

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No: N6/2013/2219/FP

SITE ADDRESS: 7 Densley Close, Welwyn Garden City

DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT: Erection of single storey front, side and rear extension and alterations to roof

RECOMMENDATION:

1. SITE AND APPLICATION DESCRIPTION:

The application site comprises of a two storey dwellinghouse with a tall pitched roof with front and rear dormers creating a three storey dwellinghouse internally. Either side of the dwellinghouse are flat roofed, single storey extensions.

The application plot is square in shape located towards the end of the cul-de-sac. With the exception of the projecting single garage, the dwelling is set back from the highway with a small canopy roof above the front entrance. All the existing windows have a horizontal glazing bar design.

The proposal seeks planning permission for the erection of a single storey side extension along the northern elevation following demolition of the existing side extension incorporating an increase in its height and depth and four rooflights and a roof lantern. Furthermore, the proposal seeks an increase in the height of the parapet surrounding the existing southern side extension.

2. SITE DESIGNATION: The site lies within the Central Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area as designated in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

N6/1991/0676/FP - Single storey side extension. Granted 14 October 1991

N6/2013/1278/FP - Erection of single storey front, side and rear extension and alterations to roof. Refused 21 August 2013 for the following reasons:

1. *The proposed front extension by virtue of its height, depth and overall scale and the proposed height of the two side extensions would appear overdominant within the streetscene of Densley Close to such an extent that it would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Central Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area and would be detrimental to the visual interests of its surroundings. The proposal is therefore contrary to s72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Policies GBSP2, D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, 2005 and the National Planning Policy Framework.*
2. *The proposed front extension would be of height, depth and overall scale that would fail to appear subordinate to the existing dwelling and would detract from the visual interests of its facade contrary to Policies GBSP2, D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, 2005.*

4. CONSULTATIONS:

No objections have been received in principle from Hertfordshire County Council, Transport Programmes and Strategy subject to informatives.

5. NEIGHBOUR REPRESENTATIONS:

Two representations have been received from the public which may be summarised as:

- The adverse affect of the increase in height of the extension housing the hot tub relative to the height of the present wall coupled with the proposed increase in length of extension will be a more intrusive structure and lead to loss of light and adversely affect the view from the (neighbouring) lounge bay window and garden,
- The raising of the parapet wall at first floor level by 2 foot will result in an enormous blank wall to look at from our (No.19 Scholars Mews) front and side gardens and it will inevitably block some light out.
- If the floor of the lounge is raised 2 foot and the windows raised then we will be overlooked by the lounge window in our front garden,
- The trees in our garden subject to a TPO will be affected by the raising of the parapet

6. MAIN PLANNING ISSUES AND RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES:

The main planning issues with this application are:

- a). Whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area, and would sufficiently sustain and enhance the conservation area and would respect and relate to the character and context of the property and surrounding area (NPPF para. 131, Local Plan Policies D1 and D2)
- b). Impact upon the residential amenity of adjoining occupiers (Local Plan Policy D1)

7. ANALYSIS:

- a) Whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area, and would sufficiently sustain and enhance the conservation area and would respect and relate to the character and context of the property and surrounding 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.*” It is now accepted case law that preserving the character or appearance of a conservation area can be achieved not only by a positive contribution to preservation, but also by development which leaves the character or appearance of the area unharmed. Chapter 12, paragraph 131 of the National Planning Policy Framework (March, 2012) states, ‘*In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:*

- *The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- *The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- *The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness’*

The National Planning Policy Framework states 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; reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials; are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions. Policy GBSP2 requires development within specified settlements to be limited to that which is compatible with the maintenance and enhancement of their character. Policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 respectively require high quality design in all new development and for proposals to respect and relate to the character and context of their location. The impact of a development is assessed giving regard to the bulk, scale and design of the proposal and how it harmonises with the existing buildings and area.

The application site sits within a residential area to the west of the town. Densley Close is a residential cul-de-sac comprising largely of detached properties situated within similar sized plots. The application dwelling is two storeys in height with dormer windows within the front and rear roofspace giving a three storey appearance.

The proposal seeks to replace the existing single storey side extension along the northern elevation with a single storey side extension increasing the height of the extension to a maximum 3.25m and increasing the depth at the rear by a further 1m. Furthermore, the existing single storey extension attached to the southern elevation will increase in height by a further 0.2m. The proposal differs from that previously refused under planning application, ref: N6/2013/1278/FP, by virtue of the northern elevation extension being reduced in height by 0.35m and the southern elevation extension being reduced in height by approximately 0.35m. The proposal was refused by virtue of the height of the parapet wall being near to the height of the first floor window sills which would appear stark and over dominant within the streetscene.

It is considered that the proposal has been sufficiently reduced in height to reduce the overall bulk and would more in keeping with the height of the parapet walls which exist within the streetscene. Furthermore, the proposal would incorporate coping stone as the parapet finish. The rooflights proposed on the northern side extension will not be visible within the streetscene and has been confirmed through an email from the agent, dated 10 December 2013. It would also be appropriate for condition the application for samples of materials to be submitted prior to commencement of development to ensure the materials appropriately match the existing dwellinghouse.

In accordance with s72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the proposal would appropriately enhance and preserve the character or appearance of the area and the proposal is therefore in accordance to the NPPF and policy D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, 2005.

b) Impact upon the residential amenity of adjoining occupiers

Policy D1 and the supplementary design guidance paragraph 5.2 (Section 5 Residential Extensions) states in part iii) the extension should not cause loss of light or be unduly dominant from adjoining properties, as a result of either the length of projection, the height or the proximity of the extension. In addition paragraph 5.7 states that new extensions should be designed, orientated and positioned in such a way to minimise overlooking between dwellings.

The properties most impacted by the proposal are neighbouring properties, No. 5 Densley Close to the north and No.19 Scholars Mews to the south. The existing garage is attached to the neighbouring single storey side extension at No.5 Densley Close. The existing garage already extends further beyond the rear of No.5 by approximately 1m with the proposed replacement side extension resulting in approximately 2m extension beyond the rear of No.5. Windows exist on the rear of No.5 in close proximity to the proposed extension however a 2m extension is not considered to result in an unduly dominant feature when viewed from these windows. Furthermore, the proposal is not considered to detrimentally impact upon loss of sunlight/daylight skylight when compared to the existing extension taking into consideration the extension will only extend a further 1m in depth and the orientation of No.5 to the north east of the application dwelling where a limited amount of light reaches these windows during large parts of the day.

The proposed height increase of 0.2m to the existing single storey side extension extending beyond the southern elevation is considered sufficient distance from No.19 Scholars Mews (approximately 10m) not to detrimentally impact upon loss of sunlight/daylight. The existing side windows are being retained with the floor level increase internally of approximately 15cm. However, the existing window openings and siting are not being altered and therefore the proposal is not considered to result in any further overlooking/loss of privacy to neighbouring properties when compared with the existing situation. The proposal is therefore considered in accordance with policy D1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, 2005.

8. CONCLUSION:

In accordance with s72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the proposal appropriately enhance and preserve the character or appearance of the area and the proposal is therefore in accordance with the NPPF and policy D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, 2005.

The proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the amenity of the adjoining occupiers.

9. CONDITIONS:

1. C.2.1 Time limit for commencement of development

2. C.13.1 Development in accordance with approved plans/details: 3081-OS1 & 3018-OS2 Rev A received and dated 24 October 2013 & 3018-P01 Rev C received and dated 11 December 2013

3. C.5.1 – Samples of 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 inspected at these offices).

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