

4.4- SE/13/01950/HOUSE Date expired 1 November 2013

PROPOSAL: Erection of single storey side extension to existing garage, with the formation of a balcony above the proposed extension on the first floor, existing hipped ends of garage roof changed to gable ends, changes to external fenestration and re-cladding of the garage.

LOCATION: Homefield Coach House , Blueberry Lane, Knockholt Sevenoaks TN14 7LL

WARD(S): Halstead, Knockholt & Badgers Mount

ITEM FOR DECISION

The application has been referred to Development Control Committee Councillor Williamson to consider whether the proposal complies with Green Belt policy and whether there are very special circumstances advanced which are not easily repeatable on other sites.

RECOMMENDATION: That planning permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:-

1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

In pursuance of section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be as specified on the drawings hereby approved.

To ensure that the appearance of the development is in harmony with the existing character of the building as supported by Policy EN1 of the Sevenoaks District Local Plan.

3) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Drawings 001 P1, 004, P3 and 024 P2.

For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

4) No development shall take place until details of a screen to the north elevation of the balcony hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no further modifications to the balcony or balcony screens shall be made without the express prior written approval of the local planning authority.

To safeguard the privacy of residents as supported by Policy EN1 of the Sevenoaks District Local Plan.

Note to Applicant

In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the NPPF Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals. SDC works with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner, by;

- Offering a duty officer service to provide initial planning advice,
- Providing a pre-application advice service,
- When appropriate, updating applicants/agents of any small scale issues that may arise in the processing of their application,
- Where possible and appropriate suggesting solutions to secure a successful outcome,
- Allowing applicants to keep up to date with their application and viewing all consultees comments on line (www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/environment/planning/planning_services_online/654.asp),
- By providing a regular forum for planning agents,
- Working in line with the NPPF to encourage developments that improve the improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area,
- Providing easy on line access to planning policies and guidance, and
- Encouraging them to seek professional advice whenever appropriate.

In this instance the applicant/agent:

- 1) The application was considered by the Planning Committee where the applicant/agent had the opportunity to speak to the committee and promote the application.

Description of Proposal

- 1 The proposals seek the erection of a single storey, flat roof side extension to the existing garage, with the formation of a balcony above the proposed extension on the first floor, accessible via new French windows. It is also proposed to convert the existing half-hipped ends of garage roof to gable ends. Changes to external fenestration is proposed together with the re-cladding of the garage in shiplap timber weather boarding under a new natural slate roof.

Description of Site

- 2 The site accommodates a large detached dwelling, with a number of large outbuildings, located on the western side of Blueberry Lane.

Constraints

- 3 Green Belt.

Policies

Sevenoaks District Local Plan

4 Policies - EN1, H6B and H14A.

Sevenoaks Core Strategy:

5 Policies SP1 and L08.

Planning History

6 SE/87/01050: Alterations, conversion and use of derelict building as residential dwelling. Granted 1987. (Implemented)

SE/99/0633: Convert garage to living room with bedroom suite over, form new entrance hall & staircase. Demolish old stables, outbuildings & greenhouse; build new wall and greenhouse. Brick up disused entrance. *Granted 1999.* (Implemented – included a new garage with accommodation within the roof as replacement for stables).

10/03188/FUL: Demolition of porch and alterations to front elevation. Erection of single storey extension to replace porch and erection of 2 no two-storey extensions to hall and living room. Demolition of 'cubby' and single storey extension to rear and erection of 2 no replacement single storey extensions, one with roof lantern. Demolition of single storey side extension and erection of a chimney stack. Alterations to roof in central hall, doors and fenestration. Internal alterations to rationalise plan. Demolition of existing 1999 erected detached garage and erection of replacement garage. Part demolition of external storage building. Creation of an external swimming pool. *Granted 19.1.11.* (Commenced but superseded by application below)

12/02136/HOUSE: Revised scheme to that previously approved under reference SE/10/03188/FUL. Demolition of porch and hall, alterations to front elevation. Erection of single storey draft lobby to replace porch and erection of 2no. two-storey extensions to living room and replacement hall. Erection of 2no. single storey extensions, one with roof lantern. Demolition of single storey side extension and erection of a chimney stack. Alterations to roof in central hall, doors and fenestration. Demolition of existing detached garage to facilitate the erection of replacement garage. Part demolition of existing storage building. Erection of an external swimming pool. *Granted 12.10.2012* (Implemented and supersedes SE/10/03188/HOUSE).

