

5n 3/11/0512/FP - Single storey part front and side extension - Brambles, London Road, Spellbrook, Bishops Stortford, Herts, CM23 4BA for

Date of Receipt: 07.04.2011

Type: Full -Other

Parish: SAWBRIDGEWORTH

Ward: SAWBRIDGEWORTH

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:-

1. Time limit (1T121)

2. Approved plans (2E102)

The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans SE1; SE2; SE3; 09.003.11 and 09.003.12

Reason: To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans, drawings and specifications.

Summary of Reasons for Decision

The proposal has been considered with regard to the policies of the Development Plan (East of England Plan May 2008, Hertfordshire County Structure Plan, Minerals Local Plan, Waste Local Plan and the saved policies of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007), and in particular policies GBC1, ENV1, ENV5 and ENV6. The balance of the considerations having regard to those policies is that permission should be granted.

_____ (051211.SE)

1.0 Background

1.1 The application site is shown on the attached OS extract. The dwellinghouse on the site is detached and sited adjacent to the main road connecting the main settlements of Bishop's Stortford and Sawbridgeworth. The application site is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt.

1.2 The dwelling has a history of refused planning applications relating to its extension and enlargement.

1.3 This current application proposes a more limited scheme of extensions offering single storey part front and side (wrap-around) extension. The floor area of this proposal would be an estimated 83 square metres, protruding from the front elevation by 3.5 metres and protruding from the side elevation

by 4.3 metres. The proposed eaves height would be 2.2 metres, and the proposed height to the top of the lean-to roof would be 3.5 metres. The southern and eastern elevations would be predominately glazed.

2.0 Site History

2.1 The 'original' form of 'The Brambles' (pre 1948) was very simple, typical of that provided for agricultural workers or alike in the early part of the 20th Century; the dwelling was a small bungalow with the principle elevation facing west towards the highway (London Road). Since 1948 the dwelling has benefited from a number of extensions and alterations to result in the size, scale and form of the dwelling that exists on the site today. The earliest planning record for this dwelling was an approval in 1954 (LPA ref: 3/54/0400/FP) for the erection of an extension to a bungalow. A second approval in 1973 (LPA ref 3/73/4223/FP) allowed for the conversion of the bungalow (The Brambles) to a two storey house and ground floor side extension.

Planning reference 3/02/1171/FP proposed a two storey rear extension and a single storey side extension, but was refused as being inappropriate development in the Green Belt due to the cumulative effect of the proposed extensions, together with the extensions previously added to the property, resulting in a building of excessive size, out of keeping with the character and appearance of the original dwelling, to the detriment of the rural character of the area. This decision was appealed to the Planning Inspectorate, but the appeal was dismissed with the Inspector agreeing with the local authority that the scheme of extensions would result in a disproportionate extension over and above that of the original dwelling. The Inspector also concluded that whilst that the single storey extension would not by itself be harmful, the proposals to the first floor would affect the appearance of the dwelling.

A further application was submitted in 2003 (LPA ref: 3/03/2225/FP) for two storey and first floor extensions. This application was also refused for the same reasons as for 3/02/1171/FP. It was noted that this scheme still proposed two storey additions, but omitted the single storey extension, which, as previously described, the previous Inspector considered the least contentious element of the proposal. The applicant appealed this decision, which was again dismissed, the Inspector agreeing with the opinion of the local planning authority with regard to the disproportionate increase in floor area (240%) contrary to Green Belt policy.

The site benefits from an approved Lawful Development Certificate application (LPA ref: 3/10/0261/CL) for the erection of a games room measuring 13 metres in length, 7.4 metres in depth, and sited 5 metres from the eastern flank of the dwelling.

