

**WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT**  
**DELEGATED REPORT**

<b>APPLICATION No:</b>	<b>N6/2012/2556/FP</b>
<b>APPLICATION Site:</b>	<b>20 Walden Road, Welwyn Garden City</b>

**NOTATION:**

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

**DESCRIPTION OF SITE:**

The application site is a plot measuring approximately 55m deep and 10m wide located to the north of Welwyn Garden City town centre in a conservation area. The plot features a two storey semi-detached property with detached garage, with similar properties characteristic of the street scene.

The property is bounded by another and its rear gardens (No.18) to the west, Walden Road to which it fronts to the north, green space to the south and by the plot of the adjacent property of No.22 to the east. The existing property has been extended, featuring a part single and part two storey rear extension at the west and east side of the rear elevation respectively.

The plot features a detached garage set back from the front building line, and extending beyond its rear elevation building line by approximately 4.5m. The garage forms the boundary with the plot of No.18 at this point, forming a symmetrical pitched roof double garage.

**DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:**

The proposal seeks to demolish the existing detached garage on the site and erect a replacement garage and single storey rear conservatory, and infill the gap between the garage and house.

The existing garage features an original and extended component. The original element measures approximately 2.6m wide, 5.5m deep, and 2.1m high at eaves height on its west elevation (adjacent to the house), extending to 4.1m high at the central ridge height shared with the adjoining garage to No.22. Its rear element is stepped down approximately half a metre behind the original garage, extends a further 4.8m deep along the same width, and measures approximately 1.7m and 2.2m high to the eaves and pitched roof ridge height respectively. The side and front elevations of the original garage are set back approximately 1.1m and 4.4m from those of the main dwelling house. Windows feature on the rear elevation of the

original and extended garage element, and windows and a door feature on the west side of the rear garage element. The garage features white timber doors at its front, and dark stained timber weatherboarding and roof tiles.

The proposed replacement main garage building would measure approximately the same width as existing at 2.6m wide and 7.7m deep. Its extra length would be accommodated towards the front where it would project approximately 800mm further than the front elevation of the existing garage, culminating approximately 3.6m from the front elevation building line of the main dwelling house. It would measure approximately 2.8m and 4.1m high to eaves and roof ridge height respectively. It would feature materials to match the existing dwelling house. Whilst no specific reference is made to the use of replacement timber cladding in the application form, the Design and Access Statement submitted with the application states that this is proposed and this appears evident on the submitted plans.

The rear conservatory would extend to the rear of the garage along the same width by approximately a further 3.9m, stepping down approximately half a metre mid-way through its depth. Adjacent to the rear elevation of the property, this element would measure approximately 1.6m and 2m high to eaves and pitched (glass panelled) roof ridge height, and 2.1m and 2.6m high respectively towards the rear where the ground steps down. As per the main garage, notwithstanding a primarily glass frontage on the west side elevation and rear elevation of the rear conservatory, it would feature materials, including brickwork, to match those of the existing dwelling house on its remainder.

The proposal would also involve infilling the approximate 1.1m gap between the garage and the house, from flush with the rear elevation to approximately 1.3m short of the front elevation of the garage, with a door at the front and rear end. This element would measure approximately 2.5m high adjoining the side of the garage, and feature a slope rising to approximately 2.9m where it would adjoin the side elevation of the main dwelling house. It would feature materials to match the existing dwelling house.

A parallel application (ref.N6/2012/2559/FP) is also under consideration at the adjoining property at No.22, which symmetrically features a shared ridge with the application site, for a replacement garage at that property which would retain the same footprint to the side and rear and project approximately 800mm forward of the existing garage, flush with the proposed garage.

#### **PLANNING HISTORY:**

N6/2001/1247/FP - Single storey rear extension – Approved 29/10/2001

N6/2001/1605/FP - Single storey rear extension – Approved 21/01/2002

N6/2005/1494/FP - Erection of first floor rear extension – Approved 24/01/2006

#### **SUMMARY OF POLICIES:**

National Planning Policy Framework 2012

Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991 – 2011:

None

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005:  
SD1: Sustainable Development  
GBSP2: Towns and specified settlements  
R3: Energy Efficiency  
D1: Quality of design  
D2: Character and context

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005

**CONSULTATIONS:** None

**TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS:** None

**REPRESENTATIONS:**

None, period expired 01/02/2013

**DISCUSSION:**

The main issues are:

- 1. Principle of development**
- 2. Character and appearance;**
- 3. Residential amenity;**
- 4. Sustainable development;**
- 5. Protected species;**
- 6. Other Material Planning Considerations**

### **1. Principle of development**

The site lies in the town of Welwyn Garden City. Policy GBSP2 says that development in such areas will be limited to that which is compatible with the maintenance and enhancement of their character and the maintenance of their Green Belt Boundaries. Accordingly, as the proposed development lies within the existing town of Welwyn Garden City, the principle of the development proposed is considered acceptable subject to compliance with Policies GBSP2, D1 and D2 of the District Plan.

