

E/14/0010/B – Erection of unauthorised rear extension at The Woodman PH, 30 Chapmore End, Ware, Herts, SG12 0HF

Parish: BENGEO RURAL CP

Ward: HERTFORD RURAL NORTH

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Director of Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Director of Finance and Support Services, be authorised to take enforcement action under section 172 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and any such further steps as may be required to secure the removal of the unauthorised development.

Period for compliance: 6 months

Reason why it is expedient to issue an enforcement notice:

1. The extension, by reason of the extent of its flat roof, materials and detailed design, fails to achieve a high standard of design which is complementary to the character of the host building and the context of the site. The proposed development is therefore considered to be of poor design and harmful to the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area and contrary to Policy ENV1 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007 and Section 7 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

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1.0 Background

- 1.1 The site is shown on the attached Ordnance Survey extract. It is located within the small hamlet of Chapmore End and lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt. It comprises a public house with associated outbuildings and garden area.
- 1.2 In January 2014, Officers received details of an unauthorised extension which had been reportedly erected to the rear of the public house.
- 1.3 Officers wrote to the landlord to arrange a visit and discuss the matter, but did not receive a response. Accordingly, an unannounced site visit was carried out, at which point it was clear that a relatively large extension had been constructed to the rear of the public house without planning permission.
- 1.4 A retrospective application was subsequently submitted under LPA

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reference 3/14/1417/FP but was refused on 8th October 2014, due to poor design and the harmful impact of the extension on the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area. No appeal against the refusal of planning permission has been lodged to date.

- 1.5 Photographs of the unauthorised extension will be available at the committee meeting.

2.0 Planning History

- 2.1 There is no relevant planning history for the committee to be aware of in this matter.

3.0 Policy

- 3.1 The relevant 'saved' policies of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007 in this case are:

GBC1 – Appropriate development in the Green Belt.
ENV1 – Design and Environmental Quality.

- 3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) are also material considerations in this matter.

4.0 Considerations

- 4.1 The determining issue in this case relates to the whether the size of the extension is acceptable in principle within the Green Belt, and whether the design and materials of the extension result in a development which does not negatively impact on the existing building and the character of the area.
- 4.2 In terms of the first issue, Paragraph 89 of the NPPF recognises that limited extensions to existing buildings can be appropriate development within the Green Belt. A previous extension on site, amounting to around 30 square metres in size, was partially demolished in order to implement the new extension, leaving around 23 square metres in place. The new extension, together with that retained from the demolished extension, amounts to approximately 76 square metres in size. The public house had an original floor area of approximately 160 square metres and Officers therefore consider that, in floorspace terms, the extension can be said to be of an acceptable scale. However, the design and impact of the extension on the character and appearance of the building is also a material consideration.

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- 4.3 The extension is of timber construction with large window openings and a felt flat roof. It is sited at the rear of the property, away from public view; mainly visible from within the grounds of the public house. However, its design is somewhat crude and not sympathetic to the character of the original building. In particular the use of a large expanse of felt roof is considered to be particularly poor and the width of the extension is considered to detract from the character of the original building.
- 4.4 Although The Woodman is not a listed building, it is a building of significant character and long standing within the area, having been on site since at least 1874 without significant alteration to its form. While the size of the extension, in floorspace terms, is considered by Officers to be acceptable, the detail of its appearance and its form and design detracts from the character of the original property and the wider area.
- 4.5 Officers acknowledge that there is a need to support the viability of public houses in rural areas. However, this should not be to the detriment of the character and appearance of the building and wider area and, in any event, whilst a written statement has been put forward by the applicants, no quantifiable evidence has been provided to demonstrate why the extension is fundamental to the on-going viability of the public house.
- 4.6 Furthermore this is not a case, in Officers opinion, where the Authority would argue that an extension to the public house should be resisted in principle. However, Officers would wish to see a more appropriate form and detailed design to better reflect the traditional character of the existing building. For example, a narrower rear extension, to better reflect a more traditional outbuilding, together with a pitched roof and improved materials would be likely to be received more favourably and would still support the retention of the community facility.
- 4.7 Accordingly whilst it is considered expedient to seek authorisation to serve an Enforcement Notice for the unauthorised development, it is proposed that a six-month time period for compliance is given for the works to be carried out. This will enable the owners to review their requirements; to liaise with Officers in respect of more appropriately designed proposals and to submit a revised application for planning permission.

5.0 Recommendation

- 5.1 For the above reasons it is recommended that authorisation be given to issue and serve an Enforcement Notice requiring the removal of the

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unauthorised development.