



The Planning Inspectorate

An Executive Agency in the Department of the Environment and the Welsh Office

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DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Ref:

ADAR/GRIFFITHS/DORMER

Our Ref:

T/APP/A1910/A/97/278258/P2

T/APP/A1910/A/97/278311/P2

T/APP/A1910/A/97/279959/P2

Date:

- 2 OCT 1997

Dear Sirs

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990, SECTION 78 AND SCHEDULE 6
APPEALS BY MR G W GRIFFITHS
APPLICATION NOS: 4/1176/96, 4/1426/96 AND 4/00155/97/FHA

1. I have been appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment to determine these appeals against the decisions of the Dacorum Borough Council to refuse planning permission for the construction of; a) a front first floor dormer window, b) a single-storey front draught lobby extension, and c) a rear dormer bedroom extension, all at The Grange, Roe End Lane, Markyate, Herts. I held a local inquiry into the appeals on 9 September 1997.

2. Your client's property lies within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Policies for controlling development in AONBs are incorporated in the approved Hertfordshire County Structure Plan Review and the adopted Dacorum Borough Local Plan (policy 90) which together comprise the development plan for the area. The former plan also carries general policies on landscape conservation and development outside rural settlements beyond the Green Belt. More detailed policies are to be found in the local plan; of most relevance to these appeals is policy 20 which deals with extensions to dwellings. Government advice on building in the countryside is mainly to be found in Planning Policy Guidance Note 7 (PPG7).

3. From what I have heard, read and seen, I consider there to be 2 key issues in these appeals. The first is the impact of all 3 extensions on the character and appearance of the building. The second is their effect on the appearance of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

4. The property lies on high ground in an attractive rural area beyond the confines of Markyate. The surrounding countryside supports a scattering of dwellings and farms, some in secluded settings. The Grange itself was once a brick pump house which has been substantially rebuilt and also extended to form a small chalet bungalow with separate double garage, following several previous refusals of permission and appeals. Its pump house appearance and characteristic fenestration has been largely retained, but a chimney stack has

been added to the north elevation without the benefit of planning permission. However, this is a separate matter and not part of these appeals.

5. The dwelling is some distance from Roe End Lane and can only really be seen from a public footpath which runs some distance to the west, and then along the northern boundary of the property. The clearest views are of the front, or east side of the building, as intervening hedgerows allow only glimpses of the back of the dwelling and its northern gable. Even then from this footpath, it is mainly the roofs of the dwelling and its garage which are visible as planting around the edge of the plot tends to screen the walls. It is only when close to the building in the garden that its pump house origins can be fully appreciated.

6. On the first issue, it was explained that the front dormer window is required mainly for security purposes. A roof light could be installed as permitted development, but a dormer is preferred in design terms. The porch would help to remove draughts which blow through the dining room as this hilltop location is windy. The rear dormer extension would increase accommodation in the main bedroom which is in the roof slope and has restricted headroom. The Council contends that the 3 extensions would create a mish-mash of visually discordant elements which would harm the original simplicity and dignity of the building. Moreover, the addition of the porch and bedroom extension would add a further 9 sq m to the floor area which, together with the previously permitted extension, would give an increase of 66% over the original pump house.

7. The small dormer and porch would both be on the more visible front of the dwelling which retains its original plain and simple roof pitch. Whilst I appreciate that neither would be large in scale and would be seen against the background of the roof and not sky, they would nevertheless be visible features on a hitherto uncluttered roof. As such, I consider the long, low clean lines of the roof would be disrupted and the pump house character would be changed, a character which was accepted as distinctive and worthy of retention, both by the Council as well as the Inspector who allowed the 1993 appeal (ref T/APP/A1910/A/92/215486/P4), even though the building is not listed. I acknowledge that a roof light could be installed without the need for planning permission, but I am not convinced its impact would be as great since the slope of the roof would not be interrupted. I do not find that either of these extensions would relate well to the building in terms of its design and so I consider they would conflict with criterion (a) of policy 20.

8. The back of the building which is less visible has already seen alterations and extensions. The rebuilt flat roofed projection in the north-west corner upon which the bedroom extension is proposed, itself is thought to have been a subsequent addition to the original pump house. There are also 2 roof lights, one of which would be replaced by the proposal. The extension has been carefully designed to slot onto the flat roof leaving its parapet walls intact. The result would be smaller and less dominant than the larger south-westerly extension and it would be seen only against the background of the roof. Given the restricted public views of the back of the dwelling and the alterations which have already taken place, I do not consider the appearance or the integrity of the building would be unduly harmed on this side if this particular extension were to be built.

9. Criterion (e) of policy 20 states that the size of an extension will be judged according to 3 additional factors. In open countryside such as this, control over size will be tightly applied and the amount of extension already permitted will be taken into account. Some of the additional floorspace previously permitted is in the roof space within the original footprint

of the pump house. The garage replaced the reservoir and a small building at the front. Even with its extensions, this is not a large dwelling. Only the porch would add to the footprint and then only in a small way. I do not find any of the 3 extensions to seriously conflict with this particular criterion.

10. Turning to the second issue, Structure Plan policy 2 and Local Plan policy 90 both state that in AONBs the preservation of the beauty of the area will be the prime consideration. A pump house with small covered reservoir has been a feature of the landscape in this location for many years, along with a scattering of farms and dwellings. The removal of the disused reservoir and restoration of the derelict pump house, its extension and conversion to a dwelling have all been accepted in the landscape and seem to have been an enhancement.

