

Agenda Item 5j

3/10/1020/FP – Two storey extension at Camwell Orchard, Black Bridge Lane, Much Hadham, Herts, SG10 6BB for Mr Rodney Munday

Date of Receipt: 08.06.2010

Type: Full – Other

Parish: MUCH HADHAM

Ward: MUCH HADHAM

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be **REFUSED** for the following reasons:-

1. The proposed two storey extension, by reason of its scale, siting, form and design, would be of excessive size in relation to the existing dwelling, and out of keeping with its rural character and that of the area as a whole. The proposal would thereby be contrary to Policies GBC3, ENV1 and ENV5 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007.
2. The proposed two storey extension, by reason of its size, siting, form and design, would result in a building that would be detrimental to the setting of the nearby group of listed buildings known as Camwell Hall. The proposal would thereby be contrary to Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment.

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1.0 Background

- 1.1 The application site is located to the North West of the settlement of Much Hadham, within the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt, as shown on the attached OS extract.
- 1.2 The application property is a one and a half storey detached agricultural workers dwelling. The property, which is weather boarded with a slate roof, is situated within its own grounds approximately 50 metres South of the nearby cluster of Grade II Listed buildings, known as Camwell Hall, which is partially visible from the application site.
- 1.3 The proposal is for a two storey extension. The proposed extension would project 13.1 metres from the front of the dwelling and would be 4.7 metres wide and 7.0 metres in height. It is proposed that the external finish of the extension would be timber framed with render.

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2.0 Site History

- 2.1 Planning permission was granted for an agricultural workers dwelling subject to an occupancy condition (LPA Ref: 3/91/0613/FP) at the application site. This is the building which currently exists on site.
- 2.2 The submission of this current application follows the refusal of planning permission for a two storey side extension and formation of a dormer window (LPA Ref: 3/05/2040/FP) for the following reasons:
- The proposed extensions, by reason of their scale, siting, form and design, would be of excessive size in relation to the existing dwelling, and out of keeping with its character and that of the area as a whole.
 - The proposed extensions, by virtue of their size, siting, form and design, would result in a building that would be detrimental to the setting of the nearby group of Listed Buildings.
- 2.2 This application was later dismissed on appeal by the Planning Inspectorate as it was considered that the proposed extension would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the appeal site and the area in its vicinity, and to the setting of the adjacent listed building. The Inspector's decision letter in relation to this appeal is attached as an Appendix to this report.

3.0 Consultation Responses

- 3.1 County Archaeology commented that the application site is located within an Area of Archaeological Significance as identified within the Local Plan. It is considered that there is a reasonable likelihood of significant archaeological remains being present and that a programme of archaeological works conditions should be recommended.

4.0 Parish Council Representations

- 4.1 Much Hadham Parish Council raised no objections to the proposal. They commented that the applicant and his family need a larger house and this is the principle reason for the proposed extension. As the site is tucked away and does not form part of the 'Wynches hamlet' the Parish Council consider that any objections there might be to the plans on the grounds that the extension would appear out of place are irrelevant and should be disregarded.

5.0 Other Representations

- 5.1 The applications have been advertised by way of site notice and neighbour notification.
- 5.2 6 letters of support for the proposal have been received from residents of Much Hadham.
- 5.3 Mark Prisk MP also wishes to record his support for the application.

6.0 Policy

- 6.1 The relevant Local Plan policies in the determination of 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

In addition to the above it is considered that Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment is of consideration within this application.

7.0 Considerations

- 7.1 The determining issues in relation to this application are as follows:
- The principles of development;
 - The impact of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and surrounding area;
 - The impact of the proposed development on the setting of the adjacent listed buildings;
 - The impact of the proposed development on the amenities of adjoining neighbouring occupiers.

Principle of Development

- 7.2 The application site is designated as falling within the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt, wherein limited extensions and alterations to dwellings will be permitted provided that an extension to a dwelling or the erection of an outbuilding will be of a scale and size (calculated on the enclosed habitable floor space) 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, in accordance with Policies GBC3 and ENV5.

- 7.3 As outlined earlier in this report, planning permission was refused and later dismissed on appeal for a two storey side extension to the dwelling (LPA Ref: 3/05/2040/FP) which is a material consideration in the determination of this planning application. It should be noted that the floor area of the original dwelling is approximately 145 square metres (sq.m). This does not include the ground floor veranda at the front of the property as this is not enclosed and does not constitute a habitable room. This measurement does include floorspace at ground and first floors and space in the eaves. It is measured externally. The previously refused extension was 5.8 metres wide, 8.9 metres in length and 7.1 metres in height to the ridge of the pitched roof. The floor area of the previously refused extension is approximately 103 sq.m and represented an increase in the size of the dwelling by some 68 per cent. It should be noted that the Planning Inspector gave significant weight to the size and scale of the proposed extension and commented that it “would be comparable with that of the main body of the existing house”, representing “a very substantial addition to the house”.
- 7.4 It has been calculated that the proposed two storey extension now proposed would have a floor area of approximately 112 sq.m which represents some 77 per cent increase in the floor area of the original dwelling. It is therefore considered that the current proposal would be materially larger than the previously refused extension. The applicant has indicated within the Design and Access Statement that the current proposal has been reduced from 5.8 to 4.7 metres in width and by 0.1 metres in height when compared with the previous refusal. However, it has been noted that the length of the proposed extension has been increased from 8.9 to 13.1 metres at first floor level, therefore it is considered that the proposed reduction in the height and width of the extension would not be sufficient to outweigh the harm of the proposed development, by reason of its inappropriateness within the Rural Area.
- 7.5 The applicant has also indicated that the proposed extension “would make possible a steeper roof pitch which helps the height problem in the rooms upstairs”. However, within the Planning Inspector’s report it is acknowledged that the applicant argued that the sloping attic ceilings of the existing dwelling prevent rooms from being properly furnished, and that this necessitates a two storey extension. However, it was the Planning Inspector’s contention that “the sloping ceilings are principally on one side of the house, and although the usable room area is somewhat reduced the existing first floor bedrooms remain of practical dimensions”. It is therefore considered that there has been no change in circumstances since the previous refusal of planning permission and the appeal decision, and that as no special circumstances have been demonstrated since the last application to justify an extension of this size and scale in the Rural Area, to

