

3/09/0953/FP – Part conversion of existing double garage for bed and breakfast accommodation and associated external alterations at Fox and Hounds House, Bromley Lane, Standon SG11 1NX for Mrs. J. Healey

Date of Receipt: 23.06.09

Type: Full

Parish: STANDON

Ward: THUNDRIDGE AND STANDON

RECOMMENDATION

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

1. Three year time limit (1T121)
2. The building and the proposed internal layout as shown on drawing no. P.01 shall be used for bed and breakfast accommodation in connection with the main dwelling on the site known as Fox and Hound House and no other purposes including any other purpose in Class C3 of the schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) order 1987.

Reason: To ensure that no alternative use is made of the premises which would be harmful to the character and appearance of the Rural Area.

Summary of Reasons for Decision

The proposal has been considered with regard to the policies of the Development Plan (Hertfordshire County Structure, Minerals Local Plan, Waste Local Plan and East Herts Local Plan) and in particular policies ENV1, GBC2, GBC3, LRC10 and BH12. The balance of the considerations having regard to these policies in this case and that there is an identified local need and the proposal would not be harmful to the character and appearance of the Rural Area or the aims and objectives of the Council's Rural Area policy is that planning permission should be granted.

_____ (095309FP.FM)

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The application site is shown on the attached OS extract.
- 1.2 The site lies within the Rural Area beyond the Metropolitan Green Belt. The main dwellinghouse within the site, Fox and Hounds House is a

3/09/0953/FP

Grade II Listed Building, and has a newer detached double garage to the front of the dwelling. The site is enclosed by an extensive hedgerow and has a large gravel drive.

- 1.3 The proposal involves converting part of the existing double garage to bed and breakfast accommodation. The garage lies to the south east of the main dwellinghouse and on a prominent corner of Bromley Lane. Internally, the existing garage has a space for two cars and externally has two sets of timber garage doors, two small windows in the north and south elevations at first floor level, and two windows in the ground floor east elevation. In order to accommodate the proposed conversion, a partition wall would be inserted internally through the middle of the double garage at ground floor level, creating a single garage, and one bed and breakfast unit. A staircase and a second floor would also be constructed which would provide a second accommodation unit. Both of the units would provide a bedroom/living/kitchen area and a separate en-suite.
- 1.4 The applicant has outlined that the proposed conversion of the existing garage would provide bed and breakfast accommodation for the business and holiday rental markets, and accommodation for those who use Stansted Airport. Breakfast would be provided by the applicants in the main dwellinghouse, with the kitchen areas used for snack purposes only.

2.0 Site History

- 2.1 The existing double garage was granted planning permission within LPA reference 3/93/1716/FP.

3.0 Consultation Responses

- 3.1 County Highways do not wish to restrict the grant of permission and comment that the proposed conversion will not have a significant impact upon highway safety or capacity. Highways also comment that access for the proposed accommodation would make use of the existing driveway, and sufficient on-site parking and vehicle space will be retained, despite the loss of one garage space.

4.0 Parish Council Representations

- 4.1 Standon Parish Council was consulted on the application and has no objections.

5.0 Other Representations

- 5.1 The application has been advertised by way of press and site notices, and neighbour notification.
- 5.2 One letter of objection has been received from No2 Bromley Hall Cottages. They raise concerns that the conversion of the existing garage will result in a loss of privacy to their first floor bedroom window, particularly from the first floor window in the north elevation of the existing garage. They also raise concerns that bed and breakfast accommodation in the locality will result in an increase of traffic and additional noise disturbance.

6.0 Policy

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

ENV1	Design and Environmental Quality
GBC2	The Rural Area beyond the Green Belt
GBC3	Appropriate Development within the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt
BH12	Development Affecting the Setting of a listed Building
LRC10	Tourism

7.0 Considerations

- 7.1 The determining issues in this instance are whether the development is appropriate in the Rural Area and the impact of the proposal on neighbour amenity and highway safety.

Rural Area considerations

- 7.2 The site lies within the Rural Area beyond the Metropolitan Green Belt wherein permission will only be given for appropriate development as outlined in Policy GBC3 of the Local Plan. Policy GBC3 of the East Herts Local Plan specifies development or a change of use which are considered to contribute appropriate development in the Rural Area. The proposed development is not specified in policy GBC3 as appropriate

3/09/0953/FP

development and as such it is necessary to consider whether the proposed bed and breakfast accommodation would preserve the character, appearance and openness of the Rural Area, and would not conflict with the aims and objectives of the Council's Rural Area policy.

