

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No:	S6/2009/1071/FP
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NOTATION:

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

DESCRIPTION OF SITE:

The application site comprises of a two storey semi-detached dwelling which is located on the northwest side of a single track lane.

The property is part of a group of dwellings which are accessed from this lane and which have open countryside to the rear.

The property is finished in white render, apart from the first floor which has tile hanging. The roof is finished in a plain tile with gables to the rear.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

The application seeks planning permission for a single storey rear extension following the demolition of an existing rear conservatory. The new accommodation will comprise of a breakfast area and family room.

The new extension will have a flat roof with a pitched roof at the perimeter.

PLANNING HISTORY:

S6/1989/0880/FP - Two storey rear and two storey side extension –granted 27/11/89

S6/2000/0583/FP - Erection of rear conservatory – granted 19/06/00

SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES:

National Policy

PPS1: Delivering sustainable development

PPG2: Green Belts

East of England Plan 2008

SS1: Achieving Sustainable Development

ENV2: Landscape Conservation

ENV7: Quality in the Built 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
D1: Quality of design
D2: Character and context
RA3: Extensions to dwellings in the Green Belt
RA10: Landscape Regions and Character Areas
Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005

CONSULTATIONS

None

PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS

Comments state: Appears to increase size of ground floor by approx two thirds.
Query is this green belt.

REPRESENTATIONS

None.

Period expired 04/08/09.

DISCUSSION:

The main issues are:

- 1. Green Belt Policy**
- 2. The impact of the proposal on the character of the existing dwelling and surrounding area.**
- 3. The impact on the residential amenity of adjoining neighbours.**

1. Green Belt Policy

Policy RA3 is relevant and National Planning Policy Guidance Note 2.

Policy RA3 of the adopted Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 sets out the Council's policy with regard to extensions to dwellings in the Green Belt and states that they may be appropriate development provided that they would not result in disproportionate additions to the original house and would not have an adverse impact on the surrounding countryside. This policy is consistent with Government Policy relating to Green Belts found in PPG2.

PPG2 sets out Government policy on Metropolitan Green Belts. Paragraph 1.4 states that: -

“The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the most important attribute of Green Belts is their openness.”

This Government policy highlights that the most important attribute of Green Belts is their openness and that one of the purposes of including land in Green Belts is to safeguard the countryside from encroachment.

It is therefore necessary to establish what the 'original' dwelling is for the purposes of Green Belt Policy.

Planning permission was granted in 1989 for a two storey rear and two storey side extension (Application S6/0890/89/FP).

There is no previous planning history before this and so the building shown on 05/01 of this application can be considered to represent the 'original' dwelling in Green Belt policy terms.

The dwelling has also been extended with a conservatory following planning permission in 2000 (Application S6/2000/0583/FP), however, this is to be demolished as part of this proposal.

Using this evidence the floor area of the original dwelling is considered to be approximately 127 sqm. The current extensions represent approximately an increase in floor space of 49 sqm, which is a 39% increase over the original floorspace.

The current proposal would (following the demolition of the existing conservatory) will increase the floorspace, when compared to the original dwelling, to approximately 67 sqm. This would represent a 53% increase compared to the current 39% increase of floorspace when compared to the original dwelling.

Floor space is one tool in assessing whether the proposed extensions would be disproportional when compared to the original dwelling. A visual assessment is also necessary, and confirms that the proposed extensions will appear disproportionate when compared to the original dwelling, as there has already been an increase in mass and bulk to the rear and side of the building from earlier extensions.

The proposal therefore fails to comply with Criteria (i) of Policy RA3 and also paragraph 3.6 of PPG2.

Turning to the visual impact of the proposal on the Green Belt. The proposals are restricted to single storey extensions to the rear of the property. Taking into account the limited views into the site, it is considered that the visual impact on the surrounding countryside from the proposed extensions will not be so significant that they would harm the character and pattern of development in the surrounding countryside. The proposal therefore complies with Criteria (ii) of Policy RA3 and paragraph 3.15 of PPG2.

In summary, the proposal represent inappropriate development and so fails to comply with Local Plan Policy RA3 and PPG2.

Very Special Circumstances.

Turning to whether very special circumstances may exist which would justify an exception to Green Belt Policy.

PPG2 states in paragraph 3.2 that Very Special Circumstances to justify inappropriate development will not exist unless the harm by reason of inappropriateness and other harm is clearly outweighed by other consideration.

No specific reference has been made to very special circumstances in the application and no none are considered to exist.

2. The impact of the proposal on the character of the existing dwelling and surrounding area.

Policy RA10, D1 and D2 and the accompanying Supplementary Design Guidance (SDG) is relevant along with PPS1.

In regards to the proposed extensions, they would not look out of keeping with the existing dwelling or surrounding area, including the landscape character. The proposal therefore would comply with the design polices of D1, D2 & RA10 subject to a planning condition requiring the use of matching materials.

3. The impact of the proposal on the residential amenity of adjoining neighbours.

Policy D1 and the accompanying Supplementary Design Guidance (SDG) is relevant along with PPS1.

The only property which is near the proposed extensions is No.7. An existing conservatory occupies a similar footprint to that of the proposed extension and therefore is a material consideration.

The proposed extension will be higher than the existing conservatory. Taking into account the proposed depth of 3m and height of approximately 2.5m of the extension, it is considered that the proposal will not unduly impact of the residential amenity of No.7 as there will be no significant loss of sunlight/daylight to this neighbour's rear windows or terrace area. In addition, the proposal will not appear over dominant or overbearing when viewed from this neighbour's property as the extension is of a limited height and depth.

The proposal therefore complies with the amenity requirements of Policy D1 & SDG.

CONCLUSION:

The proposed extensions fail to comply with PPG2 and local Plan Policy RA3.

No very special circumstances have been shown to exist to justify the development in this Green Belt location.

The proposal complies with the design and residential amenity requirements.

RECOMMENDATION: REFUSAL AND REASONS

1. The proposal is for further extensions to those already previously constructed to this application dwelling which, when considered cumulatively, would result in a disproportionate increase in the size of the original dwelling due to its resultant appearance and from the increase in floorspace, bulk and mass. This would diminish the openness of the Green Belt and so be contrary to the requirements of Policy RA3 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and

Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 (Green Belts). No very special circumstances exist which clearly outweigh the harm that would result of the development's inappropriateness.

REFUSED DRAWING NUMBERS: 9292-P001 A received and dated 10 JUN 2009

INFORMATIVES: None

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