

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No:	S6/2009/0291/FP
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NOTATION:

The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt as designated in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE:

The application dwelling is a detached bungalow sited on a spacious plot. The residential curtilage of the dwelling is surrounded by open Green Belt Land. The application dwelling is set back from the main public highway and is accessed via a narrow access road. To the rear of the dwelling are some detached agricultural buildings. The application dwelling boundaries are screen by tall trees and vegetation.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

The proposed development would involve the erection of an extension matching the approved scheme within planning application S6/2002/9/FP.

The proposal would consist of a single storey addition that would measure 7.52m by 7.75m and have a hipped roof to a maximum height of 4.55m.

PLANNING HISTORY:

E/4810-72	Retention and use of store as dwelling house – Refused and subsequently allowed on appeal.
S6/750/83/FP	Single storey extension and enlargement of roof – Approved
S6/2002/9/FP	Erection of side extension to bungalow – Approved

SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES:

PPS1: Delivering sustainable development
PPG2: Green Belts
PPS3: Housing
PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
PPG13: Transport

East of England Plan 2008
SS1: Achieving Sustainable Development
SS2: Overall Spatial Strategy
T14: Parking
ENV3: Biodiversity and Earth Heritage
ENV7: Quality of the Built Environment

Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991 – 2011:
None.

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005:

SD1 - Sustainable Development

GBSP1 - Definition of Green Belt

RA3 - Extensions to dwellings in the Green Belt

RA10 - Landscape Regions and Character Areas

M14 - Parking standards for new developments

D1 - Quality of design

D2 - Character and context

D8 - Landscaping

D9 - Access and Design for people with disabilities

R3 - Energy Efficiency

R11 - Biodiversity and Development

R16 - Protected Species

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Planning Guidance, Parking Standards, January 2004

CONSULTATIONS

Middlesex & Herts Wildlife Trust – No objection raised information was provided outlining some relevant policy considerations, suggested conditions and considerations to increase biodiversity.

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS

No comment received.

REPRESENTATIONS

None. Period expired 31 March 2009.

DISCUSSION:

The main issues are:

- 1. The proposed development's impact upon the character and appearance of the locality**
- 2. The proposed development's impact upon the adjoining occupiers**
- 3. The proposal's impact upon the openness of the Metropolitan Green Belt and compliance with Green Belt policy**
- 4. The proposed development's impact upon the adjacent wildlife site**
- 5. Other Material Planning Considerations**

1. The application dwelling is sited away from other dwellings and is set back from the public highway. The proposed extension would be large, but would reflect the height and proportions of the existing dwelling. The proposed fenestration would appear balanced and the resultant dwelling would not appear out of place.

The proposal would have a hipped roof and the resultant dwelling would not appear overly dominant or obtrusive. The proposal would not appear prominent when viewed from the surrounding public areas and would not have an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the locality. The proposed extension would maintain a substantial distance from the front boundary of the plot.

2. The application dwelling and proposed extension would retain a sufficient distance from the neighbouring properties to ensure that the occupants would not suffer an adverse loss of residential amenity. The proposed development would be single storey and sited away from the boundaries of the plot. Due to the proposed development's size and siting, it would not have an overbearing impact or result in a loss of light to the neighbouring property. The proposed extension would not result in any further overlooking or a loss of privacy to the neighbouring property.

The proposed development would therefore comply with Policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

3. The application site's planning history is vague, but from details within previous applications it seems that the application dwelling was originally an agricultural store that was used by the previous Chestnut Farm Farmhouse. Previously the farmhouse was the building to the south of the application dwelling now known as 'The Ridings'. Prior to planning application E/4810-72 the application dwelling sold independently of the main farmhouse and was occupied as a dwellinghouse without planning consent. Further to planning consent being granted on appeal in 1972, planning permission was given for an extension in 1984.

