

Planning Statement

Householder planning application for a two-storey side extension including 4.no dormer windows to the front and rear elevation of the property.

99 The Ridgeway, Northaw, Potters Bar, EN6 4BG

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1. Site Description

The application property relates to a two-storey detached property located on the western side of The Ridgeway.

The application site comprises a previously extended detached bungalow in a wide and deep plot in a long row of two-storey properties.

The immediate locality features large, detached dwellings of varying design and appearance. The surrounding area is characterised by individually designed detached properties set on spacious plots. The surrounding properties have a linear arrangement, and the front gardens are generally well landscaped.

The Council interactive Policy Map shows that the site is within Northaw Common Parkland Landscape Character Area – Policy RA10.

The site is also within the Green Belt (Policy GBSP1).

2. Site History

Application Number: 6/2020/1972 Decision: Refused

Decision Date: 23 October 2020 Proposal: Erection of two storey side extension with 2 x dormers to the front and 2 x to rear and new front boundary entrance gates and wall.

Application Number: 6/2020/1968/LAWP Decision: Refused

Decision Date: 13 October 2020

Application Number: 6/2018/1991/FULL

Decision: Refused

Decision Date: 21 November 2018

Proposal: Erection of two dwellings following demolition of existing dwelling house and associated outbuildings

Application Number: S6/1992/0302/FP Decision: Granted

Decision Date: 27 May 1992

Proposal: Erection of car port

Application Number: S6/1987/0674/FP Decision: Granted

Decision Date: 07 September 1987 Proposal: Single storey side extension

Application Number: E6/1972/2343 Decision: Granted

Decision Date: 14 September 1972 Proposal: Ground floor side extension.

Relevant planning history in the surrounding area

6/2021/1828/HOUSE - Erection two storey rear extension and part single/part two storey side extension and other works - approved

6/2021/0716/HOUSE -Erection of single rear extension, basement and other works - approved

6/2020/3275/HOUSE - Erection of a two-storey side extension – approved

6/2020/1768/HOUSE - Increase ridge height to provide full first floor, two storey side extension with front porch canopy – approved following appeal approved following appeal APP/C1950/D/20/326013

6/2020/2792/FUL - Replacement larger dwelling – approved

6/2020/2751/FUL - Replacement larger dwelling – approved

6/2020/1325/FULL - Erection of new infill dwelling – approved

6/2020/0062/HOUSE - Erection of a two-storey front, two storey rear and part single, part two storey side extension and other alterations – approved.

6/2019/2736/HOUSE - Erection of two storey front, two storey side, loft conversion and other works - approved

Proposed Development

The application seeks permission for a two-storey side extension with 4 dormer windows facing the front and rear of the property.

The proposed extension will have a depth 10 metres, a width of 8 metres and a height of 7 metres with a hipped roof.

Planning Policy Framework

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 directs Local Planning Authorities to determine planning applications in accordance with the policies of the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Section 38(3) of the Act provides that the Development Plan includes the “development plan documents (taken as a whole) which have been adopted or approved in relation to that area”.

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, March 2012, updated July 2021)
- Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005:
- SD1: Sustainable Development
- GBSP1: Definition of Green Belt
- R3: Energy Efficiency
- R5: Waste Management
- M14: Parking Standards for New Developments
- D1: Quality of Design
- D2: Character and Context
- D8: Landscaping
- RA3: Extensions to Dwellings in the Green Belt

- RA10: Landscape Regions and Character Areas
- Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005
- Whether the proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt and the impacts of the proposal on the Green Belt. (Section 9 of the NPPF, Policies RA4, RA10, D1 and D2)
- Impact on the residential amenity of the occupiers of adjacent properties.
- Supplementary Planning Design Guidance 2005 – Residential extensions.

National Planning Policy Framework 2021

The revised NPPF (“the Framework”) was published in July 2021 and replaces the 2019, 2012 and 2018 Frameworks.

Plans and decisions are required to apply a ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’. This is set out at paragraph 11. For decision taking this means:

- c) ‘approving development proposals that accord with an up-to date development plan without delay; or
- d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
 - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
 - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies of this Framework taken as a whole.’

