

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No:	S6/2008/1763/FP
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NOTATION:

The site lies within the settlement of the Hatfield British Aerospace site as designated in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE:

The application dwelling is a mid-terrace townhouse. The application dwelling has an open frontage and is set back from the front boundary by a minimum of 5.5m. The dwelling has a width of 5.4m and appears three storey to the front and rear. The application dwelling is within a development of relatively new properties, which have an in keeping design and style.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

The proposed development would involve the conversion of the existing loft space to accommodate a bedroom and ensuite bathroom. Two velux windows would be inserted into the front plane of the roof and a flat roof dormer would be built on the rear plane of the roof. The rear dormer would measure 3.4m in width by 1.8m in height with a taller section at the proposed doorway measuring 2.3m in height.

PLANNING HISTORY:

S6/1999/0971/FP - Erection of 144 houses and 26 flats with associated access roads, garages, parking areas and public open spaces, cycleways and footways – Approved. Permitted development rights were withdrawn at the time of this approval, including classes A and B of the 1995 order.

SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES:

National Policy
PPS1: Delivering sustainable development
PPS3: Housing
PPG13: Transport

East of England Plan 2008
SS1: Achieving Sustainable Development
T14: Parking

Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991 – 2011:
None.

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005:
SD1: Sustainable Development
GBSP2: Towns and specified settlements
R3: Energy Efficiency
M14: Parking standards for new developments

D1: Quality of design

D2: Character and context

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Planning Guidance, Parking Standards, January 2004

CONSULTATIONS

HATFIELD TOWN COUNCIL COMMENTS

The committee objected to the application considering the proposal an overdevelopment of the site and not in keeping with neighbouring properties.

REPRESENTATIONS

None. Period expired 10 October 2008.

DISCUSSION:

The main issues are:

- 1. The proposal's impact upon the character and appearance of the locality**
- 2. The proposal's impact upon the residential amenities of the adjoining occupiers**
- 3. Other Material Planning Considerations**

1. The application site is within a relatively new development, which has been designed to have a high density. Consequently the back-to-back distances between properties and garden sizes are modest. For example, the original back-to-back distance between the application dwelling and number 19 Great Braitch Lane was 23m and the application dwelling has a rear garden depth of 12m. Since the dwellings were built number 19 Great Braitch Lane has added a rear conservatory.

As existing the application dwelling is three storey and relatively tall, the properties on Great Braitch Lane are two storey. Some of the adjacent dwellings that form the end of terrace houses have been built with hipped roofed dormers. These dormers are within roofspaces above two storey areas and have cill heights that are lower than the second floor windows of the application dwelling. These dormer windows are also well designed and appear well proportioned and subordinate to the main dwelling.

The proposed dormer window would be a large flat roofed addition, which has not replicated any additions or design features present on the adjacent properties. Due to the size and height of this addition it would be particularly prominent and give the dwelling a 4 storey appearance, which would be overly dominant when compared to the existing dwelling and adjacent properties. The design of the proposed dormer is partly worsened by the full height doors, which would have a greater height than the rest of the dormer. The resultant tall and over dominant appearance would not be in keeping with the character of the existing dwellings and would have an inappropriate appearance, which would be viewed within close proximity from the neighbouring plots. Furthermore, glimpse of the proposed dormer would be visible through the gaps between the dwellings on Great Braitch Lane and have a detrimental impact upon this streetscene.

Although velux windows are not a predominant feature in the surrounding streetscene, the proposed velux windows to the front plane of the roof would not appear out of place or prominent. Due to the size and flush appearance of these

additions they would not result an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the locality.

2. The rear dormers windows of the neighbouring end of terrace properties have a greater distance back to back distance than the windows within the rear elevation of the application dwelling and the casement sizes are smaller. These dormers are not considered to result in any further overlooking, when compared with the other rear facing windows.

Due to the modest separation between dwellings and close proximity of windows that would look onto the proposal, the occupants the properties backing onto the application site would suffer an overbearing impact. Number 19 would suffer the worse impact due to the direct back to back relationship and the closer proximity of the conservatory that has been added to this property. The proposed dormer would over dominate the occupants of the dwellings to the rear, both when they view the resultant dwelling and when using the rear gardens.

