DELEGATED REPORT

Reference :- **08/00273/FUL**

Location :- **Hawthorns, Thornton Lane, Markfield**

Introduction :-

This is a substantial detached house built in the 1990's. It is situated within a ribbon of houses fronting Thornton Lane in a rural location remote from the developed area of Markfield. There is a group of three dwellings behind the long rear garden of the application property and on the opposite side of Thornton Lane there is a frontage of more recent dwellings that have replaced a former poultry farm.

The application dwelling stands centrally to the site frontage and has two bedrooms at first floor and an additional two in the roof at second floor; it also has two single storey extensions to the rear comprising a conservatory and a sun lounge. The dwelling is linked by a side lobby to extensive single storey outbuildings at the side and rear that include a double garage, games room and a covered swimming pool with associated plant room, changing facilities and a further conservatory.

The proposal is described as 'extensions and alterations' but in reality would amount to an almost total redevelopment of the existing house, garage and part of the outbuildings with the exception of the swimming pool that would be retained. At ground floor the dwelling would be extended to one side, marginally to the front and substantially to the rear. Part of the existing rear wall would be retained as an internal ground floor wall and as the front wall of a new basement level that would be constructed below the ground floor rear extension. To the other side the existing garage, plant room and games room would be rebuilt and a new first floor would be built over both the extended ground floor dwelling and the redeveloped garage, plant room etc. In very round terms the habitable floorspace of the existing dwelling is 210 sq.m and the proposal would have a habitable floorspace of 500 sq.m.

Consultations :-

No responses have been received from neighbours or Markfield Parish Council. Ratby Parish Council has no objections.

Development Plan Policies :-

NE5 & RES10

Appraisal :-

The scale and nature of the proposed works are such that it is patently obvious in terms of both fact and intention that the proposal relates to the removal of the existing dwelling and its replacement with a substantially larger dwelling of totally different design and character. The determining issue, therefore, is that of planning policy. Whilst there are other dwellings in the immediate locality,

some of them substantially extended, this is nevertheless a location which is outside the established settlement pattern and one to which the Countryside policies of the Local Plan apply. Policy NE5 seeks to protect the countryside for its own sake and presumes against development with certain limited exceptions. It is clear the present proposal does not constitute such an exception and that it is contrary to this policy, furthermore there are no obvious circumstances that would justify the policy being set aside in this case.

On the basis that the proposal is concluded to be for a replacement dwelling, although described by the applicants as 'extensions and alterations', the proposal has been considered also in the context of Policy RES 10 of the Local Plan. This emphasises the countryside policies of the Local Plan but provides that, where there is special justification for the development of a replacement dwelling, it will only be permitted where it is of a similar size and scale to the original dwelling and on a similar footprint. The size, scale and footprint of this proposal far exceed those of the original dwelling with the plain conclusion that the proposal is contrary also to Policy RES 10.

In the light of these fundamental objections to the principle of the proposal the details of the design of the development have not been considered other than to establish that the external appearance of the development would bear little or no resemblance to that of the existing dwelling, underlining the fact that this would be a replacement dwelling.

RECOMMENDATION :- REFUSE for the following reason :-

The proposed development represents the erection of a replacement dwelling of substantially greater scale and visual impact than the existing. On this basis it would be contrary to, and would undermine, Policies NE 5 and RES 10 of the adopted Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan which have the objective of protecting the countryside for its own sake.