

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No:	N6/2010/1277/FP
------------------------	------------------------

NOTATION:

The site lies within the Estate management Area of Welwyn Garden City.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE:

The application site is located off Bridge Road and comprises of a three storey apartment building designed with a low pitched roof.

The application site is located on the north side of Bridge Road between the Campus and Handside Lane. The site contains 6 blocks of flats with parking areas and open space within the site. The blocks are between 2 and 4 storey in height. The development is set back from the road with a row of mature trees providing a substantial screen across the site..

The application site and block is the first building seen from the public highway and is visible within the street scene.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

The application seeks consent for the replacement of windows on stairwell and panels, formation of three ramps on footpath and dropped curb on Block one of Woodside House.

The application seeks consent to change the existing windows on the stairwells and to alter the existing white PVC solid panels below the stairwell windows with new timber ship lapped cladding. In addition, the existing white PVC solid panels to the windows within the flats altered to double glazed panels with the existing block work painted black.

It is also proposed to replace the existing concrete footpaths and place ramps to the front of the buildings. Hardwood timber doors would replace the existing metal doors. The existing chimneys on the building would be removed.

PLANNING HISTORY:

W6/1997/5105/EM: Erection of a covered shelter for the housing and charging of electrical wheelchairs. Approved.

W6/1995/5455/EM: Erection of covered shelter for the housing of electric wheelchairs. Approved.

W6/1995/5366/EM: The provision of new motor lift rooms, canopy, and associated external alterations. Approved

SUMMARY OF POLICIES:

1967 Leasehold Reforms Act – Estate Management Scheme:

Estate Management Scheme Policies October 2008:

EM1 – Extensions and alterations

EM3 – Soft Landscaping

EM4 – hard Landscaping

CONSULTATIONS

None

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS

None

REPRESENTATIONS

None. Period expired.

DISCUSSION:

The main issues are:

- 1. Whether the proposal accords with Policy EM1 of the Estate Management Scheme;**
- 2. Whether the proposal accords with Policy EM1 of the Estate Management Scheme; and**
- 3. Other Material Planning Considerations**

1. The character and appearance of much of Welwyn Garden City has a quality that consists of carefully designed layouts with formal and symmetrical patterns where the design and detailing of architecture is in groups and individual buildings. Therefore in order to preserve the unique architectural heritage of the town and its building the Council expects that all applications for extensions and alterations respect and do not harm the character and appearance of the building and the street scene.

Policy EM1 of the Estate Management Scheme applies and refers to extensions and alterations and seeks to preserve the unique architectural heritage of the town and its building. It states that extensions and alterations to existing buildings will only be allowed 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. In addition, the policy states that extensions or alterations should not materially affect the residential amenities of adjoining residents through loss of day/sun/skylight, loss of privacy and outlook.

The proposed replacement windows would have four vertical panes which would include the same vertical pane in the large windows found in the building. They would be within the recessed element of the building and would be white uPVC. There is no objection to this as it is considered that it would not adversely harm the character and appearance of the building or the locality.

The replacement of the cladding below the windows in the stairwell with timber cladding would be stained in a colour to be agreed. Timber cladding is a characteristic feature within Bridge Road and it is considered that this would not appear as an incongruous feature and would not detract from the character and appearance of the building. Furthermore, the existing solid panels which would be replaced with a glazed panel with the block work painted black behind would not detract unduly from the appearance of the building.

The alteration to the materials of the external doors from steel to hardwood would again improve the overall appearance of the building.

Alterations would be made to the existing ramped accesses into the building and the paths to the entrance would be paved with block paving. The existing concrete pavement would be replaced with Marshalls paving slabs. It is considered that these proposed alterations would help improve access for people with a disability and improve the overall character and appearance of the building and site.

The proposed development would also involve the removal of the chimneys on the building. The building is a 1960/70s style building where the chimneys are not traditional style chimneys that add significant amenity value to the appearance of the building. Their removal would not harm the character and appearance of the building and therefore there is no objection.

Overall the alterations proposed to the building are considered would not adversely impact on the character and appearance of this part of the Estate Management Scheme.

In addition to the above, Policy EM1 also considers whether extensions or alterations materially affect the residential amenities of adjoining residents through loss of day/sun/skylight, loss of privacy and outlook. In this respect, it is considered that due to the set in of the proposed extension from the boundaries of the site, together with its depth at two storey, the proposed extensions would cause no unreasonable loss of light, sun or daylight to the residential amenity of the adjoining properties.

With regard to neighbour amenity, the proposed development would not result in any undue detrimental impact to the neighbouring occupiers.

2. Policy EM3 of the estate Management Scheme seeks to maintain an appropriate balance of landscaping within the site. In this instance, landscaping is proposed to the frontage of the building which would help to improve the appearance of the building. No objection is raised.

3. With regard to the proposed hardstanding, no additional hardstanding is proposed and therefore the site would maintain the balance between hard and soft landscaping where no objection with regard to Policy EM4 would be raised.

4. Recessed lighting within the recessed element is proposed in the form of spotlights. Which would be located to the front of the entrance doors in to the building. Due to the recessed entrance these lights would not be unduly visible.

There are no other material considerations relevant.

CONCLUSION:

The proposal would sufficiently maintain the character and appearance of the property and surrounding area, the residential amenity of neighbouring dwellings and would retain a sufficient parking allocation.

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS

CONDITIONS:

1-5. EM01a

6. The development/works shall not be started and completed other than in accordance with the approved plans Location plan received and dated 9 August 2010 & Drawing Nos. 200 Rev c & 201 Rev c & 210 received and dated 18 June 2010.

7. No development shall take place until samples of the timber cladding to be used in the construction of the external surfaces below the windows hereby permitted shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be implemented using the approved materials. Subsequently, the approved materials shall not be changed without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure a satisfactory standard of development in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Policy EM1 of the Estate Management Scheme

8. EM03a

SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE GRANT OF PERMISSION:

It is considered that the proposed development would not have an unacceptably harmful impact on the residential amenity or the character of the area in which it would be located. It would therefore be in compliance with the Estate Management Scheme.

INFORMATIVES:

None

Signature of author..... Date.....