WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
DIRECTORATE OF STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT

DELEGATED APPLICATION

Application No: 6/2016/0912/HOUSE
Location: 30 Sherrardspark Road, Welwyn Garden City, AL8 7JS
Proposal: Conversion of existing garage and existing loft, to include insertion of front and rear dormers
Officer: Mr T Allington

Recommendation: Refused

6/2016/0912/HOUSE

Context			
Site and Application description	The site comprises No.30 Sherrardspark Road, a two storey detached property of a typical red brick garden city design and which features a link-attached garage to the side. The house is of a symmetrical design and is set back from the road with a generous landscaped front garden. The application seeks planning permission for the conversion of the garage to a study with replacement of the garage door with brick infill wall and a window to match existing fenestration o the house. The application also proposed a loft conversion to provide second-floor accommodation comprising a fifth bedroom with an en-suite and dressing room and which would be include a dormer window to both the front and the rear roof elevations.		
Constraints (as defined within WHDP 2005)	CA - Conservation Area: WGC1;		
Relevant planning history	– N6/2010/2119/FP: Construction of new driveway access and erection of new side gates. Approved 17/11/2010. – N6/2009/2288/FP: Erection of single storey rear extension and raising part of flat roof. Approved 07/12/2009.		
Consultations			
Neighbour representations	Support: 0	Object: 0	Other: 0
Publicity	Site Notice Display Date: 3 June 2016 Site Notice Expiry Date: 24 June 2016 Press Advert Display Date: 1 June 2016 Press Advert Expiry Date: 15 June 2016		
Summary of neighbour responses	No representations received.		
Town / Parish	N/A		

representations	
Consultees and responses	No representations received
Relevant Policies	
NPPF D1 D2 GBSP1 GBSP2 M14 Others SPD, SPG and Council's Interim Parking and Garage Size Standards	
Main Issues	
Design (form, size, scale, siting) and Character (appearance within the streetscene)	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. In terms of the development plan, policies 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 SDG also requires that 'dormer windows should be contained within the roofslope, be subservient to the roof of the property and be in proportion to the existing fenestration of the property'. No.30 is a particularly prominent property within the Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area, as it is at the junction of Sherrardspark Road and Mandeville Rise, located opposite the triangular green space forming the junction and the frontage of the property can be viewed when approaching the junction along the eastern part of Sherrardspark Road (when travelling west), forming part of the entrance to this residential part of the conservation area. No.30 and the immediate neighbouring properties which make up this part of the street scene do not include any dormer windows and feature clean, uninterrupted roof forms. Whilst the principle of a dormer window to the frontage of No.30 is not objected to per se, as there are examples further along Sherrardspark Road, given the prominent location of the property within a key part of the conservation area, a dormer window would have to be a of a suitable design and of suitable, modest proportions. However, the flat roof dormer proposed to the front (which would match that proposed to the rear), would measure approximately 2m in width by a height of 1.5m and the cheeks of the dormer, to each side of the glazing, would measure approximately 0.45m in width. As such, given proportions of the proposed dormer window, the proposal would be of an excessive scale and which would be an incongruous, bulky addition to the roof, particularly with regard to the over-sized cheeks of the proposed dormer. Whilst the rear dormer would also be of a poor standard of design, this would be to the rear of the property and so would be less prominent and less obtrusive. Given the context of the site and its location, within the Welwyn Garden City

Conservation Area, the scale of the proposed dormer window and its proportions together with its overall design would not relate and would not be in keeping with the style and character of the host dwelling and would not respect the established character and appearance of the surrounding conservation area.

Furthermore, it is noted that the proposal is also for the conversion of the existing garage. Whilst no objection is raised to the principle of this, as this has already taken place at the adjoining garage at No. 32, further concerns are raised with regard to the proposed window, which would replace the existing garage door. Again, the proposed plans show a plain two pane sliding sash window. Although this has been designed to match the windows on the existing dwelling, the existing windows are relatively large and are proportionate to the large frontage of No.30. However, it is considered that a window of this scale would be overly large for the front facade of the garage aspect of the property and a window of this scale would not be suitable in this instance, as it would appear overly large and disproportionate to this smaller, single storey element of the property and would overly dominate the frontage of the garage conversion. As such, this aspect of the proposal is also considered to be of a poor standard of design.

In summary, the dormer window proposed to the front of No.30 would form an incongruous addition which would fail to be subordinate to front roof slope of the original dwelling and would be of inappropriate bulk, in particular as a result of the cheek dormers, and a poor standard of design which would fail to respect or relate to the established character and appearance of the existing property and the surrounding conservation area. Furthermore, the apparent replacement of all of the existing windows to the frontage of No.30 with plain, two pane windows would also result in the loss of a key characteristic of the property, again to the detriment of the character and appearance of the property and its contribution to the conservation area. Lastly, it is considered that the window proposed as part of the proposed garage conversion would also be of an excessive, disproportionate scale. The proposal is therefore of a poor standard of design, contrary to Policies D1 and D2 of the District Plan, the SDG and the NPPF.

