

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL  
ESTATE MANAGEMENT SCHEME PANEL - 30 January 2019  
REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR (PUBLIC PROTECTION, PLANNING  
AND GOVERNANCE)

6/2018/1861/EM

348 HOWLANDS WELWYN GARDEN CITY AL7 4HD

INSTALLATION OF 1 X REAR DORMER TO FACILITATE EXTENSION OF  
EXISTING LOFT

APPLICANT: Mr & Mrs B Walton

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 The appeal is against the refusal of Estate Management (EM) Consent for the Installation of 1 x rear dormer to facilitate extension of existing loft. The application (reference: 6/2018/1861/EM) was refused on the 27 September 2018 for the following reason:

“The rear dormer window would be unacceptable by virtue of its width, scale and siting on the rear roof slope of the dwelling which is overtly visible from an number of properties in the area and from the public footpath to the east. The dormer would result in a visually discordant and incongruous feature that would be detrimental to the appearance of the house and wider area, failing to maintain and enhance the amenities and values of the Garden City in accordance with Policy EM1 of the Estate Management Scheme”.

## **2. Site Description**

- 2.1 The application site is a two storey mid terrace dwelling house, located on the north side of Howlands. The application property is located within a row of 13 terraced houses. The rear of this terrace, and the appeal property itself, is open to public views from a public footpath that runs across the rear of the terrace to the east.

## **3. The Proposal**

- 3.1 The applicant's proposal is to install a rear dormer to facilitate the extension of existing loft. The proposed rear dormer window would measure at

approximately 5.2m in width and be set in 0.74m on the west side and 0.94m on the east side of the party walls of the adjoining properties.

Its height would be at the ridge height of the main roof and not set down.

#### **4. Policy**

##### 4.1. Estate Management Scheme Policies (October 2008)

EM1 – Extensions and Alterations

#### **5. Representations Received**

##### 5.1. No representations have been received.

#### **6. Planning History**

##### 6.1 6/2018/1362/EM- July 2018 consent for the construction of 2 x rear dormer windows to facilitate extension of existing loft conversion.

#### **7. Discussion**

7.1. This is an appeal against the refusal of EM consent. The appellant's letter of appeal is attached at Appendix 1, and the original officer's report for application reference 6/2018/1861/EM, is attached at Appendix 2.

7.2. The key issue in the determination of this appeal is the impact of the proposed rear dormer on the amenities and values of the surrounding area. The impact on the residential amenity of adjoining occupiers is considered acceptable.

7.3. In recognition of the importance of Welwyn Garden City as a unique town and in order to protect the amenities and values of the Garden City, the Estate Management Scheme was set up. The purpose of the Management Scheme and its importance to homeowners is to ensure that homes and street scenes are kept in harmony with the original design and concept of the town.

7.4. Policy EM1 of the Estate Management Scheme (EMS) states that extensions and alterations to existing buildings will only be allowed if they are in keeping with the design, appearance, materials and architectural detailing used in the existing building and do not have a detrimental impact on the amenities and values of the surrounding area.

7.5. The appeal property is located within a terrace of 13 similarly designed properties. None of these properties have rear dormer windows. This property would be the first to have such an alteration in this group of 13.

7.6. Policy EM1 aims for alterations to be in keeping with the existing property and not harm the values and amenities of the area. It is therefore essential that the uniformity in appearance of dwellings is maintained; in particular those features which are visible from the street scene.

7.7. The refusal relates to the unacceptable width, scale and sitting of the proposed elongated dormer on the rear roof. In the Garden City for roof alterations such

as dormer windows, the Council has approved a new policy approach within the EM area which includes that consent will only be granted if the proposed alteration, when viewed from any surrounding public vantage point does not have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the street scene and the wider amenities and values of the area.

