

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL
PLANNING CONTROL BOARD
17th JANUARY 2002
REPORT OF THE CHIEF PLANNING OFFICER

PCB 17.01.02
PART 1
ITEM NO
FOR DECISION
CPO

N6/2001/668/FP & W/2001/1105/EM
TWO STOREY SIDE EXTENSION, EXTENSION OF FIRST FLOOR AND RAISING OF
ROOF INCORPORATING DORMER WINDOWS TO CREATE ADDITIONAL
HABITABLE ACCOMMODATION AT 13 SHERRARDSPARK ROAD, WELWYN
GARDEN CITY.

APPLICANT: MR AND MRS ROTHERY

(Sherrards)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Consideration of this application was deferred at the meeting of the Planning Control Board on 13th December 2001 to enable members to carry out a site visit .
- 1.2 The application site is located at the end of a short cul de sac off Sherrardspark Road in the Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area. The cul de sac runs between No's11 and 13 which front onto the main road. The cul de sac serves three properties which are sited around the turning head at its southern end, with the application site located on the south eastern side of the turning head.
- 1.3 The application premises comprise a detached red brick chalet bungalow with dormer windows in the front and rear roof slopes. The property is set well back from the front of the site and has a flat roofed garage at the northern side of the site close to the rear boundary of 7 Sherrardspark Road. The property is relatively low rise with a ridge height of 7.2 metres. The neighbouring properties around the turning head are larger, taller detached properties. 15 comprises a large detached house with low eaves height and tall roof. 17 Sherrards Park Road comprises a large two storey house. All properties are red brick with clay ridge tiles.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The application proposes the erection of a two storey extension including the erection of a first floor extension and pitched roof above the existing kitchen utility area. In addition the proposal seeks consent to form a full first floor addition with pitched roof above creating an overall ridge height of 8.8 metres. Two dormer windows are proposed in the rear roofslope. The appearance of the property will be completely changed with new fenestration to the ground floor front elevation, and the provision of a parapet roofed porch. At the southern side of the front elevation a two storey bay window is proposed.

- 2.2 The plans being considered have been amended from those originally submitted as a result of negotiations. The main alterations relate to an overall reduction in the ridge height of the building, the deletion of the proposed openings in the front roofslope and a reduction in the size of the proposed side extension with a recess to the front elevation of that extension.
- 2.3 The estate management application seeks consent to widen the driveway which includes the removal of three small trees.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 The planning history for the site can be summarised as follows:

W/1995/363/EM - Remove and brick up two windows in side elevation
Granted 17/10/95

W/1996/318/EM - Relocation of soil pipe to external elevation – Granted 16/9/96
Neither of these applications are considered relevant to this application

4.0 MAIN RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

- 4.1 Welwyn Hatfield District Plan Alterations No 1 1998

Policy BEV5 Welwyn Garden City

Policy BEV10 Development in Conservation Areas

Gen Criteria 1 (Design and Siting of Buildings)

Gen Criteria 3 (Impact on amenities of residential properties)

Res Criteria 22 (Extensions to Dwellings)

Res Criteria 24 (Dormer Windows)

Oth Criteria 1 (Development in Conservation Area)

5.0 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

- 5.1 The application has been publicised by means of notification of neighbours by letter, and by the posting of a site notice. Three neighbour letters have been received in relation to the amended proposal now under consideration. The letters object on the grounds that the proposed represents a virtual rebuild rather than an extension and is a poor design which dominates the site and the surrounding properties. The character of the property would be changed from a cottage style chalet bungalow to a three storey town house which is not compatible to the surrounding architecture. Objections are expressed that the increase in height of the proposed dwelling would dominate the surrounding properties and alongside the two storey side extension would harm the amenities of numbers 7 and 9 Sherrardspark Road in terms of its overpowering impact,

overlooking and loss of light to the small rear gardens and main living rooms of those properties.

