

**WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - PLANNING, PUBLIC PROTECTION AND GOVERNANCE**

DELEGATED APPLICATION

Application No: 6/2017/0141/EM
Location: 3 Digswell House Mews Monks Rise Welwyn Garden City AL8 7AT
Proposal: Retention of internal alterations and rooflight
Officer: Ms R Collard

Recommendation: Refused

6/2017/0141/EM

Context			
Site and Application description	<p>The application site is two storey mid-terraced property located within a cluster of properties within Digswell House Mews. The property is located to the north of the town centre.</p> <p>The application seeks consent for the retention of a roof light on the front of the property.</p>		
Constraints	Estate Management Scheme, as defined within the Leasehold Reform Act 1967		
Relevant history	None		
Consultations			
Neighbour representations	Support:	Object: 4	Other:
Summary of neighbour responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We wish to object to the velux window that has been installed in the roof of No 3 Digswell House Mews, part of the retrospective planning application. It has been poorly executed and interrupts the natural flow of the roof, ruining the character of the row of cottages, integral to Digswell House Mews. We would prefer the window to go on the back of the house where other veluxes already exist. This property is mid terrace in a row of cottages with an old clay tile roof. This poorly constructed roof light ruins the flow of the line of the roof. The house already has 2 such roof lights to the rear. The mews does not have any such lights facing into the communal areas. All 4 houses and the 2 houses facing were styled with cottage gardens. No3 now has a totally paved over garden. This has been done with modern type paving unlike and not in keeping with and lacking the charm of the other gardens. The effect on my property, in particular the stress and splitting of my loft and party wall beams is of great concern. Discussion with me regarding this further work to the loft space has never been offered. This damage has become apparent since the work commenced on the adjoining property. I am concerned that this may result in a weakness in the structure of my property. We object to this development, most particularly the roof window. 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • we don't agree with retrospective planning permission in principle - it gets abused far too often and it's easy enough to find out the rules in advance. we were told this was a permitted development, it appears this isn't the case • these are old style cottages so the window doesn't look right so we object to this element of the build strongly. I understand there's windows at the back so maybe that's where it can go maintaining the clean lines at the front of the house. • it has been mentioned that this property might be rented so if this increases the occupation capacity of the house this increases pressure on already burdened parking and waste collection • even if it isn't to be rented the increase in occupation capacity raises concerns on the above services
Consultee responses	No comments have been received from Councillors
Relevant Policies	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EM1 <input type="checkbox"/> EM2 <input type="checkbox"/> EM3 Others	
Considerations	
Design (form, size, scale, siting) and Character (impact upon amenities and values of Garden City)	<p>Policy EM1 of the Estate Management Scheme is relevant and concerns extensions and alterations. It seeks to preserve the unique architectural heritage of the town and its buildings and only allows extensions and alterations 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 or the residential amenity of adjoining occupiers.</p> <p>In order to be able to respond to the large amount of requests for roof alterations and energy efficiency measures such as Solar PV panels, following public consultation the council has approved a new Policy approach within the Welwyn Garden Estate Management Scheme Areas to deal with roof alterations and this is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estate Management Consent will only be granted for energy efficiency measures and other roof alterations where they are sited on the rear or side roof slope and are sited to minimise the effect on the external appearance of the building. • Estate Management 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. • Exceptions to this Policy approach will apply where, in the judgement of the case officer the architectural design and style of an individual property or the wider character of the area means that an alteration on a principal roof slope of a property would not have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the street scene and wider amenities and values of the area. • In all cases the decision maker will continue to weigh the environmental benefits for energy efficiency measures against the visual impact. <p>The roof light would be seen to the front elevation of the building and would be clearly visible from within the courtyard area of Digswell House Mews and</p>

	<p>clear views would be gained from the public realm within Fern Grove. It is noted that the existing dwelling benefits from two rear facing roof lights and No.4 benefits from a multitude of roof lights facing onto Fern Grove together with roof lights seen to No's 7 & 8 Digswell House Mews. It would appear that no estate management applications have been received in relation to the existing roof lights seen to various properties.</p> <p>A number of objections have been received in relation to the estate management application. Neighbours consider the proposed roof light has been poorly executed and interrupts the roof line of the terraced row of cottages. In this instance it is considered that the roof light would disrupt the roof line of this terraced row of properties and as such would be out of keeping with the design, appearance, materials and architectural detailing used in the existing buildings. Furthermore it is readily visible from the wider public realm, although there are already a number of roof lights seen to various properties which are clearly visible from Fern Grove, as no approval appears to have been granted it is not considered that this sets a precedent for the area. Therefore it is considered that the roof light has a detrimental impact on the amenity and values of the Estate Management area contrary to Policy EM1.</p>
Impact on neighbours	<p>In relation to the impact on the residential amenity of adjoining occupiers the impact is measured in terms of neighbouring properties access to day/sun/sky light, overshadowing, loss of privacy/overlooking and impact on outlook.</p> <p>Giving the design of the proposal it is considered that the proposal would not be detrimental to the residential amenity of adjoining occupiers sufficient enough to warrant refusal.</p>
Landscaping issues (incl. hardstandings)	<p>Concerns have been raised regarding the alterations that have been made to the front garden. No details have been provided and therefore have not been considered as part of this application. However it is considered that Estate Management consent is required for alterations to the front garden of the property.</p>
Any other considerations	<p>A number of objections have been received in relation to the estate management application. Neighbours consider the proposed roof light has been poorly executed and interrupts the roof line of the terraced row of cottages.</p> <p>Concerns have been raised regarding the construction quality of the development and the impact on neighbouring properties. This is not a consideration as part of the estate management scheme and would be a civil matter between neighbours. Additionally the increase in capacity at the dwelling is not a consideration under the Estate Management Scheme.</p>
Conclusion	
<p>It is considered that the proposed roof light, by reason of its siting, form and design would form an incongruous alteration that, when viewed from the surrounding public vantage point would have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the street scene and the wider amenities and values of the area.</p>	

Reasons for Refusal:

1. The siting and appearance of the roof light has an adverse and uncharacteristic affect on the front roof slope of the property that disrupts the roof line of the terraced row which is otherwise intact. Given the visibility of the roof slope in the wider area it is detrimental to the character and appearance of the application property and the wider street scene. The works fail to maintain or enhance the values and amenities of Welwyn Garden City contrary to Policy EM1 of the Estate Management Scheme.

REFUSED DRAWING NUMBERS

2.

Plan Number	Revision Number	Details	Received Date
DHM:02		Existing and Proposed Floor Plans	25 January 2017
I		Location Plan	25 January 2017
DHM:03		Elevations	25 January 2017
II		Block Plan	25 January 2017

Determined By:

Mr M Robinson
20 March 2017