

12 DECEMBER 2023 PLANNING COMMITTEE

6c PLAN/2022/0349

WARD: Heathlands

LOCATION: 2 Eastgate Cottages, Heath House Road, Woking, Surrey, GU22 0RD

PROPOSAL: Erection of a first floor rear extension with balcony, single storey rear extension, insertion of front rooflights and external alterations. Erection of front gates and brick piers

APPLICANT: Jayandra Patel

OFFICER: Russell Ellis

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE:

The application was called in by Councillor Kevin Davis as he believes the proposal is not harmful to the Green Belt and is acceptable in terms of design.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposal is the erection/addition of a first floor extension above a previous extension with first floor balcony. Additionally, the erection of a single storey rear extension, again, extending off an existing single storey rear. It is further described that 2 front rooflights are added and external alterations (essentially removal of windows, new doors etc) and addition of entrance gates and piers. The plans also show dormer style addition to the roof and eaves of the side elevation however this is missing from the description of development on the application form.

PLANNING STATUS

- Green Belt
- Ancient Woodland
- Medium Surface Water Flood Risk Area
- Brookwood Neighbourhood Area
- TBH SPA Zone A (within 400m)

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse the application

SITE DESCRIPTION

The property is a semi-detached cottage, previously part of one building split into the two cottages around or pre- 1930's, built in traditional texture red brick and clay roof tiles. The property has been previously extended a number of times as detailed below.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Application No. 1160 14.02.1939 (ie. Pre-1st June 1948) Back additions

It is not clear the works here or whether implemented but the importance in planning is that it was before 1st June 1948 therefore this is date which determines what is the original building.

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77/797 Double garage at 2 Eastgate Cottages

80/1657 2 single storey extension

85/0252 Erection single storey

1992/0537 Single storey rear (92 BC records exist)
Building Control records show this was implemented.

REPRESENTATIONS

Two representations were received raising the following summarised concerns:

- Balcony will affect privacy and result in overlooking (*this is address in the report*)
- Party wall use (*would not be a planning consideration but is a private agreement between those involved*)
- Access to the roof and guttering would be impossible (*not a planning consideration and are a private matter*)
- Concern over shared drains (*not a planning matter for consideration, would be a building control and/or relevant water authority matter*)

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023):

Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places
Section 13 - Protecting Green Belt land

Woking Core Strategy (2012):

CS6 – Green Belt
CS21 – Design
CS24 – Woking's Landscape and Townscape

Development Management Policies DPD 2016

Policy DM13 – Buildings in and adjacent to the green belt

Supplementary Planning Documents:

Design (2015)
Outlook, Amenity, Privacy and Daylight (2022)

PLANNING ISSUES

Impact on Green Belt

1. The application site is located within the Green Belt. Paragraph 149 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) identifies that "*the extension or alteration of a*

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building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building” does not constitute inappropriate development within the Green Belt. Policy CS6 of the Woking Core Strategy (2012) reflects the position of the current National Planning Policy Framework (2021) regarding Green Belt.

2. Policy DM13 of the DM Policies DPD (2016) expands further, the Council’s position is *‘disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building as it existed at 1 July 1948 or if it was constructed after the relevant date, as it was first built’*. Moreover it further states that *‘acceptable, proposals will be within the range of 20-40% above the original volume of the building’*.
3. Policy DM13 of the DM Policies DPD (2016) also states *‘the NPPF does not provide any guidance as to what may be regarded as ‘proportionate’ or ‘disproportionate’ addition in the context of a building extension or alteration. The Council considers that different locations and forms of development present different site specific characteristics. In this regard, the details of any application will be judged on its own individual merits’*. The NPPF (2012) referred to in Policy DM13 of the DM Policies DPD (2016) has been superseded by the NPPF (2023), the NPPF (2023) does not provide any guidance as to what may be regarded as ‘proportionate’ or ‘disproportionate’ addition in the context of a building extension or alteration.
4. There is a long planning history for the site detailed above. These extensions and alterations have all added to the footprint, floor area and volume of the original dwelling (for the purposes of Green Belt policy, the NPPF regards the ‘original’ building as being as it existed on 1st July 1948). The Green Belt calculations initially submitted gave an uplift (when adding in the proposal to all previous additions from original) of 113%. When the fact that this would greatly exceed policy and be inappropriate, the calculations were resubmitted, merely increasing the “existing” volume such that the uplift now came to 17%. This methodology is incorrect and the first calculation of 113% is a more accurate figure. Any further extensions would therefore represent disproportionate additions to the host dwelling.
5. The proposal therefore represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt which is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. Furthermore, the proposal would significantly harm the openness of the Green Belt by virtue of the (in total) disproportionate extensions and alterations which result in a dwelling which is materially larger than the original.
6. Paragraph 147 of the NPPF (2021) goes on to state that *“Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances’*. Paragraph 148 of the NPPF (2021) states *‘When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. ‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations’*. As such it must be established whether any ‘very special circumstances’ clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm.
7. No very special circumstances have been submitted which would clearly outweigh the harm caused to the Green Belt by reason of the proposal inappropriateness.
8. The proposed development would result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. The proposal therefore represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt which would be harmful by definition and would impact detrimentally on the openness of the Green Belt. No very special circumstances are

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considered to exist which would clearly outweigh the harm caused to the Green Belt. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policy CS6 of the Woking Core Strategy (2012), Policy DM13 of the DM Policies DPD (2016) and the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).

