

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL
PLANNING CONTROL COMMITTEE
17 MARCH 2004
REPORT OF THE CHIEF PLANNING
AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICER

PCC 17.03.04
PART 1
ITEM NO
FOR DECISION
CPEHO

S6/2004/113/FP
ERECTION OF REPLACEMENT DWELLING AT WEST LODGE
COOPERS LANE NORTHAW

APPLICANT: MR J O'BRIEN

(Northaw)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The site lies on the eastern side of Coopers Lane, to the south-west of the main village of Northaw. The site lies to the south of the main vehicular entrance point, with its western boundary abutting Coopers Lane, its eastern boundary adjacent to a walled former kitchen garden and the southern boundary abutting open land. There are a number of mature Oak and Horse Chestnut trees within the site. Some of these are the subject of a Tree Preservation Order (TPO 263 confirmed on 16 December 2002). There is a post and rail fence along the highway boundary.
- 1.2 The site was formerly part of the Northaw House country estate. The principal building, Northaw House, is Grade II listed and has been used as an office since the early 1970's, occupied by the Architects' Co-Partnership and Charles Church. Prior to the office use the site may have had an institutional use as a hospital. Northaw House is situated in a parkland setting, with associated ancillary buildings (gardeners cottage, stables and apple store) walled kitchen garden and land.
- 1.3 There are two vehicular access points at the east and west gates of the whole site. There were originally Gate Lodges at these locations, although East Lodge fell into disrepair and West Lodge was demolished from its original location (as part of the 1970 permission for the change of use to offices, in order to improve visibility at the site entrance and junction with Coopers Lane. Planning permission was given for a replacement dwelling in the early 1973 for the erection of a replacement dwelling on the site south of the entrance drive as now proposed. A revised scheme was approved later in 1973 (Ref: E6/3821-73). The development was not commenced and in 1978 an application was refused for the renewal of this latter 1973 application. However, permission E6/3281-73 has subsequently been acknowledged by the Council to be extant, by virtue of the digging of a foundation, prior to its expiration in October 1978. Further planning permission and listed building consent were then granted for replacement dwellings at East and West

Lodges in October 2000, (S6/1999/1100/LB and 1099/FP). The new East Lodge has now been constructed on the basis of a further revision for which permission was granted in May 2002 under reference S6/2002/0477/FP).

2.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 2.1 Planning permission is sought for the erection of a replacement single dwelling on the site, as a revision to the scheme for which permission was granted in October 2000 (reference S6/1999/1099/FP).
- 2.2 The approved design was of a contemporary nature and the proposed scheme continues that contemporary theme with some significant changes. The dwelling would be accessed from the southern side of the driveway leading to the main Northaw House. It would be L-shaped, with the internal elevations enclosing a patio courtyard. There would be white walls of a uniform height delineating both the house and garden alike, with a flat roof above separated from the walls by a ribbon of glazing, along the western and northern elevations. The southern and eastern internal courtyard elevations would comprise full height glazed windows and doors. The eastern garden wall would be punctured by three openings giving an opportunity to view the kitchen garden wall.
- 2.3 The dwelling would be partially surrounded by water, with a glass decked steel bridge linking the frontage driveway to the main entrance. Two car parking spaces would be provided below ground level accessed by means of an hydraulic platform. The upper deck of the car hoist would be finished in resin bound gravel to match the driveway surface.
- 2.4 The approved scheme, although predominantly flat roofed, had an area covered by a pyramid roof, which has been omitted in the revised proposal to reduce visual impact from the north and west.
- 2.5 In addition to those trees protected by the Tree Preservation Order, other unprotected trees would be retained to complement the development.

3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 The following applications are of relevance.

E/1904-70 - permission for the change of use to offices at Northaw House – 14/10/71. It would appear that Condition 5 of that permission which required improvements to sight lines and visibility splays prior to the commencement of the office use, resulted in the demolition of West Lodge from its original location, to the north of the access point.

E/3439-71 – Withdrawn application for the erection of a replacement dwelling at West Lodge to east of the original still on north of the access drive – 09.10.72.

E/4885-72 – permission for replacement and re-siting of bungalow - 02.01.73. The proposal was for an L-shaped dwelling, flat roofed with glazed panels, red brick to match the kitchen garden wall, with detached flat roofed garage to the north. Dwelling now sited south of the access point and internal estate road, alongside kitchen garden wall. Condition at that time linked occupation of the dwelling to person wholly or mainly employed at Northaw House.

E6/3821-73 – permission for bungalow and garage – 16.10.73. Design of dwelling altered, moved away from L-shape but still flat roofed red brick with glazed panels.

