

a) 3/10/0541/FP and b) 3/10/0542/LB – Two storey rear extension, reconfiguration and extension of dormer windows, and internal alterations at Hadham End, Medcalf Hill, Widford, Ware, SG12 8TA for Mr and Mrs Robert Coles.

Date of Receipt: a) 24.03.2010
b) 24.03.2010

Type: a) Full – Other
b) Listed Building Consent

Parish: WIDFORD

Ward: HUNSDON

RECOMMENDATION

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

1. Three year time limit (1T12)

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 GBC3, ENV1, ENV5, ENV6 of the Local Plan. The balance of the considerations having regard to those policies and Planning Policy Statement 5 – Planning for the Historic Environment is that permission should be granted.

b) That listed building consent be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. Listed building three year time limit (1T14)
2. Samples of materials (2E12)
3. Listed building (new windows) (8L03)
4. Listed building (new doors) (8L04)
5. Listed building (new plasterwork) (8L05)
6. Listed building (new brickwork) (8L06)
7. Listed building (new weatherboarding) (8L07)
8. Listed building (new external rendering) (8L08)

a) 3/10/0541/FP and b) 3/10/0542/LB

9. Listed building (new rainwater goods) (8L09)
10. Listed building (making good) (8L10)
11. Repairs schedule (8L11)
12. No development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of recording architectural and historic assets within the listed building, in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To secure the protection and proper provision of architectural and historic assets in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 5 – Planning for the Historic Environment.

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). The balance of the considerations having regard to those policies and Planning Policy Statement 5 – Planning for the Historic Environment is that consent should be granted.

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1.0 Background

- 1.1 The application site is located within the Rural Area along Medcalf Hill, to the North of the settlement of Widford as shown on the attached OS extract.
- 1.2 The application property, known as Hadham End, is a grade II listed dwelling of timber frame construction. The application property is characterised by its steeply pitched gable end roof and part red brick, part plastered exterior. The property has been extended over time with a single storey flat roof rear extension and detached double garage/office building. The property is situated in a prominent location adjacent to Medcalf Hill and set within its own grounds which extend some 75 metres East and ascend steeply away from the rear of the dwelling.

a) 3/10/0541/FP and b) 3/10/0542/LB

1.3 The application seeks planning permission and listed building consent for a two storey rear extension, reconfigured and extended dormer windows, relocation of the internal staircase and other internal alterations. The proposed two storey rear extension, which would replace the existing flat roof rear extension, would be 8.1metres in length, 7.4metres in width and 6.3metres in height with a hipped roof. Adjoining the proposed extension would be a single storey rear lean-to extension and side porch. The existing front and rear flat roof dormer windows would be reconfigured into 4no. smaller pitched roof dormers with proposed internal alteration, including relocation of an internal staircase, to accommodate the alterations to the roof and the addition of the two storey rear extension.

2.0 Site History

2.1 The relevant planning history at the application site is as follows:-

LPA Reference	Description	Decision
3/87/1089/FP, 3/87/1192/LB	Construction of pitched roof to garage and pitched roof extension to existing garage	Approved with conditions
3/80/0114/FP	First floor rear extension and staircase	Approved with conditions
3/71/1821/FP	Erection of a building comprising a stable, animal food store and garage as amended by revised drawings	Approved with conditions
3/70/0957/FP	Erection of extension to form playroom and lobby	Approved with conditions
3/69/0621/FP	Erection of extension at rear to provide additional living accommodation	Approved with conditions
3/54/0203/FP	Garage and new access	Approved with conditions

2.2 It should also be noted that planning permission and listed building consent was recently refused for a single and two storey rear extension, and reconfigured dormer windows (LPA Ref: 3/09/1816/FP and 3/09/1817/LB) as it was considered that the proposed two storey rear extension, cumulatively with other extensions added to the property, would disproportionately alter the size of the original dwelling, and the resultant dwelling would be out of keeping with the character and appearance of the original dwelling, to the detriment of the character of the Rural Area, and the setting of the listed building. It was also considered that the size, number and design of the proposed dormer windows, would be out of keeping with,

a) 3/10/0541/FP and b) 3/10/0542/LB

and detrimental to the character and appearance of the existing building and the setting of the listed building.

