

4/00534/18/FUL	DEMOLITION OF EXISTING GARAGE & WORKSHOP BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION OF 1 NO. 3 BEDROOM DWELLING, DETACHED CAR PORT AND ASSOCIATED HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPING
Site Address	R/O 114-138 Piccotts End, Hemel Hempstead, HP1
Applicant	Belgrave Property Developments Ltd
Case Officer	Amy Harman
Referral to Committee	Previous similar scheme refused by Development Management Committee

1. Recommendation

1 That planning permission be **GRANTED**

2. Summary

2.1 The proposals now include the demolition of the existing garage and workshop and the construction of only one dwelling. A contemporary design has been followed in order to allow for the development not to compete with the historic properties which are adjacent to it and also to reduce the massing of the proposal.

2.2 In the 2014 appeal the Inspector only supported the finding of harm to the Green Belt. He concluded that there was no harm caused to the heritage assets. The Inspector also did not support the allegation that the proposal failed to provide a safe and satisfactory access to the site.

2.3 The Inspector did conclude that the assessment of the harm to the Green Belt was unreasonably founded in that the refusal had not taken into account the fact that the site is 'previously development land'. The scheme has been significantly amended to take this into account and now it is officers' opinion that this approach addresses the concerns raised by the Inspector in his previous decision and therefore the proposal is considered acceptable in principle in accordance with Adopted Core Strategy Policy CS5 and advice within Section 9 of the NPPF.

3. Site Description

3.1 The application site is located to the north-east of Piccotts End Road, to the rear of the cottages fronting the road comprising No's 114-138 and occupies an elevated position with levels falling to the south-west. The site comprises of an open grassed area in a poor state with a poor quality storage building in the northern corner. The site is located within the Piccott's End Conservation Area and is adjacent to a number of listed cottages fronting Piccotts End Road. The site is also located within an Area of Archaeological Significance and is contained within the footprint of the former 'Old Infirmary Yard' and adjacent to the former Cottage Hospital site.

3.2 Surrounding properties comprise of a builder's store, offices and yard to the south with historic cottages to the north-west, west and south-west fronting the road, including the listed No's 130-136 and 112. There is a pair of more modern semi-detached dwellings to the north of the site.

3.3 The site is bounded by an historic red brick wall along the north-eastern boundary and close-boarded fencing along the other boundaries. The site is accessed via a narrow gravel access track which runs between No's 118 and 130, which also serves the garage block to the rear of No's 118-114.

4. Proposal

4.1 Demolition of existing garage & workshop building and construction of 1 no. 3 bedroom dwelling, detached car port and associated hard and soft landscaping

5. Relevant Planning History

4/00371/14/FUL DEMOLITION OF EXISTING GARAGE AND WORKSHOP BUILDINGS AND CONSTRUCTION OF 1 NO. 4 BEDROOM DWELLING, DETACHED CAR PORT AND BIN STORE AND ASSOCIATED HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPING.

Refused
14/05/2015

4/01752/12/FUL DEMOLITION OF EXISTING AND CONSTRUCTION OF TWO NEW DWELLINGS WITH CAR PORT AND ASSOCIATED PARKING.

Withdrawn
29/11/2012

4/01753/12/CAC DEMOLITION OF EXISTING AND CONSTRUCTION OF TWO NEW DWELLINGS WITH CAR PORT AND ASSOCIATED PARKING.

