

**WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
DIRECTORATE OF STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT**

DELEGATED APPLICATION

Application No: 6/2016/0032/EM
Location: 39 Marsden Green, Welwyn Garden City, AL8 6YD
Proposal: Installation of picket fence at side and front of boundary
Officer: Ms L Hale

Recommendation: Refused

6/2016/0032/EM

Context			
Site and Application description	<p>The application site is located north of Marsden Green and comprises a two storey mid terraced residential dwelling. The street scene is residential in character and contains semi-detached and terraced dwellings. The area is characterised by spacious plots and mature soft landscaping.</p> <p>The applicant proposes a picket fence along the side and front of the boundary shared with No.41 Marsden Green. The fence would have a height of 91.5 cm.</p>		
Constraints	Estate Management Scheme, as defined within the Leasehold Reform Act 1967		
Relevant history	None		
Consultations			
Neighbour representations	Support: 0	Object: 0	Other: 0
Summary of neighbour responses	N/A		
Consultee responses	<p>1. Councillor Malcolm Cowan – an objection was received on 12th April which states: <i>'I can see no justification for allowing a picket fence here. The road is characterised by front hedges which provide harmony and consistency. I believe this is still a Garden City and I cannot see any other fences nearby'</i>.</p> <p>2. Councillor Helen Bromley – an objection was received on 4th April which states: <i>'It would be a shame for this not to match the neighbours, as it does now. Even better if that were to reinstate a hedge. I would not like this to be approved if not done with the attached property'</i>.</p> <p>3. Councillor Graham Dowler – no response</p> <p>4. Councillor Fiona Thomson – no response</p>		
Consultee representations	Two objections have been raised.		
Relevant Policies			

EM1 EM2 EM3
Others

Considerations

Design (form, size, scale, siting) and Character (impact upon amenities and values of Garden City)

Policy EM2 of the Estate Management Scheme outlines that proposals of new buildings will only be permitted where they do not have a detrimental impact on the amenities and values of the surrounding area and the residential amenity of adjoining occupiers. Whilst Policy EM2 applies to new buildings, it is considered that this is the most appropriate policy to assess the proposal against. This policy expects that new buildings should respect the visual appearance of the area in terms of its siting, scale and not result in a visually over prominent or discordant element. The policy expects that the erection of new buildings will only be permitted where they do not have a detrimental impact on the amenities and values of the surrounding area and the residential amenity of adjoining occupiers.

In addition, policy EM3 applies which aims to ensure that trees and hedgerows will only be allowed where the works would not result in the loss of landscaping which would harm the character and amenities of the area and where sufficient justification for the works has been given or there are other considerations that apply.

The proposed development would be along the front boundary line of the site at a length of 5 metres, and alongside the boundary line with No.41 Marsden Green, and would be 8 metres in length. The fence was originally erected, but taken down and new bushes have been replanted in its place. There is currently no evidence of hedge at either No.39 or No.41. The applicant requires the fence to make the front of the property easier to maintain and to keep a neat appearance of the garden.

The proposed fence would be visible when travelling from Marsden Green to Springfield and would introduce an alien feature that would contrast with the soft landscaping along this boundary detracting from the values and amenities of the garden city. It would be contrary to the original design principles of the garden city and would harm the visual interest of these sites and the surrounding area. Accordingly the proposal would have a detrimental impact on the amenities and values of the Garden City contrary to Policy EM2.

The applicant has noted that other properties within close proximity have fences to the front of their boundary along the side and along the front, however after a Site Visit; there are no other front boundary fences in Marsden Green. After a look at the estate management history there seems to be little evidence of front boundary fences, so it would appear that the properties the applicant refers to would appear to not have the appropriate consent and therefore limited weight can be attached to this.

In summary, the proposed development fails to maintain and enhance the amenities and values of the Garden City. If consent is given for such a fence, then slowly the characteristic of soft landscaping particularly in the form hedging of the garden city would be eroded. It is considered that the reinstatement of a front hedge at the front boundary of No.39 Marsden Green would enhance the character and amenities of the area.

Impact on neighbours

The proposed front and side boundary fence is considered of a depth and height that would not result in any amenity implications in the form of overbearing, loss of light or outlook.

In summary, the extension would have an acceptable relationship with the adjoining and surrounding residential properties in respect of its impact on the amenity of adjoining occupiers and complies with Policy EM2 of the Estate Management Scheme.

Conclusion

It is considered that the proposal, by virtue of the scale, siting and design, would be to the detriment of the amenity and values of this part of the Garden City in accordance with Policy EM2 and EM3.

Reasons for Refusal:

1. The proposed boundary fencing to the front would result in a loss of soft landscaping and would form a prominent addition that would adversely affect the character and appearance of the property and streetscene, detrimental to the amenities and values of this part of the Garden City and contrary to Policies EM2 and EM3 of the Estate Management Scheme.
2. REFUSED DRAWING NUMBERS: Site Location Plan & Block Plan received and dated 7th January 2016 and Proposed Fence Positioning Plan & Fence Posts received and dated 7th March 2016.

Informatives:

Determined By:

Mrs S Smith
29 April 2016