

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No:	(a) <u>S6/2006/1252/FP</u> (b) <u>S6/2006/1254/LB</u>
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NOTATION:

The site is located within the Green Belt and Landscape Region and Character Area as designated by the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE:

The Oshwal Centre is a community and religious centre used by the Jain Community. The application site is situated on an extensive irregular shaped plot on the northern side of Coopers Lane Road in Northaw, which is entirely situated within the Metropolitan Green Belt.

The site consists of Hook House (also identified as Oshwal House), the existing reception venue, associated car parking, various outbuildings and a recently constructed Buddhist temple, which is situated on the southern section of the site. The Hook House is a Grade II Listed Building, which dates from the C1839 and is an Asymmetrical Tuscan-style villa of 2-3 storeys with attics.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

The application seeks full planning permission and listed building consent for a single storey rear extension together with associated internal works. The proposed extension measures 8.9 (depth) x 13.4 metres (width). Part of the existing rear wall would be demolished to provide for the internal alterations necessary. The design of the extension is a flat roof with parapet wall.

Materials proposed would be render to match the existing and windows also matching existing. The Design and Access statement indicates that the design merits are in relation to the extension complementing the existing house in terms of materials which would match. Details regarding the physical impact on the fabric of the listed building have not been discussed.

PLANNING HISTORY:

S6/1979/689 – Change of use from residential to spiritual, cultural and leisure activities of a religious body – granted.

S6/1980/46 – Extension and conversion of outbuildings to community buildings – granted.

S6/1980/126 – New temple – granted.

S6/1984/352 – Single storey extensions and alterations- granted.

S6/1984/353 – Demolition of first floor extension, erection of single-storey extension and alterations – granted.

S6/1985/398 – Site for new temple (revised siting to previous scheme) – granted.

S6/1986/234 – Demolition of existing outbuildings and replacement with new community building in association with use of Hook House – granted.

S6/1989/534 – Revised internal road and car park surfacing, new paved surface adjacent to Oshwal House and additional landscaping – granted.

S6/1990/629 – Erection of canopy – granted.

S6/1992/681 – Erection of temple (application made under Section 73 of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act) – granted.

S6/1995/226 – Erection of temple (renewal of consent S6/1992/0681) – granted.

S6/1995/227 – Erection of non-illuminated sign – granted.

S6/1996/388 – Erection of ornamental temple (2.1m high) and paved garden in grounds – granted.

S6/1997/985 – Erection of scale model of temple (in position approved under S6/1996/0388) – granted.

S6/1998/662 – Erection of temple (revision to planning permission S6/1995/0226) to incorporate 11.5m² of additional floor area and revised elevations – granted.

S6/2005/201 – Stone garden features around the temple – granted.

S6/2006/0003/LB - Blocking up of existing internal doorway and formation of new door opening. - granted

SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES:

Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991 – 2011:
Policy 5 – Green Belt

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

R25 Works to Listed Buildings

RA1 – Metropolitan Green Belt

RA10 – Landscape Regions and Character Areas

CLT14 – Places of Worship

D1 - Quality of design

D2 - Character and context

D5 - Design for movement

D9 - Access and Design for people with disabilities

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Planning Guidance, Parking Standards, January 2004

CONSULTATIONS

Beams – recommend refusal, the proposed extension and alterations are unsympathetic to the listed building and would detract from its special architectural and historic qualities.

NORTHAW & CUFFLEY PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS

Strongly object – the existing ground floor is approx 4214sq ft and proposed 1348 sq ft. Also be detrimental to existing façade, already and existing dining hall in the obtrusive community centre adjacent to Hook House. Contrary to para 3.6 PPG2 and RA3.

REPRESENTATIONS.

The application was advertised by site and press notice. Notification commenced 29th September and expired 20th October.

Welwyn Hatfield Access Group request that this application is considered subject to the standards and criteria outlined in the current District Plan (Policy D3d, Policy D5).

DISCUSSION:

The main issues are

- 1) Impacts of the development upon the Metropolitan Green Belt**
- 2) Impacts of the development upon the Landscape Character Area**
- 3) Impacts of the development upon the character and setting of the listed building**
- 4) Whether very special circumstances exist**

(a) Policy RA1 outlines the types of development that permission will be granted for. Extensions to places of worship are not included within the list and therefore the proposal should be determined whether very special circumstances exist. No such details have been submitted by the applicant and therefore the proposal fails in relation to Green Belt policy. The agent has indicated that the proposal complies with policy RA3, however this relates to extensions to dwellinghouses and as the building is not a dwellinghouse, this policy is not applicable.