Withdrawn
30/11/2012

4/00311/09/FUL DEMOLITION OF EXISTING BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION OF SINGLE STOREY DWELLING

Refused
17/08/2009

4/01677/04/FUL FIVE DWELLINGS WITH GARAGES

Refused
06/09/2004

6. Policies

6.1 National Policy Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

6.2 Adopted Core Strategy

NP1, CS1, CS2, CS4, CS12, Cs24

6.3 Saved Policies of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan

Policies 9, 116, 118. Appendix 5

6.4 Supplementary Planning Guidance

- Environmental Guidelines (May 2004)
- Landscape Character Assessment (May 2004)
- Chilterns Buildings Design Guide (Feb 2013)

6.5 Advice Notes and Appraisals

- Sustainable Development Advice Note (March 2011)

- Conservation Area Character Appraisal for Hemel Hempstead

7. Constraints

Grade 1 listed build
Green Belt
Area of special control for adverts
Area of archaeological importance
cil3
Conservation area
Former land use

8. Representations

Consultation responses

8.1 These are reproduced in full at Appendix A

Neighbour notification/site notice responses

8.2 These are reproduced in full at Appendix B

9. Considerations

Main issues

9.1 The main issues to consider are:

- Policy and principle
- Impact on Green Belt
- Impact on Conservation Area / Listed Building
- Impact on Highway Safety
- Landscaping
- Ecology

Policy and Principle

9.2 There is a detailed planning history relating to this site and this submission follows on from the latest Inspector's Decision, it has been the result of extensive pre-application discussions.

9.3 The Inspector only supported the finding of harm to the Green Belt. He concluded that there was no harm caused to the heritage assets. The Inspector also did not support the allegation that the proposal failed to provide a safe and satisfactory access to the site.

9.4 The inspector did conclude that the assessment of the harm to the Green Belt was unreasonably founded in that the refusal had not taken into account the fact that the site is 'previously development land'. Instead he concluded that the proposal would have a greater footprint and would rise well above the boundary wall, as a result, it would be a more dominant built form than the existing development and would detract from the openness of the Green Belt.

9.5 The proposals now include the demolition of the existing garage and workshop and the construction of only one dwelling. A contemporary design has been followed in order to allow

for the development not to compete with the historic properties which are adjacent to it and also to reduce the massing of the proposal.

Green Belt

9.6 The National Planning Policy Framework states that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in Green Belt, however there are exceptions to this. One such exception is previously developed land, whereby limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

9.7 Policy CS5 is broadly consistent with the advice within Section 9 of the Framework, provided the development has no significant impact on the character and appearance of the countryside.

9.8 In this instance although the location of the new building has been shifted slightly, the footprint of the new building is only marginally larger. The proposal also includes a semi-basement (lower ground floor level) enabling the accommodation to be contained within a structure the same height and profile of the existing workshop.

9.9 It is our opinion that this approach addresses the concerns raised by the Inspector in his previous decision and therefore the proposal is considered acceptable in principle.

Impact on Conservation Area / Listed Building

9.10 The Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas were consulted and advised that we seek the views of our own specialist conservation and archaeological advisers, as relevant. As such, much time and debate has taken place with the architect, design team and the Conservation officer to ensure that the building would be both contemporary and preserve the nearby heritage assets. The design has been substantially altered to provide a low structure of modern design appearance sunk into the landscape. The basement/ ground floor plans are sunken and this substantially reduces the impact of the proposed dwelling. The design is contemporary with a split level, vertical boarding and a sedum roof. As such rather than making a particular statement the structure will sit comfortably within the background and have a subservient character to the historic buildings to the street frontage. The boarding and the brick chimney stack reference local details and therefore help to tie the design in with its wider context. The detailing of the boarding is acceptable as is the set back of the windows within the elevations. As such we believe that the proposed new dwelling would sit comfortably with the building and the surrounding landscape. Therefore we believe that the proposal would sit comfortably within the character of the conservation area.

9.11 We have carefully analysed the site and carefully considered if the proposals would impact on the setting and significance of the nearby listed buildings and we would give the preservation of their setting great weight. However we would consider that the proposals would have a negligible impact on the setting of the nearby listed buildings. Therefore we do not believe that the balancing exercise in this case is necessary. There could be a minor level of harm which would be considered to be less than substantial harm caused to the designated asset of the conservation area through the demolition of structures and the erection of a new dwelling on the site. However we believe that with the sensitive small scale design, the repair of the boundary walls and the enhancement of the garden that the benefits of the proposals outweigh any harm caused. The decision maker should give the conservation of the heritage assets great weight but overall we would consider that the proposals preserve the heritage assets.

