

**WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - PLANNING, PUBLIC PROTECTION AND GOVERNANCE**

DELEGATED APPLICATION

Application No: 6/2022/0529/HOUSE
Location: 159 Parkway Welwyn Garden City AL8 6JA
Proposal: Construction of two rear dormers to facilitate the conversion of the loft to habitable space
Officer: Ms Emily Stainer

Recommendation: Refused

6/2022/0529/HOUSE

Context			
Site and Application description	The application property is a two storey terraced dwelling which is located on Parkway in Welwyn Garden City. Planning permission is sought for the construction of two rear dormers to facilitate the conversion of the loft to habitable space. This application follows refused application 6/2021/1643/HOUSE.		
Constraints (as defined within WHDP 2005)	CA - Conservation Area: WGC1; - Distance: 0 EM - Estate Management - Distance: 0 Wards - Handside - Distance: 0		
Relevant planning history	Application Number: 6/2021/1643/HOUSE Decision: Refused Decision Date: 26 October 2021 Proposal: Construction of 2 x rear dormers and 2 x front roof lights to facilitate the conversion of the loft to a habitable space Application Number: 6/2021/2051/EM Decision: Refused Decision Date: 03 November 2021 Proposal: Loft conversion		
Consultations			
Neighbour representations	Support: 0	Object: 0	Other: 0
Publicity	Site Notice Display Date: 5 April 2022 Site Notice Expiry Date: 28 April 2022 Press Advert Display Date: 13 April 2022 Press Advert Expiry Date: 7 May 2022		
Summary of neighbour responses	None		
Consultees and responses	Conservation Officer – Objection		

Relevant Policies

NPPF
 D1 D2 GBSP1 GBSP2 M14
 Supplementary Design Guidance Supplementary Parking Guidance Interim Policy for car parking and garage sizes

Draft Local Plan Proposed Submission August 2016:

SP1 Delivering Sustainable Development
SP9 Place Making and High Quality Design
SADM11 Amenity and Layout
SADM12 Parking, Servicing and Refuse
SADM15 Heritage

Main Issues

Design (form, size, scale, siting) and Character (appearance within the streetscene)

Policy GBSP2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 states that development within the specified settlements will be limited to that which is compatible with the maintenance and enhancement of their character. 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 above objectives are broadly consistent with Policies SP1 and SP9 of the Council's Emerging Local Plan 2016.

The application site is additionally located within the Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area. Section 72 of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act states that '*special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area*'. The specific historic environment policies within the NPPF are contained within paragraphs 189-208. Additionally, section 16 of the NPPF 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' is broadly consistent with Policy SADM15 'Heritage' of the Emerging Local Plan.

Parkway is key component of the design of the original Garden City and is considered a principal axis which provides a dramatic approach to the town centre from the north and south. The formality of its layout and the buildings lining it are important elements of its overall character and appearance. The application property is located on the south-east side of Parkway. The rear of the property is visible from Stanborough Close which comprises of single storey bungalows. Glimpsing views can also be made from Rooks Hill to the north-east. The application dwelling is a mid-terrace property complete with red brick and a pantile roof that is typical of this part of the Garden City. The roof slopes along the stretch of Parkway where the application property is located are uninterrupted and thus have a degree of uniformity which form part of the original character of the Conservation Area.

This application follows the refusal of application 6/2021/1643/HOUSE which was an application for the addition of front rooflights and two rear dormers with pitched roofs. The main difference with this proposal is the removal of the front rooflights and the addition of flat roof dormers to the rear instead of dormers with pitched roofs. The previous application was refused for the following reason:

"The development would also fail to preserve or enhance the character and

appearance of the Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area and is therefore contrary to Policy D1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005, Policies SP9, SADM11 and SADM15 of the Emerging Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan 2016, the Supplementary Design Guidance 2005 and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework and contrary to the aims of Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.”

The Council's Conservation Officer has been consulted on this amended proposal and their comments reiterate that the dormers would be an incongruous feature to the terrace which would not be reflective of the original design. This is because the proposed rear dormers would be partially visible from public vantage points on Stanborough Close and Rooks Hill, which detract from the largely uninterrupted appearance of the roofscapes in the area. The comments set out that a lack of visibility from public areas does not equate to a lack of harm as the rear of buildings are seen from neighbouring gardens which are also within the Conservation Area.

It is also concluded that whilst the design has been somewhat improved through the removal of the previously proposed rooflights, the proposed dormers are still considered to cause 'less than substantial' harm to the significance of the Conservation Area and paragraph 202 of the NPPF should be applied. Consideration should also be given to paragraph 199 which affords great weight to the conservation of heritage assets and Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which states that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Conservation Areas.

Paragraph 202 of the NPPF sets out that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use. The applicant has not advanced any public benefits in the event of the application not being supported. However, several photographs of properties with dormers have been submitted as part of the supporting evidence.

The character and appearance of much of Welwyn Garden City has a quality that consists of carefully designed layouts with formal patterns where the design of architecture is in groups and individual buildings. Therefore in order to preserve the unique architectural heritage of the town and its buildings, the Council expects that all applications for extensions and alterations respect and do not harm the character and appearance of the building or the wider street scene. Some of the dormers which have been put forward as examples are located in parts of Parkway which were designed in a specific way to incorporate dormers into the design, such as the part of Parkway which is located within the town centre. In comparison, the terrace which the application site sits within was not designed this way. Some other examples are described as having no record of planning permission. Therefore, it is unknown whether these dormers are lawfully implemented. There are also examples on different roads which do not relate specifically to Parkway. As a result, it is not considered these cases justify the harm which has been identified to the terrace within this part of the Conservation Area.

In summary, the dormer windows would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area, resulting in 'less than substantial' harm. No public benefits have been

	advanced which overcome this harm. Therefore, the proposal represents poor quality design contrary to Policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005, the Welwyn Hatfield Supplementary Design Guidance 2005, Policy SADM15 of the Welwyn Hatfield Draft Local Plan 2016, the aims of Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the NPPF.
Impact on neighbours	No concerns were raised under the previous application (6/2021/1643/HOUSE) regarding neighbouring amenity. This amended proposal has been assessed and it is considered that this stance remains.
Access, car parking and highway considerations	The previous application (6/2021/1643/HOUSE) was found to be acceptable on the grounds of parking/highways impacts due to the existing driveway and proximity to services and facilities by means other than a private motor vehicle. This amended proposal has been assessed and it is considered that this stance remains.
Conclusion	
The proposed development would be in conflict with the relevant national and local planning policies.	

Reasons for Refusal:

1. The proposed dormers would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of this part of the Garden City and would harm the significance of the Conservation Area. Accordingly, the proposed development is contrary to the provisions of Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Policies D1 and D2 of the District Plan 2005, the Welwyn Hatfield Supplementary Design Guidance 2005, Policies SP9 and SADM15 of the Welwyn Hatfield Draft Local Plan 2016 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

REFUSED DRAWING NUMBERS

2.

Plan Number	Revision Number	Details	Received Date
2134	001	Existing Floor Plans and Elevations, and Location Plan	7 March 2022
2134	002a	Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations	7 March 2022

1. POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT

The decision has been made taking into account, where practicable and appropriate the requirements of paragraph 38 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 Council's website or inspected at these offices).

Determined By:

Mr Derek Lawrence
29 April 2022