

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
ESTATE MANAGEMENT APPEALS PANEL – 13 JUNE 2019
REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR (PUBLIC PROTECTION, PLANNING
AND GOVERNANCE)

6/2018/1735/EM

95 UPLANDS WELWYN GARDEN CITY AL8 7EH

ERECTION OF FRONT PORCH TO REPLACE EXISTING INCLUDING THE
REPLACEMENT OF THE EXISTING FRONT DOOR

APPLICANT: Mrs C Kiernan

1. Background

- 1.1 The appeal is against the refusal of Estate Management (EM) Consent for the erection of a front porch and replacement of the existing front door. The application (reference: 6/2018/1735/EM) was refused on the 15th November 2018 for the following reason:

“The proposed front porch would not be in keeping with the original planned design of porches along the row of the application site and its immediate context and would be detrimental to the amenities and values of the existing area. Accordingly, the proposal is contrary to Policy EM1 of the Welwyn Garden City Estates Management Scheme.”

2. Site Description

- 2.1. The appeal site is a two storey end terrace dwelling house, located on the northern side of Uplands; close to the junction with Holly Walk. The property is finished with facing brickwork, a pitched pantile roof and white windows and door frames. Estate Management consent has been granted previously for the formation of a driveway.
- 2.2. The dwelling is located in a row of 4 terrace houses. The porches in this row of terraces all feature an open canopy over the front door, of either flat or pitched roof design.
- 2.3. Surrounding properties also follow a comparable design and appearance with similar architectural features, although it is noted that individual rows of terrace properties or semi-detached properties, have some differences, including front porches and projecting garages.

3. The Proposal

- 3.1. The applicant's proposal is for the erection of a front porch to replace the existing canopy, including the replacement of the existing front door.
- 3.2. The proposed front porch would measure approximately 2.1 metres in height, 1.9 metres in width and 1 metre in depth.
- 3.3. The front door would be replaced with a UPVC door of a simple design. The colour of the proposed door has not been specified.
- 3.4. This application sought to overcome the concerns raised from a previous application for a front porch (reference 6/2017/2435/EM). That application was refused on the 29th December 2017, on the basis that it would not be in keeping with the set of terraced properties and consequently would fail to retain the character of the Estate Management Scheme.
- 3.5. The alterations made from that proposal to this proposal include;
 - The width of the porch has increased from 1450mm to 1900mm.
 - The proposed materials have been altered to brickwork to match the existing dwelling.
 - The size of the side window has been reduced.
 - The design of the front door has been changed.

4. Policies

- 4.1. Estate Management Scheme Policies (October 2008)

EM1 – Extensions and Alterations

5. Relevant Estate Management History

- 5.1. 6/2017/2435/EM Erection of front porch – Refused 19 December 2017

“The proposed front porch would not be in keeping with the original planned design of porches along the row of the application site and its immediate context, detrimental to the amenities and values of the existing area. Accordingly, the proposal is contrary to Policy EM1 of the Welwyn Garden City Estates Management Scheme.”

6. Representations Received

- 6.1. 94 Uplands – No objection has been raised.

7. Discussion

- 7.1. This is an appeal against the refusal of Estate Management Consent. The appellant's letter of appeal is attached at Appendix 1. The officer's report for application reference 6/2017/2435/EM is attached at Appendix 2, and the report for application reference 6/2018/1735/EM, is attached at Appendix 3. Photographs submitted by the appellant are attached at Appendix 4.
- 7.2. The key issue in the determination of this appeal is the impact of the proposed porch on the values and amenities of the surrounding area. The impact on the residential amenity of adjoining occupiers is considered to be 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 a two storey, end terrace dwelling located within a terrace of 4 similarly designed properties. The property, along with the three other terrace dwellings it adjoins, were designed with distinctive architectural features (such as fenestrations, chimneys and flat roofed open canopies over the front door). Some of these original features have slowly been eroded as the two mid terrace properties have introduced replacement canopies with pitched roofs. Historic records indicate that these works do not have consent under the Estate Management Scheme. The introduction of pitched roof canopies present some harm to the terrace and immediate area, but it is considered that the original Welwyn Garden City design and character has been sufficiently maintained.
- 7.6. Whilst this row of terrace properties are similar to other properties in the immediate locality, each row of terraces or pair of semi-detached properties have distinct architectural features which are not always replicated in other rows. The original features of some of the existing dwellings include projecting single storey garages and porch elements, but each row or pair must be assessed independently of one another.
- 7.7. Policy EM1 aims for alterations to be in keeping with the existing property and to not harm the values and amenities of the area. It is therefore important that the uniformity in appearance of dwellings is maintained; in particular those features which are visible from the street scene. This part of Uplands contains buildings whose architectural features contribute positively to the streetscene. As described above, there is a strong uniformity of appearance of properties in this part of Uplands and this positively enhances the character and appearance of the surrounding area and Welwyn Garden City in general.
- 7.8. The existing appeal property does not have a front porch and features the original flat roof canopy over the front door, supported by posts, maintaining the original architectural features. This design is replicated at No.101 Uplands, which forms the alternate end of the terrace.
- 7.9. In contrast, the proposed front porch would be brick built and enclosed, extending across a sizeable proportion of the front of the dwelling and projecting beyond the existing front elevation. The porch, because of its solid, closed design, would not reflect the prevailing style of open canopies in the area. It would appear as a large and bulky addition which be at odds with the architectural appearance of the property and the area. Accordingly it is