9.12 The Conservation Officer recommends approval. He commented that; that the proposals are acceptable and overall would preserve the character of the conservation area. As such we would support the scheme. A sample of the external materials for the dwelling and hard

landscaping should be agreed on site. All repairs to the boundary walls should be completed before the dwelling is occupied. A sample of lime pointing of the repairs should be agreed on site. The method statement for these repairs submitted in the DAS should be conditioned.

Impact on Trees and Landscaping

9.13 An extensive landscape plan was submitted with the application. Hertfordshire Ecology were consulted on this and support the landscaping which includes creation of wildflower grassland and tree planting.

Impact on Highway Safety

9.14 Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority has considered that the proposal in highway safety capacity terms and considers that this proposal would not have an unreasonable impact on the safety and operation of the adjoining public highway with the inclusion of planning conditions.

9.15 The applicant has provided sufficient information to provide sufficient assurances that the new dwelling can be constructed using appropriately sized machinery and equipment and without any risk of harm to the rear boundary wall or the wall paintings within frontage properties. As such a site management plan and associated documents have been submitted and will be conditioned.

Ecology

9.16 Hertfordshire Ecology were consulted on the application and provided the following comments;

1. An updated bat Preliminary Roost Assessment has been provided in support of the proposals. This identified limited evidence of use by bats as well as some potential roosting opportunities within the site. Given these would be affected by the proposals, further activity surveys are now required to determine whether there is any further evidence of bats actively using the site for roosting. These can only be undertaken when bats are active.
2. As part of the PRA, an outline mitigation strategy has been provided which describes the type of mitigation that could be required should bats be found to be present and roosting. This information enables DBC to determine the application having taken reasonable account of the presence of bats and their conservation requirements. I consider it satisfies the third Habitat Regulations test regarding the conservation of bats.
3. Consequently, I advise that the further surveys should be secured by a Condition of Approval. They will need to be undertaken prior to works likely to affect them take place on the site. Any further advice can then be provided / updated accordingly by the ecologist and a licence applied for if necessary.
4. The potential for reptile use of the site has been considered in the past although the survey is now old – we have a copy of the previous survey. However, whilst the habitat may remain suitable, the previous surveys were negative and there is nothing to suggest anything has changed or that the site has become more suitable. Consequently I am of the opinion that a precautionary approach should be taken when removing any rubble or long established vegetation on site. If any evidence of reptiles is found, work should stop and any reptiles trapped out and removed to a suitable location elsewhere to ensure they are not harmed. I advise this should be stated as an Informative attached to any permission.
5. Similar consideration should be given to the potential for roosting birds if works take place during the breeding period. If nesting birds are discovered, works should stop to allow birds to completely finish using the nest(s). This should also be attached as an Informative.
6. I support the landscaping which includes creation of wildflower grassland and tree planting. I note this includes an apple, which should be a domestic cultivar given the very old apple tree in

front of the listed building. Consideration could be given to planting more fruit trees as opposed to other species, given that this would almost certainly be more characteristic of the historic planting associated with the properties. They would also provide pollination benefits within the site.

7. Further to the above I do not consider there are any other ecological matters associated with this proposal that would represent a constraint. Consequently DBC is able to determine the application accordingly.

Response to Neighbour comments

9.17 Comments have been received from neighbours which relate to the principle of development and also the setting of the listed building and the effect the development would have on the listed building to the front of the site. All these comments have been carefully considered and taken into account whilst dealing with this application. These points have been addressed above.

CIL

9.18 Policy CS35 requires all developments to make appropriate contributions towards infrastructure required to support the development. These contributions will normally extend only to the payment of CIL where applicable. The Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was adopted in February 2015 and came into force on the 1st July 2015. This application is CIL Liabe due to resulting in more than 100m² of additional floor space.