The rear dormer would have an unacceptable impact in principle due to it height and the limited distance separating the neighbouring properties. In addition to this the design would worsen the impact upon the neighbouring properties. The proposed full height doors would allow a greater view and allow people to stand in a prominent position, which would overlook the adjoining occupiers.

In summary, the proposed development would result in an unacceptable over dominant and overbearing impact upon the adjoining occupiers, when it is viewed from the rear viewed the rear. In addition to this, the proposed dormer would result in a significant increase in overlooking to the adjoining occupiers and their private amenity space. Due to the insufficient back to back separation distances for a window of this height, combined with proposed high floor level and juliette balcony, the proposed development would result in an unacceptable level of direct and perceived overlooking. This overlooking would have a detrimental impact upon the residential amenities of the neighbouring occupiers and result in a noticeably lower standard of development in comparison with the existing locality.

The proposed velux windows would mostly only allow a view of the sky and would not result in a loss of privacy to the neighbouring properties.

3. The application dwelling appears to have a garage and two spaces to the front of the dwelling. However, the plans illustrate that the garage has been converted to accommodate a shallow store and one of the parking spaces straddles the boundary with the adjacent plot to the north. The application plot therefore only has 1 off road parking space, to serve what is at least a four bedroom dwelling as existing. The area of the application site is not zoned within the parking standards of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005, however, the parking standards stipulate a requirement of 2 spaces for 4 or more bedroom dwellings in the most accessible parts of the district. When considering the location of the application site, the proposed parking provision would not be adequate and would not meet the requirements of Policy M14 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

The application has included a sustainability checklist, which details that the development would be insulated and built to meet current building regulations and recycled materials would be used where possible. Considering that the proposal involves an extension into an existing loft space, this is considered to be a reasonable effort to meet the requirements of Policy R3 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

The agent has verbally stated that the proposed development would be for the continued use of the existing family that occupies the application dwelling and therefore additional off road parking space would not be necessary. It was also raised that if the removal of the full length doors would make the application acceptable, the applicant would be content with this alteration. Unfortunately, the suggested alterations are not considered sufficient to overcome the objections raised above and no amendments have been suggested.

Chalk Mining

The proposed development falls outside of the area that requires a risk assessment.

CONCLUSION:

The application dwelling is a modern property with modest separation distances between the neighbouring dwellings. Do to the existing layout and separation distances, any further additions must be assessed carefully. The proposed rear dormer would have an adverse impact upon the character an appearance of the locality and appear visually obtrusive when viewed from the surrounding areas. Furthermore, the proposed dormer would result in an unacceptable amount of further overlooking and loss of privacy to the adjoining occupiers. The proposal would therefore fail to meet the requirements of Policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

The applications site has a limited provision of off road parking, when considering the parking standards and the size of the resultant dwelling. It would not be appropriate to approved development to create an additional dwelling without the plot having at least a provision of parking appropriate for an accessible area. The proposed development therefore would not meet the requirements of Policy M14 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

RECOMMENDATION: REFUSAL AND REASONS

The proposed rear dormer would fail to reflect the existing design and appearance of the application dwelling and neighbouring properties. By virtue of the proposed dormer's size and design, it would not appear subordinate or subservient to the existing dwelling and roofslope. The proposed rear dormer window would therefore have a detrimental visual impact upon the character and appearance of the locality. The proposed development is therefore contrary to Policy D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and PPS1.

The proposed rear dormer window would result in an unacceptable increase in both direct and perceived overlooking of the adjoining occupiers. By virtue of the proposed dormer's design, height above ground level and narrow separation distances from the adjacent dwellings, it would result in an objectionable loss of privacy to the occupants of the neighbouring properties. The proposal has therefore failed to meet the requirements of Policy D1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and PPS1.

The proposed development would create an additional bedroom, resulting in a 5 bedroom property. The application dwelling would not have a sufficient provision of off road parking space for a dwelling of this size. The application would therefore fail to meet the requirements of Policy M14 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005, Policy T14 of the East of England Plan 2008 and PPG13.

INFORMATIVES: None.

DRAWING NUMBERS:

Site Location Plan 1:1250 & A08/BLU/A01 & A08/BLU/A02 & A08/BLU/A03 & A08/BLU/A04 & A08/BLU/A05 and date stamped 12 September 2008.

Signature of author..... Date.....