

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No: N6/2013/102/FP

SITE ADDRESS: 157 Parkway, Welwyn Garden City

DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT: Erection of single storey rear extension, entrance lobby and relocation of existing flank window following demolition of existing outbuildings

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

SITE AND APPLICATION DESCRIPTION:

The site is a plot featuring a two storey semi detached dwelling house adjoining No.159 to the south with front gardens bounding Parkway to the west and north-west and rear gardens bounding those of surrounding plots.

SITE DESIGNATION:

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

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY: None

CONSULTATIONS: None

NEIGHBOUR REPRESENTATIONS: None

MAIN PLANNING ISSUES AND RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES:

The main planning issues with this application are:

- Impact on character and appearance of the conservation area (D1, D2, NPPF chapters 7 and 12)
- Impact on residential amenity of neighbouring properties (D1)
- Parking provision (M14)

ANALYSIS:

a) Due to the planned residential layout of Parkway and surrounding streets in the vicinity of the application site, most properties form a consistent building line fronting the street. Whilst the character of Parkway changes along its length due to different house designs and street layouts, the planned nature of the street remains consistent. The integrity of this planned theme is very high in the area surrounding the application site where the formal layout of the street scene remains true to the Garden City ethos. This is achieved through the retention of soft landscaping laid out in formal patterns which dominate vistas from the street scene and the consistent use of materials in buildings and extensions, which remain subordinate in scale to their host property, and thus respectful of their context and architectural integrity.

As per other properties of this design and grouping nearby, an original garage lies adjacent to the house which sits forward of its principal elevation. A single storey flat roof extension housing a utility room, workshop and WC adjoins the garage to its

rear, overlapping half its width and adjoining the house on its other side. Whilst adjoining the house by its perimeter walls and flat roof, this extension features a linear passageway leading from its front doorway and garage access at its front, through to the rear garden, which effectively separates the rooms on the northern side of this passageway from the main living areas in the house which it adjoins on its southern side. Its front doorway and brick surround (sitting slightly below the level of the garage roof) results in a continuous front elevation between the house and garage when viewed from the front/Parkway.

Chapter 7 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) emphasises the importance of good design in context and chapter 12 is concerned with sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets such as conservation areas. The relevant policies of the Council's local plan, namely D1 and D2, are broadly consistent with the aspirations of the NPPF. D1 requires proposals to feature high quality design and is specifically supplemented by the Council's Supplementary Design Guidance (SDG) which requires residential extensions to be subordinate in scale. D2 requires proposals to respect and relate to the character and context of the area and to maintain, and where possible enhance or improve, the character of the area.

The proposal would incorporate the existing extension and the gap between the garage and the house (to create the porch) as seamless integral elements of the main dwelling house. In this regard the amount of additional footprint created would be limited to that in the porch which would be minimal against that of the main house. The rear extension, apart from a slight step in from its side boundary adjacent to No.159, would be about 3.5m deep across almost the width of the house. It would roughly match that of the existing northern side extension to form a continuous flush rear elevation. Given the limited size of the extension to the side, whilst the rear extension is large in terms of depth, given its footprint and single storey design, alongside the existing extension it would nonetheless sit subordinate to the footprint, mass and bulk of the original two storey house. In this regard, it responds to its character and context as required by policy D2 and satisfies this requirement for residential extensions to be subordinate to the original house as outlined in the SDG.

The works would however be significant in scale for a single storey extension. The house and garage are set down slope from street level and because of this, when viewing the house from the street scene of Parkway views are approximately level with the upper element of the garage and towards the rear of its roof. The existing flat roof of the side extension currently sits about half a metre below the height of the flat roof of the garage and is therefore not readily discernible from the street scene of Parkway. The works would increase the height of this element (and the rear extension) to sit about 300mm above the garage roof, which would render the rear extension visible from the street scene here. Nonetheless, the rear extension behind the garage lies about 21m from those perspectives on Parkway which considerably reduces its prominence from there, and alongside the limited scale of its height increase above the garage roof and its flat roof design, its scale and visibility is therefore not considered sufficient in scale or design as to detract from the significance of the conservation area. In this regard it also accords with the similar aims of policy D2. Along the roundabout at Parkway to the north-west, the side

extension is not readily discernible due to its distance and siting behind substantial public landscaping on the highway boundary.