10. Conclusions

10.1 It is recommended that this application being granted subject to the recommended conditions.

11. RECOMMENDATION – That planning permission be **GRANTED** for the reasons referred to above and 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.**

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 (1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 (1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans/documents:**

7046-101 A
7046-102 A
7046-103 A

Heritage Statement
Design Statement
Historic Buildings Record
Site Management Plan April 2018
Constrution Plan (Ponsford King Architects) April 2018
Concrete Supply to site Plan

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

- 3 **No development shall take place until details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted have been submitted and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. Please do not send materials to the council offices. Materials should be kept on site and arrangements made with the planning officer for inspection.**

A sample of lime pointing of the repairs should be agreed on site.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the Conservation Area in accordance with Adopted Core Strategy CS12 and CS24

- 4 **No development shall take place until details of the materials proposed to be used on the hard landscaping have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved materials shall be used in the implementation of the development.**

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory development in accordance with CS24

- 5 **All repairs to the boundary walls should be completed before the dwelling is occupied.**

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the Conservation Area in accordance with Adopted Core Strategy CS12 and CS24

- 6 **Prior to first occupation of the proposed dwelling, the parking spaces shall be provided as shown on the submitted plan. The parking spaces shall be retained thereafter for the use of non-commercial vehicles only. The spaces shall be made available to the occupiers of the development unless the Local Planning Authority otherwise agrees in writing.**

Reason: To ensure the adequate provision of off-street parking at all times in order to minimise the impact on the safe and efficient operation of the adjoining public highway in accordance with Adopted Core Strategy CS12.

- 7 **Prior to the first use of the access a properly consolidated and surfaced turning space for cars shall be provided within the curtilage of the site as identified on the submitted plan. The turning space should be free from obstruction and available for use at all times.**

Reason: To allow vehicles to enter and leave the site in forward gear, in the interests of highway safety in accordance with Adopted Core Strategy CS12

Article 35 Statement

Planning permission has been granted for this proposal. The Council acted pro-actively through positive engagement with the applicant during the determination process which led to improvements to the scheme. The Council has therefore acted pro-actively in line with the requirements of the Framework (paragraphs 186 and 187) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment No. 2) Order 2015.

Informatives

Precautionary approach should be taken when removing any rubble or long established vegetation on site. If any evidence of reptiles is found, work should stop and any reptiles trapped out and removed to a suitable location elsewhere to ensure they are not harmed.

Similar consideration should be given to the potential for roosting birds if works take place during the breeding period. If nesting birds are discovered, works should stop to allow birds to completely finish using the nest(s).

Appendix A

Consultation responses

1. Town/Parish Council

None

2. Hertfordshire county Council – Highway Authority

Notice is given under article 16 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010 that the Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority does not wish to restrict the grant of permission subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to first occupation of the proposed dwelling, the parking spaces shall be provided as shown on the submitted plan. The parking spaces shall be retained thereafter for the use of non-commercial vehicles only. The spaces shall be made available to the occupiers of the development unless the Local Planning Authority otherwise agrees in writing. Reason: To ensure the adequate provision of off-street parking at all times in order to minimise the impact on the safe and efficient operation of the adjoining public highway. 2. Prior to the first use of the access a properly consolidated and surfaced turning space for cars shall be provided within the curtilage of the site as identified on the submitted plan. The turning space should be free from obstruction and available for use at all times. Reason: To allow vehicles to enter and leave the site in forward gear, in the interests of highway safety. Highway Comment

