

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No:	S6/2010/1638/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 building (Stamp House) is a large detached, red brick, three storey building with a slate roof. The existing building has two walkways which connect to adjacent buildings. The site and surroundings are well landscaped with mature trees and vegetation.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

The proposal involves alterations to the elevations of Stamp House, which included changes to fenestration and alterations/new vents, flues and soil pipes. Some internal alterations are proposed, but no material changes of use to the building have been proposed. Alterations to the landscaping surrounding Stamp House are also proposed to create a garden area for pupils and a private garden for the House Mistress.

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
S6/2010/0658/FP	Erection of a services enclosure attached to the existing swimming pool building – Granted

SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES:

National Policy

PPS1: Delivering sustainable development

PPG2: Green Belts

Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991 – 2011:

None.

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005:

SD1: Sustainable Development

GBSP1: Definition of Green Belt

R3: Energy Efficiency

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 24 August 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**

1. The application building is a large three storey detached building. The fenestration of the existing building has a very uniform alignment. As the building stands alone, there is some flexibility for alterations provided that the quality of design is maintained.

The proposed alterations to the building would be relatively modest and not significantly change the overall appearance. Replacement doors would be fitted to the principle elevation, which would maintain the design and style to be similar to the existing building and would not appear out of place.

Alterations are also proposed to fenestration on the north west and south west elevations. The proposed alterations to door openings would not appear out of place as they are at ground floor level and the features vary more on this level. The proposed window alterations to the north west elevation would be limited to a vertical area on the building and would appear appropriate on this projection as it is different to the remainder of the building. The fenestration of resultant building would retain the existing spacing and this would appear balanced. The proposed alterations to vents, flues and soil pipes

would appear modest and are ordinary features that would not appear out of place on the building.

The application building is not listed and does not fall within a conservation area. Subject to materials matching in colour and design, the change of materials used on some elements of the fenestration would not appear too noticeable or out of place. The proposed development would sufficiently reflect the appearance of the existing building and would not have an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the locality.

The application has included changes to hard and soft landscaping around the building. The wider site is well landscaped with mature trees and vegetation. The application site is viewed within this setting and the proposed alterations would improve the usability of the surrounding garden areas to provide a private garden for the house mistress and a shared pupils garden.

The proposed alterations would retain large areas of soft landscaping and formalise the layout for garden use. Further hardstanding and seating areas would be introduced, but the overall appearance of the site would not be dominated by built development and the changes would add to the visual amenity of the area.

There are several mature trees within the Queenswood School site and a Woodland Tree Preservation Order (TPO 30) covers a substantial proportion of the site. The trees within the application site are not protected, but several are mature. The proposed development does not alter significant areas close to the trees on site. The proposed parking area would be separated from an adjacent tree by an existing hardstanding. Soft landscaping would be retained to the other areas surrounding this tree. When compared to the existing site the proposed development would not result in any significant foundations close to the mature trees. The proposal would not have an adverse impact upon the existing trees and the proposal includes two new mature trees within the shared pupils garden.

The proposed development therefore would not have an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the locality and would meet the requirements of Policies D1, D2 and D8 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

2. The application site is within a Major Developed Site in the Green Belt. Policy RA5 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 sets out certain criteria for applications within a MDS, which have been addressed below:

- The proposed development would not significantly alter the wider site and the resultant development would have no greater impact upon the purposes of including land within the Green Belt than the existing development.
- The proposed development would not exceed the height of the existing buildings.
- The proposal would not result in a significant increase in the developed proportion of the site.
- The proposal has illustrated two new parking spaces close to the house mistresses accommodation. The proposed internal alterations to the existing building would not significantly increase the level of accommodation or the number of people travelling to and from the site. Therefore, there proposed development would not result in noticeable impact upon the surrounding highway network.

- The application site is recognised as a Major Developed Site within the Green Belt and limited infilling is often accepted. The proposed development would be relatively modest and cumulatively would not have an adverse impact on the amount of built development within the MDS. The proposed development would not have an adverse impact upon the open character of the Metropolitan Green Belt complies with the requirements of PPG2 and Policy RA5 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

The proposed development would not affect the wider surrounding landscape which characterises the locality. The proposal would not have an adverse impact upon the landscape character area and the development would meet the requirements of Policy RA10 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

3. The application has been submitted with a sustainability checklist which notes the development would minimise water consumption and the waste strategy hierarchy would be followed. Considering the development comprises alterations to the elevations of an existing building and landscaping works, these provisions are considered to be a reasonable effort to meet the requirements of Policies SD1 and R3 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

CONCLUSION:

The proposed development would not have an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the locality. The proposed changes to landscaping would not affect the character of the areas and subject to appropriate conditions would not harm the existing surrounding trees. The proposed development when considered cumulatively with existing development within the MDS would not have an adverse impact upon the character and openness of the Metropolitan Green Belt. The proposed development would therefore meet the requirements of Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

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-05-001 & A-01-010 REV.C & A-10-003 REV.B received and dated 22 July 2010.

Post Development

3. C.2.1: Materials to Match

SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE GRANT OF PERMISSION:

Reason for Grant of Full Planning:

The proposal has been considered against Planning Policy Statement/Guidance PPS1, PPG2 and development plan policies SD1, GBSP1, R3, RA5, D8, D1, D2 and 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.....