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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 November 2021

**by A.Graham BA(hons) MAued IHBC**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 16<sup>TH</sup> December 2021**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/C1950/w/21/3273797**

**3 Hangman's Lane, Welwyn AL6 0TJ**

- 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 A Leake against the decision of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.
  - The application Ref 6/2020/1919/FULL, dated 3 August 2020, was refused by notice dated 28 October 2020.
  - The proposed development is for proposed new dwelling including replacement garage for donor property.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Main Issues

2. The main issue is the impact of the proposals upon the character and appearance of the area.

### Reasons

3. The appeal site is currently part of the private garden area serving number 3 Hangman's Lane. There is currently a garage on the site that serves the parent property and this building is immediately visible on entering the vicinity from the main road. Hangman's Lane then continues uphill to the right of the appeal site where it is characterised by hedges, fences and trees with the occasional view or glimpse of other properties or gardens nearby. The footpath of Roundabout Lane runs uphill alongside the appeal site and gives access to number 3 from this higher level before curving around the estate to eventually re-join Hangman's Lane itself.
4. The overriding character of the area it seems to me is one of individual, suburban houses within well landscaped garden plots that give an almost arcadian character to the narrow roads and paths around here. Most of the properties in the vicinity are bungalows or dormer chalet style bungalows but almost all stand within well landscaped grounds with generous gardens and I consider that this character is important for the overall sense of place in this area.
5. The proposal before me intends to erect a T-shaped chalet bungalow to the lower part of the site that will be set well back from the location of the existing garage. To serve this property another detached, single garage will be

constructed alongside the footpath of Roundabout Lane and, in order to maintain vehicular access to number 3, a new driveway and double garage will be constructed to the existing gardens.

6. In assessing this appeal I firstly consider that there would be some slight improvement in the approach to the site from the south, where it is particularly visible, through the removal of the existing garage. However, this potential benefit would be diluted through the building of both the new bungalow and its detached garage within close proximity to the Roundabout Lane footpath. There would moreover, be the added impact upon the character of the area through the provision of a new, separate driveway and double garage to serve the parent property.
7. The impact of these changes would therefore introduce further built form within an area that is currently characterised by relatively undeveloped garden space and landscape. Although the proposed bungalow would be well set into the site and maintain existing trees, the cumulative impact of built form consisting of the new bungalow and two detached garages, along with associated driveways, would have the impact of adversely altering and further suburbanising this character.
8. The overall impact would therefore result in a significant increase in built form here that would be largely uncharacteristic of the area and would ultimately appear cramped and uncharacteristic of the wider vicinity.
9. Further to this the proposed cupola feature and flat roof dormers would introduce elements that are not wholly characteristic of the area. The proposed dormers especially would introduce a heavy element to the roof of the proposed bungalow that would have the impact of visibly increasing its massing and scale to a substantial degree. Although there are flat roof dormers nearby, I consider that most of these are more slender with most dormers being of a more traditional pitched roof design.
10. In light therefore of the amount of buildings and infrastructure, the poor design and the cramped siting of the proposed house, I consider that the proposal would represent an over development of this site that would cause harm to the overriding character and appearance of the area through it appearing cramped and allowing construction over a significant area of garden. Although I consider that the removal of the garage could be a positive attribute of this scheme this is not sufficient enough to outweigh the harm I have identified above. As such I consider the proposal will be contrary to Policies GBSP2, D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 as well as the Council's Supplementary Design Guidance.

## **Conclusion**

11. For the reasons above, taking into account all other matters raised, I dismiss the appeal.

*A Graham*

INSPECTOR