Footnote 6 clarifies that the policies referred to in d(i) are only those in the NPPF, and not those in development plans. It also clarifies that these are policies relating to various matters, including Green Belt land, Local Green Space, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, irreplaceable wildlife habitats, designated heritage assets and areas at risk of flooding. The application site falls within the Metropolitan Green Belt and is therefore subject to Green Belt policies in the NPPF. In this case, where proposals comply with the NPPF policies relating to the Green Belt, the presumption in favour of sustainable development can be applied.

Paragraph 213 states that due weight should be given to local plan policies according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF. ‘The closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given’.

The Framework sets out the Government’s policies for the planning system and is clear that these should be applied positively and proactively to deliver sustainable development. The Framework makes clear that the purposes of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development which is identified as having an economic, social and environmental objective.

District Plan 2005

Policy SD1 - Sustainable Development Development proposals will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the principles of sustainable development are satisfied and that they accord with the objectives and policies of this plan. To assist the Council in determining

this, applicants will be expected to submit a statement with their planning application demonstrating how their proposals address the sustainability criteria in the checklist contained in the Supplementary Design Guidance.

Policy GBSP1 - Definition of the Green Belt The Green Belt will be maintained in Welwyn Hatfield as defined on the Proposals Map. The towns and specified settlements listed in Policy GBSP2 are excluded from the Green Belt. The precise boundaries of the Green Belt around these towns and settlements are defined on the Proposals Map.

Policy R3 - Energy Efficiency -The Council will expect all development to:

- (i) Include measures to maximise energy conservation through the design of buildings, site layout and provision of landscaping; and
- (ii) Incorporate the best practical environmental option (BPEO) for energy supply.

Policy R5 - Waste Management -The Council will require applications for larger schemes (as defined in paragraph 5.24) to include details of the measures to be taken in the design, construction, operation, occupation and demolition of existing buildings on site to:

- (i) Minimise the amount of waste generated;
- (ii) Re-use or re-cycle suitable waste materials generated;

Policy M14 - Parking Standards For New Development -The Council will require parking provision for new development to be made in accordance with the standards set out in the Council's supplementary planning guidance on parking. These standards represent the maximum allowable provision, except for cycle parking and car parking for disabled people where the standards represent the minimum allowable.

In urban areas of the district which are accessible by non-car modes, the Council will require parking standards for non-residential development to be reduced below the maximum allowable provision, in line with the methodology set out in the supplementary planning guidance on parking, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that such a limitation to the development would be detrimental to the economic viability of the area. The zones where such reductions will be applied are identified in the supplementary planning guidance.

Policy D1: Quality of Design -The Council will require the standard of design in all new development to be of a high quality. The design of new development should incorporate the design principles and policies in the Plan and the guidance contained in the Supplementary Design Guidance.

Policy D8: Landscaping - All development, other than changes of use of buildings, should include landscaping as an integral part of the overall design. This should reflect the strong tradition of urban landscape design in the district.

Landscaping schemes will require the use of materials which respect the character of the area, the planting of trees, hedgerows and shrubs and details of future maintenance. The retention and enhancement of existing key landscape features such as trees and shrubs, ponds and watercourses will be expected where feasible; where this is not possible, replacement planting should be carried out.

The design of landscaped areas should be such that maintenance is straightforward. On larger schemes, certain landscaped areas will be required to be designed in a manner capable of adoption.

Tree Preservation Orders or planning conditions may be used to ensure continued future protection of particular trees, groups of trees or woodlands.

Policy RA3 – Extensions to Dwellings in the Green Belt - Permission for extensions to existing dwellings within the Green Belt will be allowed only where all the following criteria are met:

- (i) The proposal 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;
- (ii) It would not have an adverse visual impact (in terms of its prominence, size, bulk and design) on the character, appearance and pattern of development of the surrounding countryside.

This policy also applies to those outbuildings for which planning permission is required.

