

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL
PLANNING CONTROL COMMITTEE – 29 OCTOBER 2009
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR (STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT)

S6/2009/1626/FP

46 BLUEBELL WAY, HATFIELD, AL10 9FJ

CONVERSION OF INTEGRAL GARAGE TO UTILITY ROOM AND STUDY AND
ADDITIONAL HARD STANDING FOR CAR PARKING SPACE.

APPLICANT: Miss K Lundy

(Hatfield Villages)

1 Site Description

- 1.1 The site, No. 46 Bluebell Way, Hatfield is a two storey detached dwelling, located within a cluster of housing that share a private access drive to Bluebell Way, a cul-de-sac road. The property has a pitched roof and is of a brick construction. The front garden measures approximately 4.7 metres deep by 8 metres wide with a rear garden measuring approximately 11 metres deep by 10 metres wide. The property includes a single integral garage which uniforms the majority of properties within the area.
- 1.2 Bluebell Way is located north west of the town centre and is located within the newly developed aerodrome site of Hatfield. Permitted Development Rights have been removed under Classes A and B of Schedule 2 Part 2 of the General Permitted Development Order 2008.

2 The Proposal

- 2.1 It is proposed to convert the existing integral garage at the front of the property into habitable accommodation to accommodate a utility room and study. It is proposed that the garage door will be replaced with a large window measuring approximately 2.3 metres wide by 1.3 metres high with the remaining façade to be in filled with matching brick. The proposal also involves the formation of additional hard standing within the front garden of the site to accommodate a second parking space.

3 Planning History

- 3.1 S6/2009/0555/FP – Conversion of garage to habitable accommodation – Refused 15/5/09. Reason:
The proposal by virtue of the loss of the existing garage parking space would result in the dwelling only having one off street car parking space. The proposal would therefore be contrary to policy M14 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance for Parking Standards 2004.

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 subject to S106 30/06/00

4 Planning Policy

4.1 National Planning Policy

PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development

4.2 East of England Plan 2008

SS1: Achieving Sustainable Development

ENV7: Quality in the Built Environment

4.3 Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005

SD1 Sustainable Development

GBSP2 - Towns and specified settlements

M14 - Parking standards for new developments

D1 - Quality of design

D2 - Character and context

4.4 Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005

Supplementary Planning Guidance, Parking Standards, January 2004,
Hatfield Aerodrome Supplementary Planning Guidance, November 1999.

5 Representations Received

5.1 This application has been advertised by neighbour notifications. No representations have been received.

6 Town Council Representations

6.1 Hatfield Town Council 'objected to the application considering drainage issues would materialise if the wrong sort of block paving was used. However the more important objection was the precedent that this would set as this was a fairly new development. The Committee did not wish to see other properties in the area losing garages and having to park on the highway and cause car parking issues in an already congested area of Hatfield'.

7 Discussion

7.1 This application is presented to the Planning Control Committee because Hatfield Town Council has raised an objection.

7.2 The main issues for to be considered are:

1. Maintaining or enhancing the character and appearance of the area

2. Impact on neighbouring residential amenity

3. Maintaining sufficient car parking

4. Other Material Considerations

1. The impact upon the character and appearance of the area

- 7.3 Bluebell Way is located in a residential area of Hatfield. The street is characterised by the presence of detached properties with single and double garages and landscaped front gardens. The 6 dwellings within the immediate area of the subject site share a common driveway and are of a similar architectural style with matching materials and finishes. The proposed conversion of the garage into a habitable area would be the first of such within the immediate area.
- 7.4 The application is a resubmission of planning application S6/2009/0555/FP which was refused on the grounds that the development would result in insufficient car parking. Whether the resubmitted application has overcome the reasons for refusal is therefore the matter for consideration.
- 7.5 Permitted Development rights have been removed under S6/1999/0971/FP in an effort to maintain the character of the area. It was established in the original application that the proposed development window design would have appropriate proportions in relation to the existing windows on the front elevation of the application dwelling. It is considered that although the proposed removal of the garage door and the instalment of the additional window would change the current view of the property it would not have a detrimental impact on the character of the street scene.
- 7.6 It is proposed to hard pave a further 10sqm of the front garden to facilitate parking. The increase in hard paving will leave 23sqm of landscaped area within the front garden (inclusive of entry path). It is considered that the additional hard standing area is satisfactory with regard to aesthetics given that 44% of the front garden will remain as soft landscaping on the northern end of the property to balance out the view hard surfacing from the street scene. Details of the materials to be used will be required prior to any construction works commencing to ensure a high quality finish is maintained. This matter can be dealt with via conditions if the application is subsequently approved. Overall however, it is considered that the proposed hard standing area will maintain an amenable appearance to the front of the property and therefore will not be detrimental to the visual amenity of the street.
- 7.7 Despite the conversion being the first proposed within the immediate area, it is considered that the changes to the façade of the building would not be significant to an extent that would adversely impact upon the character of the area. The replacement window is considered complimentary to the style and size of other windows would not be harmful to the character and appearance of the property, provided that infill brickwork of a matching nature is used, (this matter can be conditioned). In addition, the proposed hard surfacing is considered to be sufficiently balanced out by the existing soft landscaping at the front of the property. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Policies D1 and D2 of the Supplementary Design Guidance.

