

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No: N6/2013/2449/FP

SITE ADDRESS: 77 Eddington Crescent, Welwyn Garden City

DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT: Erection of single storey and two storey rear extension

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

1. SITE DESCRIPTION:

The application site is located on the southern side of the highway and measures approximately 27 metres deep and 11 metres wide. It comprises of a two storey semi-detached dwelling with front and rear associated gardens. There have been no previous additions to this dwellinghouse. The dwelling is finished with facing brickwork and a tile roof. In the rear garden area, but to the west of the dwellinghouse is a detached garage.

The surrounding area comprises of a semi and terraced house that are located in modest plots. No.75 bounds the property to the east and the plot of No.79 bounds the site to the west, with driveways and garages between both houses. A public right of way (No.67) runs along the rear of the site and either adjacent property, and north along the side of No.75 to the right.

Within the surrounding area a few small single storey additions have been added to the rear of properties. Permitted development rights were removed in the original permission for these properties.

2. SITE DESIGNATION:

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

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

N6/2013/1821/FP - Erection of two storey rear extension – Refused 17/10/2013 for the following reason;

1. The proposal, by virtue of its mass, bulk, scale and design, would fail to be subordinate to the original dwelling house and would result in a dominant form of development which would not represent high quality design and would fail to be compatible with the maintenance and enhancement of the character and appearance of the area. The proposal is therefore contrary to policies GBSP2, D1 and D2 of the District Plan, the Supplementary Design Guidance, 2005, and the National Planning Policy Framework’.

N6/2011/0769/FP - Erection of single storey rear extension – Approved 21/06/2011

4. CONSULTATIONS: None

5. NEIGHBOUR REPRESENTATIONS: None

6. ANALYSIS:

- a) Impact on character and appearance of the site and surrounding area (GBSP2, D1, D2, NPPF chapter 7)
- b) Impact on residential amenity of neighbouring properties (D1)
- c) Provision of sufficient parking provision (M14)

7. ANALYSIS:

a. The existing character of the area is of a mix of two and three storey dwelling houses and flatted buildings in close proximity to each other set within modest sized plots. Two storey dwelling houses characterise the area immediately surrounding the application property. The rear of the property abuts open Green Belt land and a public right of way (No.67) which runs past the rear of Nos 79 and 75 on either side and north along the eastern side boundary of No.75. The application property and No.75 are of similar mass and bulk, staggered so that No.75 projects approximately 1.3m beyond the application property on its rear elevation. They both feature the same roof height, with No.75 featuring a rear gable to accommodate its rear projection.

Chapter 7 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) emphasises the importance of good design in context. The relevant policies of the Council's local plan, 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 existing house occupies a footprint of approximately 6.2m deep and 8.4m wide, across two storeys. At ground floor level the footprint of the proposed rear extension would be approximately the same width as the house (8m) and about 3.6m deep. A second floor would sit above to the same depth, across about half (4.2m) of its width, centrally sited on the rear elevation so that about 2m of single storey element, with a lean-to roof, would sit below on either side. This element would feature a gable with pitched roof with ridge height about 1m lower than that of the main dwelling house. It would have a centrally positioned door and Juliet balcony, sited above wider folding doors on the ground floor below, oriented towards the rear garden as per the existing rear elevation fenestration on both floors.

This proposal follows a previous proposal which was for a two storey rear extension of approximately 50% wider design, where the resultant mass, bulk, scale and design, would fail to be subordinate to the original dwelling house and would result in a dominant form of development which would not represent high quality design and would fail to be compatible with the maintenance and enhancement of the character and appearance of the area, contrary to the above policy requirements. It featured an awkward flat roof join with the first floor of No 75 to the east and its roof design was dominant, failing to sit as a subordinate extension to the host property. This proposal has reduced the mass and bulk of extension considerably through the use of a smaller extension of about 50% less width at first floor level. In doing so, this has

reduced its required scale at its gable pitch, with the resultant extension and its ridge sitting about 1m below that of the main dwelling house. Its central siting, with single storey element at either side, and removal of a two storey element adjoining No.75 assists in reducing the visual dominance of the extension and removes the need for a first floor flat roof join with No.75 as found in the previous application which was considered poor quality design in the report for that proposal.

