
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: 03 December 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/C1950/D/21/3279335
26 Lower Mardley Hill, Welwyn, AL6 0UQ

- 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 Ms G Haslop against the decision of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 6/2021/0972/HOUSE, dated 24 March 2021, was refused by notice dated 20 May 2021.
 - The development proposed is erection of two storey side and rear extensions and a first floor rear extension, insertion of 6 x side facing dormer windows and 3 x side facing roof lights to facilitate extension of existing first floor plan, alterations to fenestration on existing front, side and rear elevations and demolition of outbuilding attached to existing garage, to facilitate erection of new detached outbuilding.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for erection of two storey side and rear extensions and a first floor rear extension, insertion of 6 x side facing dormer windows and 3 x side facing roof lights to facilitate extension of existing first floor plan, alterations to fenestration on existing front, side and rear elevations and demolition of outbuilding attached to existing garage, to facilitate erection of new detached outbuilding at 26 Lower Mardley Hill, Welwyn, AL6 0UQ, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 6/2021/0972/HOUSE, dated 24 March 2021, 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: 5186-PO1 Rev B, 5186-OS1 and 5186-OS2.
 - 3) No development shall commence until details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extensions and outbuilding hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

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 original dwelling and the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The local planning authority (LPA) raised no objections to the proposed partial demolition and alteration of the existing garage building or to the construction of a new detached outbuilding. I have no reason to disagree with the LPA's findings on these aspects of the proposal.
5. The existing dwelling is a gable fronted dormer bungalow finished in a white render with a red pantile roof. It has existing flat roof extensions to either side and to the rear. There is a detached garage to the side of the property, which has been extended to the rear. The property is not of any special historic or architectural merit and does not form part of a uniformed street scene. Accordingly, there is little justification for restricting any changes to its general appearance.
6. This section of Lower Mardley Hill, slopes downwards from north to south and comprises a row of approximately seven frontage buildings in large spacious plots, which are primarily dwellings. The property immediately to the north of the appeal site is currently in use as a children's day nursery. The building line is staggered and the properties vary significantly in terms design, scale and materials. Due to the topography of the area and buildings being set back from the road, the appeal property is not viewed in context with the dwellings to the south. Dormers, of varying styles and numbers, are present on the existing dwelling as well as elsewhere within the immediate surrounding area.
7. The proposed extensions and alterations would not increase the maximum width, depth, eaves or ridge height of the dwelling as it currently stands. However, corners and gaps would be filled in, squaring off the dwelling, and a new roof added with a pitch of ten degrees less than the existing roof slope. Whilst the number of dormers would be increased, these would be smaller than the existing dormer windows and would be symmetrical in terms of their size and their spacing across each side of the roof.
8. The replacement of the existing and varied mix of incongruous flat roof extensions, dormer windows and materials with a single coherent and well balanced design would enhance the appearance of the dwelling and its immediate surroundings.
9. Consequently I find no conflict with policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005, the council's Supplementary Design Guide or 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.

Conditions and Conclusion

10. I have imposed conditions setting out the standard time limit for the commencement of the development hereby approved and listing the approved drawing numbers, for the avoidance of doubt. The LPA requested a condition requiring the development to be undertaken using external materials to match the existing dwelling. However, the application forms suggest alternative

materials may be proposed. Given the mix of materials in the area, I see no reason to restrict the external finish purely to render to match the existing dwelling or to tiles to match an existing roof that is to be removed. In order to ensure a satisfactory end appearance, I have therefore imposed a condition requiring external materials to be submitted to and approved by the LPA prior to commencement of the development.

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

Rachael Bartlett

INSPECTOR