

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No:	S6/2009/665/FP
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NOTATION:

The site lies within the Green Belt and Landscape Character Area 51 as designated in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE:

Mymwood House was built as a residential dwelling around 1820 and is a two-storey, detached, white rendered building with a pitched slate roof. Mymwood House has a single storey, flat roofed extension to the rear. The building has been used as a residential care home for the elderly since the mid-1980's and before this had been used as a boarding school from the 1930's. Mymwood house is set back from the highway by approximately 65m. To the front of the site is a detached building Mymwood Lodge which is the application building. Both Mymwood House and Mymwood Lodge are Grade II Listed Buildings. The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt and to the east of the settlement of Brookmans Park.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

The application seeks Full Planning Permission to demolish a previous rear extension and a side extension and to replace these with new larger extensions for office accommodation.

The proposed side elevation is approximately 3.1m wide and 5.8m deep and the rear extension is also the same size. Both these extensions are the same size as the existing wing to the building.

The proposed materials are white render to the walls to match the existing and welsh slates to the pitched roofs to also match those on the existing building. The windows are timber and of a detailed design to match the existing sash windows.

PLANNING HISTORY:

S6/1983/592/FP – Change of use from school house to office – Refused.

S6/1984/519/FP – Change of use from school to residential home for the elderly – Granted.

S6/1985/601/FP – Construction of fire escape stairs in connection with change of use of existing building to old people's home – Granted.

S6/2005/225/FP – Alterations and Extensions to Care Home – Refused

S6/2005/226/LB – Alterations and Extensions to Care Home – Refused.

S6/2007/422/MA – Removal of pre-fabricated buildings and erection of extensions to provide 13 additional bedrooms and ancillary accommodation – Planning application Approved.

S6/2007/0421/LB – Removal of pre-fabricated buildings and erection of extensions to provide 13 additional bedrooms and ancillary accommodation – Pending consideration.

S6/2007/1711/LB – Erection of single storey and basement level extensions – Approved.

S6/2007/1704/MA – Erection of single storey and basement level extensions – Approved.

S6/2008/556/LB – Internal Alterations – Approved

S6/2008/693/MA - Removal of condition 5 (age restriction) of previous planning application S6/2007/422/FP – Approved

S6/2009/695/MA - removal of condition 5 (age restriction) of previous planning application S6/2007/1704/FP – Approved

S6/2009/565/LB - Erection of single storey side and rear extensions following demolition of existing side and rear extensions – Approved

SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES:

National Policy

PPS1: Delivering sustainable development

PPG2: Green Belts

PPG13: Transport

PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment

East of England Plan 2008

SS1: Achieving Sustainable Development

T14: Parking

ENV6 – The Historic Environment

Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991 – 2011:

None

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005:

SD1: Sustainable Development

GBSP1: Definition of Green Belt

M14: Parking standards for new developments

R17: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

D1: Quality of design
D2: Character and context
D9: Access and Design for people with disabilities
RA10 Landscape Regions and Character Areas

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005
Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Planning Guidance, Parking Standards, January 2004

CONSULTATIONS

None

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS

None received

REPRESENTATIONS

One letter of representation was received in regards to requesting information about availability of plans on the website. Concerns that a change of use to the main house may be proposed and that the application is not for a new building which would harm the landscape.

Period expired 27 May 2009.

DISCUSSION:

- 1. Green Belt**
- 2. Quality of Design and impact on the character of the surrounding area including the setting of the Listed Building of Mymwood House**
- 3. The impact upon the adjoining occupiers**
- 4. Other material planning considerations**

1. Green Belt

Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 (PPG2) is relevant along with paragraph 3.4. Five different purposes are listed which are considered to be appropriate in the Green Belt.

The proposed purpose of this building is to provide office accommodation, staff meeting room and reception area in association with the main use of the site as a care home. This purpose does not fall within those identified within paragraph 3.4 of PPG2, and so by definition is considered to be inappropriate development.

Para 3.2 of PPG2 states that inappropriate development is harmful to the Green Belt and that very special circumstances to justify inappropriate development will not exist unless the harm by reason of its inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

Very Special Circumstances

The previous planning permission granted for this site (S6/2007/1704/MA) is relevant for the upgrading of the main house to provide better accommodation for the existing care home. This was granted planning permission following a planning appeal, and although this was dismissed, the Inspector in his decision letter did support development on the site for care facilities in principle.

