

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No:	S6/2010/0457/FP
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NOTATION:

This site is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt as outlined in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE:

The site is located to the north of Wilkins Green Lane. The dwelling was built in the early to mid 17th century and consists of red brick with stone detailing and is Grade II listed. The site has a number of outbuildings towards the rear of the main house and landscaped lawns behind the main house. The dwelling has two vehicular accesses. One access is from Wilkins Green Lane to the south of the dwelling and close to the frontage of the main building, the other is from St Albans Road to the north which leads to a long tree lined gravel drive through the grounds. The entrances currently have pillars and gates which are modern in comparison to the original dwelling.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

The proposed development would involve the erection of a gable sided, detached garage. The proposal would approximately measure 15m in width by 6.8m in depth with a ridged roof to a height of 6.1. The proposal would be adjacent to Wilkins Green Lane and have two gable dormers facing into the application plot. These dormers would approximately measure 1.1m in width by 2.1m in height.

PLANNING HISTORY:

S6/1984/297 - New boiler house - granted

S6/1984/298 - New boiler house (Application received May, 1984) - granted

S6/1984/299 - Car Park (Application received May,1984) - granted

S6/1990/536 - Internal alterations - granted

S6/1988/643 - Listed building consent for removing dilapidated timber barn - granted

S6/2001/1367 - Elevational Alterations to Kitchen and Breakfast Room - withdrawn

S6/2001/1362 - Elevational And Internal Alterations - granted

S6/2004/1278/FP - Erection of a detached barn/workshop - Approved

S6/2004/1280/LB - Erection of a detached barn/workshop - Approved

S6/2006/326/LB - Formation of internal doorway at first floor level - Approved

S6/2007/620/FP - Erection of new gates to north and south entrances - withdrawn

S6/2007/625/LB - Erection of new gates to north and south entrances - withdrawn

S6/2007/1403/LB - Removal of render from main entrance - Approved

S6/2007/1521/FP - Erection of new gates to north and south entrances to replace existing gates - Approved

S6/2007/1524/LB - Erection of new gates to north and south entrances to replace existing gates - Approved

S6/2008/0477/FP - Erection of a detached garage with habitable accommodation above (west of Great Nast Hyde House), provision of parking area (to east of Great Nast Hyde House), provision of parking area (to east of Great Nast Hyde House) and new footgate (in eastern elevation of garden wall, following demolition of modern boiler house - Refused.

S6/2008/0480/LB - Erection of a detached garage with habitable accommodation above (west of Great Nast Hyde House), provision of parking area (to east of Great Nast Hyde House), provision of parking area (to east of Great Nast Hyde House) and new footgate (in eastern elevation of garden wall, following demolition of modern boiler house - Refused.

S6/2010/0456/FP - Alterations to entrance door surround - Approved

SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES:

National Policy

PPS1: Delivering sustainable development

PPG2: Green Belts

PPS5: Planning for the Historic Environment

East of England Plan 2008

SS1: Achieving Sustainable Development

ENV2: Landscape Conservation

ENV5: Woodlands

ENV6: The Historic Environment

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

R3: Energy Efficiency

RA3: Extensions to Dwelling in the Green Belt

RA10: Landscape Regions and Character Areas

RA11: Watling Chase Community Forest

M14: Parking standards for new developments

D1: Quality of design

D2: Character and context

D7: Safety by Design

D8: Landscaping

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005

CONSULTATIONS

HATFIELD TOWN COUNCIL COMMENTS

No comments received.

REPRESENTATIONS

None. Period expired 13 May 2010.

DISCUSSION:

The main issues are:

- 1) Impact of the proposal upon the character and setting of the listed building**
- 2) The proposed development's impact upon the visual amenity of the street scene.**
- 3) The proposed development's impact upon the openness of the Metropolitan Green Belt**
- 4) The proposed development's impact upon the residential amenity of the neighbouring properties**
- 5) Any other material considerations**

1. The proposed development would have a similar siting to the refused application under reference S6/2008/1158/FP, which was subsequently dismissed at appeal. The proposal's design has been altered to be more reflective of the barns of the opposite side of Wilkins Green Lane and the previously approved application under reference S6/2004/1278/FP, in that it would be a timber building.

The proposal would be larger than the previously approved barn/workshop, but smaller and less ornate than the refused scheme under reference S6/2008/1158/FP. The proposed garage would have a greater distance from the main Listed Building than the previous approval and be sited behind an established boundary treatment, which would create an appropriate screen. The proposal's modest design would prevent the garage from appearing more prominent or competing with the main dwelling. The proposal would have the appearance of a rural outbuilding, which would not detract from the appearance of the main dwelling.

When compared with the appearance of the previous approval the proposed garage would be larger and closer to the boundary with Wilkins Green Lane. Due to the distance separating the main dwelling and the proposal, any impact upon the setting of the Listed Building would be offset. Unlike the previously refused outbuilding the proposal would not have a highly decorative and overly prominent design. The proposed garage therefore would not have an adverse impact upon the character and setting of the main Listed Building and it is considered to meet the requirements of PPS5.

2. In terms of the siting to the proposed development, it would have an appropriate positioning in relation to the buildings on the other side of Wilkins Green Lane. However, being sited approximately 55m from the dwelling, and being proposed for use as a garage and storage area is not considered to be appropriate and reflective of the pattern of development in the locality. When compared to the

previous application, this siting would not meet the requirements of Policy D2. This siting also helps prevent an impact or conflict with the appearance of the main building. The design of the proposed garage would have an ancillary appearance to the main dwelling.