It should be noted that the proposals relating to the garage remained as approved under the previous permission.

This development as far as it relates to the house extensions is currently under construction. However, the garage as constructed under the 1999 permission above remains in situ, although it does appear that at the time of writing this report the extensions for which permission are sought are in the process of being carried out.

SE/12/03172/HOUSE: Erection of single storey side extension to existing garage, with the formation of a balcony above the proposed extension on the first floor. The formation of three dormer windows to the front elevation of the garage,

existing hipped ends of garage roof changed to gable ends and re-cladding of the garage. Withdrawn prior to determination 1.2.2013.

Consultations

Knockholt Parish Council:

- 7 Objection - This Council is forced to say 'enough is enough'. We would invite you to revisit the original application many years ago, when the area of various horticultural outbuildings were allowed in the overall calculations. We are now seeing a situation where the areas of some of those outbuildings are being reused for their effective retention. The original proposal to demolish the bulky garage appears to have been abandoned and the bulk has been increased with the conversion to gable ends.

Representations

- 8 None received.

Chief Planning Officer's Appraisal

Background:

- 9 The history of the site is complicated by the amendments to the recent permissions and I consider a brief outline of the history would be useful for the purposes of setting the scene.
- 10 It is clear that the origins of the existing single dwelling house on the site comes from the conversion of the original building, which comprises "L" shaped stables with residential accommodation above.
- 11 Following conversion to a single family dwelling, the building was extended (1999 permission), with further outbuildings converted and extended (including at first floor level), with outbuildings and a stable block demolished with a new garage erected in its place. These works were calculated as representing a 46% increase in floor area over the dwelling as comprised the original conversion (original @500m² + extension @ 232m²).
- 12 The garage was calculated as having a proposed ground floor area of 58.28m², but because of the height it included approximately 33m² at 1st floor level within the roof. The 1999 garage as actually constructed and now in situ appears to be slightly larger than approved (65m² at ground and approximately 39m² useable space above 1.5m height within the roof). The stables replaced by the garage had a floor area of 69m² and were single storey of considerably lower height, with no 1st floor accommodation.
- 13 The 2010 permission allowed for further alterations and extensions. The extensions to the dwellings, when added to the previous additions, represented a 50% increase over the floor area of the dwelling the subject of the original conversion. As part of this permission it was also proposed to replace the existing garage by one with a footprint of 85m², but considerably lower height. It would be sited at 90° to the existing garage and would partially occupy the same footprint. As part of this element of the proposals approximately 12.5m² of an adjacent outbuilding was to be demolished as a "trade-off".

- 14 The 2013 application sought to retain the existing garage in situ, but with a 10m² extension at ground floor, the addition of 3 roof dormers and the conversion of the half-hipped roof to full gables. This application was withdrawn as a result of officers raising concerns regarding the potentially harmful impact on the openness of the Green Belt. The current application is variation on the previous submission, but now omits the roof dormers and a window to the front elevation.
- 15 In summary, the garage built following permission in 1999 remains in situ. The planning permissions recently granted in 2010 and 2012 permit a replacement single storey garage with a greater footprint but smaller total floor area (i.e. no accommodation within the roof).
- 16 The current application for an extension to the existing garage should be seen as an alternative to the approved proposal for a replacement.

Principal Issues

Green Belt Implications:

- 17 Current Government advice, in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework, supports the protection of the Green Belts and seeks to restrict development.
- 18 Paragraph 79 of the NPPF states that “The fundamental aim of the Green Belt is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.”
- 19 The advice continues to state that there is a general presumption against inappropriate development within the Green Belt. Such development should not be approved, except in very special circumstances. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. The construction of new buildings inside the Green Belt is inappropriate unless, amongst other things, it is for the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the *original* building (my emphasis).
- 20 The advice explains that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. Very Special Circumstances to justify inappropriate development will not exist unless the potential harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
- 21 There is no local policy support for extensions to outbuildings within the Green Belt.
- 22 As outlined above, the original stables had a slightly larger floor area (approximately 4m² compared to garage as built), but were lower in height. The replacement garage is considerably higher and contains substantial habitable accommodation at 1st floor level. Thus, it is my view that the garage in situ has a far greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the original stables which they replaced. In light of this, it is my view that any further extension to the garage particularly in the form of the single storey extension, which would be the full depth of the garage, and to a small extent the roof alterations, would compound the harm.

