

**5k 3/12/0328/FP – Single storey rear extension, boiler house with chimney and conversion of ground floor garage space at Watts Farm, Albury End, Albury for Mr K Dewson**

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**Date of Receipt:** 28.02.2012

**Type:** Full - Other

**Parish:** ALBURY

**Ward:** LITTLE HADHAM

**RECOMMENDATION:**

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

1. Three year time limit (1T121)
2. Matching materials (2E13)
3. Approved plans (2E10) – ‘1341-2-39, 1341-2-40’.

**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 East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007), and in particular policies GBC3, ENV1, ENV5, ENV6 and the National Planning Policy Framework. The balance of the considerations having regard to those policies and the limited harm to the existing dwelling and rural surroundings and the grant of planning permission within LPA reference 3/10/1821/FP is that permission should be granted.

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**1.0 Background:**

- 1.1 The application site is shown on the attached OS map.
- 1.2 The application site has historically been associated with other land surrounding it to the north and south. It existed as an outbuilding to Watts Farm, the farmhouse which is situated to the north of this application site. That building is a grade II listed building. The original Watts farmhouse is now known and shown on the plans submitted with

the application as Willow View. On the OS extract it is identified as 'Watts'. The application site building has been known as The Annex. It constituted a domestic garage for Watts farmhouse and later contained a residential use (see site history below). In this application it has been identified as Watts Farm. In this report it is referred to simply as the building. To the south of the site are a group of buildings shown to be in agricultural, stabling and other uses. One of the buildings contains a B1 unit which has been granted a certificate of lawfulness (LPA reference 3/11/1861/CL).

- 1.3 The building is located some 40 metres or so from the road. There is a boundary wall and entrance gate to that road with some mature landscaping which partially obscures views into the site from the road. The residential garden space associated with the building is as shown on the OS extract. It includes the tarmac driveway, pond and grassed area to the front and extends to the rear of the building containing a further building in use as a gym.

## **2.0 Site History:**

- 2.1 Planning permission was granted (ref 3/87/1237/FP) for the replacement of a former garage at the site. A condition was applied which set out that the replacement garage should be used only ancillary to the main residential use at the then site, of Watts farmhouse. However, by 2006, it was determined that a separate residential use was taking place in the upper part of the building and an application for a certificate of lawfulness for this use was granted (LPA reference 3/06/0867/CL).
- 2.2 Given that decision, application 3/07/1229/FO sought, and the decision allowed, the variation of condition 2 of planning permission ref 3/87/1237/FP. This removed the planning condition restricting the use of the building only as ancillary accommodation to the Watts farmhouse.
- 2.3 Planning permission was later granted (LPA reference 3/08/0649/FP) for the conversion of the ground floor of the building into residential accommodation. This has not yet been implemented.
- 2.4 Planning permission was refused (LPA reference 3/10/0137/FP) for the demolition of the agricultural outbuildings (outside the current site) the relocation of garaging for domestic vehicles and for extensions to the application site building. It was considered that the extensions proposed to the building were excessive and they would be out of keeping with the character of the site.
- 2.5 More recently, planning permission has been granted for the change of

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use of land to residential use and to allow single storey rear and side extensions to the building, the conversion of ground floor garage use to residential accommodation and the provision of a first floor balcony (LPA reference 3/10/1821/FP).

- 2.6 A further application for planning permission for the change of use of land from agricultural land to residential use (which is a reduced area compared with 3/10/1821/FP above) has been allowed (LPA reference 3/11/1888/FP).

### **3.0 Consultation Responses:**

- 3.1 Hertfordshire County Highways comment that they do not wish to restrict the grant of planning permission. The Highways Officer comments that there is no justifiable highway reason to object to the application. Traffic generation is unlikely to change significantly, sufficient parking and turning is available and no new access is proposed.

### **4.0 Parish Council Representations:**

- 4.1 No comments have been received from Albury Parish Council.