With reference to that aspect, the report for the previous proposal specifically cited the incoherent roof approach with a flat roof element between the existing gable at No.75 and proposal gable, along with the flat roof join with No.75 emphasising the bulk of second floor element being proposed between the two storey gable proposed and the second floor of No.75 as reasons for the poor quality design. It said that a single storey element at the join with No.75 would enable a roof form to be possible which sits subservient to that of the main house. This proposal has taken on board these concerns by removing the need for a second floor at this element adjoining No.75, and through the use of a lean-to sloped roof here, which matches the sloped character of the main house roof.

When all of the above considerations are taken together, whilst the proposal seeks a large extension, the above changes successfully articulate the proposed works as a subordinate extension to the original dwelling house, overcoming the concerns in the previous application in this regard.

The previous proposal was considered visually dominant which detracted from the character and appearance of the original house and surrounding area when viewed from the rear, (this includes the impact on the visual amenities of this Green Belt location) and the public right of way to the rear. The previous proposal extended across about 75% of the width of the rear elevation to a scale nearly the same as the main house. The proposal is considered to overcome these concerns through its reduction in the bulk, which in from the rear would be measured primarily from as its width, which would now extend across about 50% of the width of the rear elevation of the original house compared to 75% previously, the siting of this bulk in the central element of the rear elevation, and a clearly lower scaled roof and ridge height. In doing so, it now successfully responds to its context, reducing its visual dominance from the public right of way to the rear. The matching external materials throughout would successfully respond to the character and context of the site in this regard, ensuring a high standard of design fitting of its surroundings. The result of these changes would be to maintain the visual amenities of the Green Belt to the south when viewed alongside the existing house and neighbouring houses of the same materials. Accordingly, the proposal is now considered to avoid causing demonstrable harm to the visual amenities of the Green Belt and to represent a design respectful of the character of the application property and those nearby from the rear/public right of way.

Whilst folding doors/a large area of glazing would feature on the ground floor, and a door instead of window, with associated Juliet balcony, would feature at first floor level, it is noted that whilst this would be visible from the public right of way to the rear, these features would nonetheless not be visible from the primary street scene of Eddington Crescent. Given their siting and limited size in the context of the wider house, they are considered capable of incorporation here without jeopardising the

character of the property and surrounding area, including the visual amenities of the Green Belt to the south, to a degree which would cause demonstrable harm.

Given the above, the proposal is considered to accord with the requirements of the SDG, policies D1 and D2 and the NPPF.

b) The application property lies approximately 8m to the east of No.79 which has a rear elevation approximately 2m further to the south than it. The group of garages between both sites are single storey with pitched roofs and lie approximately 2m south of the application property and 1m south of No.79. The proposal is not considered sufficient in scale, bulk or mass to cause detrimental impacts to the amenities of the occupiers of No.79 to the west with regard to causing an overbearing impact, loss of day/sun/sky light, loss of outlook, overbearing impact, or overshadowing to the rear of No.79 and its garden due to the siting of that property, as it would only project about half a metre beyond its rear building line. In coming to this conclusion, consideration is given to the approximate 3.6m depth of the extension, the two storey element of the extension being set back about 2m further eastwards than the side elevation of the main house which lies opposite that of No.79, and the scale of the roof of the extension which would sit about 1m lower than that of the main house.

The proposal is not considered sufficient in scale, bulk or mass to cause detrimental impacts to the amenities of the occupiers of No.75 to the east with regard to causing an overbearing impact, loss of day/sun/sky light, loss of outlook, overbearing impact, or overshadowing to the rear garden of No.75. This is because the two storeys of the rear elevation of that dwelling house project about 2m beyond that of the application site dwelling house. Accordingly, the proposal would only project about 1.6m beyond the rear elevation of No.75, and coupled with its approximate 2m setback at the side elevation adjacent to that boundary, and this siting, combined with the associated scale, bulk and mass of the proposal, it would be insufficient to cause sufficient harm to warrant refusal on the above grounds.

