

**3/09/0277/FP - Two-storey side extension at Finch Croft, Thorley Lane West, Bishop's Stortford, CM23 4BN for Mr Colin Saville**

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**Date of Receipt:** 23.02.09

**Type:** Full

**Parish:** BISHOP'S STORTFORD

**Ward:** BISHOP'S STORTFORD - SOUTH

**RECOMMENDATION**

That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions

1. Three Year Time Limit (1T121)
2. Matching materials (2E13)

**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 East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007), and in particular GBC1, ENV1, ENV5 and ENV6. The balance of the considerations having regard to those policies and the previous grants of permission for the proposed extension, most recently granted in 2006 (ref: 3/06/0393/FN) is that permission should be granted.

\_\_\_\_\_ (3090277FP.SE)

**1.0 Background**

- 1.1 The application site is shown on the attached OS extract. Finch Croft is a detached dwelling located on Thorley Lane West to the south of Great Hadham Road. The dwelling is set in fairly large grounds with detached stores and a garage to the south. The application site is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt.
- 1.2 This planning application seeks permission for the erection of a two-storey side extension, which would increase the number of bedrooms from five to six and enlarge the living space on the ground floor. It will be noted from the planning history section of this report that planning permission has previously been granted for such an extension and renewed a number of times.

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- 1.3 This application is being reported to committee as it represents a departure from the Local Plan.

### **2.0 Site History**

- 2.1 Planning permission for the proposed development was originally granted in 1990 under reference 3/90/2090/FP. This approval was renewed three times: first in 1995 (LPA ref: 3/95/1809/FP), second in 2001 (LPA ref: 3/01/0095/FN), and finally in 2006 (LPA ref: 3/06/0393/FN) (ref: 3/03/2377/FP).
- 2.2 In 2003 retrospective consent was given for a single storey rear extension together with three dormer windows (one to the front, two to the rear) (ref: 3/03/2377/FP).

### **3.0 Consultation Responses**

- 3.1 Three Valleys Water comment that the proposal is sited within the groundwater Source Protection Zone (SPZ) of Causeway pumping station.

### **4.0 Town Council Representations**

- 4.1 Bishop's Stortford Town Council raised no objection to the application.

### **5.0 Other Representations**

- 5.1 The application has been advertised by way of site notice and neighbour notification.
- 5.2 No further comments have been received.

### **6.0 Policy**

- 6.1 The relevant policies of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review (April 2007) are:

GBC1 – Appropriate Development in the Green Belt  
ENV1 – Design and Environmental Quality  
ENV5 – Extensions to Dwellings  
ENV6 – Extensions to Dwellings (Criteria)

## **7.0 Considerations**

- 7.1 The determining issues in this case are whether this proposal can be considered as limited extensions within the Metropolitan Green Belt, what impact the proposed development will have upon the character of the original dwelling and the surrounding area, and finally what impacts there will be upon neighbouring dwellings. It is also necessary to consider whether there have been any changes in circumstances or policy to warrant a different decision being taken following the grant of permission for the proposed extensions in 2006.

### *Principle of development*

- 7.2 Policy GBC1 of the Local Plan considers limited extensions or alteration to existing dwellings within the Metropolitan Green Belt as appropriate, in accordance with policy ENV5, which also considers that the extension to a dwelling will be expected to be of a scale and size that would either by itself, or cumulatively with other extensions, not disproportionately alter the size of the original dwelling.
- 7.3 This proposal, together with the previous extensions to the dwelling, will result in an 80% increase in floor area over that of the original dwelling. Whilst there is no defined percentage threshold for the determination of what can be defined as 'limited', consideration is usually given to the increase of living area produced and the physical dominance of the resultant building.
- 7.4 Whilst Officers acknowledge that an 80% increase is significant, the proposal will only result in the addition of one additional bedroom at first floor and will be developed on a footprint only marginally greater than that occupied by the existing garage. However, the proposed extension would disproportionately alter the size of the original dwelling and would therefore not accord with policies GBC1 and ENV5 of the Local Plan. It is therefore necessary to consider whether very special circumstances exist in this case to warrant a departure from policy.
- 7.5 As outlined earlier in this report, planning permission has previously been granted for the extensions which are being applied for, and renewed a number of times. Permission was last granted in 2006 for the extensions; however this permission was not implemented and expired on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2009. Since the last grant of permission there has been no significant change in policies or other circumstances that would justify a different

decision now being made. Officers therefore consider the planning history of the site to be a material consideration in the determination of this case, that significant weight should be attached to.

*Impact on character of the original dwelling and the surrounding area*

- 7.6 With regards to design, policy ENV1 expects proposals to be of a high standard of design and layout that respects local distinctiveness, whilst policies ENV5 and ENV6 considers that extensions to dwellings should not significantly affect the character and appearance of the original dwelling or any adjoining dwelling to their detriment, the proposal should also be of a design and choice of materials that compliment those of the original dwelling.
- 7.7 The original dwelling is of a simple form, which has been largely retained even with the approved dormer windows and single storey rear extension. Although not subservient to the original dwelling, the proposed extension replicates the form of the gable of the front elevation and materials of the original construction. It is Officer's considerations that this proposal would not significantly affect the character and appearance of the original dwelling to its detriment and would therefore be in-line with policies ENV1, ENV5 and ENV6 of the Local Plan.

*Impacts upon neighbouring dwellings*

- 7.8 As stated previously, this dwelling sits on a fairly open plot of land with no immediate neighbours. Due to this open location the Officers do not consider that there will be any detrimental overlooking, overbearing or loss of light issues created by this proposal; therefore in-line with part (d) of policy ENV1 of the Local plan.

**8.0 Conclusion**

- 8.1 The proposed extension, although resulting in a large cumulative increase in floor area, offers only a limited increase in accommodation for a dwelling of this scale and siting within the Green Belt. The design of the extension offers the same simple form of the original dwelling, and given its fairly isolated location, will not cause any detrimental impacts upon the occupants of neighbouring dwellings. Whilst the proposal does not accord with policy GBC1 of the Local Plan, it is a material consideration that planning permission has been granted on a number of occasions for the proposed extension, most recently in 2006. This is a material consideration in the determination of this application, and one which is considered to warrant a departure from Green Belt policy in this instance.

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8.2 Having regard to the above considerations it is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to the conditions at the head of this report.