

Part I

Report author: Louise Sahlke

Executive Member: Stephen Boulton

Wards: Hollybush

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
ESTATE MANAGEMENT APPEALS PANEL – 14 AUGUST 2019
REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR (PUBLIC PROTECTION, PLANNING
AND GOVERNANCE)

6/2018/3109/EM

13 THE CROFT, WELWYN GARDEN CITY, AL7 4JY

REPLACEMENT OF FRONT DOOR (RETROSPECTIVE)

APPLICANT: Ms S Sirviene

(Hollybush)

1. Background

- 1.1. This is an appeal against the refusal of Estate Management Consent for the retention of a replacement front door. The application was refused on the 7 February 2019 for the following reason:

“The retrospective front door, by virtue of its uncharacteristic colour, and modern design would constitute a change that would be significantly out of character with the area to the detriment of the character and appearance of the property and the immediate street scene. Accordingly the proposal would fail to maintain the values and amenities of the Estate Management Scheme and is contrary to Policy EM1 of the Estate Management Scheme.”

2. Site Description

- 2.1. The site contains a two storey, mid-terraced dwelling with a pitched roof and forms part of a row of three terrace properties. The dwelling is located on the south side of The Croft. The dwellings along The Croft are generally consistent in character, appearance and design. The property features a flat roof front canopy with white narrow pillars.
- 2.2. The previous front door was white and was designed with a rectangular glazed top panel and solid rectangular lower panel. Either side of the front door were two glazed panels which replicated the design of the front door.

3. The Proposal

- 3.1. The proposal seeks the retention of the existing front door with a modern style door. The proposed door is a composite, timber effect door with a narrow glazed panel positioned in the middle. The front door is set within two glazed panels either side of the front door which replicate the design of the front door.

The door and panels are finished in brown. The existing porch has been retained.

4. Relevant Estate Management History

4.1. None

5. Policy

5.1. Estate Management Scheme Policies (October 2008)

EM1 – Extensions and Alterations

6. Representations Received

6.1. No representations have been received.

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, and the original officer's report for application referenced 6/2018/1309/EM, is attached at Appendix 2.

7.2. The key issue in the determination of this appeal is the impact of the retrospective front door 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 applies and refers to extensions and alterations and seeks to preserve the unique architectural heritage of the town and its buildings. It states that extensions and alterations to existing properties 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 includes 1950's characteristics of a typical Welwyn Garden City dwelling, in terms of materials, glazing design as well as distinct architectural features including the front porch. The front porches along The Croft, which include largely flat roofs, form part of the uniformity of these properties and therefore are a prominent feature that contributes positively to the character and appearance of part of this streetscene. These front porches include white narrow pillars.

7.6. The design and style of front doors vary in The Croft, although a large number of front doors include a top glazed rectangular panel and solid rectangular lower panel. These styles convey a traditional, simplistic style which

complement and relate to the character and architectural detailing of the properties and street scene.

- 7.7. The previous front door was considered to be in keeping with the street scene given it was white in colour and its design conveyed a neutral, traditional and simplistic design, reflecting the style and appearance of other doors. This therefore contributed positively to the values and amenities of the property and the area.
- 7.8. The proposed front door represents a contemporary and modern design by virtue of its narrow glazed panel positioned in the middle and the long vertical handle to the left hand side. The two glass panels either side of the front door are acceptable in principal, however the introduction of a brown frame, is not in keeping with the overall appearance of existing doors and frames within The Croft.
- 7.9. Additionally, the proposed door would be finished in brown which is a departure from the predominant white door colour within The Croft and wider Garden City.
- 7.10. Accordingly, the combination of the uncharacteristic colour and modern design results in an incongruous addition to the property and street scene which is significantly out of character with the area to the detriment of the character and appearance of the property and the immediate street scene. The proposal therefore fails to maintain the values and amenities of the Estate Management Scheme and is contrary to Policy EM1 of the Estate Management Scheme.
- 7.11. A case has been advanced by the appellant in support of the appeal. The appellant outlines that at the time of the installation of the front door, they were aware of the Estate Management Scheme but did not know that they needed consent for door replacement. They had checked the Council's website and considered that they did not require consent. The following section is quoted:
- Some works do not need consent:*
- *replacement windows and doors of a different or the same materials which match the original design within the building (in terms of size and position of glazing bars, mullions, frames, transoms, sight lines etc.)*
- 7.12. Whilst it is unfortunate that the appellant did not contact the planning department prior to installation of the door to confirm if consent was required, nevertheless, the works proposed do not match the doors within the existing building. Accordingly no weight is given in favour of this.
- 7.13. The appellant outlines within this section that there is 'no mention of colour'. However, this is not the case as the above statement outlines what does not need consent. Colour is not listed and accordingly this means that a change in colour would require consent.
- 7.14. The appellant outlines that the '*Council's website also gives no explanation of what glazing bars, mullions, frames, transoms are and we would guess most*

