

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No:	N6/2012/2455/FP
APPLICATION Site:	24 Rooks Hill

NOTATION:

The site lies within Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area as designated in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE:

The application site is a two storey semi detached dwelling which is located along a road of similar properties. The area is characterised by a sense of openness with large gaps between the buildings, and development set back from road.

The property has a garage to the side, with front and rear associated gardens.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

The application seeks full planning permission for the erection of a two storey side and single storey rear extension.

The side extension would be approximately 4.3m in width, 7.9m in height and 5.1m in depth. It would feature a hipped roof with a ridge reduced by approximately 0.4m against the height of the existing dwelling. The extension would be set back from the main wall of the principal elevation by approximately 0.9m.

The rear extension would be approximately 5.5m in depth shortening to 3.6m, 2.7m in depth and 3.1m in height. It would be located mainly to rear of the proposed side extension, with an overlap of approximately 1.1m into the width of the rear of the existing dwelling. It would feature a flat roof with parapet wall and would run parallel to the boundary line, distanced by approximately 1.0m.

PLANNING HISTORY:

N6/2007/1396/FP – Proposed single storey rear extension and insertion of window.
Application withdrawn 14/11/2007

SUMMARY OF POLICIES:

National Planning Policy Framework

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: None

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS: None

REPRESENTATIONS:

This application has been advertised and no representations have been received. Period expired 20 december 2012

DISCUSSION:

The main issues are:

1. Character and Appearance
2. Residential Amenity
3. Parking
4. Other Material Planning Considerations

1. Character and Appearance

Policies GBSP2, D1 and D2 of the adopted Welwyn Hatfield District Plan are relevant. Collectively, these policies seek to encourage development of a high design standard, which should respect and relate to the character and context of the area in which it is to be sited. Furthermore, the Supplementary Design Guidance (SDG) requests that “extensions should be designed to complement and reflect the design and character of the dwelling and be subordinate in scale.”

Moreover, as the site is located within the Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area, the preservation and enhancement of the appearance and character of the area must be considered in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The proposal would include a considerable increase in footprint, which would equate to over 60% against the existing dwelling. However, the proposals have incorporated some measures to limit the visual impact, with the side extension featuring a reduction in ridge height at first floor level and a set back from the principal elevation. Furthermore, the rear extension would be of a modest scale and would feature a flat roof. Therefore despite the large increase in overall floor space, it is considered that the proposed development would appear subordinate to the existing dwelling and would not excessively alter the character of the dwelling itself.

The buildings within the area are separated by large spaces which maintain a sense of openness. The SPG states:

'for all multi-storey, two-storey and first floor side extensions, a minimum distance of 1m between the extension and the adjoining flank boundary must be maintained; it is important that existing spacing in the street scene is reflected which may result in larger distances being required.'

However given its location, there would remain a large separation distance that would still be larger than what is common in the area. Therefore, no objections are raised regarding this.

Despite this, it is considered that this development would result in a visual imbalance within the street scene. There are few examples of side extensions in the area at first floor level and the result of this is the preservation of the area's original character. Development to the side only exists currently at single storey level, in the form of a garage. Whilst the rear extension would be appropriate, the two storey side extension would appear inconsistent with the character of surrounding development. Its prominence would be particularly noticeable when approaching the property from the west, and the proposed set back would not be sufficient given the scale of the extension. It is therefore considered that this two storey development would have excessive visual prominence, appearing incongruous within the wider street scene.

With regards to the more detailed aspects of design, the proposal includes matching brickwork and roof tiling. However, the fenestration design would be inconsistent with the existing dwelling both at the front and rear of the dwelling. It is considered that this would not justify refusal however, as a condition could be applied to ensure an appropriate match.

Given the location of the site within a conservation area, the NPPF requires great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The development would not sustain or enhance the significance of the heritage asset. Whilst this would lead to less than substantial harm, it is not considered that this harm has been outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal. The proposal would therefore be contrary to the NPPF and policy D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan.