### **2. Character and Appearance**

The National Planning Policy Framework emphasises that high quality design is a core principle of planning and attaches great importance (para.56) to design. Policies GBSP2, D1 and D2 of the adopted Welwyn Hatfield District Plan apply which seek to provide a good standard of design in all new development and require that all new development respects and relates to the character and context of the area in which it is to be sited. These policies are expanded upon in the council's Supplementary Design Guidance (SDG) which requires that residential extensions should be complementary in design and be subordinate in size and scale to the existing dwelling. 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 building and area.

The street scene is characterised by similar properties allowing for subtle variations in architectural detailing, with garages and small side extensions prevalent. The proposal would effectively replace the existing garage which is visible from the street scene and the additional extension to that garage to its rear, which is not readily discernible from the street scene. The replacement garage would measure approximately 700mm higher at its eaves than the existing garage, and accordingly this would create additional mass and scale at this element which would be visible from the street scene. However, as it would feature a ridge height to match the existing ridge height, shared with the adjoining garage, the associated increase in scale and mass by virtue of raising the eaves 700mm is not considered to result in a readily discernible increase from the street scene of Walden Road in the conservation area in this regard. This would be further mitigated by the use of materials to match the existing dwelling house and garage. In this regard, notwithstanding a reference in the Design and Access Statement, as no specific reference is made in the application form to the use of replacement wooden cladding on the replacement garage as per the existing, and in order to ensure a high quality finish fitting of the standard required to maintain, respect, and relate to the character of the conservation area and its significance in accordance with policies GBSP2, D1 and D2 of the District Plan and the NPPF, a suitable condition to require material samples of external surfaces to be submitted for approval prior to development is considered necessary should permission be granted. This condition could ensure that appropriate weatherboarding is used in this element of the extension.

The parallel application (ref.N6/2012/2559/FP) at No.22 which symmetrically features a shared ridge with the application site has not yet been determined or implemented. Whilst that application would match the increased eaves height and forward projection of this proposal, as that scheme has not been implemented this application is considered on the basis of its impact on the existing development at No.22. In this regard, the increase in eaves height, whilst noticeable, is not considered prominent when read from the street scene of Walden Road in the conservation area. From here, the additional 700mm height of eaves on the application site would not appear detrimental to the character of the shared garage design due to the same height roof ridge and through the use of appropriately matching materials. It would project a further 800mm than the adjoining garage frontage and whilst not an ideal design, at less than a metre deep and through the use of matching materials, the depth difference, whilst apparent from the side vistas, would not be overly prominent, particularly from close by or direct views from the street scene of Walden Road as to cause harm to the significance the conservation area, or harm to the character and appearance of the area sufficient to warrant refusal. In this regard, the proposal is considered compliant with policies GBSP2, D1 and D2 of the District Plan and the NPPF.

The rear conservatory would feature the same width and depth as existing and its height from eaves to pitch height would be shorter than the existing element (by 100mm-200mm) closest to the main garage and slightly taller (by 400mm) at its rear where the land slopes down. It would feature materials to match those of the main dwelling house and glass would feature on the roof, rear elevation, and the side elevation which fronts the internal rear garden only. Furthermore, it would not be discernible from the street scene of the conservation area due to its location at the rear of the garage and lower topography. Accordingly, due to its limited footprint,

location, and limited scale and associated mass, in addition to the materials proposed, this element is considered subordinate to the original dwelling house (taking into account subsequent additions) in accordance with the SDG and of a good quality of design which would sustain the significance of the conservation area and respect and relate to the character of the conservation area.

The infill element of the proposal would, by virtue of its limited dimensions at 1.1m wide and 5.6m deep (6m<sup>2</sup>), and limited height at single storey, be clearly subordinate to the original dwelling house, even when taking into account its subsequent expansion. Furthermore, it would feature materials to match the existing dwelling house. The SDG seeks to avoid a terracing effect when considering applications for residential extensions. Whilst the application would infill the only gap on this side of the frontage of the property, between the house and garage, in light of the existing character of the surrounding area which features adjoining garages and side extensions, and due to the forward facing projection of the group of properties of which the application site forms, in addition to the small scale of infill proposed, this element of the proposal is not considered to result in a terracing effect on this aspect of the street scene of the conservation area.

