

5e 3/11/0730/FP – Extension to garden room to provide annex and demolition of garage at Widford Rise, Hunsdon Road, Widford, Ware, SG12 8RZ for Mr and Mrs Scott Dickinson

Date of Receipt: 26.04.2011

Type: Full – Other

Parish: WIDFORD

Ward: HUNSDON

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be **REFUSED** for the following reasons:

1. The proposed residential annexe by reason of its size, layout and design, together with the lack of information concerning its functional relationship with the main dwelling, would be tantamount to the creation of a separate unit of residential accommodation within the Rural Area, contrary to policies GBC3 and ENV8 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007.

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1.0 Background:

- 1.1 The application site is situated within the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt along Hunsdon Road, to the south of the settlement of Widford as shown on the attached OS extract.
- 1.2 The application property is a part single, part two storey detached dwelling which benefits from a large driveway and parking area, in addition to 3 ancillary outbuildings comprising of a detached single garage, garden room and stables. The property is situated within a large site which extends approximately 45 metres from the southern elevation of the dwelling.
- 1.3 The current proposal is for the demolition of the existing garage to accommodate the extension of the garden room and provide a residential annexe. The existing garden room, which has a floor area of 51 square metres, would be extended with a side extension that would be 2.8 metres in depth, a front kitchen extension and new detached building (attached via a glazed link) that would the same height as the existing garden room and would have a floor area of 29 square metres. The conversion of the garden room and cumulative extensions would result in a building with a floor area of 100 square metres. This would provide residential accommodation which would include 2no. bedrooms,

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living room, kitchen, bathroom and W.C as well as a separately accessible garden store.

- 1.4 The applicant has indicated that the proposed residential annexe would provide accommodation for an elderly family member who is suffering from a degenerative illness and requires 24 hour care. It is indicated that the size and layout of the residential annexe would provide sufficient accommodation for the family member, who is suffering from poor mobility, and their live in carer.

2.0 Site History:

- 2.1 Planning permission was previously granted for alterations and additions to the dwelling (LPA Ref: 3/60/0250/FP) and demolition of the existing store and shed, extension of the existing kitchen and replacement of existing flat roof with pitched roof over (LPA Ref: 3/00/0417/FP). There is no other relevant planning history at the application site.

3.0 Consultation Responses:

- 3.1 County Highways does not wish to restrict the grant of permission and comments that the proposal will not impact upon highway safety or capacity.

4.0 Parish Council Representations:

- 4.1 Widford Parish Council raised no objections to the proposal but consider that a condition should be applied that there is no separate sale.

5.0 Other Representations:

- 5.1 The applications have been advertised by way of 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:

- 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
- ENV8 Residential Annexes
- TR7 Car Parking – Standards

7.0 Considerations:

- 7.1 The relevant planning considerations in respect of this application concern the principle of development within the Rural Area and its impact on the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and surrounding area, highways/access and neighbouring amenity.

Principle of Development and its Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Existing Dwelling and Surrounding Area

- 7.2 The application site is situated within the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt, wherein permission will be given for limited extensions and alterations to dwellings provided an extension to a dwelling or the erection of outbuildings will 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, in accordance with Policies GBC3 and ENV5 of the Local Plan.
- 7.3 The proposed extension to the existing garden room would be approximately 49 square metres in size. However, it is noted that the proposal would also involve the demolition of the existing garage (15 square metres in size) which is a material consideration in the determination of the application. The proposed extension to the existing garden room would therefore result in a net increase in the floor area of the dwelling by 34 square metres, which it is considered represents a relatively modest increase in the size of the existing dwelling. Whilst it is acknowledged that Widford Rise has previously benefited from extensions and alterations, it is considered that the proposed extension to the garden room, together with the previous extensions and alterations would not disproportionately alter the size and scale of the original dwelling, in accordance with Policies GBC3 and ENV5. It is therefore considered that the principle of extensions to the existing dwelling would be acceptable in this instance.
- 7.4 With regards to the conversion and extension of the garden room to provide a residential annexe, Policy ENV8 permits the conversion of an

existing outbuilding to a residential annexe where the outbuilding is of a design and structure in keeping with the existing dwelling and locality; the size of the outbuilding is compatible with the requirements of the annexe; the outbuilding is appropriately located in relation to the main dwelling; and sufficient space to park vehicles for both parts of the dwelling is available and appropriately located within the curtilage of the site.

- 7.5 It is acknowledged that the existing garden room, which is timber clad with a slate pitched roof, is simple in its design and sympathetic to the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and surrounding area. Furthermore, the location of the proposed annexe would be in close proximity to the main dwelling, situated approximately 12 metres away on the eastern edge of the driveway/parking area, which would provide sufficient vehicle parking for both parts of the dwelling.
- 7.6 However, the existing garden room would require substantial extensions and alterations to accommodate the proposed residential annexe. It is proposed that the existing garden room, which has a floor area of 51 square metres, would be extended by a further 49 square metres resulting in some 96 per cent increase in the floor area of the existing garden room. Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposed extensions to the existing garden room would be limited in height and would not encroach on the openness or rural character of the surrounding area, it is considered that the provision of the residential annexe would be dependant on the substantial enlargement of the building, contrary to Policy ENV8 II (b) of the Local Plan. Furthermore, it is considered that the design of the extensions to the building, including the front kitchen extension, which would resemble a porch, and the glazed link between the existing garden room and new building would have an urbanising effect on this part of the application site giving the appearance of an independent building, rather than an ancillary rural outbuilding that would compete with the host dwelling in terms of appearance and function.
- 7.7 Officers also consider that the proposed residential annexe would contain a number of primary rooms, including a hallway, 2no. bedrooms, living room, kitchen and bathroom/W.C facilities, which would benefit from their own independent access and would be physically separated from the main dwelling. The applicant has indicated that the residential annexe would provide accommodation for an elderly relative who is unable to live independently and requires round the clock care from a live-in carer. However, it is considered that insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate that the elderly relative and their respective care requirements could not be

accommodated within the main dwelling and no further information has been submitted which explains or demonstrates the functional relationship or interdependence between the occupants of the main dwelling and the future occupier(s) of the proposed residential annexe. As such, it is considered that the proposed residential annexe would be inappropriate development within the Rural Area, contrary to Policies GBC3 and ENV8.

Highways/Access Considerations

- 7.8 It is noted that County Highways raised no objections to the proposed development and comment that despite the removal of the vehicle garage, sufficient parking will be retained within the curtilage of the site on the existing driveway and parking area. They further comment that no alteration to the existing vehicle access arrangements is required and traffic generation is unlikely to change. In view of these comments, it is considered that sufficient off-street vehicle parking would be retained within the vicinity of the site for both the main dwelling and proposed residential annexe, in accordance with Policies TR7 and ENV8 of the Local Plan.

Neighbouring Amenity

- 7.9 It is considered that Widford Rise is situated within a large site which is located some 80 metres away from the nearest neighbouring dwelling, known as The Chapel, to the north of the application site. As such, it is considered that the proposed development, which would be limited to single storey in height, would not be detrimental to the amenities of nearby neighbouring occupiers.

8.0 Conclusion:

- 8.1 Having regard to the above considerations it is concluded that the proposed residential annexe, by reason of its size, layout and design, together with the lack of information concerning its functional relationship with the main dwelling, would be tantamount to the creation of a separate unit of residential accommodation within the Rural Area, contrary to policies GBC3 and ENV8 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007.
- 8.2 It is therefore recommended that planning permission be refused for those reasons outlined at the head of the report.