S6/1978/463/FP – Refusal of permission for Bungalow and garage – renewal of E6/1973/3821- 05.10.78.

S6/1999/1099/FP and 1100/LB - permission and Listed Building consent for the refurbishment of stable building and cart house as a dwelling house and the construction of two replacement gate lodges at East and West Lodges – 30.10.00

S6/2002/0477/FP permission for replacement gate lodge at East Lodge (revision to S6/1999/1099/FP) – 07.05.02

2002 - TPO 263 - West Lodge Northaw House Coopers Lane Northaw - confirmed on 16 December 2002

S6/2003/0547/FP – withdrawn application for replacement dwelling. Identical scheme to that originally submitted under application S6/2003/1130/FP.

S6/2003/1130/FP – refusal of permission for the erection of a replacement dwelling of a floorspace greater than that approved under reference S6/1999/1099/FP.

4.0 MAIN RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

4.1 The following policies are relevant to the determination of this application

Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991 - 2011:

Policy 5 – Green Belt

Policy 6 – Settlement Patterns & Urban Concentration

Hertfordshire Structure Plan Alterations 2001- 2016 (Deposit Draft Feb 2003):

Policy 5 – Green Belt

Policy 6 – Settlement Patterns & Urban Concentration

NEW POLICY: Design and Quality of Development

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Alterations No 1, 1998

Policy GB3 – Green Belt

Policy GB6 - Replacement dwellings in the Green Belt

Gen Criteria 1 – (Design and siting of buildings)

Gen Criteria 2 – (Landscaping)

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan Review, Revised Deposit Version, June 2002:

Policy D1 – Quality of Design

Policy RA1 – Development in the Green Belt

Policy RA2 – Development in settlements within the Green Belt

Policy RA4 - Replacement dwellings in the Green Belt

Supplementary Design Guidance

5.0 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

- 5.1 The application was publicised by the display of a site notice
- 5.2 Northaw and Cuffley Parish Council – object. Although called a replacement dwelling, it is not on the site of the original West Lodge, which was demolished some years ago. This proposal vastly exceeds the original footprint for West Lodge and is contrary to Welwyn Hatfield District Plan Alterations No. 1, 1998 – policies GB3 and GB6.
- 5.3 Historic Buildings Advisors (BEAMS) – comments as follows. From the design point of view I feel that contemporary approach is quite acceptable for this site. It will complement the single storey East Lodge which has recently been completed on the former eastern entrance to Northaw House. Although the site is prominent on a bend in Coopers Lane it is well treed and will be contained by a hedge.

Although there are some similarities in the external treatment between the respective gate lodges approved for the entrance to Northaw House the current application omits the pyramid roof. The proposed scheme will be have simple white painted walls set behind a reflecting pool of water. It will have little or no impact on the few adjacent buildings, which are well screened by trees and mature hedges.

I feel that the proposed building with its crisp contemporary lines will enhance this particular site. I would recommend approval subject to various conditions including the details of the car parking arrangements.

- 5.4 Welwyn Hatfield Access Group - Design should accord with Appendix A of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan Alterations No. 1 1998.

6.0 DISCUSSION OF PROPOSALS

- 6.1 The determining issues in this case are whether a replacement dwelling in this location would accord with the Council's adopted and emerging policies and government advice in relation to replacement dwellings in the Green Belt; design considerations and the impact on the character and appearance of the locality.

Green Belt

- 6.2 The original West Lodge had been a small gate lodge, sited to the north of the access point on the northern side of the estate road. No details remain in relation to its floor plans and elevations. However, it is possible to attempt a calculation of floor area based upon the old Ordnance Survey Plans for Northaw at scale of 1:2500. This would give a floor area of a maximum of 110 sq.m. This dwelling was demolished in the early 1970's as part of the permission to use Northaw House as offices (E/1904-70). Condition 5 of that permission required improvements to sight lines and visibility splays, prior to the commencement of the office use, and this resulted in the demolition of West Lodge from its original location.
- 6.3 During the early 1970's two planning permissions were granted for the erection of a replacement West Lodge on the southern side of the estate road. The latter permission (E6/3821-73) is extant by virtue of the digging of a foundation prior to its expiration in October 1978. The Council has acknowledged this during consideration of the 1999 proposals for the erection of replacement dwellings at

East and West Lodge and the refurbishment of stable building and cart house as a dwelling house (S6/1999/1099/FP). The estimated the floorspace of the dwelling forming the 1973 permission (E6/3821-73) is 160 sq.m. This floorspace figure was critical in the consideration of the 1999 scheme, as the dwelling was larger than the original West Lodge.

