

OFFICER REPORT

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| Application Number: S6/2005/1272/FP |
| Location: 10 Thistle Drive, Hatfield |
| Proposal: Change of use of amenity land to residential and erection of replacement fence |
| Planning Officer: Eloise Kiernan |

THE SITE

The application site is located on the eastern side of Thistle Drive, which is a recent residential development built on land to the north of Manor Road and west of Hatfield Garden Village. Thistle Drive is surrounded by similarly recently constructed terraced, detached and semi-detached dwellings permitted as part of schemes for wider residential development.

The property in question is an end-of terraced red brick with brown tiled roof located on a rectangular shaped plot with parking to the front of the site. There is an existing close-boarded timber fence marking the site boundary along the western elevation.

THE PROPOSAL

The application seeks permission for relocation of a replacement close-boarded timber fence of 1.85 metres in height to enclose a strip of land, which is currently open. The existing fence is currently set back 1.4 and the proposal intends to move the fence to within 0.3 metres of the road edge.

PLANNING HISTORY

S6/2005/1338/FP – Erection of a rear conservatory – Granted

Permitted Development rights for Classes A, B, C, D, F, S2 and P2 have been removed.

There is no other relevant planning history to date.

SUMMARY OF RELEVANT DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005

D1 Quality of Design
D2 Character and Context
D3 Continuity and Enclosure

Supplementary Planning Guidance – Hatfield Aerodrome (Adopted November 1999)

REPRESENTATIONS

The application has been publicised by way of five neighbour notifications to 5, 7, 8, 12 and 16 Thistle Road. No representations have been received.

Hatfield Town Council objects to the proposal and expressed concern that vehicles would have restricted vision due to the relocation of the fence.

Hertfordshire Highways – (reported verbally) have recommended that the application be refused due to highway visibility, however the road is a private road therefore, does not fall under their jurisdiction.

DISCUSSION

Policies D1 (Quality of Design), D2 (Character and Context) and D3 (Continuity and Enclosure) of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 relate specifically to any new development. In addition, the Supplementary Planning Guidance for the Hatfield Aerodrome relates specifically to the development at this locality. Essentially there are two main issues in determination of the relocation of the fence. Firstly, it should not have a detrimental effect in terms of visual amenity and secondly, it should not pose a threat to highway safety. The relevant policies of the District Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance will be used to assess its visual impact.

Policy D1 (Quality of Design) requires that the standard of design for all new development be of a high quality. The proposed fence is a close-boarded timber type of approximately 1.85 metres in height. This is considered to be of an acceptable design as it is similar to the existing design, therefore it would improve and enhance the quality of the existing environment and be appropriate to the setting. The colour, type and height would be similar to the existing fence and those within close vicinity of the site.

Policy D2 (Character and Context) requires that all new development respects and relates to the character and context of the area in which it is proposed. The proposed relocation of the fencing would not contribute to the existing street layout and pattern and form of building and use of space as it would result in the loss of open space – landscape strips, which were part of the original planned development.

Policy D3 (Continuity and Enclosure) requires that all new development incorporate the principles of continuity and enclosure to distinguish between public and private spaces. The fence would clearly identify the enclosed private space of the dwelling, however the relocation of the fence to 0.3 metres from the boundary would not relate to the line of buildings within the street or provide an active and continuous street frontage as a large proportion of landscaping, which was accounted for within the original urban design of the Hatfield Aerodrome site would be lost.

The urban design based objectives for the Hatfield Aerodrome site included those to “promote a development that is ‘people friendly’, create a built form that utilises buildings, trees, hedgerows and walls to enclose identifiable spaces of a human scale and local character and to achieve a consistently high standard of layout and design”.

In paragraph 13.20 of the Supplementary Planning Guidance it was stated that the arrangement of buildings and enclosures should be considered first, followed by highway

engineering requirements. Consideration was also given to create high quality streets and squares. Consequently the overall objective was for the creation of a network of spaces rather than a hierarchy of roads; a layout of development in which roads play their part but are not dominant. The objectives were met by the introduction of regular open spaces and numerous landscaping strips to maintain an attractive green environment. Therefore, it is essential that road verges and attractive landscaping are maintained to enhance and contribute to the sense of space. The proposal at 10 Thistle Drive would involve the loss of an important feature of the original design of the Hatfield Aerodrome site, and as such would conflict with the purposes stated within the Supplementary Planning Guidance.

With regard to highway safety, Hertfordshire Highways were consulted on the application and have raised concerns in regards to highways visibility. However, as the development is not an adopted road, these are not sufficient grounds to warrant a refusal.

The replacement fence appears to be acceptable and inkeeping in relation to design principles, however the relocation of the fence is unacceptable and considered to be detrimental to the visual appearance of this locality, therefore it fails to comply with the relevant policies of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and Hatfield Aerodrome Supplementary Planning Guidance

RECOMMENDATION

That application reference S6/2005/1272/FP is refused.

REASONS FOR REFUSAL

- 1 The relocation of the fence would result in the loss of a feature of the original Hatfield Aerodrome site development, namely a landscape strip, which is an important feature in enhancing and maintaining the visual amenity and creation of space within the development, and as such, is contrary to policies D2 and D3 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and Hatfield Aerodrome Supplementary Design Guidance 1999.

INFORMATIVE

Although the road is currently not adopted, you are advised that the proposed relocation of the fence is considered to restrict vehicle visibility and consequently would be detrimental to highway safety.

DRAWINGS

Site location plan
Elevation of fence
Photographic illustrations

Plans were received and stamped on 10 October 2005.