

**WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT**  
**DELEGATED REPORT**

**APPLICATION No:** S6/2013/2495/FP

**SITE ADDRESS:** 87 The Ridgeway, Cuffley, Potters Bar

**DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT:** Erection of a single storey rear extension and front canopy

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**RECOMMENDATION:** REFUSAL AND REASON

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**1. SITE AND APPLICATION DESCRIPTION:**

The application property is a detached bungalow located on the south side of the highway. The application site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt and the Northaw Common Parkland Landscape Character Area.

It is proposed to erect a single storey rear extension and alterations to the front roof slope, incorporating a canopy. The proposed extension would measure approximately 8.1m in width and 4.1m in depth and have a pitched, crown roof set 0.3m down the side of the main roof. To the front, the applicant wishes to extend the front roof slope forward to create a canopy about the existing front door. This roof projection would also feature a crown roof and match the ridge of the existing.

The applicant has received informal advice regarding similar alterations to this property as part of a Pre-Application - S6/2013/1666/PA on 14/08/2013.

**2. SITE DESIGNATION:**

The site lies within Cuffley as designated in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

**3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:**

- S6/2012/2464/FP - Construction of new gable ended roof with side facing dormers, erection of single storey side extension to form a new porch – Refused 05/03/2013 REASON: Considered to be a disproportionate addition and inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
- S6/2012/0324/PA - Extend roof above existing flat roof incorporating rear dormer and two front small dormers – Invalid
- S6/2011/2734/PA - Demolition of existing detached garage and erection of new garage. Formation of loft conversion incorporating rear and side dormers – Informal View Given 17/01/2012
- S6/2011/0243/FP - Demolition of existing garage and erection of single storey side extension with loft conversion incorporating rear dormer including new front and side garage walls and rooflights – Refused 18/04/2011 REASON: Considered a disproportionate addition and inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
- S6/1976/0508/ - Single storey side extension – Approved 12/11/1976

#### **4. CONSULTATIONS:**

None

#### **5. NEIGHBOUR REPRESENTATIONS:**

The application has advertised through neighbour consultation and via a site notice, and no representations have been received from the public.

#### **6. TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIONS**

The Northaw and Cuffley Parish Council has no objections to the development.

#### **7. MAIN PLANNING ISSUES AND RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES:**

The main planning issues with this application are:

- a) Is the proposal considered appropriate development in the Green Belt (NPPF (paragraphs 79-90), RA3)
- b) The impact of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the host dwelling and immediate local area (NPPF, GBSP2, D1, D2, RA10)
- c) The impact of the proposal upon the residential amenities of the adjoining neighbouring properties (D2)
- d) Other material planning considerations

#### **8. ANALYSIS:**

a) The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt and the Northaw Common Parkland Landscape Character Area. Green Belt policy can be found in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and local policy documents. It is detailed that there is a general presumption against inappropriate development, which is by definition harmful and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

Policy RA3 in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan relates to permissions to existing dwellings within the Green Belt. They will be allowed only where all the following criteria are met:

*Policy RA3 – Extension to Dwellings in the Green Belt*

*Permissions for extension to the existing dwellings within the Green Belt will be allowed only where the following criteria are met.*

- (i) The Proposal would not individually or when considered with the existing or approved extensions to the original dwelling, result in a disproportionate increase in the size of the dwelling;*
- (ii) It would not have an adverse visual impact (in terms of its prominence, size bulk and design) on the character, appearance and the pattern of development of the surrounding countryside.*

When considering any planning application, the local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm caused to the Green Belt. 'Very Special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by

reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

Paragraph 89 of the NPPF states that a local planning Authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. The relevant exception in this case is:

*“The extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building”*

In order to assess the extension to a dwelling in the Green Belt, it is first necessary to draw a comparison to the original dwelling. This is in order to assess whether the size of the extension would be disproportionate to the size of the original. Generally, no extension will be approved that would either by itself or when taken together with outstanding permissions and previous extensions to the property, make a more prominent or visually obtrusive appearance. It must be noted that the dwelling was previously extended to the side, application reference S6/1976/0508/. The table below lists the approximate dimensions of the original and resultant dwelling following implementation of the proposal and including the side extension in 1976. For the purposes of this application, the original building is what stood in 1948; the dimensions have been calculated accordingly.