2. The impact upon neighbouring dwellings residential amenity

- 7.8 The impact on the amenity of neighbouring dwellings is measured in terms of privacy and overshadowing. The proposed development proposes the installation of a window to the front of the property. It is considered that the window would not have an impact on the privacy of neighbouring properties. It is also considered that the proposed development would not have an impact on

neighbouring properties access to sunlight and daylight. Therefore it is considered that the amenities afforded to adjoining properties is maintained.

3. Maintaining sufficient car parking

- 7.9 The property currently has access to two parking spaces on the property, that being one space covered car parking space in the garage and one car parking space on the front driveway. Hatfield Aerodrome Supplementary Planning Guidance, 1999 (SPG) states that a four bedroom dwelling would require 3 car parking spaces.
- 7.10 The garage conversion would result in the loss of one designated covered parking space, with one additional space left on site within the front garden of the site. The original property however only provided 2 parking spaces in the form of a garage and uncovered car parking space. It is therefore considered unreasonable to require the property to provide 3 spaces when the number of bedrooms will not be increased, and the property originally contained only 2 parking spaces. In this regard, it is considered reasonable to request that the applicant replace the garage space only, maintaining 2 parking spaces on the site.
- 7.11 The original application refused under S6/2009/0555/FP failed to demonstrate sufficient on-site car parking, proposing an additional space on the private shared driveway. This was considered insufficient as the driveway is to be shared by all parties and could potentially impact upon congestion within the cul-de-sac and highway safety.
- 7.12 The dwelling gains access to Bluebell Way via a private driveway which has a shared access with 5 other dwellings. Concern has been raised by the town Council regarding potential congestion on the private road and surrounding area and the possibility that the approval of such an arrangement would set an undesirable precedent for future development within the area.
- 7.13 The current application however proposes to overcome the previous reasons of refusal by hard paving an additional portion of the front garden to allow sufficient space for 2 cars to park within the front garden which is within the front boundary of the property. An area of 4.4m x 4.7m has been allocated for the parking of 2 vehicles which is considered to be sufficient space for manoeuvrability and for passengers to alight from the vehicles.
- 7.14 The parking of the vehicles would therefore be contained within the site itself and would not intensify on street parking within the cul-de-sac. It is therefore considered that there would be no additional impact on the parking situation or traffic flow on the private driveway or within the cul-de-sac.
- 7.15 It is also considered that this would not set an undesirable precedent, given that any other application of this nature within the area would also have to demonstrate adequate parking within the boundaries of the front garden, or a similar situation which would not create additional car parking or congestion within the street. The proposal is therefore in accordance with local and district policies.

4. Other material planning considerations

- 7.16 The application has included a sustainability checklist which notes that permeable block paving will be used to reduce surface water run off and evaporation. Given that the development does not include any additional building works to the dwelling only additional works to the front garden, these provisions are considered to be a reasonable effort to meet the requirements of Policy R3 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

8 Conclusion

- 8.1 The proposed development would sufficiently maintain the character and appearance of the dwelling and surrounding area. The proposed garage conversion would not impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties and would be sufficiently energy efficient. In addition, the proposal would maintain adequate parking facilities in accordance with the relevant government and local policies.
- 8.2 Based on the above assessment it is considered that the proposed garage conversion and additional hardstanding for car parking space will adequately maintain the character and appearance of the area, and not have an adverse impact on the neighbouring dwellings residential amenity. In addition, the proposal will adequately maintain sufficient parking spaces in accordance with the relevant governing policies.

9 Recommendation

- 9.1 The application, S6/2009/1626/FP is recommended for approval subject to the following conditions:
1. C.2.1- Time Limit
 2. C.13.1- The development/works shall not be started and completed other than in accordance with the approved plans and details in 'Site plan' & 'Proposed hardstanding plan' & 'Proposed elevation plan' & 'Proposed floor plan' received and dated 31 July 2009 unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
 3. C.5.1 – Material Samples for hard paving (permeable)
 4. C.5.2 - Matching Materials for dwelling

Summary of reasons for grant of permission

The proposal has been considered against PPS1, East of England Plan policies SS1, ENV7 and development plan policies SD1, GBSP2, M14, R3, D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005, in addition to the Human Rights Act 1998, which indicate that the proposal should be approved. Material planning considerations do not justify a decision contrary to the Development Plan. (see Officer's report which can be inspected at these offices).

Chris Conway, Director (Strategy and Development) (BM)
Date 15 October 2009