11. Whereas the removal of dying and neglected trees along the western boundary has exposed the buildings more than before, they are still partly screened and are very much a subordinate feature of the wider countryside. None of the 3 proposed extensions is large and all would be seen against the background of the building. In view of the changes and improvements that have taken place on this site, I do not consider that any of the extensions proposed either singly or collectively would be intrusive in the countryside or cause serious harm to the beauty of the AONB. Consequently, I find all 3 proposals acceptable on this second issue.

12. I have taken account of all the other matters raised including the views of interested persons, the rebuilding of, and extensions to other dwellings in the vicinity and the recent appeal decision at Old Hall Farm. However, none of these matters outweighs the considerations leading to my decisions on the 3 appeals. The Council accepted that its suggested condition regarding materials was unnecessary as they are indicated in the application.

13. For the above reasons and in exercise of powers transferred to me, I hereby dismiss appeals a) and b).

14. For the above reasons and in exercise of powers transferred to me, I hereby allow appeal c) and grant planning permission for the construction of a rear dormer bedroom extension at The Grange, Roe End Lane, Markyate in accordance with the terms of the application Nos 4/00155/97/FHA dated 30 January 1997 and the plans submitted therewith, subject to the condition that the development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 5 years from the date of this letter;

15. This letter does not convey any approval or consent which may be required under any enactment, bye-law, order or regulation other than Section 57 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Yours faithfully



D G HAYES DipTP MRTPI
Inspector

APPEARANCES

FOR THE APPELLANT

Mr D A Raine

Ottaways, Solicitors.

He called:

Mr J Whalen BA(Hons), BArch, RIBA

Partner, Clarke Whalen, Architects.

FOR THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY

Mr P Brown

of Counsel instructed by the Director of Law
and Administration, Dacorum BC.

He called:

Miss A Bochnacki BSc(Econ), DipTP,
MRTPI

Principal Planning Officer, Dacorum BC.

DOCUMENTS

- | | |
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| Document 1 | - List of persons present at the Inquiry. |
| Document 2 | - Notification of inquiry and circulation list. |
| Document 3.1-3.3 | - Three letters in support of the proposals. |
| Document 4 | - Appendices to Mr Whalen's proof of evidence. |
| Document 5 | - Appendices to Miss Bochnacki's proof of evidence. |
| Document 6 | - Bundle of plant invoices (submitted by the appellant). |
| Document 7 | - Local Plan policy 100. |

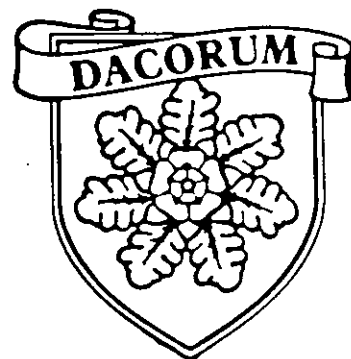
PLANS

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| Plan A.1-A.3 | - Location map, site plan and drawing for application a). |
| Plan B.1-B.3 | - Location map, site plan and drawing for application b). |
| Plan C.1-C.3 | - Location map, site plan and drawing for application c). |

- Plan D.1-D.2 - Plans of 2 previous rejected schemes for the pump house.
- Plan E.1-E.2 - Plans of permitted scheme at Old Hall Farm, Markyate - appeal by Mr R A Gardner.
- Plan F - Map produced at Mr Gardner's appeal showing location of nearby dwellings (submitted by appellant).

PHOTOGRAPHS

- Photograph 1 - Photograph of derelict pump house.
- Photograph 2.1-2.3 - Photographs of houses at Feveralls Lodge and replacement for Black Slough Cottages.



TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Ref No. 4/1426/96

Mr G W Griffiths
The Grange, Roe End Lane
Markyate
St Albans
Herts AL3 8AG

Clarke & Whalen Architects
69b High Street
Harpenden
Herts
AL5 2SL

DEVELOPMENT ADDRESS AND DESCRIPTION
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The Grange, Roe End Lane, Markyate

SINGLE STOREY FRONT EXTENSION

Your application for *full planning permission (householder)* dated 29.10.1996 and received on 01.11.1996 has been **REFUSED**, for the reasons set out on the attached sheet(s).

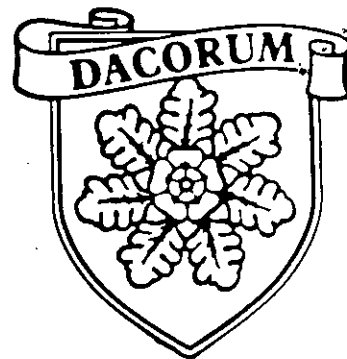
Director of Planning

Date of Decision: 30.12.1996

(ENC Reasons and Notes)

REASONS FOR REFUSAL
OF APPLICATION: 4/1426/96

Date of Decision: 30.12.1996



The property is a long and relatively low and simple form of building of distinctive character. The proposed front extension, given its size and design would unacceptably alter the character and appearance of the building and would be visually intrusive in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

NORTHGATE
DOCUMENT STAMPED
TO ENSURE DETECTION
BY SCANNER