

**WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT
DELEGATED REPORT**

APPLICATION No:	N6/2013/1967/FP
APPLICATION Site:	1 Stonecross Road, Hatfield

NOTATION:

The application site is in Hatfield. It is excluded from the Green Belt in accordance with Policy GBSP1 as designated in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE:

1 Stonecross Road is an end-of-terrace, 2 storey, pebble-dashed residential dwelling on the corner between Stonecross Road and Ground Lane. The property faces onto Stonecross Road and its rear garden extends out to the rear, alongside Ground Lane.

The surrounding area is predominantly residential in character. There are a variety of styles of dwellings in the area, including flats and houses. To the rear (north) of the application site is green space with a footpath which links Ground Lane with a number of other nearby streets.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

This application seeks planning permission for the erection of a garage to the rear of the property.

PLANNING HISTORY:

S6/2013/1423/FP – Garage to rear
Withdrawn

SUMMARY OF POLICIES:

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005:
SD1: Sustainable Development
GBSP2: Towns and Specified Settlements
R3: Energy Efficiency
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

National Planning Policy Framework

CONSULTATIONS:

Herts County Council – as Highways Authority – No objection, subject to a condition.

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS:

None

REPRESENTATIONS:

The application was advertised by neighbour notification letters. No representations were received. Period expired 21 October 2013.

DISCUSSION:

The main issues are:

1. The impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the existing property and the surrounding area
2. Impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties
3. Parking provision
4. Other material considerations

1. The impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the existing property and the surrounding area

The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) notes that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people. Planning decisions should aim to ensure that developments add to the overall quality of the area; respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation. They should also be visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

The NPPF goes on to note that planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.

Policy D1 requires the standard of design in all new development to be of a high quality and Policy D2 requires all new development to respect and relate to the character and context of the area in which it is proposed. It notes that development proposals should as a minimum maintain, and where possible, should enhance or improve the character of the existing area. The Welwyn Hatfield District Plan Supplementary Design Guidance (SDG) supplements the policies contained in the District Plan.

The proposed garage would be an irregular shape so as to follow the rear boundary line of the host dwelling's garden. It would measure approximately 3 metres tall with a flat roof and it would be located approximately 7.5 metres away from the host dwelling. The front (north-eastern) elevation would face onto Ground Lane and would incorporate a remote-controlled door.

The streetscene along this part of Ground Lane is not particularly built up. On the western side it consists of close-boarded fences relating to private rear gardens and the area of open green space with a footpath and trees and bushes. On the other side of the road there is a two storey block of flats, the entrance road to the parking for the flats and a few individual dwellings with driveways.

It is not considered that the garage itself would detract from the character and appearance of the host dwelling or the wider area because the design is considered to be in keeping with the host dwelling and nearby properties and a garage would be an ordinary feature of a residential area.

However the proposal to erect the garage would also involve the creation of a driveway from the road to the garage and this would cut across an existing area of green space (a landscape buffer zone). The loss of part of a landscape buffer zone is unfortunate, however the driveway would measure less than 3 metres wide and, on balance, it is not considered that the proposal would have such a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the area so as to warrant a refusal of the application on this basis. It is therefore recommended that the application should be approved.

2. Impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties

No representations were received from neighbouring occupiers and because of the location of the proposed garage in relation to neighbouring and nearby properties it is not considered that any would be affected in terms of loss of light or outlook, overbearing impact or overlooking. The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in this respect.

3. Parking Provision

The Highways Department have been consulted on the application and they do not wish to restrict the granting of permission. However they do have concerns about the garage door opening onto the highway and they have suggested a condition to ensure the door opens inwards into the garage. In line with the comments from the Highways Officer, and subject to the imposition of the suggested condition, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in this respect.

4. Other Material Planning Considerations

None

CONCLUSION:

Subject to a planning condition to ensure appropriate materials are used in the construction of the proposed garage it is considered that the design would adequately respect and relate to the surrounding area. Subject to a further condition to ensure that the garage door does not open out over the adjacent highway, it is considered that the impact on highway safety would also be acceptable. The impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring and nearby properties is also considered to be acceptable. The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and the requirements of the Supplementary Design Guidance (Statement of Council Policy).

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS

CONDITIONS:

1. C.2.1 Time limit for commencement of development
2. C.13.1 The development/works shall not be started and completed other than in accordance with the approved plans and details: Existing Plan & Proposed Plans & Proposed Ground Floor Plan & Roller Door Details received and dated 11 September 2013 and Site plan at 1:1250 received and dated 9 October 2013 unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved drawings and any changes must be agreed in advance in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

3. C5.2 The brickwork, bond, mortar, detailing, guttering, soffits and other external decorations of the approved extension/alterations shall match the existing dwelling, unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure a satisfactory standard of development in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Policies GBSP2, D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

4. The garage door must not open out over the highway but must be fitted to open totally within the garage structure.

REASON: In the interests of highway safety.

SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE GRANT OF PERMISSION:

The decision has been made taking into account, where practicable and appropriate the requirements of paragraphs 186-187 of the National Planning Policy Framework and material planning considerations do not justify a decision contrary to the development plan (see Officer's report which can be viewed on the Councils website or inspected at these offices).

INFORMATIVES:

1. The highway authority require the construction of the vehicle cross-over and the removal of the existing to be undertaken such that the works are carried out to their specification and by a contractor who is authorised to work in the public highway. The applicant is also advised that if any of the works associated with the construction of the vehicular access affects or requires the removal and/or the relocation of any equipment, apparatus or structures (e.g. street name plates, bus stop signs or shelters, statutory authority equipment etc.) the applicant will be required to bear the cost of such removal or alteration. The applicant will need to apply to the County Council Highways via either the website <http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/transtreets/highways/> or telephone 0300 1234047 to arrange this.

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