

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

DELEGATED APPLICATION

Application No: 6/2021/2212/EM
Location: 54 Bridge Road Welwyn Garden City AL8 6UR
Proposal: Construction of 2x two-storey detached houses and associated parking and access on the land to the rear of 52 & 54 Bridge Road.
Officer: Mr James Homer

Recommendation: Refused

6/2021/2212/EM

Context	
Site and Application description	<p>No.54 is a two storey semi-detached property located upon the northern side of Bridge Road. The property occupies a spacious plot with deep gardens and is set upon the fringes of Sherrardspark Wood and adjacent to a public footpath.</p> <p>The full proposal involves the construction of a pair of detached, two storey properties and associated landscaping including access, within the rear gardens of 52 and 54 Bridge Road. The Estate Management Scheme does not allow for a joint application across two properties, therefore the proposal has been split into two applications to cover the proposed development for each property.</p> <p>This application seeks Estate Management Scheme consent for the elements of the proposal contained within the rear garden of no.54, which includes the erection of a two storey detached property, associated access and parking and landscaping.</p> <p>Please note that due to the restrictions in place as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic, no site visit was made to the rear garden. However, the case officer was satisfied that the application could be assessed using the plans submitted by the applicant and from observations made from public areas.</p>
Constraints	Estate Management Scheme, as defined within the Leasehold Reform Act 1967
Relevant history	<p>Application Number: 6/2021/2195/FULL Decision: Decision Date: Proposal: Construction of 2x two-storey detached houses and associated parking and access on the land to the rear of 52 & 54 Bridge Road.</p> <p>Application Number: 6/2021/2211/EM Decision: Decision Date: Proposal: Construction of 2x two-storey detached houses and associated parking and access on the land to the rear of 52 & 54 Bridge Road.</p> <p>Application Number: 6/2016/1547/EM Decision: Refused Decision Date: 30 September 2016 Proposal: Alteration to widen existing access and create a driveway</p> <p>Application Number: 6/2017/2722/EM Decision: Granted Decision</p>

	<p>Date: 19 December 2017 Proposal: Shared party wall of proposed extension at 52 Bridge Road</p> <p>Application Number: 6/2019/0900/EM Decision: Refused Decision Date: 20 June 2019 Proposal: Erection of 2 x two-bedroom semi-detached dwellings with associated vehicular access and parking</p> <p>Application Number: 6/2021/1342/EM Decision: Withdrawn Decision Date: 01 July 2021 Proposal: Erection of a two-storey detached house, associated parking and access on the land to the rear of 54 Bridge Road.</p>		
Notifications			
Neighbour representations	Support: 0	Object: 4	Other: 0
Summary of neighbour responses	<p>Four neighbour objection letters were received and can be summarised as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not in keeping with Welwyn Garden City or the garden city ethos. - Concern it would set a precedence to build in rear gardens. - Ruin the views to the woodland behind. - Overdevelopment of the site. - Does not reflect the character of the area. - Damaging to the heritage of the area. - Lack of privacy for the occupants of the proposed homes. - Potential damage to significant trees in the area. 		
Consultee responses	No comments received.		
Relevant Policies			
<input type="checkbox"/> EM1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EM2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EM3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EM4 Others			
Considerations			
Design (form, size, scale, siting) and Character (impact upon amenities and values of Garden City)	<p>Policy EM2 of the Estate Management Scheme looks to protect the planned layout of the Garden City by ensuring that proposals for new buildings and structures respect the visual appearance of the area in terms of their siting and scale so they do not result in visually over prominent or discordant additions. In addition, all applications for new buildings should not harm the residential amenity of adjoining occupiers and the immediate area.</p> <p>The existing property is semi-detached with a large rear garden that backs onto the edge of Sherrardspark Wood. The surrounding area is predominantly residential also with large rear gardens. This part of the Garden City is largely characterised by a formality of layout and integration of soft landscaping and woodland within the built form. This gives the locality a relatively spacious character and appearance, which this property is in keeping with.</p> <p>Within the current gardens of no.54 the application proposes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The erection of a detached two storey house - Part of the access driveway and parking spaces. - The felling of at least six trees within the rear garden. 		