An extract from this delegated report for application S6/2007/1704/MA states:

'Cumulatively the approved and proposed development would form large additions to the existing site and would undoubtedly have an impact upon the openness of the Green Belt. However, the Inspector's decision for the appeal of the refused application S6/2005/225/FP found that there were very special circumstances of allow an appropriately designed addition, provided it is to be used as a care home. Due to the increasing demand for similar facilities in the area and the proposed development providing a small increase in capacity to provide separate rooms for the residents, the proposed development is considered to be an acceptable exception to Policy RA1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.'

The proposed extensions to this listed lodge building are therefore in connection with the wider use of the site as a care home. Construction work is also at an advanced stage in regards to implementing this previous permission for work to the main house and so there is reasonable certainty that the care home use will take place.

The proposed extensions would add another approximately 28 sqm to the original building of approximately 68 sqm. This would represent a 41% increase in floor area and footprint. These are considered to be 'limited' in scale compared to that of the original building, but justification is still required for any extension to this building in terms of its need.

The proposed use of the lodge building as part of the administration of the care home is not unreasonable on a site of this nature and the planning statement advises that four members of staff will be accommodated in the building which will also act as a reception to the main use of the site. Bearing in mind the limited size of the existing building, the extensions would provide a modest area of new office space, which in regards to the overall scale of the activities on the site would not appear unjustified.

In addition, the visual improvements to the buildings external appearance with the removal of unsympathetic extensions also adds weight to the proposal along with the Listed Building Consent which is also supported.

On this basis, it is considered that very special circumstances do exist which justify an exception to Green Belt policy for this commercial site.

2. Quality of Design and impact on the character of the surrounding area including the setting of the Listed Building of Mymwood House

Policy D1, D2 are relevant from the local plan and PPG15. The proposed impact of the extensions on the character of the listed building has already been considered under the requirements of the Listed Building Application and no new issues arise

from this application in either from its context in the setting of the Listed Building of Mymwood House or the quality of design. All these were considered to be acceptable in application S6/2009/565/LB. In regards to the landscape character area, the proposed extensions due to their limited scale are not considered to be harmful in regards to the requirements of Policy RA10. On this basis the proposal is considered to comply with Policy D1 & D2, RA10 and PPG15.

In regards to planning conditions, these have been attached to S6/2009/565/LB in regards to the approval of materials and so there is no reason to replicate them in this application.

3. The impact upon the residential amenity of adjoining occupiers

Policy D1 and the Supplementary Design Guidance (SDG) is relevant. No adjoining residential neighbours will be unduly impacted by the proposal as they are of a sufficient distance from the proposed extension. The proposal complies therefore with Policy D1 and SDG.

4. Other material planning considerations

Trees : - one tree identified as (T1) Holly in the arboricultural report requires removal and this is not considered to be an issue. The proposal therefore complies with policy R17.

Parking: - there is ample parking on the site and so no issues are raised.

Disabled access – the building is single storey and so access is considered to be acceptable, along with the internal arrangements

CONCLUSION:

The proposal has demonstrated that very special circumstances exist to justify these extensions in the Green Belt. In regards to design, the proposed extensions are considered to be acceptable in regards to their quality of design

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS

CONDITIONS:

1. C.2.1 Standard 3 year time limit
2. C.13.1 – The development/works shall not be started and completed other than in accordance with the approved plans and details JDA/0/9175/PL.006 received and date stamped 03/04/09 & JDA/0/9175/PL. REV/007A & JDA/0/9175/PL.REV/008A & JDA/0/9175/PL. 002B received and date stamped 29/05/09 unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority:

REASON: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved drawings and any changes must be agreed in advance in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE GRANT OF PERMISSION:

The proposal has been considered against Planning Policy Statement PPS1 and Planning Policy Guidance PPG2, PPG13 & PPG15, East of England Plan 2008 policies SS1, T14 & ENV6 and local development plan policies SD1, GBSP1, M14, R17, D1, D2, D9 & RA10 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005, in addition to the Human Rights Act 1998, which indicate that the proposal should be approved. Material planning considerations do not justify a decision contrary to the Development Plan (see Officer's report which can be inspected at these offices).

INFORMATIVES: None

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