

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No: S6/2015/0229/FP

SITE ADDRESS: 12 East View Essendon Hatfield

DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT: Erection of single storey side extension

RECOMMENDATION: Refusal

1. SITE AND APPLICATION DESCRIPTION:

The host dwelling consists of the original two storey semi detached property as well as a single storey side extension. The topography off the site is such that the ground slopes down steeply from west to east, and slightly from south to west, resulting in neighbouring property No. 14 being built higher than the host dwelling. The site is located on the outside of a bend in the road serving the dwelling and as such, the detached neighbouring property is angled away to the rear of the properties, and inwards to the front.

The proposal is to build a first floor side extension above the existing ground floor side extension with a gable end pitched roof. The proposed extension will be set back from the principle elevation, have matching eaves height, a lower ridge height and be set flush to the rear elevation of the host dwelling. The materials fenestration detailing will match the existing dwelling. There are views between Nos. 12 and 14 East View of open countryside to the rear.

2. SITE DESIGNATION:

The site lies within the settlement of Essendon, the Green Belt and Little Berkhamsted Settled Plateau Landscape Character Area as designated in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

S6/2011/0991/FP - Erection of first floor side extension R 02/08/2011

4. CONSULTATIONS:

No consultations were necessary.

5. NEIGHBOUR REPRESENTATIONS:

No representations have been received from the public.

6. TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIONS

No representations have been received from the Town/Parish Council.

7. MAIN PLANNING ISSUES AND RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES:

The main planning issues to be considered in the determination of this application are:

- a) Is appropriate development within the Green Belt or very special circumstances exist which outweigh the harm (Local Plan Policies D1, D2 and RA3 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005, the Supplementary Design Guidance Statement of Council Policy 2005 and the National Planning Policy Framework)
- b) Whether or not the scheme incorporates high quality design in accordance with the principles of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan (2005) and relates to the character and context of the area (D1, D2, RA10, Supplementary Design Guidance (SDG) and National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF))
- c) The impact of the proposal on the residential amenity of the adjoining properties (D1 and Supplementary Design Guidance (SDG))

8. ANALYSIS:

- a) Paragraph 79 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) identifies the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. There is a presumption against inappropriate development within the Green Belt, outlined in paragraph 87. Paragraph 89 clarifies that an extension or alteration to a building, providing it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. Policy RA3 is in line with the NPPF in that it is concerned with the impact created by extensions on the openness of the Green Belt, yet recognises that the extension of a dwelling may be considered appropriate development so long as the development would not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original dwelling (i). Policy RA3 goes on to state that the visual impact of a development, in terms of prominence, bulk size and design, on the character, appearance and pattern of development of the surrounding countryside is an important consideration in assessing a proposal (ii). Permission will only be allowed where criteria (i) and (ii) of Policy RA3 are met.

The host dwelling has a single storey side extension with a flat roof which has increased the floor space of the dwelling by 35.6m². The proposed first floor element adds an additional 15.3m² of floor space to the dwelling. The floor space of the original dwelling is 94.98m², and the total additional floor space through the culmination of extensions would be 50.9 m² with this proposal, representing a 53.53% increase of floor space from the original building. The proposal does not result in a disproportionate increase in the size of the dwelling when considered either with existing extensions to the original dwelling.

Although East View is within a residential street, No. 12 and other dwellings on this side of the street had substantial openness between them originally, and have maintained this openness at first floor level. This contributes to the Green Belt character and openness in the locality, which is emphasised by views obtainable between the buildings to open countryside beyond.

As mentioned above, the host dwelling already has a ground floor side extension which is in line with a pattern of development within the street. The proposed first floor side extension would result in a significant departure from the prevailing

pattern of development through the reduction in the spacing between dwellings at the first floor level. If planning permission were granted it would be difficult to resist similar applications from neighbouring properties. Although each proposal must be considered on its own merits, repetition of this type of development would result in a cumulative impact and a significant change in the character of the area resulting in the erosion of the openness of the Green Belt.

I acknowledge the attempt within this application to reduce the scale and bulk of the proposed first floor element, however, given the circumstances of the site, the scale of the scheme would be sufficient to significantly detract from the openness of the Green Belt. Policy RA3 states that permission will only be allowed in the Green Belt where all of the criteria within the policy are met. Whilst this scheme would meet criteria (i) in terms of disproportionate increase, it does have an adverse visual impact in terms of size, prominence and design on the character, appearance and pattern of development and as such fails to meet criteria (ii). By means of harm to the openness of the Green Belt, the proposal conflicts with Policy RA3 (ii) of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

- b) Local Plan Policies D1, D2 and RA10 alongside the SDG, seek to ensure a high quality of design which relates to the character and context of the dwelling and surrounding area. The policies require extensions to complement and reflect design and character, be subordinate in scale, and not look cramped within the site in regards to bulk. These policies are in line with the NPPF section 7 in that planning should require good design.

