

# Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 May 2017

**by Jonathan Hockley BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

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

**Decision date: 12 June 2017**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/C1950/W/17/3169601**

**189 Boundary Lane, Welwyn Garden City AL7 4EJ**

- 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 Harry Hunt against the decision of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.
  - The application Ref 6/2016/1757/FULL, dated 28 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 24 October 2016.
  - The development proposed is a rear extension to existing dwelling, removing attached garage and replacing with 2 bedroom end of terraced house.
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## Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

## Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

## Reasons

3. Boundary Lane lies towards the southern fringes of Welwyn Garden City and is a residential road consisting primarily of regular blocks of semi-detached and terraced dwellings. The appeal site lies at the northern end of the road and is the southern end terrace on a block of 6 units. The block is split into 3 groups of 2 by changes in roof height and front building lines. The dwellings have a consistent design, with two bay facades and small round windows next to the front doors. Both end properties to the block, including the appeal site, have a flat roof garage to side, although the northern house has two garages attached. The middle two properties have shallow flat porch roofs, with the outer pairs having small lean to porches.
  4. On the opposite side of the road are sited a row of 5 terraces designed in a slightly different manner, bookended by two pairs of semi-detached dwellings designed to match the appeal site run. To the south of the appeal site is a three storey apartment block with hipped roof; the ends of the block are set back within the site shy of the 7 bay main unit. The character of the area is therefore highly planned and regular, with symmetry and the rhythm of the houses and overall street scene prominent.
  5. The proposal seeks to demolish the garage to No 189 Boundary Lane, and construct a slim terraced unit onto the end of the property. This would have a front door and upper window to match No 189. A small round window would also be inserted adjacent to the front door to match the remainder of the block. To the rear the proposal would involve constructing a gabled rear extension to
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- provide space for both the new dwelling and to extend No 189 itself. The rear building line of such an extension would be similar to that of a large conservatory located at the rear of the adjacent property.
6. There is no dispute between the parties that the site lies within an area normally suitable for residential development. I also consider that the rear garden to No 189 is fairly large and the space at the side of the dwelling would accommodate the proposed new property fairly comfortably in spatial terms. However, whilst the scheme mimics the design of the existing houses as far as possible, creating a new unit at the side of the existing block in a significantly narrower design would appear out of place and jar with the rhythm and symmetry of the existing block. Such an effect would be compounded from views from the south of the side elevation, where the deeper dimensions of the side of the unit would draw the eye to the proposal and make the scheme more noticeable in such a highly planned and regular street scene.
  7. Whilst I note that the proposal would involve the removal of the existing flat roof garage, this feature is low key and replicated in part at the other end of the block. I consider that this has a neutral effect on the street scene at present and the removal of this would not constitute a benefit of the scheme. It is also suggested that the Council would be more receptive to the idea of a 2 storey extension to the existing dwelling in a similar design. However, I have no evidence or plans suggesting that such a scheme has been discussed.
  8. A second reason for refusal relates to the proposed extension of No 189. The appellant considers the Council are not objecting in this instance to the principle of the extension but its attachment to the proposed new dwelling and that if I were to find that the proposal was acceptable in other ways then this second reason for refusal would fall away. Such reasoning also features in the Council's Planning Officer report. However, for the reasons given above I consider that the proposed new unit would cause harm to the character of the surrounding area. Such harm would also outweigh the limited benefits that an additional dwelling would bring to the area.
  9. I therefore conclude that the proposal would have a significant adverse effect upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The design of the scheme would be contrary to Policies D1, D2 and H2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 which together state that all new windfall residential development will be considered against the physical and environmental constraints on development of land, should respect and relate to the character and context of the area in which it is proposed, be of a high quality design and should as a minimum maintain the character of the existing area. The proposal would also be contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework which states as a core planning principle that planning should take account of the different character of different areas and always seek to secure high quality design.
  10. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

*Jon Hockley*

INSPECTOR