3.0 Consultation Responses

- 3.1 The Council's Conservation Officer has commented that the principal concerns regarding mass, scale and design have been addressed resulting in a more sympathetic two storey rear extension to the principal listed building and its setting. Following the requested structural survey to support the proposed reconfigured dormer windows to the front and rear roofslopes of the property, it is evident that the flat roof dormers are of poor construction and detrimental to the long term future stability of the listed building. Therefore the proposed gable end dormers to the front and rear, although uncharacteristic to the evolution of the building, are considered acceptable, as they reflect and build a relationship with the gable end of the roofscape they are located on, in addition to creating added interest within the roofscape. This said, the black painted timber with white render infill proposed to the front elevation dormers is considered visually dominant against the historic brick façade.
- 3.2 The main concern with regards to the internal layout to accommodate the extension and dormers was the loss of the listed building's principal staircase. However, it is apparent that the staircase is of little historic value and its removal to accommodate a more coherent layout is acceptable. It is suggested that all opening up works, to provide new accesses within the principal building is subject to a 'making good' and recording condition. In summary, the current proposal for a rear extension and reconfigured dormers is considered acceptable. It is however recommended that the material choice to the front dormer windows is reconsidered.
- 3.3 English Heritage does not wish to offer any comments on this occasion, and comment that the applications should be determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance, and on the basis of the Council's expert conservation advice.

4.0 Parish Council Representations

- 4.1 Widford Parish Council has no objections to the proposal.

5.0 Other Representations

- 5.1 The applications have been advertised by way of press notice, site notice and neighbour notification.

a) 3/10/0541/FP and b) 3/10/0542/LB

5.2 No letters of representation have been received in respect of these applications.

6.0 Policy

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

GBC3	Appropriate Development in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt
ENV1	Design and Environmental Quality
ENV5	Extensions to Dwellings
ENV6	Extensions to Dwelling – Criteria

In addition to the above it is considered that Planning Policy Statement 5 – Planning for the Historic Environment forms a material consideration within this application.

7.0 Considerations

7.1 The relevant planning considerations in respect of these applications are:-

- The principle of development within the Rural Area;
- The impact on the character and appearance of the existing listed dwelling and its setting;
- The impact on the amenities of neighbouring residential occupiers.

Principle of development

7.2 The application site is located within the Rural Area wherein planning permission will not be given for the construction of new buildings for purposes other than those specified within Policy GBC3. Whilst there is no objection in principle to limited extensions and alterations to dwellings within the Rural Area, Policy ENV5 expects extensions to dwellings which fall outside the main settlements and Category 1 and 2 Villages 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 It has been calculated that the floor area of the original dwelling was approximately 214 sq.m in size however, the dwelling has benefited from extensions and alterations over time. In particular, the single storey rear extension (53.6 sq.m) and detached double garage/office building (80.7 sq.m) have resulted in an increase in the floor area of the original dwelling

a) 3/10/0541/FP and b) 3/10/0542/LB

of approximately 62.8%. The proposed two storey extension, which would replace the single storey rear extension, would result in an increase of approximately 133.3 sq.m in the floor area of the original dwelling and coupled with the previous additions would result in an increase of approximately 100% in the floor area of the original dwelling. Officers consider that this increase in size cannot be considered as 'limited extensions' to the dwelling and would form a departure from the Local Plan. It is therefore necessary to consider whether in this case special circumstances exist that clearly outweigh the harm by reason of inappropriateness or any other harm to the Rural Area.

- 7.4 It has been noted that the existing dwelling benefits from a modern flat roof rear extension which projects 9.6metres from the rear of the dwelling. The proposed two storey rear extension would occupy the existing footprint of this extension and although it would be materially larger in size than the existing extension, it is considered that the hipped roof, which would be set below the ridge of the main dwelling, and the part single storey lean-to extension at the rear would be more sympathetic to the character and appearance of the listed building compared with the existing rear addition, which does not form part of the original fabric of the listed building. Furthermore, it is considered that the proposed development would be limited to the rear of the application property and largely screened by the main dwelling from the adjacent Medcalf Hill. Taking into consideration the topography of the land, which rises steeply from the rear of the dwelling, Officers consider that this would largely screen the proposed extension from the surrounding area, and therefore it is considered that the proposed two storey extension would be unlikely to encroach on the openness of the surrounding area any more than the existing extension.
- 7.5 The applicant has also indicated that the existing dwelling is currently vacant and in a state of poor structural repair, requiring maintenance works and refurbishment. Within the submitted Inspection Report it is explained that the existing dormer windows are of poor construction and likely to result in structural instability within the roof space and ground floor of the dwelling should they remain in situ. The proposal therefore seeks to address these concerns through the reconfiguration of the 2no. flat roof dormer windows into 4no. smaller pitched roof dormer windows and relocation of the internal staircase to simplify the internal layout and bring the standard of construction up to date. Officers therefore consider that the current proposal would enable the long-term viable use and structural stability of this heritage asset which is a material consideration as outlined within Planning Policy Statement 5 – Planning for the Historic Environment.

