

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No:	S6/2010/0658/FP
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NOTATION:

The site lies within Metropolitan Green Belt, the Northaw Common Parkland Landscape Character Area and the majority of the school falls with a Major Developed Site in the Green Belt (MDS) as outlined in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE:

The site is located on the southern side of Shepherds Way and is within Queenswood girls' school. The wider site (MDS) is large and contains several buildings and associated structures. The application site which forms the area of the proposed development straddles the MDS boundary. The site and surroundings are well landscaped with mature trees and vegetation.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

The proposal involves the erection of an extension to an existing swimming pool building. The proposal would be sited to the north eastern side of the existing building and enclose plant for a combined heat and power (CHP) unit. The proposal would measure 6.1m in width by 5.8 m in depth with a flat roof to a height of 2.7m.

PLANNING HISTORY:

The Queenswood School site has an extensive planning history, the most recent and relevant applications have been noted below:

S6/2006/470/FP	Demolition of existing residential properties and erection of 3 no. 3 bed residential units for staff accommodation –Granted
S6/2004/446	Alterations and extensions to the existing Great Hall to form a performing arts centre - Granted
S6/2003/319	Erection of indoor swimming pool building - Granted
S6/2002/37	Erection of glazed entrance to library - Granted
S6/2000/1119	Formation of new vehicular access and gates to serve existing car park, and closure of existing access - Granted
S6/1990/1011	New building to provide replacement changing facilities, with first floor gym facilities and single storey extension to existing gymnasium & provision of 5 car parking spaces - Granted

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

Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991 – 2011:

None.

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005:

SD1: Sustainable Development

GBSP1: Definition of Green Belt

R3: Energy Efficiency

RA4: Replacement of Dwellings in the Green Belt

RA5: Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt (Limited Infilling)

RA10: Landscape Regions and Character Areas

D1: Quality of design

D2: Character and context

D8: Landscaping

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Planning Guidance, Parking

Standards, January 2004

CONSULTATIONS

NORTH MYMMS PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS

No comments received.

REPRESENTATIONS

None. Period expired 11 June 2010.

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 openness of the Metropolitan Green Belt and compliance with Green Belt policy**
- 3. Other Material Planning Considerations**

The proposed development would form a relatively modest addition to the existing pool building. When compared with the existing building it would be subordinate and viewed against the backdrop of the main building. The proposal would have matching materials and would reflect the appearance of the existing pool building.

The proposal would be sited on a blank side of the pool building and would not affect the appearance of its main elevations. The adjacent buildings have projections to a similar depth, which would prevent the proposal from appearing out of place or prominent. Due to the relatively shallow depth of the proposal and extent of the adjacent buildings, the proposal would not appear particularly noticeable from the

surrounding areas within the site. The proposal would not be viewed from public areas outside of the school grounds.

The proposal is not sited close to residential accommodation and would have a sufficient distance from the adjacent buildings to prevent any adverse impact upon the adjoining occupiers.

The proposal would be sited on a lawn area. A large landscaped area would remain surrounding the proposal. The proposal would not have an adverse impact upon the surrounding landscape and the proposal would meet the requirements of Policy D8 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

The proposed extension would straddle the MDS boundary, with approximately 18sq.m of the extension being within the surrounding Green Belt area. Policy RA5 relates directly to development within Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt. The proposal would be an ancillary addition to the existing pool building, which is considered to be acceptable limited infilling with application S6/2003/0319/FP. The proposal is to improve the energy efficiency of the existing pool building and only requires a modest addition. The extent of the proposal that would be within the MDS boundary would be minor and would not have an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the site. The proposed extension would not conflict with the requirements of Policy RA5 and is considered to be acceptable.

The small section of the development that would fall outside of the MDS boundary has been considered PPG2. Although the proposal would form a new development within the Green Belt it would be a relatively small addition. Due to the shape of the MDS boundary, it would not be noticeable that this addition falls outside of this MDS area. The proposal's small size would ensure that it would not have an adverse visual impact upon the open character and appearance of the Green Belt. As the proposed extension would accommodate a CHP unit, it would be beneficial from an energy efficiency point of view. Baring in mind the proposal is solely to accommodate the CHP unit, the benefits in energy efficiency are considered to outweigh any harm and inappropriateness of the proposed development's encroachment into the Green Belt. The benefits of the proposal are considered to form very special circumstances that would outweigh any minor harm and/or inappropriateness when the proposal is considered against Green Belt policy.

The proposed development would reduce the sites dependence on off site energy and increase the energy efficiency of the swimming pool. The proposal is considered to comprise technology which aims to achieve the requirements of Policy R3 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and PPS1.

CONCLUSION:

The proposed development would not have an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the locality. The proposal would be a relatively minor addition, which would not have an adverse impact upon the character and openness of the Metropolitan Green Belt. Although slightly sited outside of the MDS boundary, this positioning would not be noticeable and would not appear prominent from the surroundings. The energy efficient benefits of the proposed development are considered to outweigh any harm or inappropriateness when considered against Green Belt Policy. The application would meet the relevant requirements of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and is considered to be acceptable.

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS

CONDITIONS:

1. C.2.1: Standard Time Limit (3 Years)
2. C.13.1: Development in accordance with approved plans/details A-05-011 & A-05-021 received and dated 19 April 2010
3. C.5.2: Materials to Match

SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE GRANT OF PERMISSION:

Reason for Grant of Full Planning Consent:

The proposal has been considered against Planning Policy Statement/Guidance PPS1, PPG2, East of England Plan 2008 policy SS1 and development plan policies SD1, GBSP1, R3, RA4, RA5, D8, D1, D2, 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.....