

5i **3/11/2110/FP – Conversion of garage with the addition of a first floor to create annexe with a single storey link to main dwelling and car port to side of garage conversion at Oakleighs, 1 Crossroads, Epping Green, Hertford, Hertfordshire, SG13 8NG for Mr and Mrs R and S Perry**

Date of Receipt: 08.12.2011

Type: Full – Other

Parish: LITTLE BERKHAMPSTED

Ward: HERTFORD – RURAL SOUTH

RECOMMENDATION:

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

1. Time limit (1T121)
2. Approved plans (2E103); (10768-P001-A and 10768-S001)
3. Matching materials (2E134)
4. The building hereby permitted shall only be used for a purpose incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling house and shall not be occupied as a separate dwelling or for any other purpose without the prior consent in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the Local Planning Authority retains control over any future development which may be inappropriate within the Metropolitan Green Belt.

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, ENV5, ENV6, ENV8, OSV3 and GBC1 and Planning Policy Guidance 2 – Green Belts. 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. It is a semi-detached cottage located in the village of Epping Green in the south of the district. The cottage has been extended to the rear with a part single, part two-storey extension and to the side with a single-storey extension. A double garage was also approved for the dwelling. The site is located within the Green Belt.
- 1.2 The property lies on a roughly triangular plot of land with a frontage onto the road of approximately 75m. The house lies in the south-east corner of the site, slightly angled away from the road. The garage in turn is angled away from the house, with the flank elevation nearest the road roughly parallel to it. The garage is accessed by doors in the north-west wall.
- 1.3 The proposal is for the conversion of the garage into a residential annexe with the provision of first floor accommodation within the roof space. A car port with a single space would be added to the south-west wall of the garage. A single-storey extension would link the garage and house.

2.0 Site History:

- 2.1 The site formerly comprised a much smaller curtilage around the cottage, with the majority of the site being separate from it. The residential curtilage was subsequently extended to encompass the entire existing site.
- 2.2 The following applications relate to the part of the site previously separated from the residential cartilage:
 - 287-55 – Widen access – Approved April 1955
 - 740-56 – Agricultural cottage – Approved
 - 158-57 – Bungalow and garage – Approved March 1957
 - 1368-62 – Residential development – Refused September 1962
- 2.3 The following applications relate to Oakleigh Cottage itself:
 - 1153-75 – Two-storey rear extension and double garage – Approved March 1976
 - 805-76 – Single-storey side extension – Approved September 1976

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3.0 Consultation Responses:

3.1 County Highways have no objection to the development as sufficient parking would be retained on site and traffic generation is unlikely to change.

4.0 Parish Council Representations:

4.1 Little Berkhamsted Parish Council has no comment on the application.

5.0 Other Representations:

5.1 The application has been advertised by way of site notice and neighbour notification.

5.2 No representations have been received as a result.

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
ENV5	Extensions to Dwellings
ENV6	Extensions to Dwellings – Criteria
ENV8	Residential Annexes
OSV3	Category 3 Villages

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

Planning Policy Guidance 2 – Green Belts

7.0 Considerations:

7.1 The site lies within the Green Belt. The main considerations are: firstly, whether the extent of development proposed is appropriate in the Green Belt and if not, whether there are other considerations to which such weight can be given that they clearly outweigh any harm to the Green Belt and constitute 'very special circumstances' to justify inappropriate development. Secondly, whether the proposed annexe is considered to otherwise accord with the requirements of policy ENV8 and the other policies of the adopted Local Plan.

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Green Belt

- 7.2 Policies GBC1 and ENV5 of the Local Plan state that limited extensions to dwellings in the Green Belt will be acceptable in principle, and similar guidance is given in national PPG2.
- 7.3 The house had an original floor area of around 105m². The subsequent extensions added a further 80m² (approximately). The proposed link extension would have a floor area of around 14m², and the converted garage/annexe would have a floor area of around 54m² and the car port would have a floor area of around 18m². The existing and proposed extensions and garage annexe would have a floor area of around 165m², or around a 160% increase in floor area.
- 7.4 It is considered that this increase in size cannot be considered 'limited', in terms of the scale in relation to the size of the original building. Officers consider therefore that the proposal amounts to inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
- 7.5 It is however also necessary to consider whether, in this case, the proposed extension and linking of the house and garage would be harmful to the character and the openness of the Green Belt. The impact on the openness of the Green Belt from the proposed extensions would not in Officers opinion be material. The car port would be screened behind a high wall at the front of the property, and the link would be a modest addition to the property, substantially lower than either the house or garage. The overall character of the site would not be significantly altered by the development, and the general openness of the area would not be harmed by the development.
- 7.6 Although the extensions would represent a significant addition to the overall size of the property, the impact beyond the application site itself would be very limited.

