
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 October 2017

by H Lock BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 12th October 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/C1950/D/17/3181401

4 Becket Gardens, WELWYN, Herts., AL6 9JE

- 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 Beckman against the decision of Welwyn Hatfield Council.
 - The application Ref. 6/2017/0584/HOUSE, dated 21 March 2017, was refused by notice dated 18 May 2017.
 - The development proposed is new porch.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for new porch at 4 Becket Gardens, WELWYN, Herts., AL6 9JE in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref. 6/2017/0584/HOUSE, dated 21 March 2017, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: B G W-P-0 1; B G W-P-0 2; B G W-P-0 3; B G W-P-0 4; B G W-P-0 5; B G W-P-0 6; and B G W-P-0 7.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Procedural Matter

2. The description of development in the heading above has been taken from the planning application form. However, in Part E of the appeal form a different wording has been entered. Neither of the main parties has provided written confirmation that a revised description of development has been agreed. Accordingly, I have used the one given on the original application.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the appeal property and the street scene.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a semi-detached house located towards the end of a cul-de-sac which terminates in a turning loop and central green surrounded by dwellings. There is a degree of cohesion amongst these dwellings in terms of

design, materials and period of construction, but the most defined group is the housing on the eastern side of the road, with its projecting garages and porches. There is more variety to the semi-detached houses of which the appeal property forms part. In particular, porches to the semi-detached houses vary in terms of their design, form and materials.

5. The appeal property is set back from the highway behind a reasonably deep front garden. As a result of its position relative to the turning loop and tucked back next to the landscaped grounds of an adjacent nursery, I do not find the property to be particularly prominent in the street scene.
6. Policy D1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 (DP) seeks to secure high quality design in all new development, and DP Policy D2 requires such development to respect and relate to the character and context of the area in which it is proposed. To this end, the Council's published Supplementary Design Guidance advises that extensions should be designed to complement and reflect the design and character of the dwelling and be subordinate in scale.
7. The proposed extension would be larger than the porch that it would replace. However, in the context of the existing property, the width and depth of the addition would not be disproportionate. Given the range of porch designs and heights in the cul-de-sac, and the projecting garages/porches of the dwellings opposite, the proposal would not appear incongruous. It would not be unduly dominant on the appeal property, nor highly visible given its position set back from the footway. As such, it would not be harmful to the character and appearance of the street scene.
8. I therefore conclude that the proposal would respect the character and appearance of the appeal property and the street scene, and would accord with the design aims of DP Policies D1 and D2 and the associated design guidance.

Conditions

9. In addition to the standard time limit, I have attached a condition specifying the approved drawings as this provides certainty. It is also appropriate to control materials to match the existing dwelling, in order to safeguard the character and appearance of the development and the area.

Conclusion

10. The National Planning Policy Framework establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, and part of its environmental strand is to contribute to protecting and enhancing the built environment. A core planning principle of the Framework is to always seek to secure high quality design, and for the reasons given above the proposal would comply with this principle and would be sustainable development supported through the Framework. As a consequence, I conclude that this appeal should be allowed.

H Lock

INSPECTOR