

**WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - PLANNING, PUBLIC PROTECTION AND GOVERNANCE**

DELEGATED APPLICATION

Application No: 6/2019/0605/HOUSE
Location: Just House Coopers Lane Northaw Potters Bar EN6 4NJ
Proposal: Alteration to roof design
Officer: Ms Lucy Hale

Recommendation: Refused

6/2019/0605/HOUSE

Context	
Site and Application description	<p>The application site is located on the west side of Well Road, close to the junction to Coopers Lane and comprises a two-storey detached dwelling. The main dwelling is set back from the front boundary of the plot by approximately 11 metres. At the front of the property there is a vehicular hardstanding and large gravelled parking area. The site has an irregular shaped plot with two vehicular accesses directly off Well Road. The area is characterised by large dwellings on substantial plots with spacious open surrounds.</p> <p>The site is located within the Metropolitan Greenbelt and a Landscape Character Area (Northaw Common Parkland) and it is adjacent to Spinney Cottage, which is a Grade II Listed Building situated immediately to the north of the application site.</p> <p>The application seeks planning permission for an alteration to the existing roof to comprise a crown roof.</p>
Constraints (as defined within WHDP 2005)	<p>LBC - LISTED BUILDING Former bakery, now cottage. Large C17 bakers GB - Greenbelt LCA - Landscape Character Area (Northaw Common Parkland) PAR - PARISH (NORTHAW AND CUFFLEY) ROW - FOOTPATH (NORTHAW 004) Wards - Northaw & Cuffley HPGU - Northaw Place</p>
Relevant planning history	<p>Application Number: 6/2018/2678/HOUSE Decision: Granted Decision Date: 12 February 2019 Proposal: Erection of a first floor extension</p> <p>Application Number: 6/2018/2216/HOUSE Decision: Granted Decision Date: 11 October 2018 Proposal: Erection of first floor rear extension</p> <p>Application Number: 6/2018/2216/HOUSE Decision: Granted Decision Date: 11 October 2018</p>

	<p>Proposal: Erection of first floor rear extension</p> <p>Application Number: 6/2018/1737/HOUSE Decision: Refused Decision Date: 06 September 2018 Proposal: Installation of front garden dwarf wall with steel railings and electric gates including relocation of the existing entrance and existing drop kerbs</p> <p>Application Number: 6/2018/1451/HOUSE Decision: Refused Decision Date: 14 August 2018 Proposal: Erection of first floor extension</p> <p>Application Number: 6/2018/0493/HOUSE Decision: Granted Decision Date: 17 May 2018 Proposal: Erection of single storey side extension by converting garage area into habitable space</p> <p>Application Number: 6/2017/2853/HOUSE Decision: Granted Decision Date: 17 May 2018 Proposal: Erection of garage in front garden</p> <p>Application Number: S6/2003/0554/FP Decision: Granted Decision Date: 26 June 2003 Proposal: Erection of a single storey rear extension and replacement of existing side extension</p>		
Consultations			
Neighbour representations	Support: 0	Object: 0	Other: 0
Publicity	<p>Site Notice Display Date: 26 March 2019 Site Notice Expiry Date: 16 April 2019 Press Advert Display Date: 27 March 2019 Press Advert Expiry Date: 10 April 2019</p>		
Summary of neighbour responses	None		
Consultees and responses	<p>Northaw & Cuffley Parish Council - No objection Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Advisor – No objection The Gardens Trust – No comment</p>		
Relevant Policies			
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NPPF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> D1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> D2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GBSP1 <input type="checkbox"/> GBSP2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M14 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supplementary Design Guidance <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supplementary Parking Guidance <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Interim Policy for car parking and garage sizes Others: RA3, RA10</p> <p><u>Draft Local Plan Proposed Submission August 2016</u> SP1 Delivering Sustainable Development SP3 Settlement Strategy and Green Belt Boundaries</p>			