As part of the 1984 application the floorspace of the original dwelling was noted as being 62m². The previous application S6/2002/9/FP noted that the plans of the approved extensions are unclear and do not represent the existing development. Although there is not a clear record of the original dwelling within planning application E/4810-72, the plans of the existing building at this time are clearly legible and contain key dimensions, which give a good representation of the building's size. Furthermore, the correspondence within this application notes the size of the original and existing building, the percentage increase of the proposed extensions and the building's floor area. From this information there is no doubt that the original building was single storey and had a floor area of less than 70m². The plans illustrate the existing dwelling at this time to have a floor area of 75.23m². This application has been submitted with details showing the footprint of the previous dwelling and the positions of the previously approved extensions. This plan is sufficient to illustrate the extent of additions to the original dwelling..

It is necessary to assess the proposed development against the policies of the current district plan. The previous approval under application number S6/2002/9/FP was made prior to the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and acknowledges that the extensions would result in a cumulative increase in floorspace of 184%. The previous evidence is considered to be sufficient to give a relatively accurate record of the dwelling's previous size and this has not been disputed at the time of previous applications. The proposed extensions would result in a significant increase from the size of the original dwelling. Even if there may have been some errors in the size of the original dwelling, the proposed increase appears to result in a property that is clearly more than twice the size of the original property.

A visual assessment of the cumulative additions shows that the resultant dwelling would be far larger than the original property. The existing and proposed extensions would add to the mass and bulk of the original dwelling significantly. The previous application includes plans that indicate the original dwelling had a volume of 247m³. A calculation of the resultant dwelling's volume not including the roof space equates to 463m³. If the roofspace were to be included the resultant dwelling's volume would be far greater. This increase from the volume of the original dwelling is considered to be significant and disproportionate.

In addition to this assessment the proposed extension would be large in size and result in a 45.8% increase in floorspace from that of the existing dwelling. Although the Green Belt policy requires a comparison with the original dwelling, it is clear that as the existing dwelling has been previously extended the total amount of extensions is significant.

The application has not indicated any very special circumstances that would outweigh the proposal's inappropriateness or the harm that the proposed development would have on the openness of the Green Belt. Regardless of the previous decision under planning reference S6/2002/9/FP, the proposed development is not considered to be acceptable.

In summary, the resultant dwelling would be clearly disproportionate in size when compared with the original dwelling. The development would therefore be contrary to Policy RA3 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and PPG2.

4. The application site backs onto wildlife site WS128 (Chestnut Farm Meadows). The proposed development would not extend closer to the wildlife site and would be sited within the residential garden of the application dwelling. There would not be any need to carry out works within the wildlife site and there is not indication that the proposed development would have an impact upon this area.

The proposed development would increase the application dwelling's number of bedrooms from 2 to 4. The application site is with zone 4 as designated by the parking standards of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005. The parking standards require a 4 bedroom property within this zone to provided 3 off road spaces. The application site has ample off road parking space and can accommodate 3 cars. The proposal therefore meets the requirements of the parking standards and Policy M14 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

The application has been submitted with a sustainability checklist that indicates the development would be constructed to meet current building regulations and water/energy efficient fixtures would be used. Considering that the proposal comprises extensions to an existing dwelling, these provisions would be a reasonable effort to meet the requirements of Policy R3 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

The proposed development would not affect any mature trees or vegetation that is considered to be worthy of retention.

CONCLUSION:

The proposed development would not have an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the locality and would not affect the residential amenity of the adjoining occupiers. The proposal would not have an adverse impact upon the adjacent wildlife site.

The proposed development would result in a property that would be disproportionate in size when compared to the original dwelling. The resultant dwelling would be far large and more conspicuous than the original dwelling and would have an impact upon the openness of the Metropolitan Green Belt.

RECOMMENDATION: REFUSAL & REASONS

The proposed development when considered cumulatively with the existing extensions to the application dwelling, would result in disproportionate increases to the size of the original main dwellinghouse. The resultant dwelling would have an adverse impact upon the openness of the Metropolitan Green Belt. The proposal would fail to comply with the requirements of Policy RA3 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and PPG2. The application has failed to demonstrate any very special circumstance that would outweigh the proposed developments inappropriateness and detrimental impact upon the Green Belt.

INFORMATIVES: None.

DRAWING NUMBERS:

1220-7 & 250001/2 REV.A & 25000/JNS1 REV.A & 25000/JNS2 REV.A and date stamped 10 February 2009.

Signature of author..... Date.....