Paragraph 134 of the NPPF states 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 securing its optimum viable use'. The proposal would not result in any significant public benefits which would outweigh the harm as identified above and so paragraph 65 of the NPPF applies in this instance, which states that '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'.

It is noted that Officers contacted the agent seeking amended plans to address the above concerns and to address the apparent proposal to replace all of the windows to the front of the dwelling. However, suitable amendments could not be agreed upon and so the decision has been made on the basis of the originally submitted plans (which, as outlined above, do not reflect the design , finish and form of the existing windows and so plans appear to show the replacement of these, which is discussed above).

Impact on neighbours	The impact of the proposed development on the residential amenity of neighbouring dwellings is considered in terms of the impact on neighbouring properties access to day/sun/sky light, privacy and overshadowing. Policy D1 of the District Plan applies which seeks to provide a good standard of design in all new development. The Council's SPD on design supplements Policy D1 and expects that residential applications for extensions and alterations 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/alteration. The proposed front dormer and addition of the window to form the garage conversion would only face over the frontage of No.30 and Sherrardspark Road and the rear dormer would face down the rear garden of No.30 and so the proposed windows would not allow for any direct overlooking of neighbouring properties. Any views from the rear dormer window towards the properties either side of No.30 would be of an oblique angle and would not be significantly different from views already afforded by first floor windows at the rear of the property. Although the front dormer window is overly large and incongruous from a visual standpoint, as discussed above, the proposals are not of a scale which would result in any undue overbearing impact to the neighbouring properties and given the scale and location of both dormer windows, these would not result in a significant loss of light to neighbouring properties. Officers find that the proposed loft conversion with dormer windows and the proposed garage conversion would not result in any significantly detrimental impacts on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties and so the proposal therefore satisfies policy D1 and the SPD in this regard.
Access, car parking and highway considerations	Although the garage would be lost as part of the proposed conversion, the existing internal measurements of the garage are approximately 2.4m in width by a depth of approximately 4.45m. As such, the internal dimension of the garage to not meet the Council's Interim Parking and Garage Size Standards (minimum of 3m by 6m) and so therefore it is considered that the existing garage does not provide a suitable off-street parking space. No.30 also benefits from a relatively long driveway in any case, which provides space for at least 3 vehicles. Therefore, adequate off-street parking would be provided for the extended 5 bedroom dwelling and so no objections area raised in this regard.
Landscaping Issues	No comments
Any other considerations	It is noted that the existing property features vertically hung sliding sash windows of 4x4 window panes, with multiple vertical and horizontal glazing bars. This is not shown or reflected in the proposed plans, as all of the existing windows are shown to be of sliding sash but of single panes. As such, the plans appear to show the replacement of the windows. Whilst the existing original design of the windows are a key feature which contribute to the character of this property and in turn, its contribution to the conservation area and so the replacement of the windows with simplified, single pane windows would be significantly detrimental to the character and appearance of the property and the wider conservation area, regrettably

	planning permission is not required for this.

Conclusion
The front dormer window would represent an incongruous addition to the existing dwelling, which would be of an inappropriate form and design and so would not respect or relate to the establish character and appearance of the property and the surrounding Welwyn Garden city Conservation Area. The proposed plans also show the inappropriate replacement of windows to the front of the property which would result in the loss of the originally designed multi-pane sliding sash windows and which would be to the detriment of the character of the property and its contribution to the conservation area. Lastly, the window proposed to the front of the garage conversion would be of an excessive, disproportionate scale and would overly dominate this smaller aspect of the property. The proposal would therefore be of a poor standard of design, contrary to Policies D1 and D2 of the District Plan, the SDG and the NPPF.

Reasons for Refusal:

1. The proposed front dormer window, by virtue of the inappropriate design, form and excessive scale and bulk, would result in an incongruous addition that would fail to be subservient to the front roof slope of the dwelling. The proposal would appear intrusive to the detriment of the established form, character and appearance of the original dwelling and the surrounding Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area. Additionally, owing to the excessive scale of the front window proposed to the garage conversion, this would appear as a disproportionate addition which would overly dominate this modest aspect of the frontage of the property. The proposed development would therefore be of a poor standard of design which would lead to substantial harm to the character and appearance of the Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area where the harm is not outweighed by any public benefits. Accordingly, the proposal would be contrary to Policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005, guidance under the Supplementary Design Guidance, Statement of Council Policy 2005 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

2. REFUSED DRAWING NUMBERS: 3771-OS1 & 3771-OS2 & 3771-E01 & 3771-P03 received and dated 11 May 2016.

1. POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT

   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 on the Council's website or inspected at these offices).

Determined By:

Mrs S Smith
22 July 2016