

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No: S6/2015/0857/FP

SITE ADDRESS: 12 East View Essendon Hatfield AL9 6HJ

DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT: Erection of two storey rear extension

RECOMMENDATION: Approval with Conditions

1. SITE AND APPLICATION DESCRIPTION:

The host dwelling consists of the original two storey semi detached property with 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 for a two storey rear extension to the rear of the property. The ground floor element extends by 4.2m to the rear across the width of the original dwelling. The first floor element extends 3.2m to the rear and has a width of 4.2m. The first floor extension is set in from the south flank wall of the original dwelling by 1m and from the north flank wall by 3.3m and hosts a hipped roof.

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 in the determination of this application

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 proposal adds an additional 49.14m² 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 84.74m² with this proposal, representing an 89.2% increase of floor space from the original building. This increase in floor space is not usually considered proportionate in terms of development within the Green Belt.

When considering a disproportionate extension, weight should be given in terms of “very special circumstances” to the potential impact in scale and mass to any fall-back development which would fit within The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015. This view is in line with appeal referenced APP/J1915/D/15/3006763 where a fall-back position in terms of permitted development which had not been certified as lawful was given considerable weight and was considered under the umbrella of “very special circumstances” outweighing the harm resultant from disproportionate additions. The host dwelling has not applied for a prior approval larger home extension, and if it were applied for, a gap would need to be left between the existing side and rear extension and the proposed rear extension, and no two storey element could be included. Given that no neighbour representations have been received for this

application, alongside the lack of any impact of a single storey rear extension on the amenity of the occupier of any adjoining premise, the possibility of a single storey rear extension creating a cumulative 90% increase in footprint under prior approval should be considered and given some weight.

It is noted within the assessment of this application that the neighbouring property No.10 East View is in the process of building a substantial rear and side ground floor extension. This extension was approved recently under application referenced S6/2015/2651/FP. The approval was given despite the disproportionate nature of the proposal (at 117% increase) on the strength of a prior approval application being granted for an extension which would increase the footprint of the property by 78% when considered alone. Whilst this development within the immediate vicinity is noted, it is not given considerable weight as each application should be assessed on its own merits.

The accumulation of the above considerations results in the proposal representing proportionate development within the Green Belt.

Turning to the impact of the development upon the character, appearance and pattern of development of the surrounding countryside in terms of prominence, bulk size and design the extensions are to the rear of the existing two storey dwelling. The development overcomes the issue for the previous refusal of a first floor side extension referenced S6/2011/0991/FP. This side extension was refused on the impact of the development on the pattern of development within the surrounding countryside, with a pattern of development of this form creating a dangerous precedent in reducing the spacing at first floor level between properties in the area. Whilst the first floor element will be viewable from some limited vantage points from the street, as well as arable and forestry land to the rear, the extension has been designed considerately being set in from the south flank wall by 1m and hosting a hipped roof to minimise bulk. Other than the limited views of the first floor element, the bulk of the development will be indiscernible.

- 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 ground floor rear extension will host a flat roof in line with side and rear extensions in the surrounding area and present on the host dwellings existing side extension. The first floor element will host a pitched, hipped roof with a ridge height below that of the main dwelling. Whilst a hipped roof is not reflective of the host dwelling which hosts a gable side, it has been designed as such to mitigate the impact of the development in terms of additional bulk. As such, the proposal remains subordinate to the host dwelling and fails to add significant bulk to result in the dwelling looking cramped within its site. The materials to be used in the extension will match those used in the construction of the host dwelling. As a result, the extension is considered to be of good design

which reflects the character and context of the area, is subordinate in scale and would sit comfortably alongside the original 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. The proposal is considered to be in compliance with this condition.

- 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. 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. 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. There are no proposed first floor side windows within the proposal, and as such, no loss of privacy will arise.

No. 10 East View is located to the north of the host dwelling and is level in terms of height and topography. No.10 is in the process of building a single storey rear extension just over 5m in depth. As such, the proposed single storey extension will not impact on the occupiers of the neighbouring premise in terms of loss of light, undue dominance or loss of privacy. The first floor element of the development is sited in from the neighbouring dwelling by 3.3m This will mitigate any loss of light or undue dominance felt as a result of the development on the property, and as there are no proposed first floor side windows within the proposal, and as such, no loss of privacy will arise.

9. CONCLUSION:

The proposal is considered to be compliant with Welwyn Hatfield District Plan Policies D1, D2, RA3 and RA10 as well as the Supplementary Design Guidance Statement of Council Policy 2005 and the National Planning Policy Framework in terms of representing good design which respects the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring premises and being considered proportionate development within the Green Belt.

10. CONDITIONS:

1. C.2.1 - Time limit for commencement of development

2. C.13.1 - Development in accordance with approved plans and details 1:1250 Site Location Plan & 1:500 Block Plan & Existing Elevations & Existing Ground Floor Plan & Existing First Floor Plan & Proposed Ground Floor Plan & Proposed First Floor Plan received and dated 05 May 2015 & Proposed Elevations received and dated 30 June 2015
POST-DEVELOPMENT
3. C.5.2 – Matching materials

SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE GRANT OF PERMISSION:

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 at these offices).

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