

**3/13/2273/FP – Two storey side extension and single storey rear extension at 4 Lower Cottages, The Causeway, Brent Pelham, Buntingford, SG9 0HN for Mr James Clague**

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**Date of Receipt:** 20.01.2014

**Type:** Full – Other

**Parish:** BRENT PELHAM

**Ward:** BRAUGHING

**RECOMMENDATION**

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

1. The proposed extensions would disproportionately alter the size of the original dwelling and by reason of their size, scale, siting and design would be out of keeping with and detrimental to the character and appearance of the dwelling, the wider street scene, and the Brent Pelham Conservation Area. The proposal is thereby contrary to policies GBC3, ENV1, ENV5, ENV6 and BH5 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007.

**Summary of Reasons for Decision**

In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2012 (as amended). East Herts Council has considered, in a positive and proactive manner, whether the planning objections to this proposal could be satisfactorily resolved within the statutory period for determining the application. However, for the reasons set out in this decision notice, the proposal is not considered to achieve an acceptable and sustainable development in accordance with the Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework. The Council would encourage the applicant to discuss alternative acceptable proposals through its published pre-application advice service.

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**1.0 Background**

- 1.1 The application site is shown on the attached OS extract. The dwelling is semi detached and the pair of semi-detached dwellings are of a unique, uniform design within the street and the front elevation has not been altered by previous approved applications or permitted development. These buildings are characterised by a red tiled half-hip roof with tall decorative chimney stacks in a central location. The remainder of the building is of red brick finish at ground floor and render

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to the first floor. The pair of semi-detached dwellings are of a mass, scale, design and use of materials that is characteristic of an early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Edwardian dwelling.

- 1.2 This application seeks planning permission for a two storey side extension and a single storey rear extension to the above dwelling. The Design and Access statement comments that part of this proposal is to provide additional living accommodation for a disabled family member. Since this proposed extension also incorporates additional living accommodation for the occupants of the dwellinghouse, the application should be considered as an extension to a dwellinghouse and not as annexe accommodation.
- 1.3 The site is located within the Brent Pelham Conservation Area. The contribution that the architectural character of The Causeway makes to the Conservation Area is defined by the semi-detached dwellings (numbers 4 and 5 Lower Cottages) and the terrace of dwellings (numbers 1 to 3 Lower Cottages) which are sited opposite a mature hedgerow which encloses the open wider countryside. The wider area has a loose grain of mostly semi-detached houses with the occasional farmstead; associated functional buildings and larger stand-alone dwellings, all of which are set amongst mature vegetation with generous green amenity space, allowing glimpsed views of the built form. Both the application dwelling and the adjoining number 5 Lower cottages, together with the surrounding mature vegetation and glimpsed views of the wider countryside, make a positive contribution to the immediate and wider architectural and historic character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 1.4 Brent Pelham is a category 3 Village within the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt.
- 1.5 This application has been referred to the committee at the request of Councillor Cheswright.

## **2.0 Site History**

2.1 The relevant planning history for the site is as follows:-

- 3/08/0447/FP – Two storey side extension and single storey rear extension (Withdrawn)
- 3/08/1860/FP – Two storey side and rear and single storey side and rear extensions (Approved)
- 3/12/1149/FP - Two storey side and single storey rear extension and

garage with store (Approved)

### **3.0 Consultation Responses**

- 3.1 County Highways does not wish to restrict the grant of permission subject to a 'wheel washing' condition. It is also advised that any approval has a directive stating that the storage of materials associated with the development should take place within the site and not extend into within the public highway without authorisation of the highway authority. County Highways noted that the garage is to be demolished and the number of bedrooms increased. The submitted drawings do not show a parking layout and, as the planning authority set the parking standards, they should ensure that adequate parking provision is made.
- 3.2 The County Archaeologist has commented that the proposal is unlikely to have an impact upon heritage assets of archaeological interest and therefore has no specific comment to make on it.
- 3.3 The Conservation Officer has commented that the siting of the side extension encompasses the existing footprint of the garage and as such is acceptable in principle. However, the mass and scale of the proposal competes with the principle or host building, in addition to the neighbouring Victorian dwellinghouse, resulting in an addition which does not enhance or preserve the architectural or historic character and appearance of the area.
- 3.4 The Conservation Officer continues by stating that, in comparison with the existing proposal, whilst the 2012 proposal (3/12/1149/FP) included a side extension to a similar height, the narrow footprint and physical separation with the garage structure presented a fragmented scheme with a more comfortable mass. The mass, as proposed, is awkward in context and the overall scale of the side extension is incongruous, particularly when viewed from The Causeway against the gable end of the principle building. In addition, the design and use of materials are defined by the mass and scale, which in this instance is considered out of keeping with the host building.
- 3.5 In summary, the Conservation Officer considers that the proposed side extension and rear extension do not enhance or preserve the immediate and wider historic and architectural character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