Suitability of garage for conversion to annexe

- 7.7 The applicant indicates that the annexe is required to provide accommodation for an elderly relative. Policy ENV8 of the Local Plan states that permission may be granted for the conversion of an existing outbuilding to a residential annexe where:
- a) The outbuilding is of a design and structure in keeping with the existing dwelling and locality
 - b) The size of the outbuilding is compatible with the requirements of the annexe

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- c) The outbuilding is appropriately located in relation to the main dwelling
 - d) Sufficient space to park vehicles for both parts of the dwelling, in accordance with adopted standards, is available, and appropriately located in design terms, within the curtilage.
- 7.8 The garage in this case is a substantial structure designed to house two cars with additional space within the roof. The steeply sloped roof matches that of Oakleigh Cottage, and the general design of the building is in keeping with the house. At present the roofspace is an open void, but the conversion proposes the creation of a first floor to serve as the bedroom. The development would not materially alter the appearance of the structure, although a portrait window and Juliet balcony would be added to the first floor of the north-west elevation, and the existing garage doors would be replaced with windows. This elevation does not directly face the road and is screened in part by the site boundary.
- 7.9 The garage is considered to be of an appropriate size (approximately 54m² proposed floor area) for conversion to a one-bed annexe. The ground floor would form the open plan kitchen and living room, with a bedroom and en-suite bathroom on the first floor.
- 7.10 The garage would be linked to the house by a modest extension. The annexe would be capable of separate, self-sufficient occupation but the relationship with the house would be appropriate in terms of proximity and the potential for affording care. Furthermore, the sharing of the garden area, parking and access would ensure that a good relationship is maintained between the dwelling and the annexe and that the use of the annex would remain dependent upon the existing dwelling.
- 7.11 Policy ENV8 expects there to be sufficient parking for both parts of the dwelling at the site. The site currently has a paved area at the front of the garage that is capable of accommodating 2 or 3 vehicles or providing on-site turning space, in addition to the proposed car port. These spaces would remain at the site despite the loss of the garage space.
- 7.12 Policy ENV8 also states that where permission is granted for an annexe, a condition may be imposed to ensure that the occupation of the annexe remains tied to the main dwelling. Such a condition forms part of the recommendation on this application.
- 7.13 In this instance it is considered by officers that the annexe would accord with Policy ENV8 to provide accommodation for a dependent relative within the curtilage of an existing dwelling house and it would not be detrimental to the surrounding area.

Other matters

7.14 The annexe would be located on the detached side of Oakleigh Cottage, more than fifteen metres from the boundary with the nearest property. The new first-floor window would be more than thirty metres from any neighbouring property. Officers consider therefore that there would be no material impact on neighbour amenities from the proposed development, in accordance with policies ENV1 and ENV6.

8.0 Conclusion:

8.1 The proposed annexe would be appropriately located in relation to the existing house, and be in keeping with the character and appearance of Oakleigh Cottage. It is considered that it would not conflict with the aims of Policy ENV8 to provide accommodation for dependent relatives.

8.2 The creation of the annexe would involve the conversion of an existing garage with the addition of a modest link extension and car port. Overall the development results in a cumulative amount of development that amounts to inappropriate development within the Green Belt. However, the development would have no material impact on the openness or rural character of the area and it is considered therefore that any harm to the Green Belt in this case would be minimal. It is also considered that the particular needs of the applicant, together with the appropriate design, size and siting of the development are material considerations which clearly outweigh any harm and thereby constitute the 'very special circumstances' required to justify the development in the Green Belt. It is therefore recommended that planning permission is granted subject to the conditions at the head of this report.