- 7.8. The quality of the architecture in this terrace of 13 dwellings has generally been maintained and it is of note that in July 2018, an application, which assessed two individual and smaller dormer windows covering less of the rear roof slope was approved. The approved rear elevation is attached as Appendix 3.
- 7.9. Although not implemented, the consent remains extant. In the officer's report in July 2018 it was stated: *The proposed rear dormers would not be visible from public vantage points. The appearance isn't overbearing to the rear as two smaller dormers are proposed **rather than one large dormer** on a mid-terrace dwelling.* It is clear from this assessment that a larger dormer was not considered appropriate here.
- 7.10. Rather than two individual dormer windows as approved in July 2018, the introduction of a one elongated rear dormer would represent a more dominating form of development to the rear roof slope of this property. The elongated dormer would not read as a subordinate roof form within the rear roof slope of the terrace as a whole. It would be more visible, given its more solid and unbroken form and is considered to be harmful to the amenities and values of the property itself and to the wider surrounding area.
- 7.11. Views of the rear roof slope of the appeal property and its neighbours are readily visible from the public footpath to the east of the site and therefore an elongated dormer across most of the rear of the appeal property would be very apparent causing significant harm to the amenities and values of the area.
- 7.12. A case has been advanced by the appellant in support of their appeal. This includes photographs of 3 examples of a dormer windows. Two in Great Ganett and one in Howlands. The specific numbers of these properties have not been given, but your officers are aware of consent being granted for elongated dormers in Great Ganett within the EM area. However, each case must be considered on its own merits and the examples provided by the appellant are not located within the same group of terraced properties and are not directly comparable situations and so should not hold significant weight in any assessment.
- 7.13. In addition, photographs of the rear of the appeal site are provided by the applicant. The appellant states that "it would be no visual difference in the two separate dormers or one single dormer".
- 7.14. It is considered that one elongated dormer would be more visually intrusive than two separate dormer given its larger size and more solid and bulky form. From this public view point to the rear, the more solid roof form of the elongated dormer on the appeal property and as part of the terrace as a whole would be very apparent and would result in a more dominating form of development.

- 7.15. In addition, the height of the elongated dormer would be at the ridge height of the main roof and not set down. This is an unwelcome design. It is good design practice to set any such roof additions down from the main roof ridge so that the addition can read as a subordinate element on the roof slope.
- 7.16. The appellant comments on this design by saying “We are unable to have a pitched roof or lower the roof line further, as we are already having to lower first floor ceilings inside the property to allow for enough headroom in the loft room. Every millimetre will count. The room will be fairly small inside and the design of a straight across dormer will make such a huge difference to us inside the house, giving us that little bit more space”. However, it is considered that such a dormer is not appropriate and should not be allowed for the sake of internal modifications.
- 7.17. A compelling case has not been made by the appellant to demonstrate why the circumstances advanced by the occupants of this particular property, when considered in its context, should override the wider values and amenities of this part of Howlands and the surrounding streetscene. The fall-back position of two separate dormer windows is considered a more appropriate form of development for this terrace.

## **8. Conclusion**

- 8.1. The rear dormer window would be unacceptable by virtue of its width, scale and siting on the rear roof slope of the dwelling which is overtly visible from a number of properties in the area and from the public footpath to the east. The dormer would result in a visually discordant and incongruous feature that would be detrimental to the appearance of the house and wider area, failing to maintain and enhance the amenities and values of the Garden City in accordance with Policy EM1 of the Estate Management Scheme.

## **9. Recommendation**

- 9.1. That the Members uphold the delegated decision and dismiss the appeal.

