



Chartered Town Planning

Local Plan Representations

Planning Applications

Site Appraisals

Appeals

Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation
One Garden City
Broadway
Letchworth
SG6 3BF

Heritage Ref: 37309

LPA Ref: 21/01442/FPH

Scheme: Single storey flat roof rear extension and single storey front/side pitched roof following demolition of existing garage and outbuilding (henceforth referred to as “the proposal”)

Site: 27 Lawrence Avenue, Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire, SG6 2EY

MDP Ref: MD/02/v1

28 May 2021

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

Dear Sir or Madam,

1. Introduction

1.1 I write on behalf of  is strongly opposed to the proposed development identified above. This was submitted to the Local Planning Authority on 5 May 2021 and has an expiry date of 30 May 2021.



1.2 This document seeks to draw attention to the fundamental design issues, and consequential impacts upon living conditions, associated with the proposal and seeks to support and steer the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation ('the Heritage Foundation') toward the only reasonable conclusion to the application; refusal.

1.3 In summary, the proposal would considerably undermine the design principles for the Modern Character Area of Letchworth Garden City. It will render permanent harm to the site, the wider environs and by extension the character of the garden city itself. The inappropriate nature of the design would also harmfully impact upon the living conditions of the occupants of [REDACTED] in terms of outlook and access to daylight.

2. Key Points of Objection

2.1 There are two points of objection as follows:

- a) The proposal would result in significant harm to the design of the host building, the streetscene and the architectural approach for the garden city, contrary to numerous design principles.
- b) The proposal would harm the living conditions of the occupants of [REDACTED], particularly in terms of outlook and access to daylight.

3. Starting Point for Assessing the Proposal – Policy Environment

3.1 An objection to this proposal has already been submitted to the Local Planning Authority, who are to determine this application in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

3.2 However, for the purposes of this particular objection letter, the following document is considered relevant:

Design Principles: Your guide to altering your home in the Modern Character Area in Letchworth Garden City

3.3 The following principles are relevant and have been summarised:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

3.4 Rear Extensions:

- Rear extensions shall compliment the character of the original house and have a balanced and proportionate scale.
- Roof pitches shall be consistent with the original roof design of the house.
- The area and volume of the proposed extension shall be in proportion to the existing house and plot.
- Design shall respond to and harmonise with the individual qualities of the host building and its setting. High quality design is encouraged. Poor quality design will be rejected.
- Extensions shall not lead to an unacceptable loss of amenity to neighbouring occupiers. As a guide, rear extensions shall also meet the light angle guidance, as well as the maximum depths included in these principles. See below for the 45° extension rule:

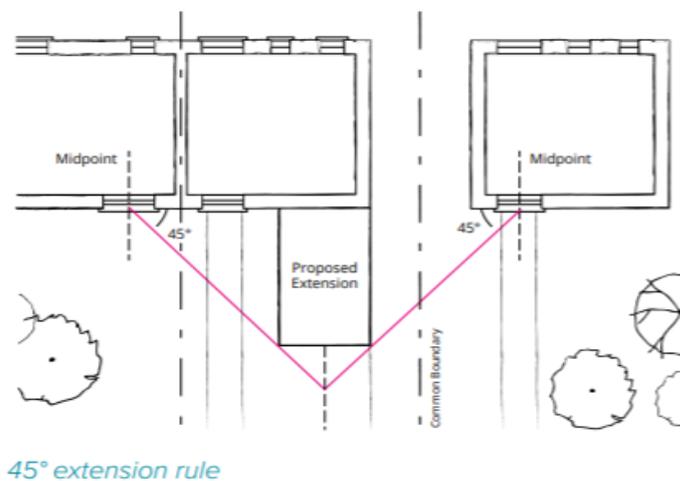


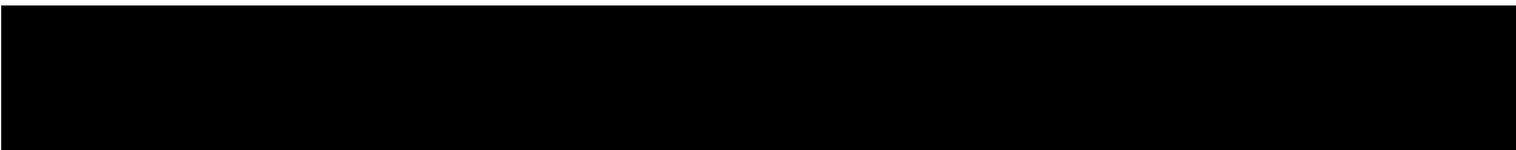
Figure 1: 45° Extension Rule taken from page 7 of Design Principles

- For semi-detached dwellings, ground floor extensions up to a depth of 5 metres from the original main rear building line of the house may be acceptable.