SP4 Travel and Transport
SP9 Place Making and High Quality Design
SP11 Protection and Enhancement of Critical Environmental Assets
SADM11 Amenity and Layout
SADM12 Parking, Servicing and Refuse
SADM15 Heritage
SADM16 Ecology and Landscape
SADM34 Development within the Green Belt

Main Issues

Green Belt

Appropriateness

The site is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt as defined by Local Plan Policy GBSP1. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. The National Policy Framework (NPPF) states, in paragraph 143 that, inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 144 then states that substantial weight should be given to any harm in the Green Belt and that “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. In paragraph 145, the NPPF outlines that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt, apart from a limited number of exceptions. Exception (c) is engaged in this case and explains that the extension or alteration to a building is not inappropriate provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. Although the District Plan pre-dates the NPPF, Policy RA3 accords with this exception and allows extensions to dwellings in the Green Belt provided they would not, individually or when considered with existing or approved extensions to the original dwelling, result in a disproportionate increase in the size of the dwelling or have an adverse visual impact in terms of prominence, size, bulk and design

The NPPF defines the “original building” as a building as it existed in July 1948 or, if constructed after that date, as it was originally built. Neither the NPPF nor the Local Plan provide any detailed guidance on how to determine whether an extension is disproportionate. This is, therefore, ultimately a planning judgement for the decision maker and demands that each proposal is considered in relation to the size and character of the original building. The proposed increase in volume, footprint and floor area are commonly used indicators, however, as well as mathematical calculations, the visual impact of the extension also has to be considered.

A recent application reference 6/2018/2678/HOUSE was granted for a first floor side extension which is calculated to be approximately 22sqm. When added to existing extensions, this extant permission amounts to a cumulative increase in floor area of approximately 49.8% over the original dwelling. The proposal would add additional usable floor area to the building in the order of approximately 24 sqm taking the cumulative increase to approximately 59% which is substantial.

In this instance, the proposed development would be contained within the footprint of the existing dwelling, however, it would increase the volume and bulk of the roof and therefore it is important to assess the proposal in qualitative terms.

The existing dwelling is irregular in shape and has a number of additions which has led to different roof forms at various angles. The proposal would infill an existing valley and join the original roof of the dwelling with the existing and approved first floor side extension roof to create a crown roof. The height of the infill from the base of the valley would increase by 2.7 metres to meet the ridge height of the dwelling. The surface of the roof would be flat and would measure approximately 6.4 metres deep by 6 metres wide. The increase in height and projection of the flat roof would result in a

sizeable addition that would add substantial volume, bulk and mass, to the dwelling. As a result the development would fail to appear subservient in size compared to the original dwelling. Furthermore, the existing valley creates a visual break between the original dwelling and adjoining side extension, assisting the existing and approved side extensions in appearing subordinate. Removing this valley would result in the existing and approved extensions along with the proposed roof addition which cumulatively would overwhelm the size of the original dwelling.

It is concluded that the proposed extensions would result in disproportionate additions, over and above the size of the original building, and would amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The NPPF advises that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt, including that by reason of inappropriateness.

Openness

The NPPF indicates that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence. It seeks to keep land free from built development and the curtilages of dwellings have a role to play in keeping land open. There is no definition of openness in the NPPF but, in the context of the Green Belt, it is generally held to refer to freedom from, or the absence of, development. Whilst the physical presence of any above ground development would, to some extent, diminish the openness of the Green Belt regardless of whether or not it can be seen, openness also goes beyond physical presence and has a visual aspect. In the visual sense, openness is a qualitative judgement. Factors relevant include how built up the Green Belt is now and how built up would it be after development has taken place and should include the likely perceived effects on openness, if any, as well as the spatial effects.

The proposed development would be contained within the existing footprint of the dwelling, however, it would infill an existing gap in the roof which assists in breaking up the overall scale of the dwelling. The addition to the roof would add substantial bulk and mass which would be visible from the road. It is considered that the design, height, width and bulk of the proposed roof addition would be excessive, particularly in light of the extensions which have already been added to the original dwelling and which would further increase the built form within the Green Belt. For these reasons, it is considered that development would result in harm and a loss to the openness of this part of the Green Belt.

