

A1417



# Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 June 2008

by **P B Jarvis** BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State  
for Communities and Local Government

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Decision date:  
8 July 2008

**Appeal Ref: APP/C1950/A/08/2067025**  
**93 The Ridgeway, Cuffley, Herts EN6 4BG.**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Mr M Kyprianou against the decision of Welwyn Hatfield Council.
- The application (Ref S6/2007/1503/FP), dated 10 October 2007, was refused by notice dated 10 December 2007.
- The development proposed is a two storey side extension and removal of garages.

## Decision

1. I dismiss the appeal.

## Main issues

2. I consider that the main issues in this appeal are:
  - a) whether the proposal is inappropriate development for the purposes of Planning Policy Guidance Note 2, Green Belts, (PPG2), and development plan policy; and
  - b) the effect of the proposed development on the openness and visual amenities of the Green Belt and character of the surrounding area; and
  - c) whether the harm by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm is outweighed by other considerations.

## Reasons

*Whether the proposal amounts to inappropriate development*

3. Policy RA3 of the Welwyn and Hatfield District Plan, 2005, (LP) indicates that extensions to existing dwellings in the Green Belt will only be allowed where the proposed extension, either individually or cumulatively with existing or approved extensions, would not result in a disproportionate increase in the size of the original dwelling and would not have an adverse visual impact on the character, appearance and pattern of development of the surrounding countryside. Planning Policy Guidance Note 2, Green Belts, (PPG2), sets out similar guidance but also indicates at paragraph 3.4, amongst other things, that the construction of new buildings inside a Green Belt is inappropriate unless for the purpose of a limited extension of existing dwellings.
4. The existing house comprises a chalet style dwelling with steep pitched sloping roof, with gable end to the front and rear. Accommodation is provided within the roofspace. There is an attached flat-roofed double garage to the side and small conservatory to the rear. Both parties appear to agree that these additions are not part of the original dwelling.

5. The proposal would involve the removal of the existing garage and conservatory and they would not count towards the cumulative impact. Therefore, only the proposed extension itself needs to be compared to the original dwelling for the purposes of LP policy RA3 and guidance in PPG2.
6. There is no guidance setting out how LP policy RA3 is to be interpreted in relation to whether or not extensions comprise a disproportionate addition. Whilst I note that various numerical calculations are referred to by both parties, including footprint, floorspace and volume, the parties appear to disagree as to the exact increases involved.
7. In the absence of any guidance as to how such proposals are to be assessed, and given that the parties do not appear to agree as to the exact increase in the size of the proposal, I consider that it is appropriate to consider the visual impact of the extension in terms of its proportionality and bulk compared to the size of the original dwelling.
8. The design of the proposed side extension incorporates a higher eaves level and a different roof shape and pitch compared to the existing dwelling. In my opinion, this would not reflect the proportions of the existing dwelling and the proposed extension would as a result, appear as a large, bulky addition to it. Whilst I note that the side extension would be set back from the main front elevation, the overall height of the extension would match the main ridge height of the existing dwelling and this additional bulk at first floor level would add considerably to the size of the dwelling. The alterations to the side dormers would also add to their bulk when viewed in the streetscene. For these reasons, it is my view that the proposed additions could not be described as limited and would result in a disproportionate increase in the size of the original dwelling.
9. The proposal thus fails to satisfy policy RA3(i) of the Welwyn and Hatfield District Plan, 2005, (LP) and the guidance in PPG2. I conclude therefore that the proposal amounts to inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

*Effect on the openness and visual amenities of the green belt and character of the surrounding area*

10. The site is located in a ribbon of development comprising a built-up frontage of detached dwellings, many of which have been extended. In views from The Ridgeway and the open land opposite the site, the proposed extensions would be seen within this built-up frontage. Furthermore, they would not extend the built form on the site towards the more open land to the rear.
11. Notwithstanding my earlier conclusion that the development is inappropriate, I consider that there would be no harmful impact on the wider openness and visual amenity of the Green Belt or the character of the surrounding area. I therefore find that there is no conflict with LP policy RA3(ii) or with the advice contained in paragraphs 1.4 and 3.15 of PPG2.

*Whether the harm by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm is outweighed by other considerations.*

12. PPG2 indicates at paragraph 3.2 that inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and in view of the presumption against such development, I attach substantial weight to this harm.
13. The appellant argues that a considerable visual enhancement would arise from the removal of the garage and the conservatory and its replacement by the proposed extension, which he considers would harmonise in style and use of materials with the existing dwelling. However, whilst I would agree that the design of the garage is not entirely sympathetic to the appearance of the existing dwelling, it is not visually prominent in the streetscene and the rather unattractive flat roof is hidden behind a small false pitch to the front. As such I do not consider that it significantly detracts from the appearance of the existing dwelling or the wider area and I therefore attach little weight to this consideration.
14. I also note the appellant's contention that the proposed extensions would not result in harm to the streetscene. However, this has already been taken into account and the lack of harm in this respect is not a consideration that can carry any weight.
15. I conclude therefore that the substantial harm to the Green Belt identified above would not be outweighed by other considerations.

**Conclusion**

16. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

*P. B. Jarvis*  
INSPECTOR