

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
ESTATE MANAGEMENT APPEAL PANEL – 14 MARCH 2016
REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING

6/2015/2051/EM

27 ARCHERS RIDE, WELWYN GARDEN CITY, AL7 4PR

REPOSITIONING OF HEDGE AT FRONT BOUNDARY

APPLICANT: Mr & Mrs Radford

(Howlands)

1 Background

- 1.1 This is an appeal against the refusal of Estate Management Consent for the repositioning of a hedge at the front boundary. The application (6/2015/2051/EM) was refused for the following reason:

'The proposal, by reason of the loss of a mature hedgerow to the front site boundary and repositioning to the side boundary, fails to reflect the appearance and design of landscaped frontages within the immediate streetscene, and detracts from the character and appearance of the property, streetscene and local area. The proposal therefore does not comply with policy EM3 of the Estate Management Scheme.'

2 Site Description

- 2.1 The application site is located to the north of Archer's Ride and comprises of a two storey mid terrace dwelling. The front is set back from the highway and includes hardstanding and boundary treatment hedgerow to the front and a timber fence to the side along the shared boundary line with no. 25 Archers Ride. The immediate streetscene is residential in character with properties similar in size and design to the host property. The host dwelling is finished in a white painted render, pitched roof and concrete tiles.

3 The Proposal

- 3.1 The original application sought Estate Management consent for the repositioning of a hedge to the front boundary.

4 Estate Management History

- 4.1 W6/2004/1645/EM – Formation of Vehicle Hard standing – Granted 3rd February 2002

5 Policy

5.1 Estate Management Scheme Policies (October 2008):

EM3 – Soft Landscaping

7 Discussion

- 7.1 This is an appeal against the refusal for Estate Management Consent. The appellant's letter of appeal is attached at Appendix 1 and the delegated officer's report for application W6/2015/2051/EM, is attached at Appendix 2.
- 7.2 The key issue in the determination of this appeal is the impact on the amenities and values of the surrounding area. The impact on the residential amenity of adjoining occupiers is judged to be acceptable.
- 7.3 The appeal property is a two storey mid- terrace property. The terraced row has a consistent appearance.
- 7.4 Policy EM3 of the Estate Management Scheme (EMS) refers to soft landscaping and states that the removal of excessive areas or prominent landscaping such as trees and hedges can over time erode character of an area. Accordingly, the Council will only allow hard surfacing (paths, paving, concrete, gravelled areas, drives and hard standings) in front gardens for the parking of private motor vehicles which retain or create sufficient soft 'green' landscaping (grass, flower beds, shrubs, trees and hedges) and a sufficient length of hedgerow (if applicable) along the frontage of the property to reduce the visual prominence of parked vehicles. The Council will aim to ensure that a significant proportion, around 50% of the frontage is retained as landscaped 'greenery' to retain the appearance and ethos of the garden city unless individual circumstances indicate that this would not be appropriate.
- 7.5 It is noted that the host dwelling already benefits from a hard standing that exceeds the standards within Policy EM3 – although this has Estate Management consent. Currently a section of hedgerow has been maintained and softens the impact of the hard surfacing within the context of the street scene.
- 7.6 The appellant's statement has highlighted a number of reasons for the removal of the hedge to the front boundary. Parked vehicles obscure the view of the road and oncoming traffic for the occupiers. There is limited vision of pedestrian traffic when accessing and egressing. The hedge height and length means there is no view of the road and pavement when reversing. Therefore they reverse in for safety. The applicants have concerns due to the road being used as a main route for children and pedestrians. CCTV footage has been submitted demonstrating a scenario experienced due to inadequate visibility for pedestrians and road users.

- 7.7 It is noted that No.25 Archers Ride has a similar hedge to the front boundary, the removal of the hedgerow would result in a large area of hard landscaping being seen within the street scene.
- 7.8 The appellant's appeal statement makes reference to No's 29 Archers Ride and the removal of the hedge, whilst Estate Management consent for a hard standing and crossover was approved under (W6/1990/5206/EM), a hedge was still shown to be retained on the approved drawings. Therefore this property cannot form a precedent as the hedge was removed without permission.
- 7.9 It is noted that the key, primary concern in this instance is the prominent setting, the proposed loss of the hedgerow and its repositioning to the side boundary would have an adverse impact on the visual amenities of the area. Within the street hedgerows along the frontages of properties are noticed, there are a few instances where these have been removed as noted above. Whilst the applicant is willing to re-instate a hedge along the side boundary, it is considered that the whole frontage of the host dwelling together with the neighbouring property would be seen and would represent a large area of hard surfacing that would not be broken up by any soft landscaping. Hedges to front boundaries are a key feature seen within the Garden City and the harsh, hard surface to the front would result in an incongruous feature which currently is softened by the existing hedgerow. The proposal does have a detrimental impact on the character of the immediate street scene to the extent to warrant a refusal. It is therefore considered that the proposal would fail to maintain and enhance the amenities and values of the Garden City.
- 7.10 Additionally the frontages of dwellings within the immediate street scene (block of three terraced dwellings) are characterised by boundary treatment hedgerows to the front and timber fencing to the sides. In this context the proposed alterations would appear to alter the established character of the area and would not sufficiently retain the distinctive frontages of Archers Ride. It is therefore not considered to be in keeping with the appearance and ethos of this part of the garden city.

8 Conclusion

- 8.1 The removal of the front boundary hedge and re-location to the side would not reflect the appearance and design of landscaped frontages within the immediate area and detracts from the character and appearance the property, street scene and local area. It therefore fails to comply with the EM3.

9 Recommendation

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


Rachael Collard (Strategy and Development)
Date 15 February 2016

Background Information

Appendix 1: Appellants grounds of appeal

Appendix 2: Original delegated officer's report



 Council Offices, The Campus, Welwyn Garden City, Herts. AL8 6AE	Title: 27 Archers Ride, Welwyn Garden City	Scale: DNS
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