

**3/09/0955/FP – Two storey side extension, single storey front and rear extensions, front dormers and rear dormers with Juliet balconies and new basement at 31 Church Road, Little Berkhamstead, Hertfordshire for David Hutchinson.**

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**Date of Receipt:** 24.06.09

**Type:** Full

**Parish:** LITTLE BERKHAMPSTEAD

**Ward:** HERTFORD – RURAL SOUTH

**Reason for report:** Contrary to Policy

### **RECOMMENDATION**

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

1. Three Year Time Limit (IT12)
2. Matching Materials (2E13)

### **Directives:**

1. Other Legislation (01OL)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (095509FP.LP)

### **1.0 Background**

- 1.1 No 31 Church Road is a semi detached property with accommodation in the roofspace, sited on the southern edge of Little Berkhamstead, as shown on the attached OS extract.
- 1.2 The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt outside of the main settlements and Category 1 and 2 Villages.
- 1.3 The application seeks permission for a 2 storey side extension incorporating a garage at ground floor, a single storey rear extension and front porch. The proposal also includes the provision of 2 additional front dormers and 3 additional rear dormers, two with Juliet balconies. A basement is also proposed.

### **2.0 Site History**

- 2.1 The history of the site is as follows:

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<b>Planning Ref:</b>	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Decision</b>
3/08/2085/FP	Single storey front & rear extensions. Two storey side extension incorporating front & rear dormers & Juliet balconies. New basement.	Withdrawn
3/07/2357/FP	Open porch to front, two storey rear, side and front extensions	Refused
3/07/1011/FP	Two storey rear, side and front extensions	Refused

### **3.0 Consultation Responses**

3.1 No consultation responses have been received.

### **4.0 Parish Council Representations**

4.1 Little Berkhamstead Parish Council have no objections to the planning proposals.

### **5.0 Other Representations**

5.1 The application was advertised by means of a site notice and neighbour notification letters.

5.2 No representations have been received.

### **6.0 Policy**

6.1 The relevant East Hertfordshire Adopted Local Plan policies applicable to this application are:

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

6.2 Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 'Green Belts' and Planning Policy Statement 7 'Sustainable Developments in Rural Areas' are also relevant.

## **7.0 Considerations**

### **Principle**

- 7.1 The site lies in a Category 3 village within the Metropolitan Green Belt where the standard Green Belt restrictions apply. Permission will not be given for inappropriate development unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated that clearly outweigh the harm by reason of inappropriateness or any other harm. Policy GBC1 advises that extensions to existing dwellings will be inappropriate within the Metropolitan Green Belt unless they can be regarded as limited extensions or alterations to existing dwellings in accordance with Policy ENV5.
- 7.2 Policy ENV5 advises that outside the main settlements and Category 1 and 2 Villages, an extension to a dwelling or the erection of outbuildings will additionally 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 nor intrude into the openness or rural qualities of the surrounding area.
- 7.3 Policy ENV6 advises that proposed extensions should be to a design and choice of materials of construction, either matching or complementary to those of the original building and its setting.
- 7.4 Also relevant in this case is Policy ENV1 where extensions are expected to be of a high standard of design and layout and to reflect local distinctiveness. Policy ENV1 also requires that development proposals should respect the amenity of occupiers of neighbouring buildings.
- 7.5 13 Church Road has already been extended with a single storey rear extension, although this is proposed to be demolished as part of the proposal. Calculations have been made in respect of the proposed extensions and basement, which will result in an overall increase of 100% over and above the floorspace of the original dwelling.

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- 7.6 As such, the size and scale of the proposal would be considered to disproportionately alter the size of the original dwelling and would therefore not satisfy the requirements of Policies GBC1 and ENV5 which permit only limited extensions.
- 7.7 While the proposed development would not satisfy those policies, it is considered that extensions approved at the adjoining property, No. 29 Church Road, should be considered as a material consideration in respect of the determination of the application at no. 31.
- 7.8 No. 29 was granted approval in 1999 (planning reference lpa 3/99/0805/FP) for a 2 storey side extension with front and rear dormer and a single storey rear extension. This extension allowed a floor area increase of around 82%.
- 7.9 The approval of the development proposed at no. 31 would provide a degree of symmetry between these two semi-detached dwellings should they both be constructed. Although this application proposes an additional front dormer to that approved to No. 29, and is 0.6 metres wider, it is not considered that this would unbalance the pair. Furthermore, the dwelling as part of the built up area of Little Berkhamstead and partly as a consequence of this it is considered that the extensions would not in themselves unduly intrude into the openness of the Green belt or rural qualities of the surrounding area.
- 7.10 The basement element, to provide a gym and swimming pool is a further factor that results in the extensions not being "limited" within the meaning of the policy. However the ancillary accommodation within the basement would have no adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the dwelling or the openness of the Green Belt.
- 7.11 Therefore, while the development is considered to be inappropriate within the guidelines of PPG2 and Policy GBC1 there are special circumstances in this case which justify a departure from Green Belt Policy.

### **Neighbour Amenity**

- 7.12 It is not anticipated that the proposed development will have an adverse impact on the attached property at no. 29 since the proposed single storey element alongside the boundary at a depth of 4.3 metres is substantially reduced from the existing single storey extension of 8

metres in depth alongside the boundary. Indeed the neighbour has a single storey extension of 4.6 metres to this boundary and the proposal will therefore be beneficial with regard to the neighbouring dwelling.

### **Design**

7.13 As outlined in Paragraph 7.10 the extension would provide a degree of symmetry with the neighbouring property and the extensions are considered to be of an appropriate size, scale and design. The single storey rear extension includes a flat roof, however notwithstanding this, it is considered, together with the side extension, to be of satisfactory design, sympathetic to the rural surroundings in satisfaction of policies ENV1, ENV5 and ENV6 of the East Herts Local Plan.

## **8.0 Conclusion**

8.1 In summary, the proposal is considered to be inappropriate development as defined by policies GBC1 and ENV5 of the East Herts Local Plan. However, the particular circumstances of the extensions to the adjoining semi-detached house; its situation within a built up area; and the positive benefits in its relationship to the neighbour are considered to amount to the very special circumstances required in this case to justify a departure from policy.

8.2 On this basis I have recommended that planning permission be granted subject to the conditions provided at the head of this report.