applicants would not know'. It is considered that it is the responsibility of the appellant to undertake their own research, obtain the services of a Planning Agent or either informal or informal advice could have been undertaken with the Local Planning Authority should they have technical questions which may affect works to their property. These points have no weight in favour of the proposal.

7.15. The appellant outlines that they are surprised that officers are referring to the colour of the door as brown. However this is the colour of the door in situ and therefore a fact of the Estate Management submission.

7.16. The appellant further outlines that they did not receive a quick and clear response to emails following the refusal of the application. The appellant wrote to the case officer concerning other doors within the locality of the site that are not the same design and colour. The case officer has subsequently provided written communication to the appellant numerous times outlining their next available steps, including evidence of other doors similar to that refused. Through the submission of this appeal, the appellant highlights that in other locations of the Garden City "*many doors have also ready been replaced and that the precedent has been set*". The appellant continues to outline that none of these doors have Estate Management consent for front door replacement. This statement is supported by a number of photographs. No addresses are however provided with these examples. The assessment of this application was based on the immediate area where every application is considered on its own merits. In this instance, The Croft consists of traditional, white doors, which the proposed scheme does not respect or reflect.

7.17. The appellant further outlines that they have been '*unable to ascertain specifically why the proposed door was refused*'. However the officer's delegated report, available on the Council's website, explains the concerns of officers and outlines that it is the proposed uncharacteristic colour and modern design which constitutes a change that would be significantly out of character with the area to the detriment of the character and appearance of the property and the immediate street scene. Accordingly these points also have no weight in favour of the proposal.

7.18. The appellant outlined that the Estate Management Scheme stipulates that "*as a homeowner the stipulations are that we keep and maintain walls, roofs, doors, windows, fences, hedges and drains in good repair and condition. We believe the replacement of the current door, as it requires replacing, with the proposed door, we are indeed exercising this responsibility accordingly*".

7.19. Whilst it is agreed that there is a responsibility to ensure properties are maintained and visually aesthetic, like for like replacements and repairs are not subject to Estate Management approval, which allows home owners to carry out this work as and when required. The appellant has not presented a case addressing why a similar design to that existing, which is more in keeping with the streetscene, could not be installed at the host property.

7.20. Officers consider that a compelling case has not been made by the appellant to demonstrate why the circumstances advanced by the appellants of this particular property, when considered in its context, should override the wider values and amenities of The Croft. Accordingly, the proposal fails to reflect the character and appearance of the appeal property, the row terrace properties to which it is located and the streetscene of The Croft. The proposed development therefore fails to maintain the amenities and values of the Estate Management Area.

8. Conclusion

8.1. The proposed front door, by virtue of its uncharacteristic colour, and modern design would constitute a change that would be significantly out of character with the area to the detriment of the character and appearance of the property and the immediate street scene. No additional evidence or information has been put forward by the appellant which adds to or would alter officer's recommendation. Therefore the uncharacteristic colour and modern design of the door would cause harm to the values and amenities of the area and the proposal fails to accord with Policy EM1 of the Welwyn Garden City Estate Management Scheme.

9. Recommendation

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

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Date *18 July 2019, revised 22 July 2019*

Background papers:

Appendix 1: Appellants grounds of appeal

Appendix 2: Original delegated officer's report



 <p>WELWYN HATFIELD</p> <p>Council Offices, The Campus Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL9 6AE</p>	Title: 13 The Croft, Welwyn Garden City		Scale: DNS
			Date: 2019
	Project: EMAP Committee	Drawing Number: 6/2018/3109/EM	Drawn: Emma Small
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