Welwyn and Hatfield Draft Local Plan

Policy SADM 34 states that within the Green Belt planning permission will be granted for development in accordance with national policy and other policies in the draft local plan. The proposals would be assessed on the basis of their impact upon the openness of the Green Belt. The policy states that 'replacement buildings in the Green Belt will be permitted provided that the new building is not materially larger than the one it replaces in terms of footprint, height and external volume and is in the same use'

APPLICATION ASSESSMENT AND CONCLUSIONS

The main issues are:

1. The impact of the proposal upon the openness of the Metropolitan Green Belt and compliance with Green Belt Policy;
2. The impact of the proposed development upon the visual amenity of the Green Belt and the character and appearance of the locality; and
3. The impact of the proposed development upon the residential amenity of the adjoining occupiers.

Principle of Development

The site is within the Green Belt wherein local plan policy RA3 (extensions to dwellings) applies as well as the National Planning Policy Framework, (NPPF, updated July 2021).

Policy RA3 defines the criteria that must be complied with in order for planning permission to be granted. These are that extensions 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 original dwelling. A further requirement is that development does not have an adverse visual impact (bulk, design, size and prominence) on the surrounding area.

The following table shows the difference between the floorspace of the existing and proposed dwelling:

Floorspace	Existing	Proposed
Ground	243.44 sqm	257.6 sqm
Ground detached structures	22.08 sqm	0
Total Ground -floor built footprint	265.52 sqm	257.6 sqm
First Floor	95.75sqm	152.48 sqm
Total	361.27 sqm	410.08 sqm

This table demonstrates that the increase in floorspace would be located within the first floor of the existing dwelling.

The following table shows the difference between the existing and proposed footprint of the dwelling.

	Existing	Proposed	Difference
Maximum depth	17.8m	15.3m	-2.5
Width	22m	22m	0
Height to eaves	3.2m	3.1m	-0.1
Maximum height	7m	7m	0

The above tables demonstrate that the footprint dimensions reflect a fair criterion for openness on a large site not readily visible from the rear of the site. The maximum depth of the original building is 17.8m and the proposed is 15.3 metres and therefore the proposal would represent a reduction in the maximum depth of the building. The width of the original building is 22m which is the same as the proposed building however the proposal will also include a demolition of the existing side/rear structures, and this would ensure the total built form would be more compact and would therefore open this part of the site. Therefore overall, the proposal would represent a reduction in the footprint of built form within the site.

Part (ii) of Policy RA3 is associated with the visual impact of the development on the character, appearance and pattern of development of the surrounding designated settlement. When viewed in isolation the existing house is reasonably well proportioned and has a balanced appearance on a large site where the plot coverage is low. The proposed extension whilst it will increase the bulk of the building, the proposal is considered appropriate for the site's location. The proposal accords with the design requirements of Policy D1.

The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristic of Green Belts is their openness and their permanence. The proposed development would have little impact on the openness character in a designated settlement within the Green Belt when compared to existing. The proposed extension will have no adverse impact on the visual of the Green Belt and the character and appearance of the locality.

Given that the site comprises previously developed land as paragraph 149 of the NPPF, which allows for limited infilling in the Green Belt or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land is defined in the NPPF as “land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land.” Our site is indeed occupied by a permanent structure and includes detached buildings.

The proposal for residential redevelopment of the site falls within the category (g) exception to inappropriate development in the green belt set out under paragraph 149 of the NPPF, namely the partial or complete redevelopment of a previously developed land.

The proposed dwellinghouse has a footprint which is less than the existing built form. As stated, before the proposal would represent a reduction in the maximum depth of the house and the proposed changes will not have an impact on the pattern of development within the existing street scene. Although the proposed maximum ridge height would be identical, given the overall bulk of the proposed first floor extension would increase the floorspace by 57.8 sqm and this would represent an increase in the net floor area. Consequently, the proposal would conflict with Policy rRA3 of the local plan, aims of which are set out above. Therefore, it is acknowledged that the proposed would result in a materially larger dwelling and would therefore be inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

However, paragraph 137 of the framework indicates that openness is an essential characteristic of the Green Belt and therefore we consider that, given that the proposal would not alter the pattern of development within the existing street scene. The proposal would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the locality. The maximum depth of the dwelling would represent a slight reduction and the removal of the existing outbuildings will open views between the application property and the neighbouring property no. 101 The Ridgeway. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal would not result in a loss of openness to the Green Belt.

Paragraph 148 requires that substantial weight is afforded to the harm found from inappropriateness from the proposed development which reduce the openness of the green belt and thus conflict with its purpose for checking urban sprawl.