	<b>Original</b>	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Increase</b>	<b>% Difference</b>
<b>Width</b>	8.1m	11.1m	3m	<b>37%</b>
<b>Depth</b>	13.9m	18m	4.1m	<b>30%</b>
<b>Height</b>	6.5m	6.5m	-	-
<b>Footprint</b>	93.9sqm	145.8sqm	51.9sqm	<b>55%</b>
<b>Overall Floorspace</b>	93.9sqm	145.8sqm	51.9sqm	<b>55%</b>

When compared to the original dwelling, the resultant property would be 3m wider than the original, an increase of 37%. Additionally, the extension would increase the maximum depth of the property by 4.1m, an increase of 30%. The roof of the proposed rear extension would be set down from the ridge by 0.3m to ensure that the resultant property would not be any higher than existing.

As this property only has one habitable level, the values of the calculated footprint and the overall floorspace are the same, however the proposed extension to the rear would increase this figure by 51.9m from the original property, an increase of 55%. Accumulatively, the existing and the proposed extensions would account to a disproportionate increase in size to the dwelling in relation to the original property.

Despite being sited to the rear of the property, the proposed extension would still be visible from the streetscene of The Ridgeway. The land slopes away to the rear of site meaning that any alteration would have more of a visual impact on the pattern of

development in the surrounding countryside. This extension to the rear would span across the entire width of the original property and have a hipped roof design. It is considered that the by virtue of the rear extension's width and roof design, an excessive amount of bulk and mass would be added to the rear of the property. The roof alterations proposed at the front of the dwelling do not increase the maximum dimensions and despite the prominent siting, the dimensions and additional bulk is considered to have a limited impact upon the appearance of the streetscene.

It was advised at the pre-application stage to reduce the height and width of the rear extension, in order for the resultant property to not unacceptably exceed the proportions of the original property. From the earlier plans at the Pre-Application stage, the applicant has reduced the height but the width has remained the same. Therefore the overall proposed footprint and floorspace is considered to be a disproportionate increase in size when compared to the original property. Despite being sited to the rear of the property, the additional bulk and mass would be visible as a disproportionate addition in the streetscene. Furthermore, to the front, the further projection of the roof slope to form a canopy would add additional bulk and mass to the front elevation, and is sited in a location which would maximised its impact.

Overall the disproportionate extension to the rear would have an adverse visual impact on the character, appearance of the host dwelling and the pattern of development of the surrounding countryside. As a result, substantial weight would be afforded against the proposal. It would therefore fail to meet the relevant requirements of the NPPF and Policy RA3, and so be considered inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

#### **Whether the proposal has an impact on the openness of the Green Belt**

The fundamental character of Green Belt land is its openness, and National policy has the intention to preserve the impact on openness. The proposed extension would be sited to the rear of the property and be of the same width of the original dwelling. The extension's 8.1m width and proposed roof design is considered to increase the bulk and mass of the property, reducing the openness of the site. However, little weight is afforded to this consideration as even though the sense of openness would be reduced, sufficient visual gaps either side of the property would be preserved to maintain a degree of openness. The roof alteration to the front is also not considered to have an undue impact on openness, by virtue of the limited scale of development.

#### **Whether the proposal has an impact on the five purposes of the Green Belt**

It is also essential for any development in the Metropolitan Green Belt to protect the five purposes of the Green Belt.

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

According to the plans submitted and owing to the single dwelling nature of this application; the proposed development would not contravene any of the above purposes for development within the Green Belt. Therefore there would be no harm to the five purposes of land within the Green Belt.

Overall the proposal is considered to be inappropriate development due to disproportionate increase in the size of the resultant dwelling and the increase in mass and bulk proposed at the rear. There would be a minimal impact to openness onsite; however this is not considered material enough to cause any serious harm. The NPPF states that inappropriate development would only be allowed in very special circumstances.