- 6.4 Therefore, notwithstanding the concerns of Northaw and Cuffley Parish Council, there is a commitment to the provision of a replacement gate lodge on the site of the current application, as there are two extant planning permissions for two schemes. The proposed scheme seeks permission for a revised dwelling of a floor area of 165 square metres. Although this is a modest increase on the approved schemes, it would not have an adverse visual impact on the Green Belt nor conflict with Green Belt policy. While it is acknowledged that the dwelling is larger than the original West Lodge, the extant schemes allow for the provision of a dwelling of approximately 160 square metres. These extant schemes should have greater weight attached to them as material considerations than the original dwelling. I am, therefore, satisfied that the scheme accords with central government advice, adopted District Plan policy GB6 and Review Plan policy RA4.

Design Considerations

- 6.5 There is support for the contemporary design from the Historic Buildings Advisor. A modern design has been agreed since the early 1970's, which has allowed for the provision of single storey flat roofed dwellings as in the case of the extant 1973 permission and earlier 1972 permission or predominantly flat roofed with a section of pyramid roof as in the case of the scheme permitted under S6/1999/1099. The proposal fully accords with the Council's design requirements and Gen Criteria 1 (Design and siting of buildings) and Gen Criteria 2 (Landscaping) of the adopted plan and Policy D1 of the Review Plan and the Supplementary Design Guidance.

Impact on the character and appearance of the surroundings

- 6.6 The dwelling would not be unduly prominent in the rural locality when considered against the mature landscaped setting in which it would be sited and in relation to the extant permissions. The simplification of the design of the dwelling from the scheme approved under reference S6/1999/1099 and the omission of the central pyramid roof would reduce the visual impact of the dwelling when viewed from the north.
- 6.7 There would be no unacceptable impact on preserved trees, even allowing for the below ground parking, especially as this would not be sited adjacent a tree covered by Tree Preservation Order 263.
- 6.8 The parking concept is different to previous schemes and would ensure that cars are not visible. Further detail in relation to the operation of the parking scheme can be covered by condition.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 I consider that the proposal does accord with the provisions of PPG2 Green Belts, Policy GB6 of the adopted plan and RA4 of the Review Plan in relation to replacement dwellings in the Green Belt and would not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the locality and would thereby be acceptable in

relation to and Gen Criteria 1 and 2 of the adopted plan and Polciy D1 and the Supplementary Design Guidance of the Review Plan.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

8.1 I recommend that planning permission be granted in respect of application S6/2004/113/FP, subject to the following conditions:

1. SC1 Time limit – full permission
2. SC09 Landscaping scheme – full permission
3. SC10 Landscaping – tree protection
4. SC12 No tree felling or lopping
5. SC19 Materials – details to be submitted
6. SC38 Removal of Permitted Development rights
(to include Classes A, B, C, D, E, F, G and H of Part 1 and Class A of Part 2 of Schedule 2)
Reason: The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt wherein the Local Planning Authority would wish to control any future development of the site in the interests of the openness of the Green Belt, visual amenity of the locality and having regard to the presence of trees protected by a tree preservation order.
7. Details of the boundary treatment of the dwelling hereby approved shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of the development. Once agreed the boundary treatments shall be implemented and retained as such unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
Reason: To safeguard the visual appearance of the site and the locality generally.
8. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted details of the car parking area, to include details of the hydraulic platform, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall thereafter be carried out, completed and retained in accordance with the approved details prior to the occupation of the dwelling unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.
Reason: To provide adequate parking provision for the development and in the interests of the visual appearance of the locality.
9. Details of any external lighting to be erected within the site shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for its prior written approval. The scheme shall thereafter be carried out, completed and retained thereafter in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.
Reason: To avoid any potential for light pollution, in the interests of visual amenity.
10. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, full details of the fenestration shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall thereafter be carried out, completed and

retained thereafter in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the appearance of the development.

8.2 The reason for grant of permission will be non standard:

It is considered that the proposed development does not have an unacceptably harmful impact on the openness of the Green Belt, the character and appearance of the area in which it is located or trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order as:

- the development proposed accords with national, strategic and local policies in relation to replacement dwellings in the Green Belt; its design, siting and external appearance will not have a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the locality or preserved trees.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991- 2011
Hertfordshire Structure Plan Alterations 2001- 2016 (Deposit Draft Feb 2003)
Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan Alterations no 1 1998
Welwyn Hatfield Review Local Plan Deposit Draft, June 2002
Application files (S6/2004/113/FP; S6/2003/1130; S6/1999/1099/FP)

