

MAIDENHEAD DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PANEL

11 November 2009

Item: 10

Application No.:	09/02141/FULL
Location:	Oakleigh School Road Waltham St Lawrence Reading RG10 0NU
Proposal:	Construction of a detached two storey dwelling following demolition of existing
Applicant:	Mr Patel
Agent:	Mr C Wilson - The AED Practice
Parish/Ward:	Waltham St Lawrence Parish

If you have a question about this report, please contact: Susan Sharman on 01628 685320 or at susan.sharman@rbwm.gov.uk

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The application seeks planning permission to replace an existing bungalow with a house in the Green Belt. As the replacement house is materially larger than the existing dwelling it represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Although the existing property is the only bungalow within the area, it does not harm the street scene or character of the area to the extent that this represents very special circumstances that would override adopted planning policy. The proposal is contrary to Policies GB1 and GB3 of the Local Plan and it is therefore recommended that permission be refused.

It is recommended the Panel refuses planning permission for the following summarised reasons (the full reasons are identified in Section 9 of this report):

1. The site is within the Green Belt and the replacement dwelling will be materially larger than the existing dwelling on site contrary to saved Policy GB3 of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Plan 1999 (incorporating alterations adopted June 2003). The proposal therefore represents inappropriate development contrary to saved Policy GB1. Inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and the applicant has not demonstrated that any very special circumstances exist that clearly outweighs the harm caused by reason of inappropriateness.

2. REASON FOR PANEL DETERMINATION

- At the request of Cllr Etherington who states the applicant is citing some support from fellow residents and that the existing property is the sole remaining bungalow in the street. However, the area remains Green Belt, so tensions exist worthy of consideration by panel given other applications nearby.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

- 3.1 The application site is 0.07 hectares and located on the east-side of School Road. The site is occupied by a detached bungalow, garage and outbuilding. The existing bungalow is 6.6 metres from the edge of the highway and is 12.2 metres wide, 13.7 metres deep and 4.1 metres high.
- 3.2 The general character of the area is one of open countryside. The east side of School Road, within the vicinity of the application site, is characterised by detached residential properties of differing styles and materials. Open fields lie to the west of School Road.

4. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL AND ANY RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

8441/69	Additional two rooms and WC.	Approved 29.10.69
200/71	Porch.	Approved 09.07.71
02/39155	Rear conservatory.	Approved 18.10.02
09/01116	Alterations and extensions to convert bungalow To house.	Withdrawn 03.08.09

- 4.1 The application seeks planning permission to demolish the existing bungalow and garage and replace with a four-bedroom house. The replacement dwelling will be 6.6 metres from the edge of the highway, 10.9 metres wide, 16.8 metres deep and 8.4 metres high.

5 MAIN RELEVANT STRATEGIES AND POLICIES RELEVANT TO THE DECISION

5.1 Royal Borough Local Plan

The main strategic planning considerations applying to the site and the associated policies are:

	Green Belt	
	✓	
Local Plan	GB1,	GB2,
	GB3,	

5.2 Other Local Strategies or Publications

Other Strategies or publications relevant to the proposal are:

- RBWM Parking Strategy

More information on this document can be found at:

http://www.rbwm.gov.uk/web/pp_supplementary_planning.htm

6. EXPLANATION OF RECOMMENDATION

6.1 The key issues for consideration are:

- i The impact of the proposal on the Green Belt
- ii The impact on the street scene
- iii The impact on the living conditions of neighbours
- iv Whether there is sufficient on-site parking for the size of dwelling proposed

The impact of the proposal on the Green Belt

- 6.2 The application site is located within the Green Belt. In the case of replacement dwellings, Policy GB3 of the Local Plan states that these should not be materially larger than the existing dwelling or result in a material alteration to the scale of development on site. Supporting text to the Policy states that there remains a presumption against a replacement dwelling which is materially larger than the dwelling it replaces, as it will not then fall within the definition of appropriate development. Matters such as scale, bulk and floorspace are factors used to assess whether a proposal is materially larger than the existing development.
- 6.3 The existing bungalow has a ridge height of 4.1 metres. The height of the replacement house, over a depth of 15 metres, ranges from 6.2 metres to 8.4 metres. The floorspace of the proposed development is 67% more than the existing dwelling. Given the increase in floorspace and the noticeably bulkier form of development the proposed replacement dwelling will be materially larger than the existing dwelling and, as such, would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt contrary to Policies GB2 and GB3 of the Local Plan.
- 6.4 Inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and it is for the applicant to show why permission should be granted. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm caused, is clearly outweighed by other considerations (Planning Policy Guidance Note 2, Green Belts). It therefore has to be demonstrated that 'very special circumstances' exist to override adopted planning policy.

