
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 September 2022

by Gary Deane BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14th September 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/C1950/D/22/3302020

3 Tanglewood, Welwyn, Hertfordshire AL6 0RU

- 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 Rohit Kaul against the decision of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 6/2022/0588/HOUSE, dated 10 March 2022, was refused by notice dated 5 May 2022.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a single storey side and rear extension; front extension and change to materials/fenestration and landscaping throughout.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a single storey side and rear extension; front extension and change to materials/fenestration and landscaping throughout at 3 Tanglewood, Welwyn, Hertfordshire AL6 0RU in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 6/2022/0588/HOUSE, dated 10 March 2022, subject to the conditions set out in the schedule to this decision.

Procedural matter

2. Reference is made to a policy within the Welwyn Hatfield Draft Local Plan 2016. However, this Plan is yet to be adopted and its policies may be subject to further modification. Consequently, I attach limited weight to this Plan.

Main issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host building and the local area.

Reasons

4. The proposal is to enlarge and externally alter the appeal property, which is a single storey detached dwelling within a residential cul-de-sac. Along that part of Tanglewood to which No 3 belongs, bungalows predominate, which vary in design, scale and general appearance. As a result, there is some variety to the existing built form within the local area to which No 3 belongs.
5. The appeal dwelling has a central gable at the front and rear that is flanked by sizeable flat roof projections. It is largely finished in a white render with white framed uPVC windows. The appeal property has no obvious architectural or historic merit. It does not form part of a uniform street scene.

6. The appeal dwelling is set back from the road behind a garden and a frontage hedgerow. Due to the sloping ground, No 3 also occupies a notably lower-level position in relation to the road. Consequently, the existing dwelling keeps a relatively low profile when viewed from the road. It has a modest presence within the local streetscape.
7. Extensions are proposed on 3 sides of the appeal dwelling that would enlarge its footprint. Even so, these would be proportionate additions with no significant increase sought to the height, size or mass of the building when seen from the road. The enlarged dwelling would continue to stand comfortably within a good-sized landscaped plot. When seen from the road, it would remain clearly legible as a bungalow and broadly in keeping with the type and scale of properties along this part of Tanglewood.
8. The submitted design is modern in style. Large-glazed units would be introduced to the front and rear elevations with the walls finished in white render and larch cladding. As a result, the completed dwelling would make a visually stronger statement on the site than the existing building, which is not, in itself, objectionable.
9. Although the proposed materials are shown on the plans, with the larch cladding specified as 'grey', the precise shade, which, in my experience can vary considerably, is not given. A silver grey or a darker grey patina to this element of the proposal would complement the light coloured render with the central gables and a dual pitched roof remaining as a distinctive feature of the host building. Details of the materials to be used could be covered by a condition if planning permission were to be granted. The introduction of black framed feature windows and capping to the central part of the dwelling with brass equivalents on either side would also be consistent with the modern style proposed. The contrasting materials and introduction of feature windows would add visual interest to the new front and rear façades. It would support the contemporary twist given to the appearance of the appeal dwelling.
10. From what I saw, timber cladding across an expansive area of the front elevation was an unfamiliar feature of buildings in the local area, where brick walls tend to prevail. The distinctive pattern of fenestration would also set the finished dwelling apart from other properties along Tanglewood. Nevertheless, the local area is not so homogenous as to be incapable of assimilating a variety of dwellings in terms of their design and materials. In this case, the proposal would merely signal a contemporary style dwelling with a balanced front elevation and a coherent design. It would not be obtrusive nor look out of place among the varied built form that characterises the local area.
11. Against that background, I conclude on the main issue that the proposed development would not materially harm the character and appearance of the host building or the local area. As such, it does not conflict with Policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 or the Council's Supplementary Design Guidance. These policies and guidance aim to ensure that development is of high-quality design that relates well to the character and context of its surroundings. It would also comply with the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework, which state that development should respond to local character and add to the overall quality of an area.
12. An interested party raises several additional concerns. The new sidewall would be up to the shared boundary with the adjacent property to one side of the

site. However, there is no clear evidence to demonstrate that the foundations of the neighbouring building or the roots of a boundary hedgerow would be adversely affected or that access to carry out building maintenance would be impeded as a result.

13. Part of the enlarged dwelling may be visible from neighbouring properties albeit at an oblique angle. In my experience, views of adjacent buildings are a common characteristic between dwellings that stand side-by-side within residential areas. The main outlook from the rear of these adjacent dwellings would not be affected. Consequently, the living conditions of others would not be harmed if the appeal scheme were to proceed.

Conditions

14. In addition to the standard time limit condition, it is necessary to impose a condition that requires the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans for certainty. Given the expanse of timber cladding proposed, it is important to ensure that the finished building has a unified appearance with respect to the materials used. This can be achieved if details are submitted for approval before work starts, including the precise colour of the timber cladding. It is necessary to impose a condition to this effect, in the interests of achieving a satisfactory appearance for the building. The appellant has agreed to this pre-commencement condition.
15. Alternatively, the Council has suggested a condition to require that the materials match those of the existing dwelling. Since the plans show alternative materials and given my findings in relation to the main issue, I see no reason to impose such a requirement.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR

Schedule of conditions

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Refs TWS3-1-1, TWS3-1-2, TWS3-1-3, TWS3-1-4, and TWS3-1-5.
- 3) No development shall commence until details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development 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.