Conclusion on Green Belt

The proposed development would amount to a disproportionate addition to the original dwelling contrary the NPPF. In addition, it is considered that the resultant increase in volume at roof level, together with the bulky design of the roof would result in a loss of Green Belt openness. Given the scale of the proposal and the fact that there would be no increase in footprint, it is considered that the proposal would not result in encroachment into the countryside, therefore, moderate weight is afforded to the harm to openness. This is in addition to the substantial harm resulting from inappropriate development identified above. The NPPF confirms that inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and this is afforded substantial weight.

Would the development reflect the character of the area?

Yes No

Comment (if applicable):

Policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 respectively require high quality design in all new development and for proposals to respect and relate to the character and context of their location, maintaining and where possible enhancing the character of the existing area. These policies are expanded upon in the Council's Supplementary Design Guidance 2005 (SDG) which emphasises that extensions should complement and reflect the design and character of the dwelling and be subordinate in scale. These design policies are broadly consistent with Policy SP9 of the Emerging Local Plan and the NPPF. The NPPF in particular advocates high quality design and that

permission should be refused for development of poor design which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards or style guides in plans or supplementary planning documents. Paragraph 124 of the NPPF advises that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve and that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

The proposed crown roof design would continue the ridge height of the existing dwelling and would project 6 metres in width by 6.4 metres in depth. The roof addition would add substantial bulk and mass and would overwhelm the original scale of the roof, failing to appear subordinate. Furthermore, the existing valley to be infilled assists the side extension appearing subservient to the original dwelling. The existing side extension, approved side extension and proposed roof additions would, cumulatively, appear substantial and amount to additions that would overwhelm the original dwelling resulting in harm to the appearance of the dwelling and character of the streetscene.

To the front of the dwelling, the roof connecting the original dwelling and side extension currently has a lower ridge height. This would increase in height to meet the ridge height of the main dwelling and would follow the same pitch. To the rear, the crown roof would extend up to the approved gable end side extension. Flush tiling is proposed on the rear elevation to infill the resultant space. There is also an existing gable projection which is set lower in height than the main ridge of the dwelling and the approved side extension, and it extends further to the rear. The existing projection and approved two storey side extension would join and form a right angle at the eaves. However, as a result of the height comparison and siting, a section of roof is suggested to adjoin this projection to the crown roof which would result in an awkward pitch. This element is considered to fail to relate to the existing pitched roof and would appear at odds. The various angles and pitches and tiled flush finish are all considered to result in the intersection appearing contrived and fussy. This lends to poor quality design which would detract from the appearance of the dwelling and the character of the area.

In addition, the drawings lack detail and there is doubt that the proposed roof could be constructed as shown. Whilst any deviation from approved drawings would require further consent from the Local Planning Authority, given the degree of uncertainty which exists in terms of the appearance of the end result, and the significant impact this may have in terms of quality of design, it is reasonable and justifiable in this case to refuse planning permission in the interest of good planning and the avoidance of doubt.

Would the development reflect the character of the dwelling?

Yes No N/A

Comment (if applicable): See above.

Would the development maintain the amenity of adjoining occupiers? (e.g. privacy, outlook, light etc.)

Yes No N/A

Comment (if applicable):

No objections have been received from neighbouring occupiers. The neighbouring property most likely to be impacted by the proposal is Spinney Cottage. However, by virtue of the siting and separation distance of the dwelling, it is not considered that there would be any significant impact on the living conditions of the neighbouring occupiers in regard to loss of light, overbearing impact or privacy.

Would the development provide / retain sufficient parking?

Yes No N/A

Comment (if applicable):

There is adequate space on the frontage of the site for on-site car parking. No objections are raised.

Any other issues

Impact on heritage assets

Due to the separation distance of the Listed Building which is located to the north of the site and the nature of the proposal, it is not considered that the proposed development would result in a detrimental impact on the heritage of the Listed Building.

