

PLANNING STATEMENT

PLANNING APPLICATION
FOR RETENTION OF A SINGLE STOREY SERVICE BUILDING
ASSOCIATED WITH THE MAINTENANCE AND UPKEEP
OF THE EXTENSIVE ESTATE AND GROUNDS
LINKED TO THE PRINCIPAL DWELLING
CONSENTED UNDER SG/2013/0919/FP
AND ASSOCIATED EQUESTRIAN USE AND STABLING
AT
WARRENWOOD MANOR, HORNBEAM LANE, ESSENDON

This application follows the grant of planning consent Ref: SG/2013/0919/FP for demolition of part basement structure, adaptation and completion of remaining part-built structure to provide a single dwelling, and construction of detached garage with associated parking and landscaping. Further consents associated with the site include SG/2009/2574/FP and SG/2012/2656/573B.

Discussions have been held with William Myers of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council's Enforcement Department and following several site visits the Council's letters dated 7 August 2015 & 6 April 2016 Ref: ENF/2013/0429 advised works did not accord with the plans approved under the above consent. We have therefore been instructed to prepare formal applications to regularise the position.



Context

The above consents have approved a substantial country house in a parkland setting with extensive landscaped grounds together with associated equestrian use and stabling for up to 20 horses establishing this as an acceptable form of development in the Green Belt.

The overall estate covers an area in excess of 24ha, just over 13ha of which is in equestrian use with approximately 0.59ha containing the now completed and occupied principal dwelling and its residential curtilage leaving the balance of around 10.5ha as landscaped grounds, meadows and woodland.

Regular maintenance and management of such an extensive area of landscaped parkland, grounds and woodland require a great deal of time, labour and specialist machinery/equipment which cannot be accommodated within the domestic scale garage building adjacent to the house.

A separate facility to securely store tractors, harrow, load-lifters, toppers, scarifier, gang mowers, brush cutter, etc as well as providing covered areas for maintenance has therefore become a necessity. Once the landscaped grounds have become established, sheep will be utilised to maintain selected meadows, and feed and associated equipment will be stored in the open areas of the maintenance and storage building, which will also provide cover for regular veterinary inspections/examinations necessary for the welfare of the animals.

All of the above activities are ancillary to the use of the principal dwelling, are outside the established residential curtilage and are necessary for the proper management, maintenance and day-to-day upkeep of the extensive estate.

Planning Policy

The application site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt, Landscape Character Area, and is adjacent to a Wildlife Site and public bridleway along Hornbeam Lane. The planning history of the site is extensive covering the period from 1980 to the present day and full details are attached to the Officer's Reports associated with the above planning consents.

Paragraph 80 of the NPPF lists the five purposes the Green Belt serves which are:

- 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.

Of these, only Item 3, safeguarding the countryside from encroachment can be considered applicable to this application.

Paragraph 81 advises Local Planning Authorities should plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, such as looking for opportunities to provide access and, amongst others, “to retain and enhance landscapes”.

Paragraph 87 advises inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

Paragraph 88 advises “very special circumstances” will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of its inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by any other considerations.

Paragraph 89 advises Local Authorities should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions are, amongst others;

- Buildings for agriculture or forestry

Design

The low key, functional design of the building minimises its impact in the landscape and follows the tradition of single storey, weatherboarded vernacular barn structures found in abundance across the District, many of which are within the Green Belt.

A series of stores and workshops set around a central open courtyard follows the tradition of ancillary and service buildings found on many country estates and the design and form of the building demonstrate that Green Belt considerations have influenced all aspects of the design.

The building is on the site of a former storage/stables building and concrete hardstanding indicated on the topographical survey drawing No J194 submitted under application Ref SG/2013/0919/FP, an extract of which is attached at Appendix A.

Natural ground levels are around 2m below the level of the infrequently used and overgrown public footpath which runs along the south-west boundary of the estate. Visual impact of the storage building from public views is therefore mitigated by the natural land form and screen planting along the south-western boundary.



Conclusion

Planning consent SG/2013/0919/FP and others granted previously have approved the principle and design of a substantial country house and associated equestrian facilities in extensive landscaped grounds within the Metropolitan Green Belt and requirements for service, maintenance and upkeep are considerable.

The above planning consents have established the provision of a substantial country house with an associated equestrian use in extensive landscaped grounds is an entirely appropriate and acceptable form of development within the Green Belt.

The primary function of the building is to provide the necessary facilities to maintain the extensive areas of parkland, woodland and landscaped grounds around the estate and to provide an essential base for the proper long-term management of the landscape.

Whilst the building is associated with the established residential use, its function is linked to the long-term management of the wider landscape which, we submit, provides the “very special circumstances” necessary to outweigh any perceived harm to the Green Belt.

PNA

April 2016

APPENDIX A

EXTRACT FROM DRAWING No. J194