- 23 It is therefore my conclusion that the proposals represent inappropriate development which would also be harmful to the openness of the Green Belt.
- 24 The applicants have advanced a case of very special circumstances relating to the demolition of part of an existing adjacent building. This is discussed in further detail below.

Impact on street scene and residential amenity:

- 25 Policy EN1 of the SDLP identifies a broad range of criteria to be applied in the consideration of planning applications. Criteria 1 states that the form of the proposed development, including any buildings or extensions, should be compatible in terms of scale, height, density and site coverage with other buildings in the locality. Criteria 3) of policy EN1 of the SDLP states that the proposed development must not have an adverse impact on the privacy and amenities of a locality by reason of form, scale, height, outlook, noise or light intrusion or activity levels including vehicular or pedestrian movements.
- 26 The garage roof is visible from the public highway as well as the neighbouring property to the north (Homefield Cottage). I consider the alteration of the roof from a barn-end to a full gable to be a modest one, which would not add significantly to the bulk of the building overall. Whilst the east elevation would clearly be visible to the street, it would not in my view result in the building appearing any more prominent in the street scene than existing. The alteration of the rear elevation roof would not be readily apparent to wider public view. Nor, in my view, would it appear overbearing when viewed from the neighbouring property.
- 27 The single storey extension would not be visible to the street and is unlikely to be visible to the neighbouring property viewed from ground floor. Whilst there could potentially be an issue of overlooking from the proposed balcony to be created above the ground floor extension, this could be addressed by a suitable screen fixed to the north side of the balcony. This in turn could be covered by a condition.

Case for very special circumstances:

- 28 I would note that this application seeks to retain the existing garage, as erected following the grant of permission in 1999, but with a 10m² extension to the north elevation and alterations to the half hipped roof end.
- 29 At this stage it may be worth summarising the potential fallback position currently available to the applicant. Firstly, the existing garage could remain in situ without the proposed alterations. The demolition to the adjacent outbuilding is already required by virtue of condition on the previous permission. Alternatively, the existing garage could be demolished and replaced by that approved under SE/13/02136/HOUSE, which has a larger footprint but reduced height.
- 30 As well as the relatively modest enlargement of the roof in the form of the half hip to full gable ends, which would add marginally to the overall volume of the garage, it is proposed to add a 10m² single storey extension.
- 31 As a “trade-off” for this, the applicant proposes to demolish approximately 12.5m² of an adjacent single storey, pitched roof, outbuilding located closer to the main road.

- 32 I would note that the demolition of this end of the outbuilding is already required by a condition attached to the previous planning permission. However, the report makes it clear that the removal of this part of the outbuilding was a trade for the replacement garage. The current application to extend the existing garage is clearly an alternative to the new garage approved (significant overlap in the siting). Thus in my view, it is reasonable to consider the demolition of the outbuilding as a trade for the extensions to the garage.
- 33 In terms of floorspace and bulk, I consider the proposal in the form of the extension and roof alterations to be compensated by the demolition of the outbuilding. Furthermore, the extension would be set well within the built envelope of the site and away from public view.
- 34 The NPPF explains that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. However, it also makes it clear that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. In this instance, notwithstanding the harm in principle through the erection of an extension to the existing garage, I consider any increase in the size of the existing garage to be off-set by the demolition of the adjacent building.
- 35 In this instance, no other harm to the street scene or residential amenity has been identified. Thus, it is my conclusion that the very special circumstances advanced are sufficient to clearly outweigh the harm in principle identified above.

Conclusion

- 36 In light of the above, it is my view that the proposals represent inappropriate development which would be harmful to the openness of the Green Belt. However, no other significant harm has been identified. It is my view that the very special circumstances advanced are sufficient to outweigh the harm identified in Green Belt terms and any other harm. Thus, it is my conclusion that the proposals comply with the relevant Government and local plan policies.