The proposed extension is of pitched roof, gable end design, which is in keeping with the host dwelling and the surrounding area in terms of design. The proposed fenestration detailing within the extension and the host dwelling will be of matching design in terms of style and dimensions. The scheme is set back from the principle elevation, and flush with the rear elevation of the host dwelling, resulting in a lower ridge height and a scheme which is considered to be subordinate in scale to the host dwelling.

Policy RA10 states development in rural areas contribute to the conservation, maintenance and enhancement of the local landscape area, as appropriate. The Little Berkhamsted Settled Plateau Landscape Character Area strategy is to conserve and strengthen through careful consideration that local landscape character is not compromised by a change of scale or inappropriate non-vernacular design. This proposal represents, as outlined previously, a new scale of development within the settlement at first floor level, which it is considered represents inappropriate development within the Green Belt. For the same reasons, the change in scale of development is considered inappropriate, and the development fails to conserve and strengthen the local landscape character.

Whilst the design is in keeping with the host dwelling and surrounding area, the pattern of development, for the reasons outlined previously, is not within the character and context of the host dwelling or surrounding area by means the spacing between buildings at a first floor level. The SDG suggests that the extension must not reduce the space around the dwelling to such an extent that the dwelling looks cramped within its site, and that the spacing of adjacent

buildings and buildings within the locality should be reflected. Efforts have been made and acknowledged to reduce the bulk of the first floor element resulting in the cumulative impact of the development not resulting in the building looking cramped within its setting. As outlined previously, the original dwellings had significant spacing, which has eroded at ground floor level, but has been maintained at first floor level. The proposed first floor extension would not reflect the spacing of buildings adjacent to and within the locality, fails to conserve and strengthen the local landscape character and as such would be contrary to Policies D1, D2, RA10, the SDG and the NPPF.

- c) With regard to the impact on the amenity of adjoining neighbours, policy D1 and the SDG states that any extension should not cause loss of light or appear unduly dominant from an adjoining property. The impact of the proposed development should be assessed in regard to loss of day/sun/sky light, whether it is overbearing and will impact on outlook from an adjoining property.

No. 10 East View is the adjoining property to the north of the host dwelling. As the development is solely to the south side of the host dwelling, and does not extend beyond the existing front or rear elevation, there will be no impact in terms of undue dominance, loss of light or loss of privacy on this neighbouring property.

No. 14 East View is detached from the host dwelling, and due to being located on the outside of a bend in East View, is angled away from the host dwelling to the rear. The topography of the area is such that No. 14 East View is situated on higher ground than the host dwelling. The single storey side extension at No. 14 is 1m higher than the single storey extension on No. 12, and contains a side window. There is also a first floor side window on No. 14 East View, which is obscure glazed. No. 14 East View is south of the host dwelling, and being in the northern hemisphere, the angling of the sunlight is such that shadows are cast to the north, as well as east to west through the duration of the day. As a result there will be little loss of light into these side windows due to the proposed development. In regard to undue dominance, the scheme is sufficiently spaced from the neighbouring property to mitigate any impact.

As a result of the orientation projection, height and spacing of the proposed development, there will be no significant impact in terms of loss of light or undue prominence on neighbouring properties, and as such, is compliant with policy D1, the SDG and the NPPF.

9. CONCLUSION:

The proposed development, by virtue of its height, size, prominence and spacing is of poor design which is not reflective of the character of the surrounding area and has an adverse visual impact on the character, appearance and pattern of development of the surrounding countryside. The proposal represents a design fails to relate and respect the character and context of the area and will be harmful to the Green belt through its adverse impact on the character, appearance and pattern of development.

10. REASON FOR REFUSAL:

1. The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt where there is a presumption against inappropriate development. The proposed extension would have an adverse visual impact on the character, appearance and pattern of development. The proposed extensions would have an adverse affect on the open characteristics of the Green Belt as a result of increasing its developed appearance and reducing the spacing at first floor level between buildings. As such, the proposals represent inappropriate development and as no very special circumstances have been advanced of sufficient weight to set aside Green Belt policies of restraint, is contrary to the advice contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and would conflict with Policy RA3 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.
2. The development, by virtue of the scale and spacing between buildings adjacent and in the locality of the site is of poor quality design which is unreflective, inappropriate non-vernacular design which fails to strengthen and conserve the character and context of the dwelling or surrounding area or the local landscape character. Accordingly the proposal is contrary to Policies D1, D2 and RA10 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005, the Supplementary Design Guidance (Statement of council Policy 2005) and the National Planning Policy Framework.

SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR REFUSAL:

The decision has been made taking into account material planning considerations and where practicable and appropriate the requirements of paragraphs 186-187 of the National Planning Policy Framework (see Officer's report which can be inspected at these offices).

REFUSED DRAWING NUMBERS:

Site Location Plan 12EV1 – 2 & 12EV1 -3 & Existing Ground Floor Plan & Proposed First Floor Plan & Proposed Elevations received and dated 05 February 2015 and 12 EV1 – 1surv (Existing elevations) & 12 EV1 – 1surv (Existing Plans) received and dated 30 March 2015.

INFORMATIVES:

None

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