	<p>The proposed house to be erected within the current rear garden of no.54 would feature a clay tiled hipped roof with a front gable projection with brickwork finish at ground floor and timber cladding finish at first floor. Conservation casement windows are proposed for the front and side elevations and first floor at the rear. The application proposes a timber front door and conservation style French doors with side lights at the rear.</p> <p>Despite the sympathetic design, the proposed building would appear out of place within the area as there are no properties set back behind the existing properties fronting Bridge Road. As a result, the proposed dwelling, together with the existing dwelling, would appear excessive, resulting in the site appearing overdeveloped and out of keeping with the immediate character of the area.</p> <p>Furthermore, gardens are considered an important component of the Welwyn Garden City and create important open space between homes and amenity areas. The sub-division of this plot would result in a significant loss of garden to the rear of 54 Bridge Road and the erection of a large house to the rear would upset the balance of the open space between the houses along Bridge Road and the edge of the woodland to the rear of the site. Ultimately, the proposal would result in a more cramped site that is out of keeping with the area resulting in a detrimental impact on the spacious character and appearance of the locality as a whole.</p> <p>Despite the sympathetic design, the proposed new dwelling to the rear of no.54 would not respect the visual appearance of the area in terms of its siting and scale and would result in visually over prominent and discordant addition. This is exacerbated by the proposal for a similar dwelling within the rear garden of 52 Bridge Road.</p>
<p>Impact on neighbours</p>	<p>A number of objections have been received from across Welwyn Garden City with concerns regarding the negative impact the properties may have on the character of the Estate Management Scheme area.</p> <p>In terms of neighbour amenity the siting of the proposed dwelling would introduce a significant structure to the rear of No.54. However, the separation distance between the properties and boundary screening from existing vegetation is such that it is not considered the proposed development would result in a detrimental loss of light or appear unduly dominant. Whilst there are side windows proposed within the dwelling, these are shown to serve bathrooms and therefore can be conditioned to be obscure glazed if necessary.</p>
<p>Landscaping issues (incl. hardstandings)</p>	<p>Policy EM3 of the Estate Management Scheme states that works to hedgerows will only be allowed where the works would not result in the loss of landscaping which would harm the character and amenities of the area and where sufficient justification for the works has been given.</p> <p>The proposed plans indicate that at least six trees within the rear garden of no.54 would need to be felled. No justification for their removal has been given or replacement planting proposed to compensate for the loss. The proposed felling of the trees would result in significant harm to the verdant setting of the property and the character of the area.</p> <p>In addition, the application lacks the submission of an Arboricultural report necessary to demonstrate that the proposed works would not result in unacceptable harm to TPO trees on the site.</p> <p>Policy EM4 seeks to retain the appearance of the Garden City while accommodating the increased pressure for vehicle hard standings due to the</p>

	<p>rise in car ownership over recent years. In doing so, Policy EM4 states that proposals to construct hardstanding should retain or create sufficient soft 'green' landscaping to help preserve the character of Welwyn Garden City. In addition, works must not result in the loss of any existing hedgerows or landscaping along the boundary other than the minimum required to access the hardstanding.</p> <p>The proposal includes the creation of a driveway (continued from the driveway to the property proposed at the rear of no.52) to access the proposed development and parking for up to four cars. The proposed driveway would result in the loss of soft landscaping currently situated within the rear garden of no.54 and an increase in hardstanding however, not to an extent that may be considered harmful to the property.</p>
Any other considerations	None.
Conclusion	
<p>Despite the sympathetic design, the proposed new dwelling to the rear of no.54 would not respect the visual appearance of the area in terms of its siting and would result in a visually over prominent and discordant addition to the rear of the existing property that would result in harm to the character of the site and wider area of Bridge Road. This is exacerbated by the proposal for a similar dwelling within the rear garden of 52 Bridge Road.</p> <p>In addition, the proposal would result in the loss of at least six trees within the rear garden of the existing site that is considered harmful to the verdant setting of the property and character of the wider area.</p> <p>As a result, the application fails to comply with Policy EM2 and Policy EM3 of the Estate Management Scheme.</p>	

Reasons for Refusal:

1. Despite the sympathetic design, the proposed new dwelling to the rear of no.54 would not respect the visual appearance of the area in terms of its siting and would result in a visually over prominent and discordant addition to the rear of the existing property that would result in harm to the character of the site and wider area of Bridge Road. This is exacerbated by the proposal for a similar dwelling within the rear garden of 52 Bridge Road.

In addition, the proposal would result in the loss of at least six trees within the rear garden of the existing site that is considered harmful to the verdant setting of the property and character of the wider area.

As a result, the application fails to comply with Policy EM2 and Policy EM3 of the Estate Management Scheme.

REFUSED DRAWING NUMBERS

2.

Plan Number	Revision Number	Details	Received Date
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1644.EM2.0 5	Proposed block plan	21 July 2021
1644.EM2.0 4	Location and existing block plan	21 July 2021
1644.EM2.0 6	Proposed plans	21 July 2021

Determined By:

Mr James Homer
18 October 2021