



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 September 2021

by C Osgathorp BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 September 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/C1950/D/21/3270998

31 Aldykes, Hatfield, Herts AL10 8ED

- 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 Mrs B Grewal against the decision of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 6/2020/2894/HOUSE, dated 15 October 2020, was refused by notice dated 15 January 2021.
 - The development proposed is front and rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for front and rear extension at 31 Aldykes, Hatfield, Herts AL10 8ED in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 6/2020/2894/HOUSE, dated 15 October 2020, 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: Location plan; mp.224; mp.24; mma.477; mp.2344A; and, mp.24400.
 - 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.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appellant has submitted a revised proposed floor plan with the appeal (drawing No. mp.2344A), which makes a minor amendment to the layout of the ground floor. This consists of the realignment of an internal partition wall between the main living area and the hallway. Given the minor nature of the amendment, it would not materially change the proposal and so no prejudice would be caused to any party if I were to accept the revision. I have therefore considered the proposal on the basis of the revised plan.
3. The Council cites policies SP9 and SADM11 from the emerging Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Local Plan (the emerging Local Plan), however the Council has not explained the current status of the Plan or whether these policies have been objected to or are subject to modification. Accordingly, I have afforded these policies limited weight.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the internal layout of the proposed development would provide an acceptable standard of living accommodation for future occupiers, with particular regard to natural lighting and outlook.

Reasons

5. No 31 Aldykes is a 2 storey mid-terrace property. The ground floor comprises 2 bedrooms at the rear and separate kitchen and dining room at the front. The first floor provides 3 bedrooms and a bathroom.
6. The proposed alterations to the ground floor would provide a large open-plan living room/kitchen, which would be served by a new floor to ceiling window in the proposed front extension. The proposed rear extension would accommodate 2 bedrooms that would be positioned either side of a central corridor. At first floor, the 2 storey rear extension would provide a bedroom, and the internal layout would be re-configured to provide an en-suite and 2 shower rooms.
7. The new floor to ceiling front window would be the main source of natural light and outlook to the ground floor living room/kitchen. Whilst the depth of the room would be sizeable, the new large front window and the regular shape of the room would ensure that the space would receive an acceptable level of natural light. Furthermore, I am mindful that the existing ground floor has 2 bedrooms at the rear and so the kitchen and dining room only has a single aspect to the north. The proposed living/kitchen area would be no different in this respect. Given the increased size of the new front window and the aspect on to an open grassed area at the front, I am satisfied that adequate outlook would be provided for future occupiers.
8. The proposal would provide a much larger and more spacious living area for future occupiers. Furthermore, the additional W.C. facilities at ground and first floor would improve accessibility and the overall standard of accommodation at the property. Having regard to the above factors, I find that the proposal would improve the standard of living accommodation at the appeal property compared to the existing situation.
9. For the above reasons, I conclude that the internal layout of the proposed development would provide an acceptable standard of living accommodation for future occupiers. The proposal would therefore accord with Policy D1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and guidance contained within the Welwyn Supplementary Design Guidance 2005, which requires the standard of design in all new development to be of a high quality. The proposal would also accord with paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 which, amongst other things, seeks to create places with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Other Matters

10. I have had regard to the concerns raised by local residents, which have been considered in the officer's report. The proposal would not increase the number of bedrooms at the appeal property and so it would not cause a material increase in noise and disturbance, or additional waste and litter. The Council indicates that the proposal would accord with the parking standards and I see no reason to take a different view.

11. The single storey extensions to the front and rear would not cause a significant loss of light or outlook to neighbouring properties due to their modest height and depth. The two storey element would be inset from the side boundaries, which, together with its modest depth, would ensure that there would not be a significant loss of light or outlook to the habitable windows and gardens of the adjacent dwellings. The appeal site is located in an urban area where there is already mutual overlooking of gardens. The windows in the proposed extension would not cause a significant loss of privacy to neighbouring occupiers compared to the existing situation.
12. The proposed front and rear extensions would appear subordinate to the existing dwelling and would integrate satisfactorily with its scale and form. There is no substantive evidence before me that the adjacent green space to the front of the building would be used as a builder's yard and this is not a matter that is within my jurisdiction.

Conditions

13. In addition to the standard time limit condition, I have imposed a condition requiring that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans. This is for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of certainty. In order to maintain the character and appearance of the dwelling and the surrounding area, I have also imposed a condition requiring the external surfaces of the development to be finished in materials to match those used in the existing building.

Conclusion

14. For the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

C Osgathorp

INSPECTOR