
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 November 2021

by R Bartlett PGDip URP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 November 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/C1950/D/21/3280056

16 Waterbeach, Welwyn Garden City, AL7 2PT

- 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 Gavin Jones against the decision of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 6/2021/0847/HOUSE, dated 15 March 2021, was refused by notice dated 21 May 2021.
 - The development proposed is two storey front infill extension.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. Reference is made to the Draft Local Plan Proposed Submission August 2016. However, since there is no certainty that the policies within this will be adopted in their current form, I can afford them limited weight.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the dwelling and the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The site comprises a two storey detached house with a detached double garage to the front. It is situated within a modern housing estate in the corner of a cul-de-sac. The surrounding house types, although varied, are all of similar design and materials, which complement each other. This end of Waterbeach is characterised by a generally symmetrical layout with matching house types located opposite each other. Across the head of the cul-de-sac there are single storey garages, gardens, parking spaces and soft landscaping. A public footpath runs centrally between the landscaping and garages of Nos. 16 and 17 Waterbeach, which leads onto Lysander Way, a local distributor/main access road serving the wider residential area.
5. It is proposed to infill the gap between the front of the dwelling and the detached garage with a two storey extension. The extension would be aligned with the rear of garage, as opposed to with the side of the house. This would result in an awkward and disjointed appearance, where part of the wall height and eaves height would not match those of the original dwelling or indeed the majority of the proposed development.

6. Even if this issue was addressed, by aligning the extension with the side elevation of the original dwelling, the two storey scale, mass and bulk of the resultant dwelling, when viewed from Lysander Way and the loss of symmetry when viewed from Waterbeach, would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the area.
7. The appellant has drawn my attention to various other developments nearby but, based upon the evidence before me, none of these examples appear directly comparable to the appeal scheme or share the same prominent public views from numerous directions. Accordingly, I have given these little weight in reaching my decision.
8. I acknowledge that the views through the gap, which would be infilled, are limited and are primarily of built development beyond. However, from Lysander Way, this gap is important in terms of breaking up the massing of buildings and brickwork, particularly at first floor and roof level. From Waterbeach, the gap is important in terms of retaining the symmetrical layout and the single storey, open and spacious nature of the head of the cul-de-sac. All of these factors make a positive contribution to overall character and appearance of the area.
9. The design of the extension would appear attractive from the front of the dwelling and would reflect the style of the original house. However, this is not sufficient to outweigh my concerns. On a different plot, where the symmetry of the street and public views to the rear were less prominent, the proposal may have been acceptable. However, I am required to consider how the development fits in with its immediate surroundings.
10. The scale and location of the proposed extension would significantly detract from the symmetrical and low level design and layout of this part of Waterbeach. It would also result in a large expanse of unbroken brickwork in prominent views from Lysander Way. Consequently, it would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area, contrary to policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005, the council's Supplementary Design Guide and the National Planning Policy Framework, which collectively seek to ensure that new development is of high quality design that relates well to the character and context of its surroundings.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above the appeal is dismissed.

Rachael Bartlett

INSPECTOR