
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 January 2017

by Christa Masters MA (hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 20th January 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/C1950/D/16/3162756
113 The Ryde, Hatfield AL9 5DP

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs Ron & Jane Lane against the decision of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 6/2016/1386/HOUSE, dated 5 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 18 August 2016.
 - The development proposed is first floor front and side extension including installation of suntubes to extg front elevation.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises a detached residential dwelling. It is located within an established residential area where the dwellings are generally set within spacious regular sized plots. The existing property has an attached double garage which is a flat roofed structure. A number of the surrounding dwellings have been extended and altered.
 4. Policy D1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan (DP) 2005 advises that the Council will require the standard of design in all new development to be of a high quality. Policy D2 goes on to note that new development will be required to respect and relate to the character and context of the area in which it is proposed. Developments should maintain and where possible enhance or improve the character of the existing area.
 5. The extension proposed would provide a first floor extension over the existing flat roofed double garage. This would have a gable front and would sit forward of the existing host property by some margin. As a result of the size and scale of the structure, as well as the gable front element, it would in my view represent a prominent addition to the street scene. It would present a bulky and dominant feature, which would fail to be subordinate in scale and form to the host property. It would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area as a result.
-

6. The appellant has referred to the existing extensions in place at Nos 111 and 117. However, in these examples the extensions do not protrude forward of the existing front elevation of the property. They do also not include a front gable element. In contrast to the appeal proposal, they are in my view extensions which are proportionate in scale and form to the host properties concerned. I have also been referred to other extensions at nearby properties along Highlands. However, I have no details regarding when these extensions were permitted, or the development plan policies which were applicable at that time. The weight I can attach to these examples is therefore limited.
7. Concerns have also been expressed regarding the fenestration detailing as proposed. From the drawings presented and having considered the proportions of the two proposed first floor windows shown, I am unable to agree with the appellants assertion that the two new windows proposed would be similar in design terms to the existing fenestration. This adds weight to my concerns that the proposal would fail to either maintain or enhance the existing character of the area, as envisaged by policy D2.
8. I therefore conclude the proposal would fail to accord with the development plan policies outlined above. These policies are consistent with the Framework as a whole and in particular, paragraph 17 which requires, amongst other things, that decision taking should always seek to secure high quality design. Reference has also been made to the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan Supplementary Design Guidance (SPD) 2005. However, my attention has not been drawn to anything specific within this document which would alter my conclusion in relation to the main issue.
9. Reference has also been made to policy GBSP2 which relates to defined town and specified settlements within the Green Belt. As the Council have advised the site is not located within the Green Belt, I do not consider this policy is directly applicable to the appeal proposal.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons set out above and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Christa Masters

INSPECTOR