- 7.3 Arguably, the garage could be used as bed and breakfast accommodation ancillary to the main house without the need for planning permission. However, having regard to the facilities provided (kitchenette) that could allow the units to be used as independent accommodation, the proposal is not considered to be ancillary accommodation to the main dwelling house, and as such planning permission is required.
- 7.4 Taking into account the type and level of accommodation the proposal would provide, Officers do not consider that the levels of activity at the site would increase so significantly that there would be an impact on the rural character of the area. The small size of the accommodation, which in practical terms would provide accommodation at the most for two sharing couples, means that the commercial use of the building is very small scale.
- 7.5 Policy LRC10 of the Local Plan encourages suitable tourism proposals in appropriate locations, giving favourable consideration to suitable proposals for visitor accommodation within East Herts. It also outlines that the adaptation and re-use of existing buildings for small-scale visitor accommodation in the countryside may be permitted.
- 7.6 The applicant has submitted information with the application that demonstrates that there is a local need for accommodation for tourists and visitors to the area. In particular, the Tourist Board has submitted information outlining that as the London 2012 Olympic Games would be in close proximity to the area, a demand for accommodation will increase significantly.
- 7.7 Taking into account the evidence of local need and that the level of activity associated with the use would not be harmful to the character and appearance of the rural area, officers consider that a departure from policy in this instance would not be harmful to the aims and objectives of the Council's Rural Area policy and would to some degree assist rural diversification.
- 7.8 It is also a material consideration that a recent planning application for the conversion of a detached garage to bed and breakfast accommodation at another property in Bromley Lane which is also sited within the rural area was allowed on appeal. The Council refused the

application as it was considered that such a conversion would result in a harmful impact upon the character of the Rural Area. However, the Inspector concluded that the bed and breakfast met a local need and further commented that such accommodation was appropriate to a rural area and assisted with rural diversification, and as such complied with Policies GBC2 and GBC3 of the Local Plan.

Alterations

- 7.9 To accommodate the development, it is also proposed to change the existing ground floor window on the north west elevation of the garage to a single entrance door. This door would provide access to both of the bed and breakfast units at ground and first floor levels. It is Officers opinion that the proposed alteration to the garage would not result in a harmful impact upon the character and appearance of the Rural Area. Taking into account the size and design of the proposed door, and its siting behind a mature hedgerow, it is considered that it would be sympathetic to and in keeping with the character and appearance of the street scene, and would preserve the openness of the Rural Area and the setting of the adjacent Listed Building. The proposed external alteration to the existing garage would therefore accord with Policies ENV1 and BH12 of the East Herts Local Plan.

Neighbour amenity

- 7.10 With regards to neighbour impact, the representations from No2 Bromley Cottages have been taken into account. Taking into consideration that the first floor garage window retains a distance of over 16metres to the front wall of No2 and that the first floor of the garage could be used as ancillary residential accommodation by members of the household of Fox and Hounds House without the need for planning permission, Officers do not consider that the proposal would create such an adverse impact upon residential amenity from overlooking or loss of privacy to warrant refusal of the application. With regards to noise and disturbance, the scale of the bed and breakfast proposed is very small and Officers consider that the scale and nature of the occupation and any traffic movements is unlikely to be very different from typical residential use of a property, which would include traffic movements at various times of day and night as well as visitors from time to time.

Highway safety

- 7.11 Turning to highway safety, taking into account the comments and recommendation of approval from County Highways, that there is sufficient parking and turning space on site for at least 5No. cars, excluding the garage that is to be retained and that the development would use the existing site access; Officers do not consider that converting part of the existing garage to be used as breakfast accommodation would have an impact upon highway safety.

8.0 Conclusion

- 8.1 In conclusion, the use of part of the existing garage as bed and breakfast accommodation would not significantly affect the character, appearance or the openness of the Rural Area beyond the Metropolitan Green Belt. The proposal would not increase traffic movements to the site substantially and would not result in a considerable increase in noise and disturbance to neighbouring properties or to the rural locality. The proposal would not create an adverse impact upon neighbouring amenity and would not have an impact upon highway safety. Accordingly, it is recommended that the application be approved subject to the conditions set out at the commencement of this report.