a) 3/10/0541/FP and b) 3/10/0542/LB

7.6 Taking into consideration those reasons outlined above, it is considered that, whilst the proposed development would result in additional floor space being created within the building, it would not materially alter its footprint, nor would it be harmful to the openness of the surrounding Rural Area. Furthermore, it is considered that the proposed development would enable the long term retention of this Grade II listed building. In conclusion, it is considered that there are special circumstances in this case to warrant a departure from the Rural Area policy.

The impact on the character and appearance of the existing listed dwelling and its setting

7.7 It is considered that the proposed development would be acceptable in principle. However, it has been noted that planning permission and listed building consent were previously refused for a single and two storey rear extension and reconfigured dormer windows (LPA Ref: 3/09/1816/FP, 3/09/1817/LB), therefore consideration turns to whether these previous reasons for refusal have been sufficiently overcome by the current proposal.

It is considered that the proposed two storey rear extension has been significantly reduced in size by approximately 4 metres in length and 3 metres in width. Furthermore, it is considered that the proposed hipped roof, which is set below the roof ridge of the main dwelling, would be subservient to the main dwelling and represents a simplified design, more in keeping with the traditional character and appearance of the listed building.

7.8 Turning to the proposed roof alterations, the number of dormer windows has been reduced from 7 to 4 and it is considered that their pitched roof design would be more reflective of the gable end roofscape of the main dwelling, compared with the previous proposal. It has been noted that the Inspection Report has indicated that the building is in need of structural repair to the roof and dormer windows in particular, which it is considered the current proposal would address to enable to the long term retention of this listed building. In respect of the relocation of the staircase and other internal alterations, the Council's Conservation Officer has commented that it is apparent that the staircase is of little historic value and its removal to accommodate a more coherent layout would be considered acceptable subject to making good and recording conditions, which it is considered should be recommended in the interest of the historic and architectural character of the building.

7.9 With regards to the impact of the proposal on the setting of the listed building, it is considered that the proposed development would occupy the same footprint as the existing dwelling and although the proposed two storey extension would be materially larger than the existing extension, it is considered that its sensitive design, coupled with the modest sized dormer

a) 3/10/0541/FP and b) 3/10/0542/LB

windows would not be detrimental to the setting of the listed building. Furthermore, it is considered that the proposed development would be confined to the rear of the dwelling and as such, the wider setting of the application property, which occupies a prominent location along Medcalf Hill, would be retained.

The impact on the amenities of neighbouring residential occupiers

- 7.10 The application property is set within a large site which is situated 40 metres away from its nearest neighbours, known as Field View to the North, Plovers to the South and 16 metres away from Tall Trees to the West. It is considered that nearby residential properties are situated within spacious grounds and the surrounding area to the East of the application site is open agricultural land. Therefore it is considered that the proposed extension would not be detrimental to the amenities of nearby residential occupiers.

8.0 Conclusion

- 8.1 Having regard to the above considerations, it is considered that the proposed development would be acceptable in this instance and that special circumstances exist to outweigh the harm, by reason of inappropriateness within the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt.
- 8.2 The proposed development would not be detrimental to the character and appearance of the existing listed dwelling or its setting, and would enable the long term retention of this listed heritage asset. Furthermore, the proposal would not be detrimental to the openness or rural character of the surrounding Rural Area, or the amenities of neighbouring occupiers.
- 8.3 It is therefore considered that there are circumstances in this case to allow permission to be granted contrary to Policy GBC3 of the East Herts Local Plan, and it is therefore recommended that planning permission and listed building consent be granted subject to the conditions which are outlined at the head of the report.