The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristic of Green Belts is their openness and their permanence. The proposed development would have little impact on the openness character in a designated settlement within the Green Belt when compared to existing. The proposed extension will have no adverse impact on the visual of the Green Belt and the character and appearance of the locality.

Whilst attaching substantial weight to that fond, the actual degree of Green Belt harm is mitigated by several factors. The site falls within a residential strip and therefore represents a relatively small indent of open Green Belt into a built-up area. There are a number of properties on the road which have received permission for significantly large extensions and additional dwellings and therefore this has set a precedent within the character of the area. Furthermore screened by the existing vegetation to the front of the property (please see images below) and this provides a reduction in the degrees of loss of visual openness to the Green Belt.





In addition to whilst it is acknowledged that the first-floor extension would add more bulk to the to the building; the potential loss of views through the site would be mitigated by the removal of the existing outbuildings which would maintain the openness of the site.

Therefore, the proposal would not have a harmful effect on the visual qualities of the area and its effect on the openness of the Green Belt would be neutral.

The proposed development would not be a dominant feature and would not appear out of keeping with the surrounding landscape.

The proposal therefore would have minimal impact on the visual amenity of the Green Belt and rural character of the area. The proposal would meet the requirements of Policies RA3 (ii) or D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

The proposal would not significantly block views of the surrounding landscape; its appearance from public areas within the landscape would not be harmful. Therefore, the proposal would have no adverse impact upon the surrounding landscape character area and conflict within the requirements of Policy RA10 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

In summary, the proposal would represent appropriate development, and so would not cause harm to the wider visual amenity in the Green Belt. The proposal therefore accords with the National planning Policy Framework (NPPF, updated June 2019). and policies D2, RA3 and RA10 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

The proposal and the adjacent properties are detached and are set on reasonably spacious plots. The proposed two storey side extension retains a reasonable distance from the plots flank boundaries (7m). Although the proposal would include a first-floor side extension, the distance from the main habitable areas of the neighbouring dwellings is sufficient to offset any adverse impact of the additional bulk and massing of the development.

The proposed extension would not project beyond the rear wall of the neighbouring properties and therefore the proposal would not have an adverse impact upon the outlook from neighbouring properties and would not appear overbearing from these plots. The proposed development would not result in any significant overshadowing or a loss of light to the adjacent properties.

The development site is located within a built-up area where a significant number of properties have received permission for significant extensions and therefore the proposal would represent an extension to an existing dwelling, within an established row of dwellings that run parallel to the western side of The Ridgeway. The proposed development is situated on previously developed land and has been carefully designed with a roof style that reflects the architectural features of the area to ensure that it does not cause any unacceptable harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

The proposed extensions are considered appropriate, and the proposed design of the extensions and roof style would be in keeping with the character of some of the surrounding properties. The proposed development is not considered to result in overdevelopment and sits comfortably within the plot and the village as a whole.

Therefore, the principle of the proposed development is considered in accordance with the NPPF and policies RA3 and RA10 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

Design

The proposed development has been carefully designed to be keeping with the character of the street. The proposed development will be two storeys in height to match the height of the existing property and neighbouring properties.

Given that there is no consistent character or architectural features on the row of houses on this part of the Ridgeway (**please see street scene images below**) the proposed development is of an appropriate design and scale and fits within the existing and emerging character of this part of The Ridgeway.

Given that the context of the site is one of houses which vary architecturally in terms of scale and height. When considered in this context, the proposed extended dwelling would complement the variety found within the street. The proposed height and scale would be compatible with those around it, and accordingly, the proposed building would sit harmoniously within the street scene. The Council's previous concerns on application reference 6/2020/1972 concerns regarding the extent of the first-floor extension and design of the roof have been taken into consideration and as such the proposal has been designed to ensure that views of the proposed roof would not dominate the property or the street scene.

Therefore, the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area in accordance with Policy D1 of the DP and the SDG which together, seek high quality, contextual design. The context of the site is one of houses which vary architecturally in terms of scale and height. When considered in this context, the extended dwelling would complement the variety found within the street. The proposed height and scale would be compatible with those around it, and accordingly, the extended building would sit harmoniously within the street scene.