### **4.0 Parish Council Representations**

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4.1 Brent Pelham Parish Council has raised no objections to this proposal.

## **5.0 Other Representations**

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

5.2 One letter of support was received stating that the plans submitted are very much in keeping with the characteristics of the property and the village.

5.3 One letter of objection has been received from the occupants of the neighbouring dwelling, number 3 Lower Cottages. The concerns raised are that the proposed two storey side extension would have a harmful impact on the natural light that the dwelling currently enjoys, and would impact upon their outlook. Concern is also raised with regard to the size, scale and design of the extension, not being in keeping with the surrounding built form and intruding disproportionately into the openness and rural quality of the area.

## **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
- BH1 - Archaeology and New Development
- BH5 - Extensions and Alterations to Unlisted Buildings in Conservation Areas
- TR7 - Car Parking – Standards

6.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) are also material considerations in the determination of this application.

## **7.0 Considerations**

Principle of development

- 7.1 The site is located within the Rural Area Beyond the Metropolitan Green Belt wherein policy GBC3 of the Local Plan states that limited extensions or alterations to existing dwellings are considered appropriate development in accordance with policy ENV5. Policy ENV5 considers that extensions to dwellings and the erection of outbuildings should respect the character, appearance and amenities of the dwelling and any adjoining dwellings and be of a scale and size 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.
- 7.2 This proposal will result in an approximate 118% increase in the floor space of the dwelling. Although the original dwelling, by reason of its fairly limited size provides minimal accommodation, an increase of 118% cannot be considered to be limited or proportionate, and therefore would not be in accordance with policy GBC3 of the Local Plan. The proposal therefore, in principle, represents inappropriate development in the Rural Area. However, further consideration is given to the size, scale, siting and design of the proposed extension and whether it would respect the character and appearance of the original dwelling and whether it will intrude into the open rural characteristics of its surroundings.

Size, scale, siting and design

- 7.3 Policy ENV1 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007 states that proposals should be of a high level of design, that relates well to the massing and height of adjacent buildings and to the surrounding landscape, and considers the impact of any loss of open land on the character and appearance of the locality. Policies ENV5 and ENV6 additionally consider that extensions should not significantly affect the character and appearance of the dwelling or adjoining dwellings, not disproportionately alter the size of the dwellinghouse nor intrude into the open rural qualities of the surrounding area. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) endorses sustainable development in that it promotes good design that establishes a strong sense of place and responds to local character and history, and reflects the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation lead to substantial harm to or total loss. In addition, the NPPF considers that development in Conservation Areas should make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness whilst not causing harm to the significance of the area as a designated heritage asset
- 7.4 With regard to the above, Officers do have concerns with regard to the

size, scale, siting and design of this proposal. Having regard to the Conservation Officer's comments, the existing spacing between the application dwelling and the neighbouring number 3 Lower Cottages contributes to the character of the setting of these dwellings, that of the street scene, and forms part of the distinctive character of the Conservation Area. The proposed development would result in a two storey side extension that would be wider than the existing dwellinghouse; would encroach into the existing spacing between the dwellings, and would thereby be disproportionate. The design incorporates the gabled form of an outbuilding and a glazed link in an attempt to overcome the massing of the extension. However, the development would incorporate almost the entire width of the site and in combination with its height and form would result in a cramped appearance that is considered to be harmful.