- 6.5 The design and access statement submitted with the application acknowledges that the land is within the Green Belt and that planning policies restrict the amount of development allowed. It goes on to state however that the proposal is considered to be exceptional “due to the siting of the house within a continuous street scene, but which currently, due to the low grade design and inappropriate scale, is detrimental to the street scene and intrinsic character of the area. The design seeks to improve its relationship with the street and the surrounding environment through improved design and appropriate scale.” The statement further adds that, “Oakleigh as currently constructed is visually more prominent and intrusive to the character of the area than the completed dwelling would be under these proposals. It draws attention to itself by its very distinctiveness and gives an awkward appearance. This in itself would not be harmful if it were part of a rich pattern of dwellings of differential proportions and scale. However, all of its neighbours and the houses along the entire street scene are two storey and of heights and massing which fall within a range very different from Oakleigh today.”
- 6.6 The existing dwelling is the only bungalow in School Road and the proposed two-storey house, would match its neighbours, in terms of its height. However, relative to the size of the plot, the proposal in terms of its overall bulk will be larger than a number of its neighbours. Furthermore, the bungalow has existed on site for at least 40 years without any apparent harm to the street scene or character of the area. Whilst the existing property is of a simple design, it is not “low grade” and does not appear particularly awkward or detrimental to the street scene. Overall, the fact that the existing bungalow is different from its neighbours does not amount to very special circumstances that override planning policy justifying a materially larger dwelling in the Green Belt.

The impact on the street scene

- 6.7 The application site is located within a row of dwellings that generally follow a similar building line and have similar sized frontages. The front of the proposed house will be sited in the same position as the existing dwelling. The neighbouring houses have side garages, which allow a degree of separation between the properties. Although the proposed house is taken close to the side boundaries, it is considered that the low eaves and hipped roof design will allow sufficient gaps between the neighbours so as not to appear cramped in the street scene. The proposed house has an individual design, but this is not uncharacteristic of development in the area. Overall, the proposal will not harm the street scene.

The impact on the living conditions of neighbours

- 6.8 Given the position of the proposed dwelling in relation to its neighbours, together with the boundary screening to the south, there is sufficient space between the properties so that the proposed development will not appear overbearing or result in any loss of light to the neighbours. No windows are proposed at first floor on the side elevations to cause overlooking and the proposed rear balcony will not result in loss of privacy to the private amenity areas of the neighbours. Overall, the living conditions of the neighbours will not be harmed by the proposal.

Whether there is sufficient on-site parking for the size of dwelling proposed.

- 6.9 The proposed house has four bedrooms, as per the existing dwelling, and therefore three off-street parking spaces are required to comply with the Council’s standards. The proposal involves the loss of the existing garage, however there is sufficient space within the site to accommodate three cars. Accordingly, the proposal complies with the parking standards.

7. CONSULTATIONS CARRIED OUT

Comments from interested parties

8 occupiers were notified directly of the application.

The planning officer posted a statutory notice advertising the application at the site on 20th October 2009.

1 letter was received supporting the application, summarised as:

Comment	Where in the report this is considered
1. The proposal would visibly enhance School Road by bringing the property more in keeping with the surrounding properties in terms of the dimensions and style.	6.6

No letters were received objecting to the application.

Statutory consultees

Consultee	Comment	Where in the report this is considered
WSL Council	Parish Comments to be included in Panel Update.	

8. APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT

- Appendix A - Site location plan
- Appendix B – Existing plan and elevations
- Appendix C – Proposed elevations

9. REASONS RECOMMENDED FOR REFUSAL IF PERMISSION IS NOT GRANTED

- 1 The site is within the Green Belt and the replacement dwelling will be materially larger than the existing dwelling on site, contrary to saved Policy GB3 of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Plan 1999 (incorporating alterations adopted June 2003). The proposal therefore represents inappropriate development contrary to saved Policy GB1. Inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and the applicant has not demonstrated that any very special circumstances exist that clearly outweighs the harm caused by reason of inappropriateness.