Very special circumstances

Paragraph 143 of the NPPF outlines that as with previous Green Belt policy, inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 144 states that when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm 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 resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

In this case, in addition to the substantial harm resulting from inappropriate development identified above, moderate weight is afforded to the harm to openness and significant weight is afforded to the poor quality design, which would detract from the appearance of the dwelling and the character of the area.

No very special circumstances exist to clearly outweigh the identified harm.

Conclusion

The proposal represents an inappropriate form of development within the Green Belt. Furthermore, as a result of increased width, bulk and massing, the proposed development would result in a loss of openness and visual permeability of the Green Belt. Very special circumstances do not exist. Accordingly, the proposal is contrary to Policies GBSP1 and RA3 of the adopted Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005; Policies SP3, SP25 and SADM34 of the Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Draft Local Plan Proposed Submission August 2016; and the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.

In addition, by virtue of its height, width, bulk and mass the proposed roof addition would fail to appear subservient and respect the scale of the roof of the original dwelling. Furthermore, the proposed roof addition would appear contrived and fussy, resulting in poor quality design that would detract from appearance of the host dwelling. Accordingly, the proposal is contrary to the Policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005; the Supplementary Design Guidance 2005, Policy SP9 of the Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Draft Local Plan Proposed Submission August 2016; and the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.

Furthermore, insufficient drawings have been submitted with the application to adequately assess the design and intersection of the proposed roof addition and alterations against Policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005; Supplementary Design Guidance 2005; Policy SP9 of the Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Draft Local Plan Proposed Submission August 2016; and the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.

Reasons for Refusal:

1. The proposed extension together with existing extensions, would result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building, as such the proposal represents inappropriate development within the Green Belt. Furthermore, the increased bulk and massing of the building would result in a loss of openness and visual permeability of the Green Belt. Very special circumstances do not exist to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and any other harm. Accordingly, the proposal is contrary to Policies GBSP1 and RA3 of the adopted Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005; Policies SP3, SP25 and SADM34 of the Draft

Local Plan Proposed Submission 2016; and the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.

2. By virtue of its height, width, bulk and mass the proposed roof addition would fail to appear subservient to, or respect the scale of, the roof of the application dwelling. Furthermore, the proposed roof addition would appear contrived and fussy, resulting in poor quality design that would detract from appearance of the application dwelling. Accordingly, the proposal is contrary to the Policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005; the Supplementary Design Guidance 2005, Policy SP9 of the Draft Local Plan Proposed Submission 2016; and the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.

3. Insufficient drawings have been submitted with the application to adequately assess the design and intersection of the proposed roof addition and alterations against Policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005; Supplementary Design Guidance 2005; Policy SP9 of the Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Draft Local Plan Proposed Submission August 2016; and the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.

REFUSED DRAWING NUMBERS

Plan Number	Revision Number	Details	Received Date
AR/A3/001		Environmental Map	14 March 2019
AR/A3/003		Approved Site Plan	14 March 2019
AR/A3/004		Existing Floor Plans	14 March 2019
AR/A3/005		Existing Second Floor Plan	14 March 2019
AR/A3/006A		Existing And Proposed Roof Plan	22 May 2019
AR/A3/007A		Existing Eastern And Southern Elevations	22 May 2019
AR/A3/008A		Existing Northern And Western Elevations	22 May 2019
AR/A3/009		Existing Section B-B	14 March 2019
AR/A3/010		Proposed Floor Plans	14 March 2019
AR/A3/011		Proposed Second Floor Plan	14 March 2019
AR/A3/012		Proposed Section A-A	14 March 2019
AR/A3/013B		Proposed Streetscene Elevation	24 May 2019
AR/A3/014A		Proposed Northern And Western Elevations	22 May 2019
AR/A3/002		Location Plan	14 March 2019
AR/A3/015		Isometric View	22 May 2019

1. POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT

The decision has been made taking into account, where practicable and appropriate the requirements of paragraph 38 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 viewed on the Council's website or inspected at these offices).

Determined By:

Mr Mark Peacock
25 June 2019