

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No:	S6/2010/0436/FP
------------------------	------------------------

NOTATION:

The site lies wholly within the Metropolitan Green Belt, Landscape Character Area 53 as defined in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan Proposals Map.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE:

The application property is one of a group of semi-detached two storey dwellings located on the northwest side of Hook Lane. The application site includes a front and rear garden, single integral garage and off street parking for two vehicles. The site backs and fronts onto woodland. The application dwelling is finished in painted render at ground floor and tile hanging above. The property has a plain tile roof with a hipped roof to the side extending to ground floor and a gable to the rear.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

This application seeks full planning permission for erection of a two storey side extension. The proposed extension would have a hipped roof and rear gable and would provide additional living accommodation at ground floor and an enlarged bedroom with en-suite and dressing room at first floor. The application proposes to use materials and windows to match existing.

PLANNING HISTORY:

S6/2008/2114/FP - Erection of a Glazed Two Storey Side Extension (Refused 29/12/2008)

Summary of reasons for refusal of planning application S6/2008/2114/FP:

1. The proposed extensions would, by virtue of their incongruous design, fail to complement and reflect the design of the parent dwelling and the wider streetscene, as the significant changes to the roof profile to the original front elevation would create a visual imbalance when viewed in the context with the adjoining property of No.2 Hook Lane. This would not only harm the architectural appearance of the application dwelling but also this wider context formed by this small group of rural dwellings which have retained their original character.

SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES:

National Planning Policy:

PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development

PPG2 Green Belts

East of England Plan:

SS1 Achieving Sustainable Development

ENV2 Landscape Conservation

ENV7 Quality in the Built Environment

T14 Parking

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005:
SD1 Sustainable Development
R3 Energy Efficiency
GBSP1 Definition of the Green Belt
RA3 Extensions to Dwellings in the Green Belt
RA10 Landscape Regions and Character Areas
D1 Quality of Design
D2 Character and Context
M14 Parking Standards for New Development
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

Northaw and Cuffley Parish Council – No objection

REPRESENTATIONS

The application was advertised by site notice and neighbour notification letters. One representation was received from Potters Bar Society Country Group objecting to the proposal on the grounds of overdevelopment and resulting imbalance with the adjoining property.

DISCUSSION:

The main issues are:

1. Impact on the Green Belt
2. Quality of Design and Character and Context
3. Impact on Neighbour Amenity
4. Other Material Considerations

1. Impact on the Green Belt

The general policies controlling development in the countryside apply with equal force in Green Belts but there is, in addition, a general presumption against inappropriate development within them. Such development should not be approved, except in very special circumstances. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and it is for the applicant to show why permission should be granted. Very special circumstances to justify inappropriate development will not exist unless the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. The limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings is not inappropriate provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over an above the size of the original dwelling as it existed in 1947.

In addition, Policy RA3 requires that permission for extensions to existing dwellings within the Green Belt will be allowed only where the proposal would not have an adverse visual impact in terms of its prominence, size, bulk and design on the character, appearance and pattern of development of the surrounding countryside.

The current application is a resubmission following refusal of planning application S6/2008/2114/FP which was refused on grounds of design. The previous application proposed a 48 percent increase in floorspace which was not considered disproportionate over an above the size of the original dwelling. The scheme currently proposed has been amended to include a set back from the front elevation and this has resulted in a reduction in the floorspace proposed. The resulting dwelling would measure approximately 173sqm equivalent to a 40 percent increase over the original dwelling. This level of increase is considered to be proportionate.

In regards to the visual impact, the resultant bulk and mass and volume of proposed accommodation would be particularly noticeable to the front and side, however, on balance this is considered not to have an adverse visual impact on the Green Belt as the proposed extensions would maintain a reasonable visual gap with the adjoining property at No.11 Hook Lane. Furthermore, the of the application site backs onto woodland and so would not appear overly prominent in the wider character of the countryside.

In summary, the proposal is therefore considered to comply with the requirements of PPG2 and Policy RA3, as it will not have an adverse visual impact on the character, appearance and pattern of development of the surrounding countryside.

