

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No:	S6/2010/3094/LB
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NOTATION:

The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt, an Area of Archaeological Significance and Northaw Common Parkland Landscape Character Area as designated in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE:

The application site accommodates a Grade II* Listed Building (1 Northaw Place). Northaw Place was constructed in 1690 as a two-storey house, with basement and attic rooms. A second storey was added in the early 19th Century. A balancing single storey wind was added in 1988.

The property's main feature is a painted staircase hall which dates from around 1700, which is of national significance, and is the remaining significant internal feature, since much of the remaining original fabric was stripped from the interior when the building was substantially repaired around 1988.

Although the restoration of the internal paintings was secure by enabling development in the 1980's, several inappropriate internal alterations have been carried out over the years. The property is currently undergoing repairs, maintenance and approved alterations throughout the whole building.

Northaw Place is listed as an unregistered park and garden in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005. The surrounding plot is well landscaped with mature tree and vegetation surrounding.

The wall subject of this application forms the boundary to a historic walled garden to the south of the main dwelling. The wall is constructed from red bricks and is Grade II Listed. The wall has a very weathered and historic appearance and is noted as being 17th century with a set of gates that are 19th century. The wall and gates measure a maximum of approximately 2.6m in height.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

The proposed development would involve the construction of piers and repair of cracks to stabilise the existing wall. The cracks would be repaired by stitching in new replacement bricks and adding stainless steel rods that would bridge the cracked area between the adjacent piers.

The proposed alterations would introduce piers to add stability across the wall and prevent further movement. The proposed piers would be constructed at equal intervals of approximately 5.25m across the inside of southern section of the wall and the outside of the eastern section. The piers would be constructed on top of large concrete footings approximately measuring 1.1m in width by 1.5m in depth. The core of the piers would be a 0.225m wide reinforce concrete pillar. These additions would tie into the wall and be faced with brickwork to match the existing wall. Externally the piers would measure approximately 0.45m in width by 0.225m in depth with a sloped top that would be 0.225m from the top of the wall.

PLANNING HISTORY:

Northaw Place has an extensive property history. However, when considering the proposed developments, the most relevant applications were determined in the 1980's. These applications have the following reference numbers:

S6/1986/0970/LB – Extensions and alterations and partial demolition to form 4 dwellings – Approved.

S6/1986/0971/FP – Change of use from institutional to residential to form 4 dwellings and erection of five dwellings with garages – Approved.

S6/1998/1249/FP – Amendments to S6/1988/1249/FP – extra dormers on rear of garages to each dwelling and 2 single storey conservatories on rear of houses type A – Approved.

S6/2009/2355/PA – New detached garage with adjacent plant and store room and proposed repairs and alterations to the main house – response generally supportive of internal works.

S6/2009/2702/LB – Alterations include: new window in the west wing north elevation, 1st floor; roof lantern in flat roof of west wing; formation of two access hatched to roof gutters internal alterations to second floor to rearrange bathrooms; redesign of 20th century staircases to 2nd floor and west wing, reopen blocked doorway between original dining room and morning room, alterations to 20th century cornices, door surrounds in entrance hall, replace 20th century floor boards on ground floor, stripout bathroom on first floor and reinstate south east room , replan kitchen and bathroom in basement – Approved.

S6/2010/0273/LB – Alterations include:-conversion and extension of existing east wing (garage & kitchen) to form new kitchen and swimming pool, shower area and mezzanine and 1st floor bathroom over kitchen, linked by new staircase to swimming pool. construction of new conservatory. associated service installations. works to main house east elevation 1st floor; installation of new door to replace modern door and build up window formed in 1988; reinstatement of porch and replacement of modern door on south elevation – Approved.

S6/2010/0110/MA – Alterations include:-conversion and extension of existing east wing (garage & kitchen) to form new kitchen and swimming pool, shower area and mezzanine and 1st floor bathroom over kitchen, linked by new staircase to swimming pool. construction of new conservatory. associated service installations. works to main house east elevation 1st floor; installation of new door to replace modern door and build up window formed in 1988; reinstatement of porch and replacement of modern door on south elevation – Approved.

S6/2010/2898/LB – Amendments to applications S6/2009/2702/LB and S6/2010/0273/LB comprising a modern partition in mezzanine west wing; half glazed double doors to first floor landing; roof access hatch on west wing roof; conservatory rooflight on main inner pitch; painted timber screens on proposed conservatory to have double doors and powder coated aluminum glazed doors to pool room – Pending Consideration.

SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES:

National Policy
PPS5: Planning and the Historic Environment

East of England Plan 2008
ENV6: The Historic Environment

Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991 – 2011:
None.

