**Nether Fawke House**

**Fawke Common**

**Sevenoaks**

**Proposed first floor side extension.**

**Design, Access and Planning Statement**



**James A Bacon**

**Design & Planning ©**

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**Description.**

The proposal is to construct a first floor side extension to the east side of Nether Fawke House over the existing Orangery which was granted approval in 2009. Ref 09/01199.

A previous permission was given in 2005 ref/SE/05/02992 which comprised of a two storey side extension to the east, a single storey side extension and conservatory to the west and dormer windows to the attic; however although the west single storey extension and conservatory were built the dormer windows were not constructed and in order to reduce costs the now existing orangery was converted from the then existing garage and lounge. At the time the orangery was approved it was expected that an application would follow in due course to build the first floor accommodation along the lines of the 2005 approval to improve the appearance of this side of the property and this application is to fulfil that.

The design is similar in principle to the 2005 permission but due to the slightly different ground floor outline is not identical.

**Layout.**

The proposed first floor bedroom, dressing area and bathroom are to be accessed from the landing extended through the existing rear bedroom.

**Siting**

The proposal is to the left of the main house looking at the front.

**Drainage**

Foul drainage will be connected to the existing soil pipe.

Surface water will be connected to existing surface water drains.

**Scale**

The proposal is of a similar scale to the previous permission which was found to be acceptable. It has been possible to reduce the ridge height to 7.0m above dpc which is 1100mm lower than the previous approval.

Under permission 05/02992 the ground floor area of the east side extension was calculated to be 71.36sqm and the first floor area over at 48.18sqm.

In this proposal with the ground floor plan of the Orangery being 14.49sq m larger than the approved ground floor design (refer to drawing 210101/4) it was necessary to keep the first floor as small as possible within the limits of a similar roof pitch and without creating a distorted appearance and it can be seen from the proposed first floor plan that the effective depth of the room within 1.5m ceiling height is slightly less than the depth of the approved first floor area.

The floor plans indicate the previously approved and proposed floor areas. The first floor plan is 4.95sq m larger than the previous approval, but this reduces to 1.95sq m when allowance is made for the dormer windows that are not to be constructed; there is an overall increase in floor area therefore of 16.95 sq m.

The roof pitch is to match the existing dwelling and is set at the lowest position available over the existing roof joists and beams. The outline of the approved first floor extension is indicated on the drawings for comparison; in places it can be seen to be below that now proposed but elsewhere and most noticeably at the ridge it is above that now proposed.

It is evident that the floor area of the original dwelling will be exceeded by slightly more than 50% in this proposal, however the first floor element has been designed to reduce the overall impact of the proposal compared to that already approved, added to which the attic dormer windows are not now to be constructed which further reduces the impact over the previous approval. By excluding the attic dormers and keeping the profile of the proposal below that approved the aim of the floor area limit has been respected in that the proposal would in my view not harm the openness of the Greenbelt when compared to the approved design; also the new tiled eaves at window head level to the front and rear elevations would remove the existing conspicuous brick parapets.

The proposed roof design being lower than that previously approved would emphasise more the identity of the original dwelling and additionally would increase the subservience of the extension to the original dwelling in that the rear roof pitch is lower and separate from the original roof and of a simpler design.

**Amenity**

The dwelling is within the Greenbelt and has a good size garden. The proposed windows look out over farmland and the rear garden of Nether Fawke House and would not affect the amenity of neighbours.

In preparing this application the owners were mindful of the two considerations that directly relate to the site’s AONB status – ie whether the application conserves the AONB and does it result in an enhancement. They believe that both these criteria are achieved in this proposal.

The planning history of this site is relevant to these two issues. As noted above, there is existing permission for a two storey side extension to the east, and a single storey side extension and conservatory to the west and dormer windows to the attic. Although the development commenced in 2009 the side extension to the east was not built. Instead permission was obtained to convert an existing flat roofed garage attached to the main house. This involved the addition of two large roof lights. Although permission was granted to retain the garage and convert it to living accommodation, concerns were voiced by members of the planning committee about the light pollution that these roof lights would generate, and the poor visual amenity posed by retaining the flat roof of the existing garage structure. The owners made a commitment to the planning committee to build the first floor accommodation along the lines of the 2005 approval to improve the appearance of this side of the property when they were in a position to do so. This application seeks to fulfil that commitment.