2. Quality of Design and Character and Context:

National Planning Policy Guidance PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development requires planning authorities to plan for high quality design which is appropriate in its context. Policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 respectively require high quality design in all new development and for proposals to respect and relate to the character and context of their location.

The application property is part of a group of semi-detached dwellings which are located on one side of a single lane track in a rural setting. This group of properties are of varying designs, but form a well designed row of dwellings that retain their original character.

Some of the other dwellings have previously been extended, particularly to the rear, and there are also examples of side extensions which have incorporated dormer windows. Although some of these side dormers are large, the original profile of the roof has been retained to the front and so the original character of these neighbouring dwellings has been retained. One different example is at No.11 which has been extended with a two storey side extension, however, this has successfully maintained the dwelling's original roof profile by replicating this in the extension.

The current application is a resubmission following refusal of planning application S6/2008/2114/FP which was refused on grounds of design. The current scheme has addressed the reason for refusal by introducing a 2.4m set back from the front elevation. This has the effect of maintaining the distinctive hipped roof profile and the balance of the semi-detached pair of dwellings. The design of the extensions, as amended, would be subordinate in scale and in keeping with the character of the existing dwelling and would preserve the visual amenity of the area. The proposed extensions therefore, overcome the reason for refusal of planning application S6/2008/2114/FP in accordance with proposals comply with PPS1, PPS5, Policy SS1, ENV6 and

ENV7 of the East of England Plan 2008 and Policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and Supplementary Design Guidance 2005 (Statement of Council Policy).

3. Impact on Neighbour Amenity:

The previously refused planning application S6/2008/2114/FP was not considered to be sufficiently harmful to warrant refusal of planning permission. The only neighbour likely to be impacted is No.11 Hook Lane located adjacent to the north east. Taking into account the resultant separation distance between the proposal and No.11, it is considered that the proposed extensions would not have an overbearing or dominating impact on the occupiers of this adjacent property.

In regards to daylight/sunlight, the proposal would be southwest of No.11. It is likely that some shadowing may occur to the rear garden of No.11 from the proposed two storey extension, however, taking into account the separation distance and the existing depth of No.11 it is considered that this is not so significant to justify withholding permission.

In regards to privacy and overlooking, the windows which are proposed would not look towards the adjoining property and so there would be no significant loss of privacy to this adjoining resident. The Juliette balcony would not result in any unacceptable level of overlooking to neighbours. The extensions are therefore in accordance Policy D1 Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and Supplementary Design Guidance 2005 (Statement of Council Policy).

5. Other Material Considerations:

Sustainable Development and Energy Efficiency: The applicant has submitted details of how the proposal would contribute towards sustainability in accordance with policies SD1 and R3 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and Supplementary Design Guidance, 2005. The applicant has indicated within the submitted sustainability checklist that the extensions would not impact upon neighbour amenity. The extensions and alterations to roof will include improved insulation and all windows to be double glazed. It is proposed to use recycled bricks to assist in integrating the appearance of the existing extension. No trees would be affected by the development.

Landscape Regions and Character Areas: Policy RA10 requires developments to contribute to the landscape character and region. The application site is located with Landscape Character Area 53 where there is a strategy to 'Conserve and Strengthen' the condition and character of the area. The proposal would not have any direct impact upon the local landscape quality of the area and although would not contribute would not be contrary to this policy.

Parking: No additional bedrooms are proposed and so there is no requirement for the provision of additional parking.

CONCLUSION:

The design of the extensions, as amended, would be subordinate in scale and in keeping with the character of the existing dwelling and would preserve the visual amenity of the area. As such, the proposals overcome the reasons for refusal of planning application S6/2008/2114/FP.

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS

CONDITIONS:

1. C.2.1 – 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 1:1250 Site Location Plan & 1201-E03 & 1201-P01 & 1201-P02 Rev C & 1201-P03 Rev A received and dated 26 March 2010
3. C.5.2 – Matching Materials

SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE GRANT OF PERMISSION:

The proposal has been considered against National Planning Policy PPS1, PPG2 and Policy SS1, T14, ENV2 and ENV7 of the East of England Plan 2008 and development plan policies (i.e. Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 GBSP1, SD1, R3, R29, RA3, RA10, M14, D1, D2 and Supplementary Design Guidance), 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.....