

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 March 2023

by S. Hartley BA (Hons) Dist.TP (Manc) DMS MRTPI MRICS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3rd April 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/C1950/D/23/3315357

14, The Reeds, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire AL7 3BN

- 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 A. Wood against the decision of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.
 - The application Ref: 6/2022/1901/HOUS, dated 15 August 2022, was refused by notice dated 2 November 2022.
 - The development proposed is the raising of the existing dwelling's ridge line to allow for the erection of a rear box dormer and installation of roof lights to the front roof slope, to facilitate conversion of the loft space into habitable accommodation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development upon the character and appearance of the host property and the area.

Reasons

3. The existing dwelling is a detached, mainly two-storey property in a residential area. Like the majority of surrounding dwellings, the main part of it has an unbroken, double pitched roof and which adds distinctively and positively to the character and appearance of the area.
4. The proposed development includes a box dormer window to the rear roof plane of the property, facilitated by the raising of the roof by approximately 0.25 of a metre. It also includes roof lights to the front elevation which would be flush with the existing roof plane.
5. The local planning authority (LPA) makes no adverse comments concerning the proposed roof lights and I see no reason to object to them, nor would raising the ridge of the dwelling by approximately 0.25 of a metre, when considered on its own, cause harm to the design of the host property or to the character and appearance of the area. The main issue is the proposed rear box dormer window by virtue of its scale and design.

6. The box dormer would be set in from the existing rear eaves of the dwelling and in from the side elevations. It would also be set down from the ridge of the dwelling, but only slightly, and only once the existing ridge had been increased in height.
7. So far as the insets from the eaves and side elevations are concerned, the design would accord with the LPA's Supplementary Design Guide 2005 (SDG). However, by its box design, spanning most of the length of the rear roof and including its flat roof, it would appear as an incongruous, heavy addition, causing harm to the design of the host property and to the character of the immediate area.
8. While it would, in part, comply with the SDG, it would be contrary to its aim to ensure that dormer windows should be '*subservient to the roof of the property and be in proportion to the existing fenestration of the property*'. Despite meeting some of the technical requirements of the SDG, overall, the proposed dormer would, by its scale and appearance, detract from the character and appearance of both the dwelling and that of the immediate area. It would be conspicuous in public view especially from Corals Mead.
9. Therefore, I conclude that the proposed development would not accord with policies GBSP2, D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District plan 2005, or with the Council's SDG, or with paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021, all of which require development to relate to the character and context of the area in which it is proposed.

Other matters

10. The applicant has referred to a dormer window, allowed on appeal and considered to be of a similar design to the current proposal. However, it is in a different area, and in that , the inspector took into account that the dormer window would not be especially visible from the public realm. I consider that there are significant differences to the current appeal. In any case, I have determined the appeal on its individual planning merits. I do not consider that this matter outweighs my findings on the main issue.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons outlined above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

S. Hartley

INSPECTOR