

Name of Applicant	Proposal	Expiry Date	Plan Ref.
Mr William Frazer	Rear extension St Kenelms Lodge, St Kenelms Road, Romsley, Halesowen, Worcestershire B62 0NF	28.05.2015	15/0357

**RECOMMENDATION:** That planning permission be Refused

### Consultations

**Romsley Parish Council** Consulted 05.05.2015; No objections

**Site notice expired** 01/06/15; No responses received.

### Relevant Policies

#### **Bromsgrove District Local Plan 2004 (BDLP):**

DS2 Green Belt Development Criteria  
C27C Extensions to Converted Rural Buildings

#### **Others:**

NPPF National Planning Policy Framework  
NPPG National Planning Practice Guidance  
SPG4 Conversion of Rural Buildings

### Relevant Planning History

B/6317/1979	Erection of garage to replace existing timber stable block.	Approved	13.08.1979
B/97/0205	Conversion of existing outbuilding into dwelling (As amended by plans received 17.07.97)	Approved	08.09.1997
11/0953	Proposed detached garage 5m high to match existing dwelling and replace extant C of L	Approved	05.01.2012
13/0011	Conversion of existing outbuilding into a dwelling.	Approved	27.03.2013

### Assessment of Proposal

This application relates to a detached structure sited on the northern side of St Kenelms Road, Romsley. The building, which is in the process of being converted from a garage to

a dwelling, has its own dedicated access and sits midway between two substantial dwellings; St Kenelms Hall and to the west, Kenelmstowe. The area is rural in character and is sited within the Green Belt.

### Proposal

The amended plans (dated May 2015) relate to the addition of a rear extension to form a family room at ground floor with bedroom and part of an extended bathroom over. The proposal would be 5m in length and 5.3m wide. The external appearance would reflect the existing structure by using projecting brick plinth, but would be formed from plain rendered elevations. Velux roof lights and fenestration including large patio type doors are proposed.

### History

Application B97/0205 allowed the conversion of a garage/outbuilding to a dwelling. That proposal allowed for the ground floor to be used as domestic accommodation, whilst retaining a single integral garage. It involved no increase in roof height (original roof height 5.8m) no velux windows, no accommodation at first floor and no staircase provision. It included very modest external changes merely inserting more appropriate fenestration. That consent withdrew Permitted Development rights for extensions and outbuildings (Class A and E). This consent was not implemented.

Subsequently application 13/0011 was submitted for the conversion of the outbuilding to a dwelling. The existing plans on this submission indicated a building some 7.3m in height and showed some form of stair access to the first floor and the presence of floor space at first floor. It is concluded that prior to the submission of the 2013 application, the roof of the building had been raised by 1.5m and that additional floor space had been provided up and above the original building.

Application 13/011 was approved. It allowed living accommodation on the ground and first floor as well as cosmetic alterations to the external appearance in the form of brick plinth, timber and rendered infill panels along with revised fenestration. That consent also withdrew Permitted Development rights, but for Classes A to E.

### Main considerations

The site lies within the Green Belt, the main issues are therefore:

- Whether the proposal represents inappropriate development within the Green Belt for the purposes of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the development plan,
- And the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area and the host building.

Inappropriate development is defined in paragraphs 89 and 90 of the NPPF; it is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. The re-use of a building is not inappropriate development, provided that it is of permanent and substantial construction, that it preserves openness, and does not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt.

However, the NPPF also identifies in paragraph 89 that 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, is not inappropriate. There is no definition in this context as to what comprises a disproportionate addition in either the NPPF or in the Bromsgrove District Local Plan.

### Mass and scale.

There is disagreement as to what constitutes the original building in terms of floor space. The Council considers the ground floor of the building as it existed in 1979 is what constitutes 'original' in the context of the NPPF.