2. Residential Amenity

Local Plan Policy D1 is relevant along with the SDG. The impact of the proposed development on the residential amenity of neighbouring dwellings is measured in terms of the impact on neighbouring properties access to day/sun/sky light, overshadowing, loss of privacy/overlooking and impact on outlook.

The proposal would bring the flank wall closer to the boundary. This would result in a minor impact on overshadowing and impact on outlook on 26-30 Rooks Hill. However, it is considered that the impact would not be overly excessive to warrant refusal. There would be no windows on the side elevation of the side extension, thereby restricting any overlooking impacts. There would be some windows at first floor level on the rear elevation. These would overlook onto the rear gardens of 34

and 36 Rooks Hill. However, this would not cause excessive harm and in this circumstance is considered acceptable. With respect to the rear extension, it is considered that given its scale and siting, it would be unlikely to impact any of the neighbouring residents. Therefore, the development would be in accordance with policy D1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

3. Parking

Local Plan Policy M14 and the accompanying Supplementary Planning Guidance- Parking Standards is relevant.

The site is located in Zone 3 where a maximum of three parking spaces are required for a 4 bedroom dwelling. There would only likely be a maximum provision for two cars on the existing driveway and one space is lost from the demolition of the existing garage. However, it is not considered that the resulting development would have an detrimental impact on highway safety. It is therefore considered that the proposal complies with the policy M14 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan.

4. Other Material Planning Considerations

Protected Species

The presence of protected species is a material consideration, in accordance with the National Planning Policy, Natural Environment & Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (section 40), Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as well as Circular 06/05.

Protected species such as great crested newts, otters, dormice and bats benefit from the strictest legal protection. These species are known as European Protected Species ('EPS') and the protection afforded to them derives from the EU Habitats Directive, in addition to the above legislation. Water voles, badgers, reptiles, all wild birds, invertebrates and certain rare plants are protected to a lesser extent under UK domestic law (NERC Act and Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981).

The existing site and development is such that there is not a reasonable likelihood of EPS being present on site nor would a EPS offence be likely to occur. It is therefore not necessary to consider the Conservation Regulations 2010 and amended 2012 Regulations further.

Amendments

Amendments to applications can be negotiated to achieve favourable outcomes. It was considered that in this circumstance, given the extent of change required and the time constraints in place, an appropriate amendment was not likely to be achievable. Therefore, whilst no negotiation has been sought on this scheme, it is considered that the proposed has been made taking into account, where practicable and appropriate, the requirements of paragraph 186-187 of the NPPF.

CONCLUSION:

The proposed development would result in a considerable increase in floor space compared with the existing dwelling. It is considered that the visual impacts caused by the side extension would be out of character with development within the wider

area. This would lead to less than substantial harm to the conservation area, but this harm is not outweighed by public benefits. The proposal would therefore be contrary to policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan and the guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework.

The proposal is not considered to result in an excessive impact on the amenity values of the neighbouring residents.

RECOMMENDATION: REFUSAL AND REASON (S)

1. The proposed development by virtue of its location, size, form and design, would be out of scale and would fail to respect the character of the wider area. The two storey side extension would appear inconsistent with the nature of development within the area and would therefore appear as an incongruous addition that would fail to sustain or enhance the significance of the Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area. The proposal would therefore be contrary to the design requirements of policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR REFUSAL

The proposal has been considered against the National Planning Policy Framework and Development Plan policies SD1, GBSP2, R3, M14, D1, D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005, in addition to the Human Rights Act 1998, which, at the time of this decision indicate that the proposal should be refused for the reason(s) set out above. The decision has been made taking into account material planning considerations and where practicable and appropriate the requirements of paragraphs 186-187 of the National Planning Policy Framework (see Officer's report which can be inspected at these offices).

INFORMATIVES: None

REFUSED DRAWING NUMBERS:

2932-OS1 received and dated 20 November 2012 & 2932-P01 Rev A received and dated 3 December 2012

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