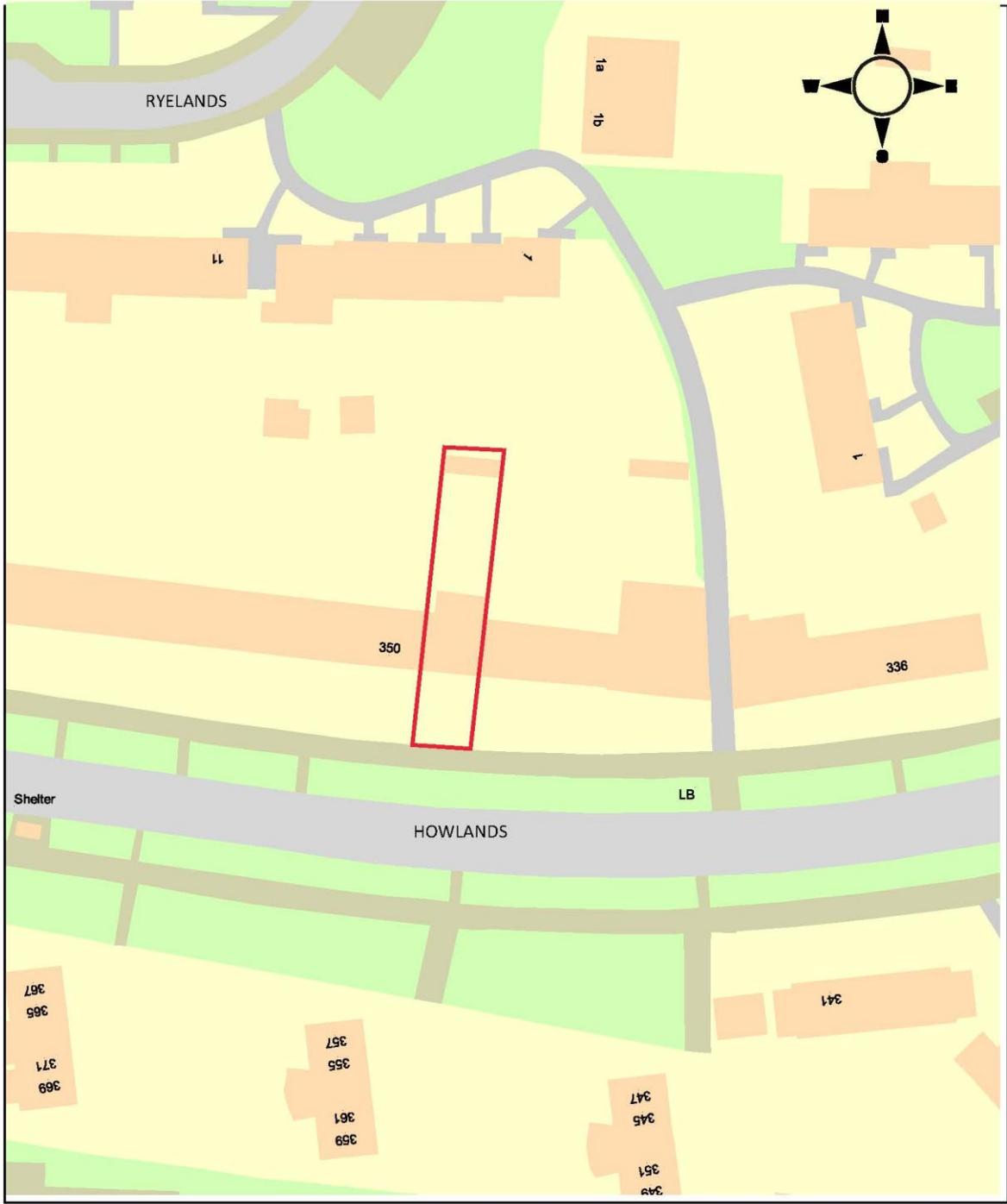
Name of author      *Sarah Madyausiku 01707 357378*  
Title                      *Development Management Officer*  
Date                        *20 December 2018*

### **Background papers:**

Appendix 1: Appellant’s grounds of appeal

Appendix 2: Original delegated officer’s report

Appendix 3: The July 2018 consent for two rear dormers- approved elevation



 <p><b>WELWYN HATFIELD</b></p> <p>Council Offices, The Campus Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 6AE</p>	Title: 348 Howlands Welwyn Garden City		Scale: DNS	
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	Project: EMAP Committee	Drawing Number: 6/2018/1861/EM	Drawn: Ida Moesner	
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