Streetscene:







The design of the proposal has been led by the character of the surrounding area, to ensure that the proposed site complements its existing setting, within its greenbelt location and meets the relevant standards set out in Policies D1 and D8 of the District the Plan.

This is in adherence with the requirements of the NPPF and adopted Policy RA3 'Extensions with the Greenbelt' states that extensions to buildings will be required to ensure that: "their location respects the wider landscape setting of the site" and "they are of a design which respects local character in terms of traditional plan form and detailing".

The proposals also meet the standards set out in Policy RA3 of the District Plan which requires that extensions buildings "respect their setting in terms of scale, proportion, siting, massing, height, orientation, roof-line and detailing" and "only employ external materials which are sympathetic in colour and texture to the vernacular range of materials".

The proposed development is considered to be in accordance with adopted District Plan policies D1, D8 and RA3.

Amenity

Policies D1, D2 and the SDG states that planning permission will not be granted extensions to buildings which have a detrimental effect upon existing neighbouring or surrounding properties in either amenity or functional terms.

The extension would be set off the boundary with the neighbouring dwelling at 101 The Ridgeway by 7m and would have a half-hipped roof. Whilst there is a small first floor window in the flank elevation of the dwelling at 101 and front and rear facing dormers. The extension would not appear overbearing when viewed from, or have an adverse impact upon the amenities of, this dwelling.

The other neighbouring dwelling at 97 The Ridgeway would not be affected by the proposed extension as it would be set away from that property, screened by the existing dwelling at 99.

(The images below show the relationship with the neighbouring properties)







Trees and Landscaping

Given that the extensions would not encroach on the Root Protection Areas of any trees that are to be retained, no specialist foundation designs, or construction techniques will be required to prevent damage to tree roots.

However, the applicant is prepared to accept conditions to secure a tree protection plan and a construction method statement if required. In addition to this the applicant is also prepared to accept conditions to secure details of hard and soft landscaping.

Notwithstanding this the proposed development is considered to comply with adopted policy D8 and RA10 of the District Plan.

Access and Connectivity

The access arrangements to the property would not change and the site already benefits from an existing area of hardstanding which can accommodate several cars.

The proposals accord with the NPPF and the interim policy for car parking and garage sizes.

Waste and Recycling Facilities

Given that the application is for extension dwelling the proposal will not lead to any changes to the waste and recycling facilities or arrangements and this would be in accordance with District Plan 2005.

Flood Risk and Water

The proposed physical building footprint is within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore at low risk of flooding and is a suitable location for residential development.

It is considered that there will be no adverse impact upon flood storage associated with the proposed development. As a minor development it is appropriate to secure surface water drainage by means of attaching an appropriately worded planning condition to any approved application.

The proposed development is considered to comply with the NPPF, District Plan policies D1 and R3.

Summary and Conclusions

The above assessment demonstrates that the site will be appropriate within its contextual location in the Greenbelt. It will extend an existing family-sized dwelling on a previously developed site.

The proposals have been assessed against both adopted and emerging local planning policy and shown to comply with both. The proposals also comply with the requirements of national planning policy.

The site is situated within the Green Belt. However, it has been demonstrated that the proposed development will not have a harmful visual or spatial impact on the Green Belt as the development has been designed to be in keeping with the character and appearance of the street scene and the context of residential site within the Green Belt. The proposed development will have a neutral visual impact and the design of the dwelling will complement the surrounding character of the neighbouring properties whilst respecting its Green Belt location.

Paragraph 144 of the Framework requires that substantial weight be given to any harm to 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 resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposal would represent inappropriate development within the Green Belt. It would also result in some very limited harm to the openness of the Green Belt. In accordance with Paragraph 144 of the Framework, this factor is afforded substantial weight. However, given that the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area. It would also help deliver some fundamental and necessary improvements for the existing occupants which would provide significant and demonstrable social benefits. Based on these factors which carry more than substantial weight; it is considered that the circumstances would clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt.

Accordingly, we consider that very special circumstances do exist to justify the proposal. The development proposal meets the three objectives of sustainable development as outlined in the NPPF, as well as complying with the adopted District Plan.