

5g 3/10/0687/FP – Ground floor extension with ramped access at Spellbrook JMI School, London Road, Spellbrook, CM23 4BA for Spellbrook School

Date of Receipt: 10.05.2010

Type: Full - Minor

Parish: SAWBRIDGEWORTH

Ward: SAWBRIDGEWORTH

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following condition:-

1. Three year time limit (1T12)

Directives

1. Other legislation (01OL)

Summary of Reasons for Decision

The proposal has been considered with regard to the policies of the Development Plan (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 SD2, GBC1, and ENV1. The balance of the considerations having regard to those policies, and other material considerations, is that permission should be granted.

_____ (068710FP.MP)

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The site comprises a primary school set within an area of some 1.04Ha and sited within the settlement of Spellbrook within the Metropolitan Green Belt. The site fronts onto London Road, the main road linking Bishops Stortford to Harlow, with open agricultural fields to the south and west. The application site is shown on the attached OS extract.
- 1.2 The siting of the extension is to the southern elevation of the building and extends upon the existing administration area of the building, to provide an increased floor area of administrative space and a new access way with a ramp. The existing building features some elements of architectural merit in terms of the materials of construction and the juxtaposition of the various roof forms which all highlight the building's historic evolution and add to its character. The elevation of the building onto which the extension is proposed is a contemporary part of the building with a flat roof and large floor to ceiling windows.

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2.0 Site History

2.1 The following planning history is of relevance:-

3/04/2350/CC	Car park and additional hard play area	Approved with conditions
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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 this proposal.

5.0 Other Representations

5.1 The application has been advertised by way of 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:-

SD2	Settlement Hierarchy
GBC1	Appropriate Development in the Green Belt
ENV1	Design and Environmental Quality

7.0 Considerations

Principle of Development

7.1 The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt wherein inappropriate development will not be permitted. Policy GBC1 lists developments which are classed as appropriate; however this does not include extensions to existing schools. Very special circumstances must therefore be demonstrated that clearly outweigh the harm caused by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm.

- 7.2 In this case the applicant has indicated within the design and access statement that there is currently insufficient office space for the school's growing administration needs. From the plans attached with the application, Officers are of the opinion that the current administration areas are of a limited size and appear congested in their layout and relationship with other rooms and circulation space. Officers therefore acknowledge the difficulties that the existing layout has in terms of the effective administration of the school. Additionally, Officers also note that the proposal will allow improved access with the provision of an access ramp and wider access doors for disabled people.
- 7.3 The proposed extension to the school building increases the footprint marginally and effectively 'squares off' the built form, and will have limited impact on the Green Belt. Therefore, on the basis of the information submitted and in particular the need for the accommodation, as outlined above, Officers consider that very special circumstances exist to outweigh Green Belt policy.

Scale and Design

- 7.4 The proposed extension provides an approximate floor area increase of 30 square metres which, given the existing floor area of the building, is considered to be a modest increase in the footprint. The proposal seeks to replicate the existing form and design of the building with a similar design of extension and pallet of materials. Overall the size, scale, form and design of the extension is considered to be acceptable in the context of the site.

Other Matters

- 7.5 It is considered that no harm will arise to neighbouring amenity from the proposal given the distance to neighbouring properties.

8.0 Conclusion

- 8.1 Overall, although the development cannot be considered as appropriate development in the Green Belt, Officers consider that circumstances exist to outweigh this policy objection. The existing layout and scale of the administrative part of the building is insufficient for the needs of the school, and the proposal will also allow improved access into the building for disabled people. Furthermore, it is considered that the building is acceptable in scale and design and will have limited wider impact on the Green Belt.
- 8.2 The application is therefore recommended for approval subject to the condition set out above.