### **5.0 Other Representations:**

- 5.1 The application has been advertised by way of site notice and neighbour notification.
- 5.2 One letters of representation has been received which raises concern in relation to the history of the site and the way in which the building has now turned into a dwelling.

### **6.0 Policy:**

- 6.1 The relevant 'saved' Local Plan policies in 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
ENV6	Extensions to Dwellings – Criteria

**7.0 Considerations:**

- 7.1 The main planning considerations relate to the principle of development and its impact on the character and appearance of the building, its rural surroundings and on neighbour amenity.

Principle of development

- 7.2 As the site lies within the Rural Area, the principle of development is assessed under policy GBC3 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007. Under part (c) of this policy, consideration is given as to whether this proposed extension can be considered as “limited” and whether it accords with the criteria of policy ENV5. The principle objective of this policy is to limit the impact an extension may have on the character and appearance of an existing dwelling, both in itself and in relation to any adjoining dwelling and on the appearance of the locality.
- 7.3 There is a somewhat complex history to the site. In essence, the upper floor of the building has a lawful use as a residential dwelling. Later permissions (LPA references 3/08/0649/FP and 3/10/1821/FP) have granted planning permission for the conversion of the lower floor of the building and extensions. Those previous extensions/alterations were considered to represent a limited extension to the original dwelling (which Officers take to be the first floor residential use of the building). They consisted of a small rear extension to the building of 2.8metres, the provision of two dormer windows to the rear roof slope and a small side extension with a footprint of 3 square metres to provide a boiler house.
- 7.4 In addition to the rear extension previously granted consent, the proposals in this application involve a larger north side extension for the boiler, now with a footprint of 4 square metres and a chimney on the flank elevation. Also proposed is the enclosure of the existing staircase to the south side of the building, in the form of a 1½ storey side extension.
- 7.5 Having regard to the extensions previously proposed, the extensions now proposed in this application will increase the size of the dwelling further and will not, in Officers opinion, represent a limited extension as set out in policy GBC3(c) of the Local Plan. The proposed extension does therefore conflict with the requirements of policy GBC3 of the Local Plan.
- 7.6 However, Officers consider that the main planning issues should focus on how the proposed extensions impact on the character, appearance and open, rural nature of the site and surroundings.

Impact on surrounding area/amenity

- 7.7 Turning to the proposed increase in the size and scale of the boiler extension – this element remains modest and appropriately subordinate to the dwelling. In Officers opinion it does not result in significant harm to the character or appearance of the dwelling or surroundings.
- 7.8 The more significant element of the proposal is the two storey side extension to enclose the existing staircase. This element does increase the width of the building and does add a degree of mass to the roof slope of the building. However, it is a limited projection to the side and, whilst it could not be said to be subservient to the building, it does not, in Officers opinion, significantly detract from the character or appearance of the building and will result in limited harm to the rural surroundings.
- 7.9 The character of the building is altered by the provision of a chimney to the flank elevation, the provision of a gable porch to the front and the fenestration layout. However, in Officers opinion, those alterations to the previously approved scheme generally appear to add a greater degree of character to the building and is considered to result in a building which is more sympathetic to its rural surroundings.
- 7.10 In accordance with the above it is considered that the proposed alterations to the building do not result in significant harm to the character or appearance of the dwelling or its rural surroundings. The building is sufficiently separate such that the proposals are considered to have no harmful impact on the setting of the listed building to the north.

Neighbour amenity considerations

- 7.11 In the same vein, because of that separation from the nearest neighbour (Willow View – 20 metres or so to the north) there will not be a significant impact on neighbour amenity.

Conditions

- 7.12 In the interests of the amenity of the site and surroundings, Officers consider that it is necessary and reasonable to require any materials to match the existing.

**8.0 Conclusion:**

- 8.1 Officers consider that the amount of development proposed cannot be considered as 'limited', and is therefore contrary to policy GBC3 of the Local Plan. However, as the existing building is modest, the proposed

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extensions are appropriately designed, will not result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the dwelling, the rural setting or the setting of the adjacent listed building, and there is no other harm, it is recommended that planning permission be granted.