**Preserve and enhance the AONB**

Reduction of height (relative to the 2005 approval) lessens the visual impact of the dwelling. This is at the cost of a slight increase in footprint, but the benefit of reduced overall scale and the aesthetic enhancement secured by the removal of the large roof lights and the flat roof outweighs the slight increase in floor area.

**Improved visual amenity**

The NPPF states that the Government ‘attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.’ (para. 56). The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) outlines that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in ‘very special circumstances’. One such circumstance is the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. Policy SP1 of the Core Strategy states that all new development should be designed to a high quality and should respond to the distinctive local character of the area in which it is situated. The owners believe that the proposed extension achieves a balance and shape that enhances the impact of the building on its environment when compared to the current flat roofed structure. And compared to the two story extension for which permission has already been granted, this application is 1100mm lower than the structure permitted under the 2005 approval. Thus the overall impact of the structure is reduced.

**Appearance.**

The owners are aware that Policy EN5 of the ADMP states that the Kent Downs and High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and their settings will be given the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. They have therefore sought to ensure that the form, scale, materials of the design will conserve and enhance the character of the landscape and have regard to the relevant Management Plan and associated guidance.

All materials are to match existing, including brickwork, tile hanging and roof tiling. The existing matching bedroom and en-suite windows are to be re-used in the new bedroom set symmetrically beneath the twin hip roofs of the east elevation and the existing ground floor windows. Two dormers are included to the front at first floor as found in the approved scheme. The rear elevation has been simplified to provide a single pitched roof down to ground floor eaves with Cabrio rooflights providing light and enjoyment of the garden from the proposed bedroom. This avoids the need for the inverted lead dormers previously included.

The existing east attic window to the main house is retained with a hidden flat roof at high level.

The proposed design would not in my view appear more noticeable when seen from the surrounding countryside, and considering also the absence of the attic dormers it could be considered less conspicuous.

As noted under ‘Scale’ the existing dwelling would be more clearly identifiable due to the proposed lower ridge height and separation of the rear roof pitch retaining the distinctiveness of the original dwelling.

**Improved light pollution**

Paragraph 17 of the NPPF identifies a set of core land-use planning principles one of which is that planning should always seek to secure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings. In this context the light pollution suffered by neighbouring properties has been considered. Whereas the total area of fenestration provided by the current single story structure (including roof-lights) and windows to first floor and attic of the east elevation is 58.35 sq metres; the proposed addition reduces this total area of fenestration to 39.6 sq metres.

**Planting and landscaping**

The gardens are well kept and form an attractive setting for the dwelling, it is not intended to make changes to the landscaping.

**Accessibility**

The proposal does not affect accessibility to the dwelling. Due to the high ceiling of the orangery 2 shallow steps are necessary up to the new bedroom.

**Conclusion.**

The proposal would in my view be less conspicuous in the countryside than the previously approved design as the marginal difference in position of the east elevation flank wall would not be sufficient to be noticeable, whereas the reduction in roof level and omission of the dormer roofs would be more significant.

Although the floor area would be 16.95sq m in excess of the previously approved scheme due to the existing ground floor footprint of the dwelling on which the Orangery is based the design seeks to ameliorate this by:-

1. Omission of the attic dormer windows.
2. Separation of the proposed roof from the existing main roof pitch.
3. Lower ridge level.

The proposal would closely follow the overall appearance of approved design ref 05/02992 but be more subservient to the main dwelling due to the roof design and ridge level.

The proposal would not materially harm the openness of the Greenbelt through excessive scale, bulk or visual intrusion and due to the omission of the attic dormers and would reduce the impact of the previously approved scheme.

The proposal would enhance the appearance of the property in reducing the impact of the existing Orangery flat roof and parapets.

The proposal would reduce the potential of light pollution by a reduction in glazed area of over 18sqm

Due to the above and despite the discrepancy in floor areas I would ask that this application be approved.

Jb/10/04/21