This application has not demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority that the harm caused by the reason of inappropriateness, is clearly outweighed by other considerations, so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development.

b) Local policy requires that extensions should form as a subordinate feature and not impact on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the locality. The rear extension would have a crown top roof. Although this roof form doesn't feature on the existing dwelling, it is commonplace of other properties in the surrounding area and so reflects the local character. However, in this instance, the overall width of the rear extension, and the bulk of the roof when considered with the downward slope of the land, towards the rear of the site, would fail to make the extension appear subordinate to the host dwelling.

Furthermore the alterations to the front roof slope to create a canopy would be sited in a prominent position on the property and relatively visible in the streetscene. However, the overall scale of this element of the proposal is considered to be limited and therefore would not unduly impact the appearance of the host dwelling or The Ridgeway streetscene.

However the visual harm caused by the impact of the rear extension would fail to maintain the character and appearance of the host dwelling or enhance the appearance of the Northaw Common Parkland Landscape Character Area. Consequently, the proposal would be contrary to Policies D1, D2 and RA10.

c) The impact of the proposed development on the residential amenity of neighbouring dwellings is considered in terms of how the proposal would impact on neighbouring properties in terms of overshadowing and the level of access to day/sun/sky light afforded by the proposal, whether the proposal would be overbearing and cause a loss of outlook, and in terms of overlooking/privacy.

The proposed extension would be set far enough apart from the adjoining neighbouring properties to avoid a substantial loss of day/sun/sky light to them and additionally it wouldn't appear too overbearing. The proposal would also not include the installation of any windows to side planes where there was not one previously. As a consequence, there would be no additional overlooking from the implementation of this scheme. Overall, I am satisfied that the proposal would not have an adverse impact upon the residential amenity of the adjoining occupiers.

#### **d) Parking Provision**

From the submitted plans, it is proposed that part of the proposed extension would accommodate an additional bedroom. Provision for parking must always be considered in an application that provides additional bedrooms; however the existing driveway appears to provide sufficient space in excess of the minimum requirements set out by the Council's SPD, Car Parking Standards January 2004.

#### **9. CONCLUSION:**

The proposal is considered to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt due to the increase in the size of the resultant dwelling, in conjunction with the additional mass and bulk proposed. There would be a marginal impact upon openness; however, little weight is afforded to this consideration. Furthermore, the proposal would not conflict with the five purposes of including land within the Green Belt. The proposed development would therefore not comply with Green Belt policy, contrary to the guidance given in the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy RA3 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, 2005.

Turning to design, despite the alterations to the front roof slope being acceptable, the rear extension would fail to form a subordinate addition and would unduly impact on the character and appearance of the host dwelling, the immediate streetscene and the Northaw Common Parkland Landscape Character Area. Therefore the proposal would not be in accordance with the relevant sections of the NPPF, and Policies GBSP2, D1, D2, RA10 and the Council's Supplementary Design Guidance. The proposed extension would not have an adverse impact upon the residential amenity of the adjoining occupiers, nor would it require additional parking provision to be sought onsite.

#### **10. REASONS**

1. The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt where there is a presumption against inappropriate development. The proposal, when considered with the size of the original dwellinghouse and existing extensions would result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original dwelling and so would represent inappropriate development. The proposed extensions are therefore contrary to Policies RA3 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and the National Planning Policy Framework. Furthermore, the application has failed to demonstrate that Very Special Circumstances exist to justify inappropriate development and that the resulting harm, by reason of the development's inappropriateness and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
2. The proposed rear extension by virtue of its scale, siting and roof bulk, when considered with the downward slope of the land, would fail to form a subordinate addition to the rear of the property that would complement the host dwelling, the character of the immediate streetscene and the Northaw Common Parkland Landscape Character Area. The proposal is therefore contrary to the NPPF, policies GBSP2, D1, D2, RA10 of the District Plan and the Council's Supplementary Design Guidance.

**REASONS FOR REFUSAL**

The decision has been made taking into account, where practicable and appropriate the requirements of paragraphs 186-187 of the National Planning Policy Framework and material planning considerations do not justify a decision contrary to the development plan (see Officer's report which can be inspected online at the Council's website or at these offices).

**REFUSED DRAWING NUMBERS:**

Site Location Plan & 2334/1 & 2334/2 & 2334/4 & 2334/5 received and dated 22 November 2013

**INFORMATIVES:**

None

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