3.6 Side Extensions:

- The width of side extensions can greatly impact on the original character of the home and the streetscene.
- It is preferable for extensions to be on the rear of the property, as these normally have a reduced impact on the character of the context.
- Side extensions shall be consistent with the character of the original house, respecting the proportions and scale of the existing property.
- Roof pitches can have a substantial impact upon the appearance of a building and the streetscene. Therefore, all proposed roof pitches and the design of the roof and roof line shall be consistent with the original roof design of the house.
- The area and volume of the extension shall be subservient to and in proportion with the existing house and plot.
- For all dwellings, ground floor extensions shall retain a 1 metre gap to the boundary.
- For semi-detached dwellings, side extensions must retain the identity of the original property and be visually subservient. This is normally achieved by having lower roof lines and being significantly set back from the front building line.

3.7 Front Extensions and Porches:

- Adding elements to the front façade of semi-detached buildings can have an impact upon attractive streets and the architectural value of the host property. They can also alter the relationship within a group of houses by; creating unsightly or unduly prominent development, disrupting the uniformity of the front building line and disrupting the coherence of a group of semi-detached houses.
 - Front extensions are discouraged. Amongst other things, they will not be supported unless they are consistent with the character of the original house and have balanced proportions and scale.
 - The design of front extensions should relate well with the original and neighbouring houses.
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- Extensions shall respect the balance and symmetry of a pair or group of houses.
- For semi-detached dwellings, they shall not upset the balance or symmetry of a pair of houses.
- Porches shall compliment the character of the original property. Their design shall respond to the individual qualities of the host building and its setting.
- Porches are normally acceptable where they already exist as an acceptable feature in the area and do no unbalance a group of properties.
- The removal of open porches, canopies or tiled hoods can damage the original character of the property and will not normally be permitted.

3.8 **Garage Conversions:**

- Where there is enough justification to support conversion, it shall normally be ensured that the property's frontage has capacity to provide at least two car parking spaces.
- Retention of garage doors is preferred. Replacement windows shall match the style and proportions of original windows.

3.9 **Windows – New and Replacement:**

- Windows contribute significantly to the identity and value of individual houses.
 - The size and materials of windows on the façade of a house strongly influence the overall composition and character of a home. Changes can completely alter its character.
 - Replacement windows shall match the style and design of the original windows in the property.
 - External glazing bars or external leading are preferred where this was an original feature of the property.
 - Positioning, type, size of new openings shall be consistent with the original design of the property and style of the original windows.
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3.10 Roofs, New Roofs, Alterations, Re-tiling and Repairs:

- Roof alterations shall reflect the original roof design and specifications.
- There shall be no cut-outs under windows.

4. Points of Objection

A: Harm to the Design of No 27 and the Balance it Shares with [REDACTED]

Rear Extension

- 4.1 No 27 has an existing rear extension constructed as part of development approved under application Ref. 07/00889/1HH. This is shown on plans submitted with this proposal to already have a maximum depth of 3.61 metres, which is just short of the recommended maximum depth of 3.65 metres within the Council's design guidance for Letchworth. In addition, this existing extension is stepped away from both of the shared rear flank boundaries. Clearly, significant care and attention has already been given to ensure that previous extensions at No 27 were not excessive in scale, bulk and mass and that they were stepped away from flank boundaries to ensure that sufficient space remains about the property.
- 4.2 This proposal would extend the existing single storey rear extension by a further 3.2 metres. The single storey rear extension at No 27 would therefore have an overall depth of around 6.8 metres. This is considerable and greatly exceeds the maximum depth of 5 metres advised for semi-detached properties. Moreover, the rear extension would completely fill the existing gap between No 27 and the shared rear boundary with [REDACTED] (a gap which is already less than 1 metre in width) and would be positioned significantly closer to the southern site boundary compared to the existing situation. As such, it would not maintain a 1 metre gap to either flank site boundary as advised. Overall, the proposed rear extension would extend across the entire width of No 27, and indeed nearly the entire width of the plot itself. This, together with other extensions, would markedly erode the space about the dwelling.
- 4.3 Taking the above into account, particularly when the rear extension is considered in conjunction with previously approved and constructed extensions at No 27, this development would wholly overwhelm the original design of the host property. Not only would the proposed bulk and mass of
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- [REDACTED]

the single storey extension unduly dominate the rear elevation of the host property and [REDACTED] but it would also occupy purposefully designed gaps to flank boundaries resulting in No 27 appearing cramped upon its plot.

- 4.4 Furthermore, the proposed rear extension would have a flat roof, a roof form that is often discouraged within the garden city. In any event, not only would this flat roof adjoin a differing roof form in the shape of the pitched roof of the proposed side extension, but it would also sit above the eaves level of this pitched roof. Consequently, the rear extension's flat roof would visually jar with that of the proposed side extension and would form an incongruous roofscape. This reinforces the harm to the design of the host property by virtue of its excessive bulk and mass.

Side Extension

- 4.5 The single storey side extension would again decrease the gap between No 27 and its southern site boundary and would not leave a 1 metre gap to this boundary. This would exacerbate the cramped appearance of the host property. This extension would also span the entire depth of the extended No 27 and would not be set back from the front of the building line as advised. As a consequence, there would be large expanses of unbroken facing brickwork along the building's southern elevation. This is clearly indicative of poor design and highlights the disproportionate scale of the proposal as a whole.
- 4.6 It is noted that features have been included to break up the side extension's southern elevation. However, this includes a circular window which is not centrally positioned and would be set above side facing windows within the proposed rear extension. This window would therefore promote a discordant fenestration pattern that would unbalance the appearance of the side extension. This would further draw the eye to its harmful scale.
- 4.7 Lastly, proposed drawings appear to show that the overall height of the side extension would be 4 metres. The ridgeline of its roof would appear to be taller than the sill of the first floor window directly above. This is again indicative of poor design and is most likely due to the inappropriate overall depth of this element of the proposal.