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005:

CONSULTATIONS

Hertfordshire Buildings Preservation Trust (BEAMS) – The following comments were received:

As discussed before & as previously advised, following the site meeting with the architects- both the proposed **3-bay detached single storey garage block** (3096/LB) & the proposed series of new **brick piers, minor stabilising & enhancing alterations & conservative repairs & re-pointing** of the wall accord with the approach to design & re-instatement/ stabilisation that were discussed & agreed at that site meeting. The works to the walls of the walled garden are strongly to be encouraged as an important part of the total repair/ alteration/ extension works comprising the current phase of works to this building of outstanding interest & national importance. The garage block can be tucked alongside the side additions of the principal house, without, I understand, detriment to the best of the trees in this part of the setting of the listed building. With the additional screen planting proposed the new garage should be able to be a low-key background element in the wider gardens & sensitive setting of the main house.

Some further additional specification details for both applications are still required- suggest standard materials & specification/ schedule/ method statement conditions.

NORTH MYMMS PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS

The PC feels that this is a listed building it should be left to specialist comments.

REPRESENTATIONS

None. Period expired 5 February 2011.

DISCUSSION:

The main issues are:

- 1. The proposed development's impact upon the character and setting of the Listed Buildings**
- 2. Other Material Planning Considerations**

1. The garden walls are a historic feature within the grounds of Northaw Place. Due to the age of the wall, the weathering that has taken place and the location of the adjacent trees, there has been some movement in across the wall. Cracks have formed and the overall stability of the wall has been affected. Water has also

penetrated the bricks to the top of the wall and this has resulted in damage to the top brick courses. The agent has surveyed the wall and their assessment has found the wall to be in poor condition. At the time of the site visit the workers had created an exclusion zone around the wall to protect people on site in case it collapses.

To prevent further damage to the wall some repair work is needed. Areas that have cracks would be repaired by removing the damaged bricks and the surrounding mortar. Stainless steel bars would be inserted that would extend across the area of the crack and along the wall to adjoin the adjacent proposed piers or corner of the wall. The damaged areas would then be repaired by stitching new brickwork across the crack and re-pointing the areas with mortar to match the existing.

The proposal has noted that general repairs would also be made to the wall that would comprise repairs and replacement of the top course of bricks in order to reduce damage from water penetrating the wall from above. Re-pointing and piecing in of new bricks would be carried out as required across the wall.

The proposed works have been designed to appear relatively subtle when viewed against the existing wall and the main structural additions would be hidden. The proposed piers would be relatively slender and have an appropriate spacing, which would prevent these additions from appearing too prominent. The historic fabric of the wall would be mostly retained with only minor areas being used to attach the proposed additions, which would prevent any major alterations to the existing wall. The proposed development would retain the character and appearance of the wall and would add structural stability sympathetically.

The wall and gardens are important individually and add to the setting of the main building which is also listed. The proposed works and recent approved applications to the main building form part of a package to repair and restore a building and site which are of outstanding interest and national importance. The proposed development would meet the relevant requirements of PPS5 and policy ENV6 of the East of England Plan 2008.

2. **East of England Plan 2008:** The application has been considered against policy ENV6 of the East of England Plan, which at the time of this decision forms part of the development plan for the borough.

On 10th November 2010, The High Court quashed the decision of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to unilaterally revoke Regional Spatial Strategies in England on two grounds:

- That he acted outside his statutory powers in circumventing the need for parliamentary scrutiny of such a fundamental change to the national planning system; and
- He failed to consider the likely environmental effects of revoking Regional Strategies

Whilst the Government is still committed to the abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies through the Localism Bill, the policies in the East of England Plan are currently re-established and form part of the development plan again and are therefore a material consideration which can be taken into account in reaching a decision.

CONCLUSION:

The proposed works are required to prevent the collapse of the Grade II Listed wall. The proposed works have been designed to retain the historic fabric of the wall and maintain its appearance. The works are considered to be appropriate and would have an acceptable impact upon the character and setting of the listed wall and house.

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS

- 1. C.2.2: Standard Time Limit Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas (3 Years)
- 2. C.13.1: Development in accordance with approved plans/details Site Location Plan & D127366-020 REV. T1 received and dated 24 December 2010.

Pre - Development

- 3. C.5.1: Materials to be agreed

INFORMATIVES: None.

Summary of reasons for grant of permission

The proposal has been considered against Planning Policy Statement/Guidance PPS5, East of England Plan 2008 policies ENV6, and development plan policies 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).

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