Although large the proposed garage would have good proportions and dormer windows that would be an appropriate size and appearance for the roof slope. When viewed in isolation the proposal would be an attractive building and would meet the high design requirement of Policy D1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

3. The site is clearly within the Metropolitan Green Belt and as detailed within the previous appeal decision and PPG2, the most important attribute of Green Belts is their openness. New development within the Green Belt should meet the test set out within PPG2 and reflected within Policy RA3 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

The site of the proposal used to accommodate a building and the foundations are still present, however, there is no clear record of its actual dimensions and overall appearance. It has been stated that this previous building accommodated stables. At the time of the previous appeal it was noted that there are no details of the design or scale of the stables. It is evident of OS plans, including the Local Plan proposals map and remnants of the building can still be seen on site. Within the appeal of application S6/2008/1158/FP the Inspector noted:

“ I understand that the proposed site was previously that of a stable block. Whilst evidence of part of the flooring of that block remains, it was clearly removed many years ago. Therefore, I have attributed little weight to this matter in my determination of this appeal.”

As the appeal decision forms a material consideration in the determination of this application. The previous building is not considered to be a reason to justify the proposal. It has been noted that the proposed garage has been reduced in scale and prominence from the previous refusal, however, this building was wholly inappropriate.

It has been noted that calculations of the floorspace of all the buildings on the wider site in 1948 would have been larger than the proposed coverage. However, there is not a clear record of these buildings and as with the stable block some were clearly removed many years ago.

The applicant has verbally stated that the siting of the proposal would be more appropriate than the approved scheme under reference S6/2004/1280/FP. Although the boundary with Wilkins Green Lane is more screened at the area of the current proposal, the distance from the main house and other buildings would be further. The proposal therefore would not have a close association with the main dwelling and would impact greater on the open character of the area. Furthermore, the boundary treatment that would partly screen the proposal cannot be guaranteed to remain for the lifetime of the development. Equally landscaping details cannot be a reason to make an inappropriate development acceptable.

The previously approved scheme would have been a smaller building, approximately 3.9m less in width, 2m less in depth and 2.25m less in height. As a result it would have had a very single storey appearance with a low cat-slide roof. The proposed garage would appear two-storey and would be a large building. Although when

compared to the main dwelling the proposal would not appear excessive, the main house is a very substantial building. The proposed garage would have a footprint of roughly 102sq.m. The differences between the proposal and previous approval in height, bulk and massing are considered to be noticeable and would mean that the proposed garage would have larger and more dominant appearance.

The proposed garage would have the impact of spreading development across the plot and reducing the openness of this area, which was part of the reason for the objection to the previously refused scheme. The Inspectors decision on the previous application took issue with this siting and stated:

“Added to the harm of being inappropriate development is the impact that the proposal would have in diminishing the sense of openness of this part of the Green Belt. The building would be a prominent building which due to its siting and scale would diminish the sense of openness of this country side setting.”

It has been noted that large properties often require ancillary buildings and this was recognised by the appeal Inspector. However, it is not considered to be reason that would outweigh the development harm and impact on the Green Belt. There are not considered to be any very special circumstances present that would outweigh the developments harm or override Green Belt policy.

The proposed garage would still be a relatively large building measuring 15m in width by 6.1m in height the extent of this addition would be clearly noticeable from Wilkins Green Lane. It has been acknowledged that the design has improved from the refused application under reference S6/2008/1158/FP, however, the reductions that have been made would not sufficient overcome the impact upon the openness of the Green Belt. Therefore, the development would fail to meet the requirements of PPG2 and Policy RA3 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

Although the proposed development would impact upon the open character of the area, it would not have an adverse impact upon the wider landscape character area. The proposal would therefore meet the requirement of Policy RA10.

4. The neighbouring properties are sited a sufficient distance from the proposed development to ensure that the occupants would not suffer any loss of residential amenity.

The application was submitted with a sustainability checklist which note the building would be used as a garage and for storage, therefore it would not required insulation. The checklist also notes that landscaping would be retained and these provisions are considered to be reasonable due to the use of the building. The proposal would therefore meet the requirements of Policies SD1 and R3 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

The proposed development would be sited close to and may involve the remove a couple of small trees. These trees are not protected and do not make a significant contribution to the visual amenity of the surrounding area. Subject to an appropriate landscaping scheme, no objection would be raised over the removal of these trees. The application therefore would comply with Policy D8 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

Policy RA10 and ENV5 requires contributions to be made to the Watling Chase Community Forest. If the application were to be approved a condition requiring an appropriate number of new trees would be necessary.

CONCLUSION:

The proposed garage outbuilding would form a prominent addition that would spread development across the application site. This addition would be easily viewed from the surrounding area and have an adverse impact upon the open character of the Green Belt and therefore, the application has failed to meet the requirements of Policy RA3 and PPG2.

RECOMMENDATION: REFUSAL AND REASONS

1. The site is within the Metropolitan Green Belt where it is the policy of the local planning authority as set out in PPG2 to not to allow development unless it is for the purposes set out in PPG2 and appropriate to the rural area. The proposed garage outbuilding would appear prominent, visually intrusive and have a location at odds with the pattern of development in the countryside, by reason of its siting, height, bulk, mass and distance from the dwellinghouse. This addition would therefore have a detrimental impact upon the open character of the Green Belt. Furthermore, no very special circumstances are apparent in this case that would outweigh the developments harm. The proposed development would therefore fail to meet the requirements of PPG2 and Policies RA3 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

INFORMATIVES: None.

DRAWING NUMBERS:

Site Location Plan 6103/100 & 6103/104 REV.A & 6103/105 REV.A & 6103/106 REV.A & 6103/107 REV.A received and dated 26 March 2010.

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