



## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 June 2019

**by J Bell-Williamson MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 June 2019

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### **Appeal Ref: APP/C1950/D/19/3224965**

### **The Old Manse, 40 Barleycroft Road, Welwyn Garden City AL8 6JU**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
  - The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs Rhys Roberts against the decision of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.
  - The application Ref 6/2018/2813/HOUSE, dated 31 October 2018, was refused by notice dated 21 December 2018.
  - The development proposed is ground floor side and rear extensions, two storey rear extension, first floor rear extension, new window opening in side elevation, demolition and rebuilding of brick garden wall, internal alterations.
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### **Decision**

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for ground floor side and rear extensions, two storey rear extension, first floor rear extension, new window opening in side elevation, demolition and rebuilding of brick garden wall, internal alterations at The Old Manse, 40 Barleycroft Road, Welwyn Garden City AL8 6JU. The permission is granted in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 6/2018/2813/HOUSE, dated 31 October 2018, subject to the following conditions:
  - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
  - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: site location plan, P.01 (block plan), P.02 (floor plans), P.03 (roof plan and section) and P.04 (elevations).
  - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extensions hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

### **Preliminary Matter**

2. The appellants have submitted an exchange of correspondence in which the Council indicates that all elements of the scheme are acceptable in principle, except the extension to bedroom 4. Furthermore, I note that the appellants subsequently submitted an application for the same form of extensions as in this case, but omitting the two storey extension to bedroom 4 (reference 6/2019/0274/HOUSE). However, I have not been notified of any decision that
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may have been made with regard to this application. Therefore, while I note these matters, I have considered the whole scheme before me on its merits.

### **Main Issue**

3. The main issue is whether the proposed extensions would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area.

### **Reasons**

4. The Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area includes the town centre and residential areas west of the main railway line. The appeal property is a detached triple-fronted dwelling built in the 1920s in a residential road of similar property types. These dwellings have a strong degree of design uniformity and a coherent character and appearance, reflecting the origins of the new town. As such, they make an important contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.
5. The Council's principal concern is that taken together with previous additions the proposed extensions would not be subordinate to the original dwelling and would harm its proportions and appearance. I agree with the Council that the limited additional depth of the single storey side extension would not be harmful, nor would the minor change resulting from the rebuilt garden wall.
6. The effects of the extensions that have already been undertaken are only apparent to the rear. These added some depth to the original building but principally altered the appearance of the rear elevation through the creation of a two storey extension spanning around two-thirds of the building's width, with a flat roofed single storey element wrapping around the side and rear. As such, this materially changed the original built form, which had a greater degree of articulation through a pair of two storey projections to either side of the rear elevation, of different depths but with the same hipped roof form, subordinate to the main roof.
7. The proposed extensions would, in effect, replicate these elements of the original dwelling but at greater depth. The proposed changes would add under three metres depth but would restore the two projections in a similar relationship to each other and with the same roof form as in the original dwelling. This would, in my view, be an improvement to the current rear elevation, which is largely homogenous and uninteresting compared to the original. I acknowledge that this would add further depth to the original dwelling, but the amount is not significant and the extensive width due to the triple-fronted design of the original building helps to offset the effects of this additional depth.
8. In addition, the changes proposed would not be uncharacteristic in their setting. The neighbouring properties, Nos 34 and 36, both have two storey extensions of similar or greater depth in the same position to the rear. Therefore, taking these findings as a whole, I conclude that the proposed extensions would preserve the character and appearance of the Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area. Consequently, there is no conflict with Policy D1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005, which requires high quality design in new development. Reference is also made to a number of policies from the emerging Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan 2016. However, I am not aware

from the appeal submissions of the emerging plan's status and, therefore, the weight that might be given to relevant policies with regard to the guidance in paragraph 48 of the National Planning Policy Framework. For this reason, I have not taken account of these policies for the purpose of this appeal.

### **Conditions**

9. Of the Council's suggested conditions I have imposed the standard time condition and, to ensure the proper implementation of the proposal, one requiring development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans. I agree also that a condition requiring the external materials used to match those of the existing building is needed in the interests of the appearance of the host dwelling and wider conservation area.
10. The Council also suggests that a condition is needed to require the window in the side elevation of bedroom 5, facing No 40a, to include obscured glass to protect the neighbouring occupants' privacy. However, in the officer's report the conclusion is that no such harm would arise due to the position of this window in relation to the neighbouring property. I agree with this assessment and, therefore, have not imposed the suggested condition.

### **Conclusion**

11. For the reasons given above it is concluded that the appeal should succeed.

*J Bell-Williamson*

INSPECTOR