- 5.2 Objections are also raised on the grounds that the area will lose a modest sized property, where there needs to be a good mix of size of dwellings. Particular concern is expressed in relation to overlooking towards 9 Sherrardspark Road from the windows in the front and side elevation, especially the proposed two storey bay window. Objections are made to the scale of the proposed porch and the potential of a balcony being created above it.
- 5.3 Beams comment that they consider the amended proposal as shown on drawing no: 1102:01E is acceptable subject to a condition requiring the submission of materials for prior approval.
- 5.4 The Welwyn Garden City Society have commented on a drawing bearing the Councils date stamp 12th October 2001. This drawing has been superseded by that now under consideration. The drawing dated 12th October 2001, is fairly similar to that now under consideration and given the Society's comments that "if this application is approved it will make a mockery of the Conservation Area Policies in the current District Plan.", It is assumed that they will object to the current proposal. The Society has been sent a copy of the latest plan and any further comments received from the Society, in relation to it will be reported verbally at committee.
- 5.5 Since writing the Committee Report for the meeting on 13th December 2001 two letters were received from the occupant of 7 Sherrardspark Road which were circulated to members at the last meeting. The letters object to the proposal on the grounds that it will be out of scale and character with its surroundings, would prejudice the ability of occupiers of adjoining properties to extend their properties without destroying the appearance of separation between dwellings and does not preserve the amenity of rear gardens adjoining the proposed extension. One of the letters makes comments about the style of properties which surround the site. Members will have the opportunity to consider the surrounding dwellings during the site visit. The letter also alleges inaccuracies over the separation distance indicated in this report between the rear of 7 Sherrardspark Road and the flank wall of the proposed extended dwelling at 13 Sherrardspark Road. The application details include scale drawings indicating the separation distance between the properties which accord with the Council's Ordnance Survey Plan for the area which all show the flank wall of the proposed dwelling to be over 20 metres from the rear of 7 Sherrardspark Road as indicated in paragraph 6.7 of this report. I therefore have no reason to doubt the accuracy of that statement.

6.0 DISCUSSION

- 6.1 The main issues in this case relate to the impact of the application proposal on the character and appearance on this part of the Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area, and the impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties.
- 6.2 Policy BEV10 of the adopted District Plan emphasises that within Conservation Areas extensions will only be permitted when they would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area in terms of siting, form, scale, materials and detailing. In addition to the special attention that shall be paid by local planning authorities in the exercise of their planning functions to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area,

advice in PPG15 Planning and the Historic Environment (1994), indicates that local planning authorities should ensure that they can call on specialist conservation advice to inform their decision making.

- 6.3 Given the nature of the application proposal which fundamentally changes the scale and appearance of the existing dwelling, and given the location of the application site within the conservation area, this is a very sensitive application, which has been carefully considered, taking into account specialist conservation advice from Beams. The existing property on the site is a detached five bedroom chalet style bungalow, which is best described as average in terms of its architectural merit. The extended dwelling proposed comprises a two storey house, which has increased the height of the eaves of the dwelling by approximately 2.4 metres and the overall ridge height by 1.6 metres. This allied to the proposed two storey extension substantially increases the scale and massing of the dwelling. Because of space around the site it is not considered that the proposed increase in size of the building necessarily results in a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of this part of the Conservation area.
- 6.4 When considered in relation to its surroundings the proposed house would be more in keeping with the scale and height of the larger properties which already exist at 15 and 17 Sherrardspark Road and it could be argued that the character and appearance of the area will be improved as a result. Furthermore the size of the application site is such that it is not considered that the proposed extended property would appear cramped on the site, nor given its position set back approximately 20 metres from the front of the site would the extended property appear unduly prominent in the streetscene. Overall it is considered that the proposed size of the dwelling would not have a harmful and intrusive impact on this part of Welwyn Garden City and accords with Policies BEV5,10 and Gen Criteria 1 of the adopted District Plan.
- 6.5 With regard to the design of the amended proposal now under consideration, this has been finalised after close liaison between the local planning authority the applicant's architect and Beams, who have now expressed their satisfaction with the amended proposal. The overall design of the dwelling, including the fenestration, parapet roofed porch, with brick on edge detailing and the two storey bay window are considered to pay reference to elements of architectural detailing common to Welwyn Garden City. The extension at the side of the main dwelling has a recessed front and rear elevation and a lower ridge height than the main dwelling to ensure it appears subordinate to the main dwelling. The dormer windows proposed accord with the advice of Res Criteria 24 of the adopted District Plan. In all these circumstances it is considered that the design and detailing of the proposed dwelling will cause no harm to the character or appearance of this part of the Welwyn Garden City Conservation area and will satisfy the duty placed on the LPA to ensure new development preserves, or enhances its character accords with Policies BEV5, BEV10 and Gen Criteria 1 of the adopted District Plan.
- 6.6 With regard to the impact of the proposal on the amenity of the neighbouring properties, the main alterations the proposal will have relate to the increased height and bulk of the dwelling, potential increased overlooking from additional windows and the extension of the building at a first floor level towards the rear boundary of 7 Sherrardspark Road. With regard to the impact on 15 Sherrardspark Road I am satisfied that the relative disposition and siting of these

two properties is such that the increased bulk of that building will not cause an undue loss of light or have a dominant impact on any main living room windows to that property. Furthermore I am satisfied that there will not be any undue increase in overlooking towards that property.