- Original - Total ground floor area of 84.5 square metres
- As approved in 2013 consent allowing first floor accommodation - total floor area provided 128 square metres
- Proposal as currently submitted with rear extension - total floor area 223 square metres or 164% increase up and above the original building.

There is no guidance in the NPPF as to what constitutes a proportionate addition in so far as relates to converted buildings. The Council does have an SPG with respect to domestic dwelling, but this clearly states it does not relate to converted rural buildings, where other issues will be relevant.

Notwithstanding the near threefold increase in floor area up and above the original building, the increase in the height of the building also has significance. The depth and height of the rear extension is of a scale as to challenge the dominance of the original building; indeed the depth of the extension at 5m is almost as deep as the main dwelling (6.4m) and the dominance of the gable when viewed from the rear adds to this fact.

The scale and mass of the additions is therefore considered to be disproportionate in relation to the modest nature of the original building. In this context the proposal is considered to be inappropriate and by definition harmful in the context of the green belt. In particular the proposal will reduce greenbelt openness and result in a more developed and built up appearance on the site.

Para 79 and 80 of the NPPF outlines the importance of Green Belts, their fundamental aim being to keep land permanently open, Para 88 goes on to say that in considering applications in the Green Belt Local authorities should '*...ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt*'.

The Council have considered the presence of any very special circumstances. The applicant's agent has stated (email 8th Oct) that support for extensions at converted rural buildings exists at Officer level (cites application in Truemans Heath Lane 14/0722) and at Inspector level and cites a recent appeal decision at Dale Hill. The agent considers a precedent has been set and requests consistency through the Department.

Your Officers consider that each application needs to be considered on its merits and that there are differences between these examples and the application site;

- The extensions at both sites were proportionate in relation to the original building and thus appropriate in the green belt by definition;
- the form of the extension at Truemans Heath Lane sat within the envelope of the building as a whole and did not fundamentally challenge its original form;
- both sites sat within a loose cluster of dwellings whose character was in contrast to the more remote nature of the application site,
- and Dale Hill saw a very modest gable addition - one which would not 'overwhelm' the original building.

It is concluded that these cases do not represent the 'very special' circumstances required to outweigh the harm caused as a result of the inappropriate nature of the development and any other identified harm.

### Character

Policy C27 requires proposals to be assessed against the impact of the scheme on the character of the building as it existed 'immediately prior to conversion rather than the use to which it has been converted'.

At the application site the linear and simple uncluttered appearance of the original garage block is noted, its elevations were 'clean' with no projecting elements and its roof line uncluttered and similarly simple in appearance and character. Its height was limited and so its ancillary nature was emphasised.

In contrast the proposal seeks to add built form in a position which undermines the form and style of the original building. The resultant floor plan being at odds with the plain and utilitarian character of the original building, the scale and mass of the rear gable feature cutting across the roof slope and introducing uncharacteristically large fenestration styles. On the front elevation the addition of a substantial porch, (all be that it is only shown on the front elevation and not on the side elevation or floor plan) causes similar harm to the simple character and form of the original building. All of which sits against the backdrop of a roof height which is already higher than that associated with the original building.

It is concluded that for these reasons that the proposal by virtue of its siting, scale and design would detract from the simple utilitarian form of the original building and would therefore be harmful to the visual amenity of the area, contrary to Policy C27C of the BDLP, the advice in SPG4 and the NPPF.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That planning permission be; Refused

### Reasons for Refusal

- 1) The scale and mass of the proposed extensions are disproportionate in relation to the modest nature of the original single storey building. The proposal is therefore inappropriate and by definition harmful in the context of the green belt. In particular the proposal will reduce greenbelt openness and result in a more developed and built up appearance on the site. The proposal therefore fails to comply with para 89 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Plan reference

- 2) The proposal by virtue of its siting, scale and design would detract from the simple utilitarian form of the original building and would therefore be harmful to the visual amenity of the area, contrary to Policy C27C of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan 2014, the advice in Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 4 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

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