This amended application is for a revised internal layout with the dwelling appearing to have a smaller footprint and positioned more to the east of the site. The car port has also been moved to the south eastern edge of the site. This is shown on the plan numbered 4026-501 rev A dated January 2015. As with the previous application, the applicant still proposes the demolition of an existing buildings /workshop and construction of one detached dwelling. The site is located at the end of a private track, which takes access from Piccotts End, which is a local distributor road with 30 mph speed limit. At the top of the track, there are four purpose built garages. They appear to have sufficient space in front of the garage doors to park and turn around on. As part of this latest application, the private track has now been accurately surveyed. The width at the pinch point is now recorded as being 2.48m wide. This is a metre smaller than previously quoted by the applicant. This may mean that only motor cars can access this track with any ease which clearly they do at present as there is a block of four garages at the top of the site. Currently a vehicle wanting to access the site has to wait on the public highway to allow a vehicle already on the track to leave the site. The Highway Authority has considered that whilst the proposed development would increase the number of vehicles using this track, the likelihood of vehicles having to wait on the public highway to allow an oncoming vehicle to exit the site would increase but not significantly with one dwelling. Vehicle to vehicle inter-visibility in both directions from the existing access remains acceptable for the speed and hierarchy of the road. The applicant has indicated that there will be off street parking spaces provided as part of the proposed development. This should accord with the local planning authority's parking policy

The highway authority is aware of the neighbour concerns about intensifying the use of the track and have read the comments from the emergency services about access and the use of sprinklers systems should permission be granted. The fact remains that this is an existing access that already enjoys vehicular access and that one dwelling would not lead to conditions that would warrant highway capacity concerns

However, the highway authority is concerned with how this site will actually be developed. Whilst not recommending refusal to the LPA on the previous applications it was on the understanding that the track had sufficient width to allow delivery vehicles to access the top of the site. This is now not the case and has been brought to the applicants attention. The applicant has now submitted a construction management plan. The plan states how the site will be accessed and what measures will be put in place to mitigate concerns raised about the construction of this house.

Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority has considered that the proposal in highway safety capacity terms and considers that this proposal would not have an unreasonable impact on the safety and operation of the adjoining public highway with the inclusion of the above planning conditions.

3. Building Control Surveyor

- Approved document M Confirmation that design considerations in respect to disabled access under (threshold).
- Approved Document B Access under Section 5 Access is none compliant, due to widths and length of approach to property.
(Refer to Section 5 Table 20 and diagram 50)

4. Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas

Thank you for your letter of 7 March 2018 regarding the above application for planning permission. On the basis of the information available to date, we do not wish to offer any comments. We suggest that you seek the views of your specialist conservation and archaeological advisers, as relevant.

It is not necessary for us to be consulted on this application again, unless there are material changes to the proposals. However, if you would like detailed advice from us, please contact us to explain your request.

5. Hertfordshire Ecology

1. An updated bat Preliminary Roost Assessment has been provided in support of the proposals. This identified limited evidence of use by bats as well as some potential roosting opportunities within the site. Given these would be affected by the proposals, further activity surveys are now required to determine whether there is any further evidence of bats actively using the site for roosting. These can only be undertaken when bats are active.
2. As part of the PRA, an outline mitigation strategy has been provided which describes the type of mitigation that could be required should bats be found to be present and roosting. This information enables DBC to determine the application having taken reasonable account of the presence of bats and their conservation requirements. I consider it satisfies the third Habitat Regulations test regarding the conservation of bats.
3. Consequently, I advise that the further surveys should be secured by a Condition of Approval. They will need to be undertaken prior to works likely to affect them take place on the site. Any further advice can then be provided / updated accordingly by the ecologist and a licence applied for if necessary.
4. The potential for reptile use of the site has been considered in the past although the survey is now old – we have a copy of the previous survey.
However, whilst the habitat may remain suitable, the previous surveys were negative and there is nothing to suggest anything has changed or that the site has become more suitable. Consequently I am of the opinion that a precautionary approach should be taken when removing any rubble or long established vegetation on site. If any evidence of reptiles is found, work should stop and any reptiles trapped out and removed to a suitable location elsewhere to ensure they are not harmed. I advise this should be stated as an Informative attached to any permission.
5. Similar consideration should be given to the potential for roosting birds if works take place during the breeding period. If nesting birds are discovered, works should stop to allow birds to completely finish using the nest(s). This should also be attached as an Informative.