Front Extension

- 4.8 The proposed side extension would wrap around the property to meet a largely enclosed lean-to front extension. The enclosed nature of this front extension is not a characteristic feature of
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- [REDACTED]

properties within this part of the street, or indeed the garden city as a whole. Instead, nearby front extensions and porches take the form of small canopies over the front door or 'open' porches. Consequently, the front extension, by reason of its size and form, would be incongruous within the streetscene.

- 4.9 In addition, the proposed front extension would disrupt the design of the ground floor bay window and would remove an existing porch canopy hood. It would also result in the loss of the existing garage door which incorporates small casement windows that are characteristic of garden city architecture. This would be harmful to the architectural interest and design of No 27 and would contribute to the continual, and unacceptable, erosion of features typically associated with the garden city movement.

Garage Conversion and Off-Road Parking

- 4.10 As discussed, the proposed garage conversion would result in the loss of attractive window detailing, which would be replaced by standard, modern, fenestration. This would harm the architectural quality of the house. In addition to this, advice seems quite clear that, where a garage is to be lost or converted, the property must afford at least two off-road parking spaces. Submitted plans show only one off-road space, conflicting with this particular design principle.

Unbalancing of Nos 25 and 27

- 4.11 Lastly, No 27 forms one half of a pair of semi-detached buildings with No 25. From the front these remain largely unaltered and therefore retain a sense of rhythm and balance. The proposal would add such a significant amount of bulk and mass to No 27 that it would inappropriately compete with, and dominate, No 25. This would be particularly evident when both properties are viewed from the rear. Accordingly, the balance and rhythm of the pair of semi-detached properties would be lost. The shortening of the bay windows to front and the enclosed porch would reinforce this harmful impact.

Conclusion – Character and Appearance

- 4.12 Taking all of the above into account, my client considers that the proposed extensions would be excessive in scale, bulk and mass and would therefore not be visually subservient. As a consequence of their excessive scale, No 27 would appear cramped upon its plot in relation to its size. The proposal would remove features synonymous with garden city architecture and promotes

an incongruous fenestration pattern and roofscape. The scheme would not relate well to neighbouring properties and would unbalance the pair of semi-detached dwellings to which No 27 belongs.

- 4.13 Taking everything together, the proposal would not respond to and harmonise with the individual qualities of the host building and its setting. It is of exceptionally poor design and would contravene many of the design principles advanced by the Heritage Foundation.

B: Harm to Living Conditions at [REDACTED] in Terms of Outlook and Access to Daylight

- 4.14 The proposed single storey rear extension would draw development onto the rear boundary shared with [REDACTED]. In addition, it would extend in excess of 3 metres beyond an adjacent rear ground floor habitable room window. Consequently, the size and positing of the proposed development would breach a 45° extension rule when taken from the midpoint of this neighbouring window, contravening a key design principle advanced by the Heritage Foundation (as shown at paragraph 3.4 to this letter).
- 4.15 Taking the above into account, the proposed rear extension would appear visually dominant from within [REDACTED]. In addition, given the orientation of [REDACTED] relation to No 27, the proposal would also have a notable impact upon access to daylight within adjacent habitable rooms at my client's property at certain times of the day.
- 4.16 Further, the primary rear external amenity space currently enjoyed by the occupants of [REDACTED] located immediately adjacent to the rear elevation of this property. The proposed single storey rear extension would be immediately adjacent to this space and visible from within it. As such, particularly when this proposal is seen in conjunction with the existing rear extensions at No 27, the cumulative bulk and mass of development to the rear of the application property would appear visually oppressive from within the garden of [REDACTED]. This would make it a significantly less pleasant space in which to spend time.
- 4.17 For these reasons, the proposal would result in an unacceptable loss of amenity at [REDACTED], contrary to design principles of the Heritage Foundation.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The proposed development will cause significant material harm to the character and appearance of the host property and that of the streetscene. It would also fundamentally undermine the principles of garden city architecture, eroding the character and interest of the settlement. Further, it would cause harm to the living conditions at [REDACTED] particularly in terms of outlook.
- 5.2 Taking the above into account, not only would the proposal clearly conflict with the Council's adopted development plan, but it would also contravene numerous design principles advanced by the Heritage Foundation. It would unacceptably add to the cumulative erosion of architectural interest and quality within Letchworth Garden City, harming the characteristics that make it a special place to live and work.
- 5.3 It is therefore respectfully requested that the Heritage Foundation's high design standards are upheld and that it refuses this application.

I hope the contents of this objection are useful to you and inform the outcome of the application.

The contents of this representation should only be read in the context of the above planning application in advancing client concerns.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]