6.7 With regard to the impact on the properties at Scholars Mews to the rear it is considered that they are a sufficient distance away, at approximately 30 metres from the closest property to ensure that undue overlooking or dominant impact will not result. To the other side of the property 7 and 9 Sherrardspark Road have their main living room windows at ground floor and main bedroom windows facing down their respective gardens towards the application premises. The occupiers of 7 and 9 Sherrardspark Road are concerned in relation to the impact of the increased scale and bulk of the application proposal, and in relation to the proposed extension at a first floor level towards the rear boundaries of those properties. It is considered however that the distance of the rear of those properties from the proposed dwelling at over 20 metres apart at the closest point, would ensure that the increased height of the dwelling would not cause an undue loss of light or dominant impact on those properties, particularly given that the front elevation is angled away from the rear elevation of No's 7 and 9 Sherrardspark Road, such that the gable end of the application premises is the main elevation facing the rear of 7 Sherrardspark Road.

6.8 With regard to potential overlooking from the proposed property to No's 7 and 9 Sherrardspark Road the most direct overlooking would be from the proposed first floor flank elevation of the proposed extension at the side. Four small windows already exist in the existing property facing 7 Sherrardspark Road, however the window proposed to the side extension would be almost 3 metres closer to the rear boundary of that property. Given that the bedroom this window serves has two other windows it is proposed to attach a condition requiring this window to be obscure glazed and non opening. It is considered that to omit the window altogether would result in a blank elevation which would be uninteresting in appearance. The front elevation of the application premises is clearly visible from the rear of 9 Sherrardspark Road, however given the distance between the properties and the oblique angle of views from the application premises to 9 Sherrardspark Road I do not consider an undue loss of privacy would result sufficient to sustain a refusal of planning permission. With regard to the potential use of the porch roof as a balcony, I can confirm that this is not the applicants intention. The full length window above the porch is intended to be a non opening feature window. It is proposed however that a condition should be attached to safeguard this position in the future. The proposal is considered to accord with Gen Criteria 3 and Res Criteria 22 of the adopted District Plan.

6.9 As indicated above the estate management application proposed the widening of the driveway and the removal of three small trees. The Council's arboricultural officer has viewed the trees and does not consider they are worthy of protection with a Tree Preservation Order. However given the sites position in the Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area it is considered necessary to attach a condition requiring the submission of a landscaping scheme indicated new planting.

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 The proposed development represents a fundamental change in scale and appearance to the existing dwelling on site. The proposed extended dwelling has

however been significantly changed from that which was originally proposed, after close liaison with expert conservation advice from Beams, who have now expressed their satisfaction with the proposed design. In comparison with the existing dwelling on the site which is of neutral architectural merit, it is considered that the proposed extended dwelling meets the tests of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of this part of the Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area. The proposal therefore accords with Policies BEV5, 10 and Gen Criteria 1 and Oth Criteria 1 of the adopted District Plan.

- 7.2 With regard to the impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties I am of the opinion that the siting of the building in relation to the surrounding properties is not such that an undue loss of amenity in terms of overlooking, dominant impact or loss of light would result. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with Gen Criteria 3 and Res Criteria 22 of the adopted District Plan.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 I recommend that application no: N6/2001/668/FP be approved planning permission subject to the following conditions:-

1. SC01 Standard Time Limit – Full Permission
2. SC09 Landscaping – Full Permission
3. SC19 Materials – Details to be submitted
4. SC21 No additional windows in first floor side elevations
5. The window in the side elevation of bedroom 4 as shown on drawing no: 1102:01F of the proposed extension shall be glazed with obscure glass and shall be non opening, and shall be retained in that form thereafter.

REASON

To prevent any overlooking or loss of privacy to adjoining properties and to accord with Gen Criteria 3 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan Alterations No.1 1998.

6. The Window in the centre of the front elevation above the porch shall be of non opening form and shall be retained thereafter in that form after first installation.