6. I support the landscaping which includes creation of wildflower grassland and tree planting. I note this includes an apple, which should be a domestic cultivar given the very old apple tree in front of the listed building. Consideration could be given to planting more fruit trees as opposed to other species, given that this would almost certainly be more characteristic of the historic planting associated with the properties. They would also provide pollination benefits within the site.

7. Further to the above I do not consider there are any other ecological matters associated with this proposal that would represent a constraint. Consequently DBC is able to determine the application accordingly.

Appendix B

Comments received from local residents

128 Piccotts End

I wanted to comment on the above application for Piccotts End.

I am really concerned about the application as the vehicle access would run through a narrow path which runs right outside my front door. It's such a narrow path, any further vehicle access will be a nightmare and I would hate for it to ruin the current conservation/heritage area we have.

If I can have any further influence it would be appreciated.

Director of Piccotts End Limited, which owns the Grade 1 listed property at 130-132 Piccotts End - 28 Birch Green, Hertford

138 Piccotts End

The previous application to develop this green belt site of special interest was referred to the Planning Committee and we request that if the LPA decide to support this proposal it is also referred to the Planning Committee.

1. The Green Belt

The owner has made many proposals to build on this green belt site and all have been refused.

The last application on this green belt site was approved by planning officers and then rejected by the planning committee. The owner appealed, and the appeal was resolutely turned down by the planning inspectorate just 2 years ago:

Conclusions 49.

Accordingly I conclude that this would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt that would harm the fundamental purposes and aims of the Green Belt, and in the absence of any other considerations that clearly outweigh this harm, the development would be contrary to Policy CS5 in the Core Strategy and the Framework.

50. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

As you will know, the government's most recent directives on inappropriate development on

green belt land have tightened and are very clearly opposed to such development with new legal protections being introduced, reinforced by Theresa May's recent speech (March 2018):

'That's why the answer to our housing crisis does not lie in tearing up the Green Belt.

No, the defining characteristic of Green Belt land is not its beauty or its greenness, but its openness. Green Belts exist not to preserve landscapes but to prevent urban sprawl. That is what they were created for in the 1950s and that is the valuable purpose they still serve today.

Planning rules already say that Green Belt boundaries should be changed only in "exceptional circumstances". But too many local authorities and developers have been taking a lax view of what "exceptional" means. They've been allocating Green Belt sites for development as an easy option rather than a last resort.

To prevent this, we're strengthening existing protections so that authorities can only amend Green Belt boundaries if they can prove they have fully explored every other reasonable option for building the homes their community needs.'

These are precisely the reasons that development on this green belt site has been refused many times and if anything the position is now clearer than ever. In line with stated government policy, can the LPA prove they have explored every other reasonable option ahead of permitting development on this green belt site?

2. Inappropriate Development

This proposal is considered inappropriate development under policy 4 of the local plan:

'Inappropriate development will only be allowed where it can be demonstrated that *very special* circumstances exist which clearly outweigh the harm to the green belt.'

Where are the very special circumstances presented? I've read the planners' report several times and there is no cogent list of four or five very special reasons why inappropriate development should be allowed. And there is no closely argued case explaining how they might outweigh the harm and no case studies have been presented by developers. A strongly argued case built on clear precedents involving grade 1 listed land, close to an exceptional grade 1 listed building need to be presented to argue a case for this *inappropriate development*. So this proposal should be rejected.

