



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 January 2023

by Mrs Chris Pipe BA(Hons), DipTP, MTP, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 02 February 2023.

Appeal Ref: APP/C1950/D/22/3313727

30 Barleycroft Road, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire AL8 6JU

- 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 J Barnett against the decision of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 6/2022/2139/HOUSE dated 13 September 2022, was refused by notice dated 8 November 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as Part Single & Part 2-Storey Rear Extension, Roof Extension & Alterations to Openings.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character of the area of the conservation area and the existing property itself.

Reasons

3. The site is a detached 1920's property within a predominantly residential area within the Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area. In accordance with the statutory duty imposed by section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990; I am required to have special regard to the effect of the proposed development on the character or appearance of the area.
4. The Conservation Area in the vicinity of the appeal site is characterised by pairs of semi-detached properties and detached properties which have a uniformity in terms of scale and design. Coherence of features on properties is evident for instance on detached properties in the area, two side symmetrical chimney stacks are a typical characteristic. The harmony of the built form adds to the significance of the area.
5. The proposed two storey rear extension would replicate the original dwelling nevertheless the proposed development would remove the side chimneys and raise the roof slightly to incorporate a crown roof feature. The Appellant has drawn my attention to properties in the area which have been extended or have crown roofs. Notwithstanding this I note that although some original features have been lost on some properties in the area, the harmony of design is retained by the majority of the properties.

6. The single storey rear extensions are a modest addition to the property and due to its location at the rear and screened to a degree by side boundaries and landscaping would be unobtrusive. Notwithstanding this cumulatively the proposed development would be disproportionate and dominate to the original property.
7. The proposal includes the removal of the front porch and alterations to windows, I observed during my site visit that porches in the area are not a common feature and its removal would allow the symmetry of the windows to be obvious in the streetscene. The alterations to openings and windows are in general proportionate to the property, however, the larger central front window would be out of keeping with the property and area in general.
8. Whilst the appeal site has been historically extended the proposed development would detract from the distinct character of the property.
9. Paragraph 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) (the Framework) states that great weight should be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset when considering the impact of a proposal on such an asset. This is irrespective of the level of harm. Any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification based on Framework paragraph 200.
10. I find that the proposed development would lead to less than substantial harm of the significance of the Conservation Area. Paragraph 202 of the Framework states that where a development leads to less than substantial harm to the significance of a heritage asset this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use. I find that there are no public benefits which would outweigh the harm caused by the proposed development.
11. The proposed development would be unsympathetic to the existing property. I find that the proposed development would diminish unacceptably the character and appearance of the conservation area and would be out of keeping with the existing property itself.
12. There is conflict with Policy D1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan (2005) and Policies SP9, SADM11 and SADM15 of the Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council - Draft Local Plan Proposed Submission August 2016 which seek amongst other things to ensure development is of high standard of design responding positively to the character and context of the historic area.
13. There is conflict with the Council's Supplementary Design Guidance which seeks to ensure developments harmonise with the existing building and area.
14. There is conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) which seeks amongst other things to ensure developments are of good design appropriate and sympathetic to their surroundings and that the historic environment is protected.

Conclusion

15. For the above reasons I conclude that this appeal should be dismissed.

C Pipe

INSPECTOR