



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 February 2020

by Alison Partington BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 February 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/C1950/D/19/3241043

5 Pentley Park, Welwyn Garden City AL8 7RT

- 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 and Mrs C Davies against the decision of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 6/2019/1741/HOUSE, dated 12 July 2019, was refused by notice dated 6 September 2019.
 - The development proposed is a single storey side extension and infill extension to covered area at side of property. Single storey part two storey side/rear extension following demolition of existing conservatory and alteration to openings to include erection of 2 x side facing dormer windows.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in the appeal is whether or not the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area and the host property.

Reasons

3. The appeal site lies in Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special attention to be had to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of a conservation area. The conservation area covers the original part of the garden city. The high standard of the street scape and consistency in the design and materials used in the dwellings gives a strong sense of unity to the area. As one of the first garden cities the conservation area has historic as well as architectural significance.
4. The appeal property is a relatively modest sized link detached house. It is located in an area that comprises mainly linked detached and detached houses with a limited range of similar designs that formed part of the original garden city.
5. At present the house has a single storey flat roof extension and a conservatory at the rear which would be demolished as part of the proposal. The footprint of the main rear extension proposed would not be significantly greater than these existing extensions and the amount of the plot occupied by the built form would not increase substantially as a result of the appeal scheme.

6. Nevertheless, the scale and mass of the proposed extensions would be significantly greater than that which exists at present. The ground floor element would be wider than the existing house and to one side would join to a further single storey side extension that would in part replace the existing storage shed. The first floor element would not be as wide but would still be virtually the full width of the house and would be the same depth as the ground floor. Although the dual pitch roof ensures the ridge line of the extension is lower than that on the main house, it would still dominate the rear roof plane.
7. Given its scale and mass, the proposal would not be a subordinate or sympathetic addition to the host property and would detract significantly from its original form and appearance. As such, it would be detrimental to both character and appearance of the host property and the character of the wider area.
8. As well as bi-folding doors, the rear elevation of the extension would contain 2 large windows, one at ground floor and the other at first floor. Although of a similar width, the plans indicate that the ground floor window would have 8 casements but the first floor only 5. Such inconsistency in detailing would detract from the appearance of the property. The proposed windows would respect the host property in that the ground floor window would be taller than the first floor one. Nevertheless, both of these windows would be significantly larger than those found on the original dwelling and so would not respect its proportions or character. The high level windows on the side elevation of the extension would also be out of keeping.
9. The appeal scheme also includes two half-dormers, one on each side of the original dwelling. Half-dormers are a feature of housing in the area, as is the fact that the gutters sail through the window. As such, I consider these would be acceptable additions to the host property.
10. As the proposed extensions would be to the rear of the property there would be limited visibility of them in the street scene. However, whilst a lack of visibility means that the impact the proposal would have on the appearance of the conservation area is more limited, character is a more intrinsic quality that does not depend on visibility and the impact of the proposal on that would be much more severe.
11. My attention has been drawn to a number of other similar rear extensions on a nearby street. It is suggested that these show that such extensions are part of the local character. However, such extensions were very much in the minority, and so do not represent a characteristic feature of the area. Moreover, these extensions were on houses with a different design to the appeal property. I observed that a number of other houses immediately surrounding the appeal site, including some with the same original design to No 5, had rear extensions, but none of these are of the same scale and mass as proposed here.
12. Overall, I consider that the proposal would not preserve, and would unacceptably harm, the character and appearance of Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area and the host property. Accordingly, it would conflict with Policy D1 of *Welwyn Hatfield District Plan (adopted April 2005)* which requires a high quality of design in new developments. Having regard to paragraph 196 of the *National Planning Policy Framework*, whilst the harm caused to the conservation area would be less than substantial, there are no public benefits which would outweigh the harm caused.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons set out above, I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

Alison Partington

INSPECTOR