warrant a departure from Rural Area policy. The extension now proposed is larger than that which was previously refused and dismissed on appeal. Whilst the applicant's desire for additional accommodation is noted, no special circumstances have been demonstrated to justify that permission should now be granted for a larger extension to that which was previously considered to be unacceptable.

- 7.6 Your officers are particularly disappointed that the application has come forward in this way as many hours of officer time have been spent with the applicant since the last appeal. A range of different options have been suggested, all of which seemed more suitable as a solution to the applicants needs. All appear to have been rejected. Whilst it is acknowledged that the existing property is modest, given that it was originally approved with an agricultural worker occupancy condition and because the floorspace is not dissimilar to many modern family houses, it is considered that a decision other than in accordance with policy requirements or the previous appeal decision could reasonably be taken to be quite irrational.

The impact of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and surrounding area

- 7.7 The one and a half storey detached dwelling was originally built on the basis that it was needed in connection with agricultural work. The property is relatively low key and simple in its form and appearance which is reinforced by its weather boarded exterior, low roof ridge and eaves levels over the front veranda, which reflects its rural setting. The roof ridge of the proposed extension would be 0.5 metres higher than the roof of the existing dwelling and at 13.1 metres in length at first floor level, the proposed extension would be substantially larger than the existing modest agricultural workers dwelling. Furthermore, the height and prominent front gable end would be at odds with the scale and proportions of the existing dwelling, resulting in an extension that would dominate the appearance of the existing dwelling to the detriment of its low key character and appearance. It is considered that this would be exacerbated by the eaves height of the extension which does not align with the eaves height at the front of the dwelling and the overtly ornate and poorly designed fenestration. The proposed timber frame and rendered finish, coupled with the timber studs and wind brace feature, has the appearance of an inappropriate 'mock Tudor' pastiche that would be out of keeping with, and detrimental to the character and appearance of the existing dwelling, which the Planning Inspector described as "agricultural/stable like".
- 7.8 As outlined above, it is considered that the one and a half storey dwelling is simple in form and design which reflects its current rural setting. It is

considered that the proposed two storey extension, which is taller than the existing dwelling, overtly ornate in its design and substantial in length, would be conspicuous and incongruous within the surrounding agricultural landscape. This would be exacerbated by the openness of the application site which would give rise to views of the proposed extension from the South and West, which would encroach on the rural landscape and would impose an urban character which is out of keeping with, and detrimental to the locality of Camwell Orchard and its environs.

The impact of the proposed development on the setting of the adjacent listed buildings

- 7.9 It has been noted that the application site is located approximately 50 metres to the South of the cluster of buildings known as Camwell Hall, which are Grade II Listed buildings. In determining the appeal against the previous refusal the Inspector considered that “the house as extended would have a somewhat urban character and not be compatible with this extremely rural setting”. The Inspector commented that “the general openness of the surroundings and the few buildings in the vicinity mean that the appeal property is seen as part of a group with the other buildings”. In his decision he goes on to say that “although the belt of trees separating the appeal property from the farmhouse provides a degree of screening, this does not significantly reduce the impact the extended house would have upon the group as a whole”. The proposed extension would be larger than that which was previously refused and dismissed on appeal, and more urbane in its character and appearance. Having regard therefore to the Inspector’s considerations and the harm they identified in respect of the impact of the development on the setting of Camwell Hall, it is considered that the now larger extension in length will result in a building that would be even more conspicuous and incongruous in relation to the setting of Camwell Hall.

The impact of the proposed development on the amenities of neighbouring occupiers

- 7.10 The application property is situated within open countryside with its nearest neighbour situated some 50 metres to the North at the cluster of properties known as Camwell Hall. The proposed extension would therefore be unlikely to have a detrimental impact on the amenities of nearby residential occupiers thereof.

8.0 Conclusion

- 8.1 Having regard for the application (LPA Ref: 3/05/2040/FP) which was refused and dismissed on appeal and the considerations outlined above, it

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is considered that very special circumstances have not been demonstrated to outweigh the harm of the development by reason of its inappropriateness within the Rural Area. It is therefore concluded that the proposed two storey extension would be inappropriate development within the Rural Area and would be harmful to the setting of the nearby group of buildings at Camwell Hall, which are Grade II Listed buildings.

- 8.2 It is therefore recommended that planning permission be refused for those reasons outlined at the head of the report.

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