It should also be acknowledged that the site as a whole has benefited from a number of extensions over the years, including the adjacent community building and temple.

Works to listed buildings (policy R25) should respect the character, appearance and setting of the building in terms of design, scale and materials. By virtue of the size of the extension in relation to both its width and depth which almost doubles the depth of the existing building, the proposal cannot be considered to respect the character or appearance of the listed building.

The design is functional but clearly does not relate to the integrity of the existing building or, in relation to the rear elevation, adequately enhance the existing features by virtue of the extension obscuring the majority of the buildings features and layout. The large expanse of flat roof is inappropriate in design in this location.

The D&A statement does not indicate how the works would impact upon the internal features (those to be demolished and altered) and it is therefore not possible to adequately assess the likely impact. The proposal therefore fails to comply with R25 or D1.

Policy D2 requires proposals to respect the character and context of the area in which it is proposed. The site, by virtue of its scale relates 'only to itself', the proposal would therefore comply with this policy.

Policy RA10 requires proposals in rural areas to contribute to the conservation, maintenance and enhancement of the local landscape. The siting of the extension would ensure that there would be no impact.

Policy CLT14 indicates permission will only be granted where adequate parking is provided, no harmful impact on amenity of nearby residents and does not detract from the visual amenity of the area. Adequate parking provision is already provided across the site and the extension would be unlikely to result in a significant increase in the numbers of people visiting. No neighbouring occupiers are within the vicinity and the overall visual amenity of the area would be maintained. The proposal would therefore comply with this policy and also with the parking standards policy M14.

The D&A statement indicates that the internal circulation of the site will be clearly sign posted and that levels would be flat. This would therefore assist those with disabilities or those with prams (or similar). The proposal would therefore comply with D5 and D9.

No details have been submitted as to how the proposal would contribute to energy efficiency. In terms of sustainable development, the only information submitted is in relation to the

number of vehicular journeys would not increase and that a large number of visitors to the site travel with a full occupancy car, thus reducing CO₂ emissions. Other sustainable development matters have not been addressed.

(b) Works to listed buildings (policy R25) should respect the character, appearance and setting of the building in terms of design, scale and materials. By virtue of the size of the extension in relation to both its width and depth which almost doubles the depth of the existing building, the proposal cannot be considered to respect the character or appearance of the listed building.

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The D&A statement does not indicate how the works would impact upon the internal features (those to be demolished and altered) and it is therefore not possible to adequately assess the likely impact. The proposal therefore fails to comply with R25.

CONCLUSION:

- (a) The proposal fails to comply with policy RA1, the proposal is not for those specified as been acceptable within the Green Belt and very special circumstances have not submitted. The design of the proposal fails to complement the architectural setting and character of the listed building and therefore does not comply with policies R25 and D1. Insufficient details have been submitted as to how the proposal would impact upon the alteration work which may impact affect the historic fabric.
- (b) The proposal fails to comply with policy R25 by virtue of the extension failing to compliment the architectural setting and character of the listed building. Insufficient details have been submitted as to how the proposal would impact upon the alteration work which may impact affect the historic fabric.

RECOMMENDATION: REFUSAL AND REASON (S) REASONS:

- (a) 1. The application site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt as defined in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan wherein permission will not be given except in very special circumstances for development for purposes other than those required for mineral extraction, agriculture, small scale facilities for outdoor sport or recreation or other uses appropriate to a rural area. No such special circumstances are apparent in this case, and the proposal would therefore be contrary to policy RA1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.
 - 2. The scale and mass of the proposed extension is overdominant in relation to the architectural character and setting of this Listed Building. The design fails to respect the existing architectural features by virtue of the extension obscuring the buildings features and layout and large expanse of flat roof which is inappropriate in this location. The proposal therefore fails to comply with policies R25 and D1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and Supplementary Design Guidance.
 - 3. Insufficiently detailed information has been submitted to enable the Local Planning Authority to determine how the proposal and proposed alteration work may impact upon the historic fabric of the Listed Building.
- (b) 1. The scale and mass of the proposed extension is overdominant in relation to the architectural character and setting of this Listed Building. The design fails to respect the existing architectural features by virtue of the extension obscuring the buildings features and layout and large expanse of flat roof which is inappropriate in this location. The proposal therefore fails to comply with policies R25 and D1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and Supplementary Design Guidance.

2. Insufficiently detailed information has been submitted to enable the Local Planning Authority to determine how the proposal and proposed alteration work may impact upon the historic fabric of the Listed Building.

INFORMATIVES:

None

DRAWING NUMBERS:

Site Location Plan, 6842-01B, 6842-02 and date stamped 19 September 2006

Signature of author.....

Date.....