With regard to overlooking and loss of privacy to either adjacent property, it is noted that no side elevation windows are proposed on the ground or first floor of the proposed works;

At ground floor level, despite being further towards the rear, given that the proposed windows and doors would be oriented towards the rear garden as existing, and the presence of the garage and rear boundary fencing to the sides, the works would be insufficient to cause such impacts to either adjacent property a degree sufficient to warrant refusal.

At first floor level, the proposal seeks a centrally positioned door and Juliet balcony on the rear elevation. The house currently features bedroom windows on the first floor rear elevation which afford opportunities for (oblique) overlooking of the rear garden to either adjacent property. The garage has a pitched roof which extends to a height close to the first floor eaves height of the main house. Due to the depth of the extension, the Juliet balcony would sit adjacent to this approximate area, where the bulk of the garage and its width from the balcony side to its far side boundary with No.75 would prevent direct overlooking and loss of privacy to the rear elevation and

rear garden area immediately behind the house and garage at No.79 to a degree sufficient to warrant refusal. Beyond the garage, direct views would be possible at the rear elements of their rear garden, but given its approximate 11m distance from direct views, and the fact that existing views are already possible to this part of that garden from the existing rear windows on the same orientation as the door and balcony, this is not considered to cause harm in this regard sufficient to warrant refusal.

In coming to the above conclusion, it is acknowledged that a door and balcony would afford greater opportunities for overlooking compared to a window, however given the nature of a Juliet balcony where no platform exists, and its nature to serve a bedroom rather than a more intensely used living room or kitchen or similar room by many members of a household, and the above existing and proposed mitigating factors, the intensity of potential overlooking or loss of privacy is not considered sufficient to cause demonstrable harm sufficient to warrant refusal.

The above is also relevant to the occupiers of No.75. The current first floor bedrooms are set back about 2m from the rear of No.75 and its immediate rear garden, where direct and oblique overlooking (except for the far western first floor window to a very limited degree) of the rear elevation and garden area immediately behind are prevented. Oblique views to the rest of the rear garden are possible due to the shared orientation of the rear windows to both properties and the depth of the rear gardens. The rear of the proposed extension would project about 1.6m beyond the rear elevation of No.75 and not feature side elevation windows, meaning direct or even oblique views from the first floor door/balcony would not be afforded to the rear elevation or immediate (1.6m depth) rear garden of No.75 as per existing. As oblique views are already possible to the remainder of the rear garden of No.75, the door/balcony would not change over existing in this regard. As per No.79, it is acknowledged that a door and balcony would afford greater opportunities for overlooking compared to a window, however given the nature of a Juliet balcony where no platform exists, and its nature to serve a bedroom rather than a more intensely used living room or kitchen or similar room by many members of a household, and the existing possibility for oblique views to the same area, the intensity of potential overlooking or loss of privacy is not considered sufficient to cause demonstrable harm sufficient to warrant refusal in this regard.

The proposal therefore accords with policy D1 in this regard.

c) The site lies within zone four as outlined in the Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), Parking Standards, January 2004. This says that three bedroom houses as it is at present should feature a maximum of 2.25 parking spaces, and four bedroom houses which this proposal would result in should feature a maximum of three parking spaces. Policy M14 applies which reiterates these standards. The application site already features a garage which could accommodate one vehicle parking space and a driveway approximately 13m long and 2.5m wide which could accommodate off-street parking for two average sized cars parked in a row. Accordingly, by featuring three off-street parking spaces, the proposal is considered to accord with the SDG and policy M14 in this regard.

8. CONCLUSION:

The proposal would maintain the character and appearance of the property and surrounding area and would not impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring dwellings.

9. CONDITIONS:

1. C.2.1 Time limit for commencement of development

2. C.13.1 Development in accordance with approved plans/details: drawing number: 3108-OS1 & 3108-OS2 & 3108-E01 & 3108-P01 Revision B received and dated 29 November 2013.

Post Development

3. C.5.2 – Matching materials

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 online or inspected at these offices).

INFORMATIVES: None

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