At the rear, the same consideration is also considered to apply, where the works would be indiscernible from any public street scene due to their siting behind the house and existing rear extension. The scale at the rear would be substantial for a single storey building, confirmed by the agent as a product of building regulation requirements for roof insulation. Whilst it would extend to a height just below the first floor window cill, it would still nonetheless sit as single storey in scale against the two storey dwelling house with pitched roof which is of a clearly materially larger scale. Given the footprint of the rear extension/works, and their height in relation to the original property, they would satisfy the SDG requirements for extensions to be subordinate in scale to it.

At the front, the creation of the front porch would not introduce discernible additional bulk as it would project the front door forward along an existing enclosed passageway, and whilst slightly taller than existing, this would not be readily discernible given its height to match that of the garage. The porch would not project beyond the forward-most elements of the front elevation of the existing, original, house, and in this regard respects the aims of the SDG in sitting subordinate to it in scale, bulk and mass.

Given the above considerations with regard to the scale, siting, and design of the works, in this case, given the distance of the affected areas to the side of the house/behind the garage from perspectives along the only street scene along which they would be readily discernible on Parkway, and given the siting of the majority of the bulk to the rear which would not be discernible from a street scene or public vantage point, the proposal sufficiently respects and relates to the character and context of the area as required by policy D2. In doing so, it represents sufficiently high quality design as to accord with policy D1.

In coming to this conclusion regard is given to the impact of the works on the significance of the conservation area heritage asset in which the site is located and to which its design and character contributes. The height increase of the works behind the garage slightly above the level of its flat roof, and creation of the porch between the existing structures of the house and garage, would both be visible to a limited degree from the street scene of Parkway. Accordingly, in order to secure high quality design as required by policy D1 to a level which sufficiently protects this more vulnerable publically visible element of the heritage asset, a condition requesting material samples to be submitted for approval prior to the commencement of the works is considered both reasonable and necessary to ensure the works respect the appearance of the original house.

Accordingly, subject to such a condition the proposal satisfies the SDG, policies D1 and D2 and the NPPF.

b) The proposal would not create windows to either side elevation. The rooflights would be flush with the flat roof and oriented skywards thereby avoiding opportunities for overlooking of adjoining properties. The windows would be sited on the rear elevation as per the existing house, oriented towards its deep rear garden

bounded by fences. Accordingly, given its single storey scale, these considerations mean that no overlooking or loss of privacy to the occupiers of adjacent properties would take place to a degree sufficient to warrant refusal as a result of the works.

The scale of the works is greater than most single storey extensions, at about 3m. However, they would be set back about 400mm from the boundary with No.159 to the south, and officers have negotiated a reduction in the depth of the rear extension from 4m to 3.5m. Given this depth, the flat roof design of the works, and their setback from the boundary with No.159, whilst large in scale, this is not considered sufficient to cause an overbearing/ over dominant impact, loss of outlook, or reduction in the level of day/sun/sky light to the occupiers of No.159 to a degree sufficient to warrant refusal. No.155 lies about 11m to the north-east of the rear of the existing rear extension, and given its height would increase by about 800mm as a result of the works. Given the similar depth of the additional rear extension proposed which would sit beyond it when viewed from No.155, the works are not considered sufficient in size to result in discernible changes to the amenities of the occupiers of that property or its rear garden with regard to the above considerations to a degree which would warrant refusal. No property faces the site beyond the rear garden. Accordingly, the proposal satisfies policy D1 in this regard.

c) Given that no addition bedrooms are proposed as a result of the works, and that the proposal would retain the existing level of off-street parking provision, it would satisfy the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance on parking standards and policy M14 in this regard.

CONCLUSION:

The proposal would sufficiently maintain the character and appearance of the property and surrounding conservation area. It would not impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring dwellings and would retain sufficient parking provision.

CONDITIONS:

1. C.2.1 Time limit for commencement of development
2. C.13.1 Development in accordance with approved plans/details: drawings numbered: 001 & 002 & 004 Rev A received and dated on 23/01/2014 & 003 Rev A & 005 Rev B received and dated on 04/03/2014

Pre Development

3. C.5.1 Material samples

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 inspected at these offices).

INFORMATIVES: None

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