

**Report to District Development Control
Committee**

Date of meeting: 7 December 2010



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Subject: Planning Application EPF/1912/10 – 6 Forest Close, Waltham Abbey, Essex, EN9 3QR – Two storey side and rear extension, single storey rear extension and alterations to main roof to provide a flat top (revised application).

**Officer contact for further information: J Cordell
Committee Secretary: S Hill Ext 4249**

Recommendation:

That the committee considers the recommendation of the Area Plans subcommittee West to grant planning permission subject to the following suggested conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this notice.

Reason:- To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2. Materials to be used for the external finishes of the proposed development shall match those of the existing building, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason:- To safeguard the visual amenities of the locality.

3. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order 1995 as amended (or any other order revoking, further amending or re-enacting that order) no development generally permitted by virtue of Part 1, Class A and B shall be undertaken without the prior written permission of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason:- The development is recognised as being contrary to policy as it does not constitute a 'limited extension' under policy GB2A, and therefore restrictions over further additions are required.

Report

- 1. This application has been referred by the Area Plans Sub Committee West with a recommendation for approval. The report to the sub-committee carried a recommendation from officers to refuse planning permission and the officer's report is reproduced in full below.**

Planning Issues

2. The debate at the sub-committee meeting centred on the recommended reasons for refusal and the definition of 'limited extension' with regards to the Green Belt.
3. The sub-committee considered that the size of the proposed extension was acceptable, however accepted that this would be contrary to policy as it did not constitute a 'limited extension' (however they have requested clarification from Legal Services on what defines a 'limited extension' in relation to the Green Belt).

Conclusion

4. Whilst the proposal is recommended for approval by Area Plans Sub-committee West the planning officer's recommendation to refuse planning permission still stands. This is because the proposed development is considered inappropriate development and is unacceptable by reason of its size, design and siting being visually intrusive within the Green Belt.
5. Notwithstanding the above, should the Committee grant planning permission it is recommended that this be subject to the above suggested conditions.

ORIGINAL PLANS SUBCOMMITTEE WEST REPORT

Recommended reasons for refusal:

1. The proposed extensions do not constitute a limited extension to an existing dwelling and are therefore unacceptable by reason of proposed size, design and siting being visually intrusive in the surrounding area in the Green Belt contrary to the aims and objectives of policy GB2A of the Adopted Local Plan and Alterations and PPG2.

This application is before this Committee since it is an application that is considered by the Director of Planning and Economic Development as appropriate to be presented for a Committee decision (Pursuant to Section CL56, Schedule A (k) of the Council's Delegated Functions).

Description of Proposal:

The applicant seeks to revise a consent previously issued by Members under EPF/0555/09. The proposals retain the two storey side and rear extension and alterations to the roof, whilst now further extending the first floor from 2m as previously approved to 3m. The applicant also proposes the addition of a canopy 1m in depth at ground floor.

Description of Site:

The application site is situated within the Metropolitan Green Belt, at the top of a small cul-de-sac of 10 dwellings, abutting open countryside immediately to the north of the site. Neighbouring properties bound the property to the south and eastern sides of the application site and to the west is a playground area, sub station and Pynest House.

The area has a relatively urban character within the cul-de-sac, created by street lighting, footways and alterations to neighbouring properties. The land to the north, east and south of the site is more open and rural particularly to the north. The site is occupied by a two storey semi-detached property that has not been previously extended.

Relevant History:

The applicant has been previously refused permission for a similar extension under application EPF/0374/08. This application was refused due to the scale of the development conflicting with Green Belt policies, and the depth of the proposals impacting adversely on the neighbouring property at number 5 Forest Close.

EPF/2210/08 was an identical scheme refused under delegated powers for the following reason:

The site is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt. The proposed development is at odds with Government advice as contained within PPG2, the policies of the Local Plan and Alterations namely policies GB2A and GB14A in that it does not constitute a reasonable extension to an existing dwelling. The application is unacceptable by reason of its size, design and siting which would harm the objectives of the Metropolitan Green Belt. Furthermore it would be dominant and visually intrusive in the surrounding area.

EPF/0555/09 was a two storey wrap around extension recommended for refusal by Officers and approved by Members.

The majority of neighbouring properties appear to have been extended or altered in some manner, most prior to the adoption of the 1998 Local Plan or the current Local Plan and Alterations adopted in 2006. The Green Belt has been designated and protected in this area since prior to 1964 and records indicate that the neighbouring property at number 8 has been recently granted consent for a similar scale of extensions by Members at committee.

Policies Applied:

Epping Forest District Local Plan and Alterations

GB2A – Development in the Green Belt

DBE9 – Impact of New Development

DBE10 – Design of Residential Extensions

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS:

TOWN COUNCIL: No objection

8 neighbouring properties were notified with no objections received.

Issues and Considerations:

The main issues that arise with this application are the additional impacts of the proposed further extensions, namely the additional 1m depth on the first floor rear extension and the ground floor further 1m enclosed beneath the canopy.

Policy GB14A was in use during the first two applications, however this has subsequently been withdrawn due to conflict with lawful development tolerances. Members considered that the proposals justified a departure from usual policy in 2009, however Officers maintain that larger extensions still remain contrary to the objectives of Green Belt policies GB2A and PPG2. As indicative measurement the proposals including the ground floor rear canopy result in total floor space additions in the region of 96sqm. This is in the region of an 86% increase in floor space. Officers have consistently recommended refusal of the proposals due to the size, design and siting of the extensions as Officers do not interpret the additions as 'a reasonable extension to an existing dwelling'. For this reason Officers feel unable to support an enlarged extension with a positive recommendation.

Design

The proposed extensions extend the existing ridge of the roofline and frontage of the property for some 3m, this results in the property appearing uncharacteristically wide compared to the attached property without any relief or reduction to the ridge. This would result in an aesthetically unsympathetic development, detracting from the character and symmetry of the original semi-detached pair of properties contrary to design objectives of policy DBE10.

Neighbouring Properties

Previous proposals have been refused due to concerns regarding outlook from 5 Forest Close. The offset from the boundary at first floor is retained as part of the proposals therefore whilst potentially appearing prominent and dominant in the rear garden areas, the proposals do not detract from the outlook of neighbouring properties.

Other matters

Previous application EPF/1055/08 for number 8 Forest Close, for a similar scale of development was allowed by Members against Officer Recommendation due to the individual merits of the case. Members considered that the alterations to surrounding properties in the cul-de-sac were sufficient to justify the proposals in this instance due to minimal harm that would occur in the location. The proposed extensions to number 8 would only be visible from within Forest Close and the playground area behind the site, and the development would be visible only within the constraints of the existing built up area. Officers would note that while the neighbouring developments and indeed extant permissions do form a material consideration, in this instance the location of the application site and proximity to the surrounding open countryside present a visually prominent development from within the surrounding Green Belt, furthermore Officers would maintain that there have been no details submitted that would constitute very special circumstances which are usually required to justify a departure from usual policy.

Conclusion:

The proposals offer no justification for departure from Green Belt policy, and present a further increase in volume. The applicant's plot is visually prominent from the surrounding open countryside and Green Belt, and as such Officers opinion remains unchanged and refusal is recommended.

In respect of design the proposals are considered visually dominant in relation to the attached property, however Members may consider that this would be largely obscured from view in the north-western corner of the cul-de-sac.

Adverse neighbouring impacts have been largely resolved in respect of outlook through the offset from the boundary at first floor. Notwithstanding this, Members may consider the enlarged scheme to appear prominent and domineering in the rear garden of the attached property to the detriment of neighbouring amenity.