

3/07/2718/FP–Erection of agricultural storage barn (retrospective) at Woolmer’s Park, Letty Green for Mr J Godbold

Date of Receipt: 31.12.07

Type: Full

Parish: HERTINGFORDBURY

Ward: HERTFORD – RURAL SOUTH

RECOMMENDATION

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

1. The building hereby permitted shall only be used for agricultural storage purposes and for no other purpose without the prior consent in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To restrict the use of the building to one compatible with the surrounding rural area in accordance with Policy GBC1 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007

2. No external lighting shall be provided without the prior written permission of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the area, and in accordance with Policy ENV1 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007

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, Minerals Local Plan, Waste Local Plan and East Herts Local Plan) and in particular Policies GBC1, GBC7 and ENV1 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007. The balance of the considerations having regard to these policies is that planning permission should be granted.

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1.0 Background

- 1.1 Woolmer's Park comprises a large estate centred on a Grade II* mansion which looks towards the B158 Lower Hatfield Road. The estate is home to Hertfordshire Polo Club and includes 73 hectares of grazing land from which a hay crop is taken each year. The estate buildings are accessed via a private drive off Woolmer's Lane in Letty Green.
- 1.2 The application site is shown on the attached OS extract.
- 1.3 There is a range of working buildings located immediately to the north of the mansion including estate offices, stabling for the polo ponies, an indoor riding arena and other agricultural buildings. The barn now constructed replaced a lean-to barn which was attached to the eastern elevation of the indoor riding arena and which was used to store hay and straw.
- 1.4 The application is for retrospective permission for the recently constructed agricultural storage barn measuring some 315 square metres and rising to a height of 7.3 metres at the ridge.
- 1.5 It is understood that the barn is similar in height to the indoor riding arena to which it is attached and is approximately 1 metre higher than the previous lean-to. It stands on a similar footprint to the lean-to barn which it replaces.
- 1.6 The barn is of standard agricultural appearance and has been designed to be in keeping and to blend in with existing buildings and their surroundings. No further changes are proposed to the existing hard and soft landscaping on the site.
- 1.7 No additional lighting is proposed.
- 1.8 The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt.

2.0 Site History

- 2.1 The site history of the estate over the last ten years is as follows:

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| Planning Ref: | Development | Decision |
|----------------------|---|-----------------|
| 3/06/1031/CL | Existing extension to the club house to provide toilet facilities, additional toilet block and conservatory | Approved |
| 3/02/1073/FP | Toilet and kitchen extensions, conservatory and verandah, detached toilet block | Approved |
| 3/00/1711/FP | Toilet extension, verandah and covered area to existing polo clubhouse (retrospective) | Withdrawn |
| 3/99/1910/OP | Two 4 bed houses with garages | Withdrawn |
| 3/99/1842/FP | Block of 50 stables and associated facilities | Withdrawn |
| 3/99/0083/FP | Re-modelling of South Lodge to form 3 bed house/garage | Approved |
| 3/98/1789/LB | Alterations to Listed Building | Approved |
| 3/98/1788/FP | Alterations and extensions | Approved |
| 3/98/0444/FP | Alterations to Gardeners Cottage to form 3 bed house | Approved |
| 3/98/0441/FP | Alterations and extensions to four cottages | Approved |
| 3/98/0445/LB | Alter existing house to form new 3 bed house | Approved |

3.0 Parish Council Representations

3.1 Hertingfordbury Parish Council has advised it has no comments to make on the application.

4.0 Other Representations

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

4.2 No third party representations have been received at time of writing.

5.0 Policy

5.1 The relevant East Hertfordshire Adopted Local Plan policies applicable to these applications are GBC1 (Appropriate Development in the Green Belt), GBC7 Agricultural Development and ENV1 (Design and Environmental Quality).

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- 5.2 Policy GBC1 permits the construction of new buildings on Green Belt land for agricultural purposes and essential small scale facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation.
- 5.3 Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 (Green Belts) advises that Green Belts have a positive role to play in providing opportunities for access to the open countryside for the urban population and providing opportunities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation.
- 5.4 Policy GBC7 advises that new agricultural buildings will be permitted provided that the building is located within or adjacent to an existing group of buildings. Policy GBC7 also advises that the site should be chosen to minimise the impact of the building on the character and appearance of the site.
- 5.5 Policy GBC7 states that the building should be to a design which is appropriate for its intended use and sympathetic to its surroundings in terms of scale, materials, colour and architectural details.
- 5.6 Policy ENV1 requires that all development proposals are expected demonstrate compatibility with the structure and layout of the surrounding area and relate well to the massing and height of adjacent buildings.

6.0 Considerations

Justification of the Barn

- 6.1 The purpose of the barn is to store large bales of hay and farm related machinery and equipment.
- 6.2 Woolmer's Park has an established use as a Polo Park. However, in addition to this the estate comprises 73 hectares of grazing land from which the hay is cut and stored. This storage is considered to be primarily agricultural storage rather than storage for equestrian purposes given that it originates on the site and is the product of agricultural activity. This is considered to be the case even if the final purpose of the crop is the feed for the polo ponies.
- 6.3 The building is of typical design for an agricultural building, it is appropriate for its intended use and of a matching appearance to the adjacent buildings. Furthermore, it has been located adjacent to an existing group of buildings, thus minimising the impact of the building on the character and appearance of the countryside and the openness of the Green Belt. It is not isolated from other buildings.

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- 6.4 The barn is similar in height and scale to the barn which it replaces. It has a height of 6 metres to its eaves and is just under 7.5 metres high at its ridge. As such, it is similar in height to the existing building to which it is attached which is used as the indoor riding arena, and approximately 1 metre higher than the previous lean-to.
- 6.5 The barn is well screened by existing planting and I therefore agree with the applicant's view that there is no need for additional planting in this case.

Neighbour Amenity

- 6.6 It is considered by officers that the storage barn will not adversely affect the amenities of local residents. The closest properties are to the north and west of the building however, they will have few views of it. As it replaces a previous barn it is not considered that the use of the building will have any impact that did not previously occur. Other occupiers some distance to the east of the building will have views of it, but given the distance and its provision as a replacement building again I cannot see that the impact is unduly harmful.

Further Considerations

- 6.7 No representations have been received from neighbouring residents.
- 6.8 It is considered that the barn is not unduly prejudicial to the openness of the Green Belt, nor does it detract from visual amenity. The barn is of a design and materials of construction which are in keeping with the adjacent buildings. The barn is located within a working yard which is screened by established tree belts. It is not easily visible from outside of the estate. Furthermore, the barn in itself would not appear to have any detrimental effect on the amenities of nearby residents.

7.0 Conclusion

- 7.1 On this basis I conclude that the barn is appropriate development within the Green Belt and that its retention will not result in harm to the purposes of the Green Belt. I have accordingly recommended that planning permission be granted subject to the conditions at the head of this report.