In conclusion, overall, the application would add little additional mass or bulk to the existing property. Its limited forward projection would nevertheless retain the forward siting and associated character of the main dwelling house front elevation and in this regard remain subordinate to the main dwelling house, and the limited additional mass by virtue of the infilled element and increase in main garage eaves height would not lead to a detrimental impact on the significance, character and appearance of the site and surrounding conservation area. Irrespective of whether permission is granted and implemented for a forward garage projection and replacement at No.22, the limited difference in eaves height and depth of forward garage projection when read against the existing garage of No.22 would not be sufficient to cause a detrimental impact to the significance, character and appearance of the site and surrounding conservation area sufficient to warrant refusal. Due to the limited additional mass afforded by the replacement garage and conservatory, and the infill element by virtue of its scale, in addition to appropriate use of materials, the proposal is considered subordinate to the original dwelling house and of a sufficient quality of design to enable it to be compatible with the maintenance and enhancement of the character of the area. Accordingly, the proposal complies with policies GBSP2, D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, 2005, the Supplementary Design Guidance, 2005 and the NPPF.

### **3. Impact on the residential amenity of adjoining occupiers**

The impact of the proposal on the residential amenity of neighbouring dwellings is considered in terms of how the proposal impacts properties in terms of overshadowing and the level of access to day/sun/sky light afforded by the proposal, whether the proposal would be overbearing and cause loss of outlook, and in terms of overlooking/privacy.

The proposal would be of a similar scale to existing in terms of the garage and rear conservatory (existing rear garage element). The maximum height increase of approximately 400mm of the conservatory over the existing rear garage element, combined with the same footprint and position adjacent to the rear of the adjoining

garage at No.22, the presence of the garage of No.22 (both existing and proposed) between it and the rear habitable rooms at No.22, and the distance to those habitable rooms of approximately 11m ensure that it would not cause a detrimental impact to the amenities of the occupiers of No.22 with regard to the aforementioned criteria. With regard to No.18, its glass elevation on the west side would be at ground floor and coupled with a distance of approximately 10m from the rear elevation of that property, and boundary treatment between, mean that it would not cause a detrimental impact to the amenities of the occupiers of that property either.

The replacement main garage would be approximately 700mm higher at eaves height. However, the main roof and ridge height would remain the same. It would be sited at the side of the application site dwelling house and existing/proposed garage of the same ridge height at No.22, and accordingly, the increased mass by virtue of raised eaves is not considered to cause such a degree of overshadowing/overbearing effect/loss of light to the occupiers of No.22 over the existing buildings as to cause a discernible detrimental impact to the amenities of its occupiers. In light of its distance adjacent to the existing garage at No.22 behind which the majority of its mass would lie, and distance of approximately 5m from the front elevation of No.22, the proposed garage and its additional 800mm forward projection is not considered to result in a discernible loss of light, overbearing effect, loss of outlook or other detrimental loss of amenity to the occupiers of No.22 either, and would not be visible or discernible to the residents of No.18 on the other side of the main dwelling house.

Accordingly the proposal is considered compliant with policies D1 and D2 of the District Plan in this regard.

#### **4. Protected species**

The presence of protected species is a material consideration, in accordance with the National Planning Policy, Natural Environment & Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (section 40), Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as well as Circular 06/05. Protected species such as great crested newts, otters, dormice and bats benefit from the strictest legal protection. These species are known as European Protected Species ('EPS') and the protection afforded to them derives from the EU Habitats Directive, in addition to the above legislation. Water voles, badgers, reptiles, all wild birds, invertebrates and certain rare plants are protected to a lesser extent under UK domestic law (NERC Act and Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981). The existing site and development is such that there is not a reasonable likelihood of EPS being present on site nor would a EPS offence be likely to occur. It is therefore not necessary to consider the Conservation Regulations 2010 and amended 2012 Regulations further.

#### **5. Other planning considerations: None**

#### **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 be sufficiently energy efficient.

**RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS**

**CONDITIONS:**

1. C.2.1 Time limit for commencement of development
2. C.13.1 Development in accordance with approved plans/details: drawing number: 2840-P01 & 2940-OS1 & 2940-OS2 received and dated 6 December 2012.

**Pre Development**

3. C5.1 Material samples

**SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE GRANT OF PERMISSION:**

The proposal has been considered against the National Planning Policy Framework, Development Plan policies SD1, GBSP2, R3, D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005, and the Supplementary Design Guidance 2005, in addition to the Human Rights Act 1998, which, at the time of this decision indicate that the proposal should be approved. The decision has also 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**.....