- 7.5 Officers have taken into consideration the recent planning history of this site. Planning approval 3/08/1860/FP approved a two storey side extension measuring 3.5 metres in width, together with a single storey side extension measuring an additional 2 metres in width. Although together with the rear extensions this approved scheme was not limited, it was of a design that was subservient, resulting in appropriate massing and form. Planning approval 3/12/1149/FP approved a smaller two storey side extension, together with a detached garage. This was a significantly reduced scheme from that approved in 2008.
- 7.6 It seems that the design has been influenced by these previous approvals by utilising and enlarging the form of the approved garage as the principle form of the extension. This element of the proposal is approximately 1.7 metres higher, 1.2 metres wider and 1 metre longer than the previously approved garage, and will appear particularly prominent in the street and harmful to the street scene and character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The glazed link, measuring 5.5 metres in height, is proposed to try to overcome the massing of the extension at first floor but contributes to the overall mass and bulk of development on the site. Whilst this dwelling has previously approved schemes for extending to the flank elevation and individually each have been considered to be acceptable, the resultant mass and form of the proposed extension would exceed the scale of extensions previously approved and would result in extensions that would be harmful to the character and appearance of the dwelling and the surrounding built form.
- 7.7 For the above reasons Officers recommend that the proposed two storey side extension, by reason of its size, scale, siting and design, would disproportionately alter the size of the original dwelling and would be out of keeping with and detrimental to the character and appearance of the

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dwelling, the wider street scene, and the Brent Pelham Conservation Area. The proposal is thereby contrary to policies GBC3, ENV1, ENV5, ENV6 and BH5 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007.

#### Amenity considerations

- 7.8 A letter of objection has been received from the occupants of the neighbouring dwelling; number 3 Lower Cottages, who raise concerns with regard to overbearing and loss of light and outlook impacts. This neighbouring dwelling has a two storey side/ single storey rear extension approved under ref: 3/02/0873/FP. When considering the approved garage development at the application site (ref: 3/12/1149/FP) the Local Planning Authority considered that the siting, depth and height of the garage building would not cause harm to the enjoyment of this neighbouring property. This current application, however, increases the depth of the extension by 1 metre and raises the height of the gable roof by 1.7 metres resulting in an increase in massing protruding further to the rear of dwelling.
- 7.9 Officers agree that the proposed enlargement of this building would have some impact upon the enjoyment of this neighbouring property in terms of loss of light and outlook from their ground floor flank windows. However, given that these flank windows are secondary windows and that other windows provide light and outlook from these rooms; given the height of boundary screening that could be erected along this boundary; and the pitch of the proposed roof away from the boundary, it is not considered that the loss of light would be detrimental to their amenity. Further, although the outlook from these flank windows would be affected, as well as, to some degree, from the rear of No. 3, this impact is not considered to be so significant as to warrant refusal of the application. The proposal also includes rooflights in the north facing roof slope and these rooflights could overlook the neighbouring property. However, these rooflights could reasonably be required to be obscure glazed by a condition of any planning permission granted.
- 7.9 Overall, whilst some harm would arise to the occupiers of No. 3 by reason of loss of light and outlook, Officers do not consider that this would be to such an extent as to warrant refusal of the application. With regard to the adjoining dwelling, number 5 Lower Cottages, this proposal will not cause harm to their amenity.

#### Parking

- 7.10 This proposal will result in a 4 bedroom dwelling, which is an increase of one bedroom. The resultant three off-road parking spaces accords with

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the standards as set in policy TR7 and Appendix II of the Local Plan.

#### **Other matters**

- 7.11 The site is also located within an Area of Archaeological Significance. The County Archaeologist has commented that the proposal is unlikely to have an impact upon heritage assets of archaeological interest. For this reason this proposal accords with policy BH1 of the Local Plan and section 12 of the NPPF.
- 7.12 County Highways have not objected to this application but have recommended a wheel washing condition. Whilst the emission of dust and debris on to the highway should be avoided, this condition is not usually imposed on a development of such a small scale, and additionally this matter can reasonably be controlled through separate Highways legislation.

#### **8.0 Conclusion**

- 8.1 This proposal cannot be considered to be limited or proportionate, and therefore is not in accordance with the principle of appropriate development in the Rural Area. The proposed extension would disproportionately alter the size of the original dwelling, and by reason of its size, scale, siting and design would be out of keeping with and detrimental to the character and appearance of the dwelling, the wider street scene, and the Brent Pelham Conservation Area. The proposal is thereby contrary to policies GBC3, ENV1, ENV5, ENV6 and BH5 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007.
- 8.2 Officers therefore recommend that planning permission be refused.