

5L 3/11/1759/FP – Erection of single storey and two storey extensions at 254, Hertingfordbury Road, Hertford, Hertfordshire, SG14 2LG for Diarmid Mackenzie

Date of Receipt: 04.10.2011

Type: Full – Other

Parish: HERTFORD

Ward: HERTFORD CASTLE

RECOMMENDATION:

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

1. Time limit (1T121)
2. Approved plans (2E102; 002/B, 011/A, 013/A, 014/B, 015/A, 016/A, 017/B, 018/B, 019/B, 020/B, 022, 101, 102, 254HR_S(A), 254HR_GA, 254HR_EA and 254HR_1)
3. Notwithstanding the details shown on the approved plans, no development shall commence on site until details of the external materials of construction of the extensions hereby permitted, together with any external treatment of the existing house itself, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with those approved details.

Reason: To achieve a consistent appearance between the original house and proposed extensions appropriate to the character of the Hertingfordbury conservation area and in keeping with policies BH5 and BH6 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007 and national Planning Policy Statement 5 – Planning for the Historic Environment

4. Tree retention and protection (4P053)
5. Hedge retention and protection (4P063)

Directive:

1. Other legislation (01OL1)

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 ENV1, ENV2, ENV5, ENV6, ENV11, GBC1, BH5, BH6 and Planning Policy Guidance 2 – Green Belts and Planning Policy Statement 5 – Planning for the Historic Environment. The balance of the considerations having regard to those policies is that permission should be granted.

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1.0 Background:

- 1.1 The application site is shown on the attached OS extract. The property is a detached house, part of a group on the western approach to Hertingfordbury. The site is adjacent to a terrace of listed dwellings at 246-252 (evens), and opposite the car park and buildings at Shepherds, currently the subject of proposals for re-development (ref's: 3/11/1641/FP and 3/11/1642/FP). The site is within the Conservation Area of Hertingfordbury which is a Category 3 village within the Green Belt.
- 1.2 The property lies on a roughly triangular plot of land of approximately 23m depth at its widest north-south point. The house is located at the east end of the site, with the front door to the east elevation, although the present layout indicates that this is probably not used as the main entrance.
- 1.3 The proposal is for a single-storey extension (north elevation) and two-storey extension to the rear (west elevation).
- 1.4 Conservation Area Consent was granted in November of last year for the demolition of the existing conservatory and single-storey side extension to the dwelling house.

2.0 Site History:

- 2.1 The planning history of the site is as follows:
 - 3/97/0110/FP – Conservatory – Approved February 1997
 - 3/11/1760/LC – Demolition of garage, side extension and conservatory – Approved November 2011

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3.0 Consultation Responses:

- 3.1 County Highways have no objections to the proposed extensions.
- 3.2 The Conservation Officer has no objection to the principle of the development and comments that the extensions “will not impact on the views of listed buildings or views within the conservation area”. Its design is contemporary and imaginative but the Officer feels that it sits awkwardly against the existing house and she considers that this could be mitigated to an extent by rendering the house white. On balance, however, considering the limited visibility of the extensions, she considers that they would have no detrimental impact on the Conservation Area or setting of any listed building.
- 3.3 The County Archaeologist has no objections to the proposals

4.0 Town Council Representations:

- 4.1 Hertford Town Council has no objections to the proposed extensions.

5.0 Other Representations:

- 5.1 The application has been advertised by way of press notice, 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:

GBC1	Green Belt
ENV1	Design and Environmental Quality
ENV2	Landscaping
ENV5	Extensions to Dwellings
ENV6	Extensions to Dwellings - Criteria
ENV11	Protection of Existing Hedgerows and Trees
BH5	Extensions and Alterations to Unlisted Buildings in Conservation Areas
BH6	New Developments in Conservation Areas
OSV3	Category 3 Villages

6.2 In addition, the following National policy guidance is relevant:

Planning Policy Guidance 2 – Green Belts

Planning Policy Statement 5 – Planning for the Historic Environment

7.0 Considerations:

7.1 The site lies within the Green Belt, and also within the Hertingfordbury Conservation Area. The main considerations are a) whether the extent of development proposed is ‘appropriate’ in terms of Green Belt policy and if not, whether there are ‘very special circumstances’ that would clearly outweigh the harm caused by inappropriateness and any other harm b) whether the design of the extensions is acceptable, and c) whether the proposals preserve or enhance the character of the Conservation Area.