Background Papers

- 37 Site and Block Plans

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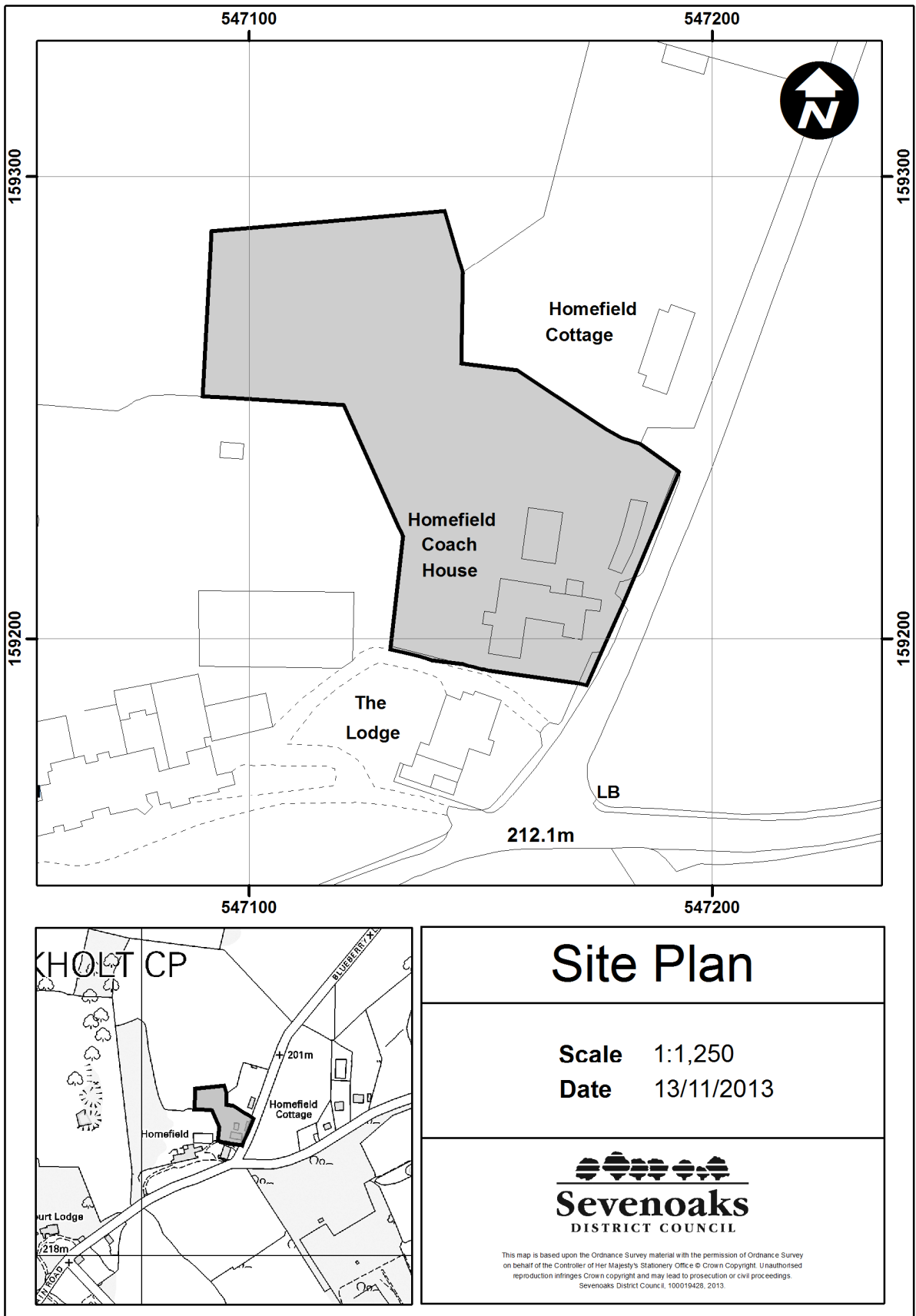
Richard Morris
Chief Planning Officer

Link to application details:

<http://pa.sevenoaks.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=MPARICBK8V000>

Link to associated documents

<http://pa.sevenoaks.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=MPARICBK8V000>



BLOCK PLAN