considered that it introduces a discordant and incongruous addition that detracts from the character and appearance of the host dwelling, the rest of the terrace it is located in, and the wider streetscene.

7.10. A case has been advanced by the appellant in support of their appeal. This includes;

1. Following the first refusal, the porch was redesigned to a brick structure with small side windows and a front door in keeping with the Garden City design principles.
2. Historically, porches have been permitted across the Monkswood and Uplands Estate (as evidenced in photographs included in both the appeal and the applications).
3. Examples of applications which have been granted consent during the period of time between the two applications, as well as a side extension which was granted in February 2018 opposite the application site.

7.11. With regard to point 1, the original application proposed an enclosed front porch, to be finished with white UPVC cladding. It was refused on the grounds that the porch would not be in keeping with the original planned design of porches along the row of the application site and its immediate context. Comparatively, the revised porch would be the same height and depth, however the width would be increased from 1450mm to 1900mm. It would be finished with brickwork to match the dwelling and UPVC doors and windows. Extensions to dwellings in the Estate Management Scheme require materials to match the existing property, and this aspect is looked upon favourably. Nonetheless, this benefit does not outweigh the previous reason for refusal that the principle of an enclosed front porch was considered to be unacceptable.

7.12. No concerns are raised with regard to the front door. The colour of the proposed door was not included as part of the application, but in the event of the appeal being allowed, a suitable condition could be imposed to ensure that it is white.

7.13. With regard to point 2, photographs have been provided by the appellant to demonstrate examples of approved extensions in the area. These are attached at Appendix 4. Firstly, the appellant refers to a front porch at 47 Uplands. It is acknowledged that while this porch was approved under the scheme in 1997 (reference W6/1997/5111/EM), the addition has removed an original feature which has diluted the character of the terrace and immediate area. The presence of this porch is not considered to be a reason to justify a significant alteration to the porch canopy at the application site, which would further dilute the original Welwyn Garden City design and character. It is also worth noting that the application at No.47 pre-dated the Estate Management policies which were introduced in 2008, with the aim of simplifying the scheme by creating a set of policies to guide decision making.

7.14. In addition, a photograph of a single storey front extension on Uplands has been submitted. The photograph does not indicate the house number and therefore the location is unknown. Examples including a single storey side extension at 96 Uplands, and a garage conversion on Knightsfield have also been highlighted. These developments were not for the erection of a front porch, providing limited weight in favour of the proposal.

7.15. Point 3 refers to examples of applications which have been granted consent during the period of time between the first and the second Estate Management application. The examples referred to primarily involve works to the rear of the dwellings, which do not impact the front elevation directly. Limited weight can therefore be given when drawing a comparison between the schemes.

7.16. Overall, it is considered that 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 Uplands and the surrounding streetscene.

8. Conclusion

8.1. The proposal would fail to enhance the appearance of the existing property given its enclosed design, which would appear out of keeping with the host dwelling and the surrounding terrace of properties. It would form an overly dominant form to the front of the dwelling which is unacceptable and detrimental to the values and amenities of the appeal property, the row of terraces and the surrounding streetscape. Accordingly, the proposal would be contrary to Policy EM1 of the Estate Management Scheme.

9. Recommendation

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

Author Emily Stainer
Title Development Management Officer
Date 16 May 2019

Background papers:

Appendix 1: Appellant's grounds of appeal

Appendix 2: Original delegated officer's report

Appendix 3: Delegated officer's report for the application subject to this appeal

Appendix 4: Appellant's photographs