Green Belt policy

7.2 Policies GBC1 and ENV5 of the Local Plan state that ‘limited extensions’ to dwellings in the Green Belt will be considered appropriate in principle, and this reflects similar guidance set out in PPG2.

7.3 The house has an original floor area of 114m², which does not include the conservatory or side extension, the demolition of which has been granted consent. The extensions would have a volume of around 100m², or around an 88% increase in floor area.

7.4 It is considered that this increase in size cannot be considered as a ‘limited extension’ of the dwelling and as such, the proposal would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt. It is therefore necessary to consider whether there are any very special circumstances in this case which would clearly outweigh the harm caused by inappropriateness and any other harm.

7.5 As regards any other harm caused by the proposal, Officers consider that the impact on the openness of the Green Belt from the proposed extensions would not be material. The site is screened by the surrounding trees and, although the extensions would represent a significant addition to the overall size of the property, the impact beyond the application site would be very limited.

Design

7.6 The extensions would be of emphatically modern design, with mainly

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timber boarding exteriors and some yellow brick exteriors. The roofs to the extension would be curved, and constructed in zinc. The Conservation Officer has expressed concerns about the relationship between the extensions and the original house, and suggests that the rendering of the house would make the relationship less incongruous. A condition is therefore recommended to ensure that the materials of construction of the extensions, together with any rendering of the existing house, are approved prior to any development commencing on site.

- 7.7 The new extensions have been designed to be read together, with the slopes of the roofs aligning, in spite of the rear extension having a convex curved roof, while the side extension has a concave curved roof. In addition, the extension roofs would be respectful of, and subordinate to, the roof of the original house.
- 7.8 The extensions would not be readily visible in the surrounding Conservation Area. The property is screened on all sides by extensive and densely packed trees and other vegetation growth, and is not clearly visible from Hertingfordbury Road. The development would therefore have limited impact on the Conservation Area, nor would there be any impact from the development on the setting of any nearby listed buildings. However, to ensure that the materials would be acceptable for the site, a condition is recommended to require that these approved by the Council prior to work commencing.
- 7.9 The overall result of the proposed extensions would, in Officers opinion, result in a high standard of design which would preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Other matters

- 7.10 The property is detached, sufficiently well screened and the extensions far enough from any neighbouring property that they would have no material impact on the amenities of any neighbouring occupiers.
- 7.11 Officers therefore consider that 'very special circumstances' exist in this case that clearly outweigh any harm caused to the Green Belt and therefore recommend that planning permission can be granted. Given the importance of the surrounding landscaping, however, a condition is recommended to ensure that this is protected during and after the construction of the development. This condition would be in accordance with policies ENV2 and ENV11 of the Local Plan.

8.0 Conclusion:

- 8.1 The proposals represent a more than 'limited' enlargement of the property when taken together with existing extensions to the house. However, the development would not result in any significant loss of openness within the Green Belt, nor result in any harm to the character of Hertingfordbury being consistent with extensions added to other dwellings in the area.
- 8.2 The design is somewhat awkward for the house but carefully considered and contemporary. Given the established screening, it will not be viewed widely in the surroundings and there would be no loss of amenity or privacy to neighbouring occupiers as a result of the proposed extensions.
- 8.3 For these reasons it is considered that there are very special circumstances in this case which would clearly outweigh any harm to the Green Belt. It is therefore recommended that planning permission be granted for the proposed development, subject to the conditions outlined above.