
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 July 2023

by Les Greenwood MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23RD August 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/C1950/D/23/3319672

18A London Road, Woolmer Green SG3 6JP

- 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 Rist against the decision of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 6/2022/2658/HOUSE, dated 22 November 2022, was refused by notice dated 17 January 2023.
 - The development proposed is the conversion and extension of the existing car port with a first floor extension over (amended application previous ref 6/2022/0298/HOUSE).
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the conversion and extension of the existing car port with a first floor extension over (amended application previous ref 6/2022/0298/HOUSE) in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 6/2022/2658/HOUSE, dated 22 November 2022, subject to the following 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: 18LR-LP, 18LR-20-A, 18LR-21-C and 18LR-23-D.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Preliminary matter

2. The Council refers in part to the Welwyn Hatfield Draft Local Plan Submission Incorporating the Proposed Main Modifications 2023 (dLP) but does not provide any statement of this plan's progress towards adoption or advise whether there are outstanding objections to the relevant policies. I therefore give limited weight to the draft plan.

Main issues

3. The main issues are the effects of the proposal on:

- i) The character and appearance of the house and the local area; and
- ii) Living conditions at a next door flat 6 Kimptons Court, particularly in terms of outlook.

Reasons

Character and appearance

- 4. 18A London Road is a low-key, contemporary style detached house set back from the street within the central part of Woolmer Green. It currently has full gables at both ends. The proposal is to infill a car port at the side and extend over, with a half-hipped roof.
- 5. The Council's concern is that the half-hipped roof would represent poor design, out of character with its surroundings. The buildings on this part of London Road are, however, varied in their siting and architectural form, giving scope for change and difference. The Council's Supplementary Design Guidance (SDG) confirms that Woolmer Green has a varied character. Although the buildings in the vicinity predominantly have full gables, there are several examples of fully hipped and half hipped roofs nearby. These fit in well, adding diversity and interest to the street scene.
- 6. The house's roof already lacks full symmetry, due to the existence of a chimney at one end. Its design does not rely on a formal, symmetrical appearance. Even in this prominent position, the proposed extension with its half-hipped roof would sit comfortably within and complement its context.
- 7. I conclude that the proposal would not harm the character or the appearance of the house or the local area. It accords with the aims of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 (DP) policies D1 and D2, dLP policy SP9, the SDG and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), to secure high quality design that respects and relates to the character and context of the area.

Living conditions

- 8. The SDG says that extensions should not be unduly dominant as seen from adjoining properties. A first floor flat next door at 6 Kimptons Court has a side window facing No 18A. I understand this to be the only window serving an office/spare bedroom. No 6 is, however, set back from the boundary. The side window is high enough up and far enough away that, with the half-hip, it would maintain a reasonable outlook over and around the extension. The extension would not, therefore, unduly dominate these views. No 6's main outlook to the front and rear would remain unaffected. For similar reasons the proposal would not significantly affect light to No 6. There would be no side facing windows so no effect on privacy.
- 9. I conclude that the proposal would not significantly affect living conditions at the neighbouring property, 6 Kimptons Court. It accords in this respect with the aims of DP policy D1, dLP policy SADM11, the SDG and the Framework, to protect neighbours' living conditions including by ensuring that new development is not overbearing upon existing buildings or spaces. The Council

also refers to DP policy D2 here, but that policy refers to local character and context rather than neighbours' living conditions.

Other matters

10. There are listed buildings in the vicinity, but I understand from the Council that these are set away from the site so that their settings would not be affected. I note a resident's concern that the property has already doubled in size, but (even without knowing the actual percentage increase) find that it would remain proportional to its reasonably large plot.

Conditions

11. I impose a condition specifying the relevant plans to provide certainty. A further condition requiring the use of matching materials is needed to protect the character and appearance of the house and the local area.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should succeed.

Les Greenwood

INSPECTOR