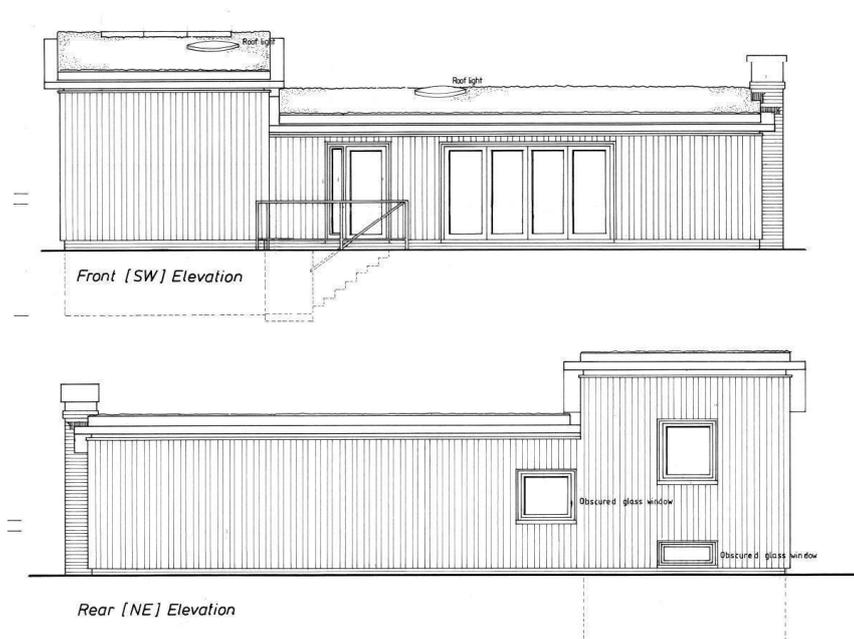
3. Permitted Development Rights

This plan proposes a relatively modest house on a large plot. It is also quite an uneasy design with the master bedroom and bathroom placed underground. It might well be bought with a view to extending under permitted development rights, perhaps significantly with two full storeys, including redevelopment of the large carport into a second building. If this proposal does progress, permitted development rights should be suspended.

3. Adverse Effect on a Listed Building

This proposed development needs to be weighed with particular care as it will have an adverse effect in planning terms on the setting of a listed building. And not just any listed building, but a former great medieval hall house of England, the only building in the UK to house both exceptional religious murals and an Elizabethan painted room. A building of national significance which is grade 1 listed and the only grade 1 listed residential building in the whole Dacorum area.

It is therefore critical that any new building that lies immediately behind the medieval building is also exceptional in architectural terms. I am in real sympathy with the idea to fit any new building into the space occupied by the current workshop/garage, and also that a new building should be contemporary in style and not a pastiche as was proposed previously. However, these are the planned front and rear elevations of the new house, and a picture is worth a thousand words:



4. Design Issues

I applaud the extensive garden planning encouraged by the LPA. This is a very welcome step in the right direction. However, any new building in this listed setting and conservation area should inspire and excite the imagination. In the digital age couldn't a more performative approach be adopted? This proposed building lacks movement, concept or any sense of celebration of the built form, particularly in relation to the remarkable grade 1 building it aspires to sit behind. A *very special* circumstance for developers to argue for this 'inappropriate development' could have been a strong design serving to enhance the site. But this opportunity has not been grasped.

5. Building Material Issues

Likewise, the building materials planned for this proposed building would create a sense of dissonance with all the surrounding buildings. The LPAs LPF document, Matter 7: Policy LA1, Appendix 1 (2016) relates to the Marchmont Farm development and the council asserts:

'Although much of the housing development will not be visible from Piccotts End Road, the new housing will be closely linked via the Link Road and Piccotts End Lane. Use of traditional styles, materials and layout should be used to reflect the style of the conservation area.'

Traditional materials are emphasised in the Marchmont development which will be some distance from Piccotts End, and yet in this instance with the proposal to build directly behind one of Dacorum's most special listed buildings, the materials are entirely alien. Timber clad houses are not a feature of Piccotts End. Lime (wattle and daub), oak frames, hand made brick and lime mortar, slate and flint are the materials that define this conservation area, and not cedar weather boarding.