REASON

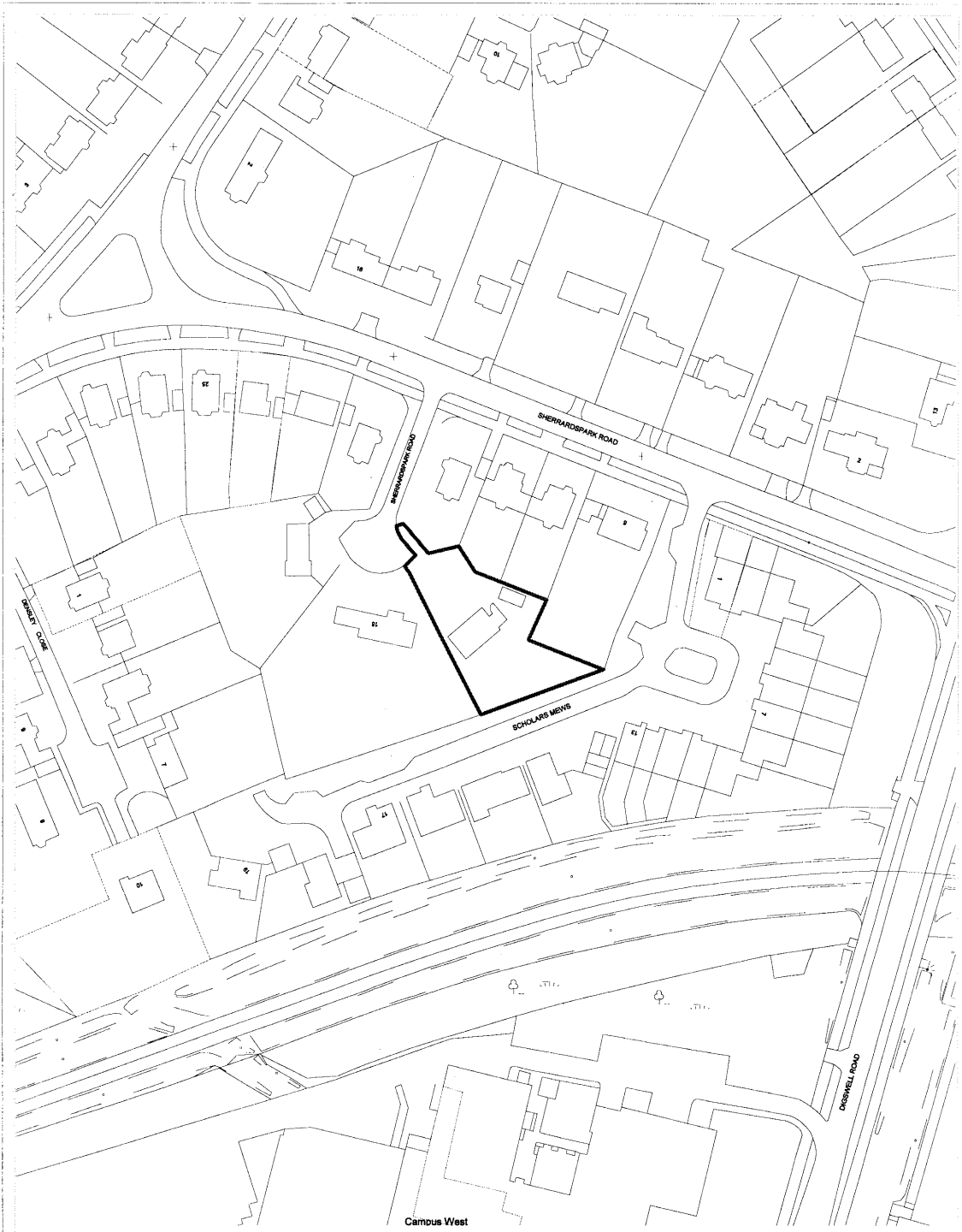
To prevent any overlooking or loss of privacy to adjoining properties and to accord with Gen Criteria 3 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan Alterations No.1 1998.

- 8.2 I recommend that estate management application no. W/2001/1105/EM is approved.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Planning Application N6/2001/668/FP

Estate Management Application W/2001/1105/EM



**WELWYN
HATFIELD
COUNCIL**

13 SHERRARDSPARK ROAD, WGC

SCALE: 1:1250

DRAWN BY: LIZA WREN

DATE 30th November 2001

Drawing No. NB/2001/668

Council Offices, The Campus,

Welwyn Garden City, Herts. AL8 6AE

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