Character of the Area

9. Policy CS21 of the Woking Core Strategy (2012) states that new development should respect and make a positive contribution to the street scene and the character of the area within which it is located.
10. Historic maps would appear to show the property was originally one single larger building accessed off Bagshot Road to the west; and later split with No.2 then accessed from Heath House Road. However, what could be termed the front/principal elevation has always remained described as that facing west and Bagshot Road. This is borne out by previous applications and their description and even the current, correctly, describes the additions as being at the rear.
11. However, the 1980 two storey side addition certainly had the function of presenting the south elevation as the principle one, relocating the front door and closing off the west facing one, adding a porch over the new entrance and this opening up into a hallway. This elevation with the doors, matching windows etc is the elevation presented when approaching the building from the road/access and is very much in keeping and character of the building as a whole.
12. The current proposal completely alters how this elevation is presented on approach, removing all the traditional and matching windows and replacing with a stark brick façade by “bricking up” these openings. Additionally, this elevation is to have the large glazed dormer style window (3m wide) added serving the principal bedroom, utilising modern materials, and stepped out slightly from the wall on this elevation ie. Removing the eaves at this point, that will also be part of the “first impression” presented on approaching the dwelling.
13. This elevation as proposed becomes totally out of character with the main dwelling and area and whilst Heath House Road has minimal pedestrian traffic, this elevation would adversely impact street scene.
14. To the rear, the modern design is probably more acceptable and as there is no street view, is less dominant and impactful. However, the rear elevation becomes almost fully glazed and additionally a 1st floor balcony is added at 4.75m wide and 1.25m in depth; clearly designed to be utilised and used extensively. This rear elevation, certainly from 1st floor, directly impacts neighbouring amenity, privacy, outlook and the openness of the green belt.
15. Therefore, in addition to finding the proposal unacceptable development in the green belt by definition, on its own the design also fails due to its effect on the openness of the green belt, poor design and impact on outlook, amenity and privacy.
16. It is therefore contrary to the NPPF (Sections 12 & 13), Woking DMP DM13, Woking Core Strategies CS6, CS21, and CS24; and SPD policies on Design (2015) and Outlook, Amenity, Privacy and Daylight (2022).

Impact on Neighbours

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17. Policy CS21 of the Woking Core Strategy (2012) advises that proposals for new development should achieve a satisfactory relationship to adjoining properties, avoiding significant harmful impact in terms of loss of privacy, daylight or sunlight, or an overbearing effect due to bulk, proximity or outlook.
18. The large glazed rear elevation has the potential to impact the neighbouring amenity and the balcony is of such a size that it is clearly intended for regular use and again, would impact outlook and amenity significantly harming the neighbour's amenities.
19. The proposal therefore conflicts with policies on Design (2015) and Outlook, Amenity, Privacy and Daylight (2022).
20. Consequently, the proposal is recommended for refusal.

LOCAL FINANCE CONSIDERATIONS

21. The proposal is not Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) liable.

CONCLUSION

22. The proposed development would result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. The proposal therefore represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt which would be harmful by definition and would impact detrimentally on the openness of the Green Belt. No very special circumstances are considered to exist which would clearly outweigh the harm caused to the Green Belt. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policy CS6 of the Woking Core Strategy (2012), Policy DM13 of the DM Policies DPD (2016) and the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).
23. By reason of design, the proposal has an unacceptable impact on the character of the host dwelling, openness of the green belt and neighbouring amenity and is therefore contrary to NPPF (Sections 12 & 13), Woking DMP DM13, Woking Core Strategies CS6, CS21, and CS24; and SPD policies on Design (2015) and Outlook, Amenity, Privacy and Daylight (2022).

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Site visit photographs
2. Previous applications
3. Current application

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse planning permission for the following reasons:

- i) The proposed development would result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. The proposal therefore represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt which would be harmful by definition and would impact detrimentally on the openness of the Green Belt. No very special circumstances are considered to exist which would clearly outweigh the harm caused to the Green Belt. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policy CS6 of the Woking Core

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Strategy (2012), Policy DM13 of the DM Policies DPD (2016) and the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).

- ii) By reason of design, the proposal has an unacceptable impact on the character of the host dwelling, openness of the green belt and neighbouring amenity and is therefore contrary to NPPF (Sections 12 & 13), Woking DMP DM13, Woking Core Strategies CS6, CS21, and CS24; and SPD policies on Design (2015) and Outlook, Amenity, Privacy and Daylight (2022).

Informatives

1. The plans relating to the development hereby refused are listed below:

Dwg No. (PA)010 Existing and proposed elevation 01 dated 06.04.2022

Dwg No. (PA)011 Existing and proposed elevation 02 dated 06.04.2022

Dwg No. (PA)012 Existing and proposed elevation 03 dated 06.04.2022

Dwg No. (PA)013 Existing and proposed section dated 06.04.2022

Dwg No. (PA)005 Existing first floor plan dated 06.04.2022

Dwg No. (PA)004 Existing ground floor plan dated 06.04.2022

Dwg No. (PA)006 Existing roof plan dated 06.04.2022

Dwg No. (PA)002 Existing site plan dated 06.04.2022

Dwg No. (PA)008 Proposed first floor plan dated 06.04.2022

Dwg No. (PA)007 Proposed ground floor plan dated 06.04.2022

Dwg No. (PA)001 Location and block plan dated 06.04.2022

Dwg No. (PA)014 Gate elevation dated 06.04.2022