Oak frames are used with great imagination in contemporary designs, often together with the

lightness of glass, or even traditional lime render. I could support a good design occupying this footprint built from those or other appropriate materials. In my view the proposed design is just too rudimentary and lacking grace and should be rejected.

6. Site Issues

This proposal would involve a considerable amount of earth excavation and removal due to the underground construction. In the previous proposal, developers said that smaller trucks would decant building materials to large lorries. But where? The main road is very narrow at this point – where will the lorries stop to collect and deliver materials? This is a bus route – where is the impact assessment of this? The highways authorities must be alerted to this.

An alternative access road has been offered to developers and this should be explored.

The exceptional wall paintings in the Mural Cottages are in a perilous and fragile condition and several expert reports can be produced to support this. The significant digging works must be assessed in terms of their impact on the paintings, as must the risk of vibration and damage from so many heavy vehicles in constant use on Infirmary Lane. There has never been any precedent for the close proximity of all this heavy plant vibration, particularly as the medieval building has the most rudimentary foundations (the Mural Cottages are set well back and up from the main road). The planning inspector on his visit expressed concern about this issue.

The grade 1 listed buildings rely on a borehole to supply their water. The impact on the water table and the risk of contamination from all this excavation activity have not been assessed, and this should be an essential condition.

There are significant issues at stake with this proposal and we ask that you consider the points raised with due regard.

On-line comments

132 PICCOTTS END, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD, HP1 3AU (Objects)

Comment submitted date: Fri 23 Mar 2018

I am writing as one of the owners of the Grade 1 listed property at 130-132 Piccotts End. We take our responsibility for the care of this building and its internationally important wall paintings very seriously and consequently have some reservations about the new planning proposal. Most notably the threat of vibration and ground disturbance by the amount of digging out and construction traffic.

We are concerned about the risk of destabilising the foundations of these listed buildings and of polluting or displacing the water table which provides the only water supply to the cottages via a borehole which is sited between the cottages and the proposed new development.

It is imperative that the safety of these important national assets is placed before the need to agree to a new development which may put them at risk.

The design of the dwelling is not sympathetic to the medieval character of the village and the

surroundings, and the materials are completely inappropriate for the site.

Old School House, Powderham, Exeter, EX6 8JJ (Neutral)

Comment submitted date: Tue 20 Mar 2018

I am the owner of 'Church Lane'. The principle of developing in the GREEN BELT has not changed from last time, so on that basis the application should be rejected. However the APPLICANT has been offered (by me) an alternative access down the much wider, safer and easier access road between 110 and 112 Piccotts End. The offer to them was on commercial terms and it would allow the current access to the site to be blocked off or used for pedestrian access to the site only. If this alternative access was used, I feel that the APPLICANT is giving something back to affected residents (albeit at some financial cost) and takes away from the Grade ONE listed Mural Cottages the potential damage through additional traffic, especially during any potential construction of the proposed dwelling. I therefore urge Dacorum Planning Department to take this, once and for all opportunity of insisting that planning for this site will be GRANTED but only if the alternative access offered is used.

79, Benslow Lane, Hitchin, SG4 9RA (Objects)

Comment submitted date: Fri 16 Mar 2018

I write on behalf of Mrs R J Speakman of Fenton Cottage, 118 Piccotts End (Mrs Speakman is my mother):

1. The only justification for this property is monetary gain by the developer and should not be allowed.
2. The proposed dwelling, being on land that slopes up from the affected properties, will destroy their privacy and be visible from the first floor windows.
3. There will be significant noise pollution from the additional vehicles using and servicing the proposed dwelling and this will be exacerbated by the tunnel effect of the walls of No. 118 and the single-glazed window in the sitting room on the side elevation of No. 118
4. There is no possible vision splay on exiting the driveway onto Piccotts End Road in a South Easterly direction to the Old Town.
5. The narrow access would make it difficult for private cars and commercial vehicles to safely use the road without some risk of the adjacent properties being hit and suffering substantial damage - particularly fire engines.