3.0 Consultation Responses

3.1 No consultation responses have been received

4.0 Town Council Representations

4.1 Sawbridgeworth Town Council raised no objections to the proposal.

5.0 Other Representations

5.1 The application has been advertised by way of press notice, site notice and neighbour notification.

5.2 No letters of representation have been received.

6.0 Policy

6.1 The relevant 'saved' Local Plan policies in this application include the following:-

GBC1 Green Belt
ENV1 Design and Environmental Quality
ENV5 Extensions to Dwellings
ENV6 Extensions to Dwellings –Criteria

7.0 Considerations

Principle of development

7.1 Policy GBC1 of the Local Plan includes 'limited' extensions or alterations to existing dwellings in accordance with Policy ENV5 as one of the forms of appropriate development within the Green Belt. Policy ENV5 states that planning permission will be granted for extensions to existing dwellings provided that the character, appearance and amenities of the dwelling and adjoining dwellings are not significantly affected to their detriment. It is also

considered that an extension to a dwelling will additionally be expected to be of a scale and size that would by itself, or cumulatively with other extensions, not disproportionately alter the size of the original dwelling nor intrude into the openness or rural qualities of the surrounding area.

- 7.2 It has already been noted within this report that the appeal property has been substantially extended in the past, with the total floor area of the original dwelling increasing from 83 square metres to around 240 square metres. This represents an increase in floor area of 157 square metres or 189%. The addition of the proposed extensions would increase the floor area by a further 83 square metres, which would represent an overall increase of 240 square metres, or 289% over the floor area of the original dwelling.
- 7.3 Considered separately to massing and appearance, this cumulative increase in floor area cannot be considered 'limited' in accordance with policy GBC1 in determining appropriate development within the Green Belt. It is for this reason that the application is reported to the Development Control Committee. Although the increase in floor area proposed could be considered disproportionate to that of the original dwelling; consideration needs to be given as to whether this would in itself adversely affect the character and appearance of the dwelling or whether the proposed extensions would intrude into the openness or rural qualities of the surrounding area.
- 7.4 Unlike the two previous refusals at this dwelling (references 3/02/1171/FP and 3/03/2225/FP), this current proposal proposes only ground floor extensions and no development at first floor level or above. Reference should be made to the Inspectors decision in reference 3/02/1171/FP when discussing the single storey element of the proposal: "while the single storey element of the scheme would not, in itself, be significant in terms of the scale and size of the existing dwelling, the other related alterations proposed at first floor, including two extra bedrooms, would materially add to the size and bulk of the building, albeit within the existing footprint of the dwelling. This would be particularly apparent in the proposed north and west elevations of the extended dwelling".
- 7.5 It is Officers opinion that, whilst it is acknowledged that the cumulative floor area increase will be disproportionate to the small dwelling that originally stood on this site, the size, scale and massing of the proposed ground floor extensions would not of themselves be significant, and would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the existing dwelling, nor intrude in the open and rural character of its surroundings. This proposal would create further ground floor accommodation and circulation space, but it will not create any further bedroom accommodation. It is also considered that

the lean-to, 'wrap-around' conservatory design would be subservient to, and compliment the existing character and appearance of the dwelling. The application proposal will not be visible from the public highway.

- 7.6 For these reasons it is Officers opinion that there are very special circumstances, related to the limited size, scale and massing of the proposal that justify a departure from policy GBC1 of the Local Plan. In addition the proposal complies with the design considerations of policies ENV1, ENV5 and ENV6 of the Local Plan and would not have any adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt or the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Impact on amenity

- 7.7 With regard to the impact upon the enjoyment of the amenities of the neighbouring dwellings, Officers consider that due to the minimal scale of the proposal and its siting, shielded by the massing of the dwelling, this proposal would not cause any harm to the amenities of any nearby proeptries, in accordance with the amenity considerations of policies ENV1, ENV5 and ENV6 of the Local Plan.

8.0 Conclusion

- 8.1 Officers acknowledge that the cumulative increase in floor area is beyond what can reasonably be called a 'limited' extension within the Green Belt. Notwithstanding the extent of this increase, Officers consider that the size, scale, siting, design and materials of construction of this extension would not, in itself, harm the openness and rural character of the surrounding area, and would therefore respect the principle aims and objectives of controlling development within the Green Belt.
- 8.2 Officers therefore recommend that this proposal should be considered as an acceptable departure from policy GBC1 of the Local Plan.
- 8.3 For these reasons it is recommended that planning permission be granted for the proposed development, subject to the conditions outlined above.