
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 September 2019

by N Thomas MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 September 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/C1950/W/19/3231961

111 Wheatley Road, Welwyn Garden City AL7 3LD

- 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 Barton against the decision of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 6/2018/2833/FULL, dated 2 November 2018, was refused by notice dated 7 February 2019.
 - The development proposed is the change of use of amenity land to residential driveway parking, with new dropped kerb to highway.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the change of use of amenity land to residential driveway parking, with new dropped kerb to highway at 111 Wheatley Road, Welwyn Garden City AL7 3LD in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 6/2018/2833, dated 2 November 2018, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 18.009-PL1000, 18.009.PL1002
 - 3) No works to surface the driveway shall take place until details of the materials to be used have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Procedural Matter

2. An emerging plan, the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan 2016, has been submitted to the Secretary of State for examination. It is not clear the extent to which there are unresolved objections to its policies. It does not form part of the adopted development plan and I give the emerging plan policies limited weight.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is one of a pair of semi-detached houses, fronting onto Wheatley Road. The site is within a suburban residential area, characterised by

two storey dwellings set well back from the road behind open lawns, with footways separated from the road with grass verges and occasional trees. This gives the area a verdant and spacious appearance. The site is within a Garden City, designed with buildings set within an 'arcadian' landscape context with accessible open space, mature trees, hedgerows and boulevards, with a strong tradition of 'verge-path-verge'.

5. Wheatley Road is a short section of road, with only two pairs of semi-detached houses on this side. They are in a staggered arrangement, so that the house at No 111 is set slightly behind No 113, and they are set at a slight angle to the road. None of them currently have off road parking, but an appeal¹ has recently been allowed for a driveway at No 113. Two of the houses on the opposite side of Wheatley Road have narrow driveways which are used for parking, and there are other driveways in the wider area.
6. The appeal proposal would result in the loss of a small section of the open lawn, which would be replaced by hard surfacing to park two cars to the front of the house. A significant portion of the lawn to the front of No 111 would be retained, and as a result its open appearance would be largely unharmed. The appeal site is partially screened from wider views by the forward siting of No 113, and young trees have been planted on the road verge, which when established would assist in assimilating the proposal into the street scene. Taking into account the existing driveways on the opposite side of the road, and the allowed appeal at the adjacent site, the driveway would not appear at odds with the established character of the area.
7. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the proposal would not be harmful to the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area. It would therefore not be in conflict with policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005, which seek, amongst other things, to ensure high standards of design that respects and relates to the character and context of the area. It would not conflict with the Supplementary Design Guidance 2005 or the National Planning Policy Framework.

Conditions and Conclusion

8. The Council has suggested conditions to be imposed should the appeal be allowed. I have considered these in the light of the advice in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). In addition to the standard condition, I have imposed a condition requiring that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans, in the interests of clarity. Details of the materials to be used in the surfacing of the driveway are required in the interest of the character and appearance of the area.
9. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

N Thomas

INSPECTOR

¹ Ref APP/C1950/W/19/3223634