



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 15 June 2021

by R Sabu BA(Hons), MA, BArch, PgDip, RIBA, ARB

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25th June 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/C1950/D/21/3268704

11 Peplins Close, Brookmans Park, Hatfield AL9 7UX

- 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 Paul Sindrey against the decision of Welwyn Hatfield Council.
 - The application Ref 6/2020/2781/HOUSE, dated 22 October 2020, was refused by notice dated 24 November 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as, 'loft extension'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. I note the Welwyn Hatfield Draft Local Plan 2016. However, since there is no certainty that the policies within will be adopted in their current form, I attribute them limited weight.

Main Issues

3. While I note the two reasons for refusal, from the wider evidence, the main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host building and surrounding area.

Reasons

4. Peplins Close is a residential street characterised by two storey semi-detached dwellings with similar hipped roof forms that are largely unaltered such that the area has an attractive character and appearance.
5. The existing two storey side extension has a low roof with a height significantly lower than that of the main building such that it appears subservient to the main building and is in keeping with the character of the area.
6. The proposed hip to gable roof extension would increase the height of the side extension so that the roof would be in line with the ridge of the roof of the host building. This would significantly increase the mass of the building such that it would unbalance the composition of the semi-detached dwellings and appear incongruous given the largely unaltered hipped roofs in the area.
7. In addition, the proposed pitch of the roof at the front elevation would be noticeably different to that of the host building and would be a further departure from the roof forms prevalent in the area adding to the incongruous effect on the character of the area.

8. I acknowledge the corner position of the dwelling within the cul-de-sac, and that the roof extension would be in line with the footprint of the building as well as the proposed materials matching the existing. However, given the significant increase in the massing of the building, it would appear bulky and the resultant discordant appearance would be visible from along the street particularly during the winter months when the foliage on trees on the street are less dense.
9. The proposed dormer extension would extend across a significant width of the existing roof and proposed hip to gable extension. While the dormer extension would not extend above the ridge height, it would only be set in a short distance from the sides and less than the distance advised in the Supplementary Design Guidance 2005 (SPD). Given the overall width of the proposed dormer extension, it would visually dominate the rear elevation of the host building which would appear as a three-storey building from the rear. The resulting discordant effect would be seen from the rear gardens of the neighbouring properties.
10. I acknowledge the evidence regarding permitted development. However, since the rear dormer extension as proposed would be reliant on the hip to gable extension, there is little prospect that the proposed dormer extension could be constructed should this appeal fail. Therefore, it does not form a fall-back position and this matter has not altered my overall decision.
11. Consequently, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the host building and surrounding area. Therefore, it would conflict with Policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 Adopted April 2005 (DP) which together require a high standard of design and for all new development to respect and relate to the character and context of the area. It would also conflict with the aims of the Supplementary Design Guidance 2005 and the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework).

Other Matters

12. I acknowledge that the scheme would provide additional accommodation for the occupants. However, these personal wishes do not outweigh my earlier findings based on making decisions in the wider public interest.
13. While the scheme would provide a suitable environment for future occupiers in terms of internal space and would not harm the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, a lack of harm in this respect carries neutral weight and has not altered my overall decision.
14. The development plan pre-dates 2012 but the weight to be attached does not hinge on its age. Rather paragraph 213 of the Framework makes it clear that due weight should be given to existing policies according to their degree of consistency with the Framework. The Framework places emphasis on good design being a key aspect of sustainable development and requires that developments are sympathetic to local character. DP Policies D1 and D2 are consistent with these aims and I therefore attribute them full weight.
15. There may be temporary economic benefits during the construction process and an increase in value of the property. However, any public benefit in this respect would be limited given the modest scale of the development. I also acknowledge the evidence regarding effective use of land. However, given

the harm to the character and appearance of the area, these matters have not altered my overall decision.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above, the proposal would conflict with the development plan as a whole and in the absence of materials considerations to indicate otherwise, the appeal is dismissed.

R. Sabu

INSPECTOR