

Appeal Decision

Site visit made 9 January 2025

By Ruth Reed BA DipArch MA PGCertEd PPRIBA HonAIA FRIAS

An Independent Scheme of Management Inspector
Appointed by the Heritage Foundation Letchworth Garden City

Decision date 20 January 2025

Appeal Reference RR/2025/018

66 Lawrence Avenue, Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire, SG6 2EZ

- The appeal is made by [redacted] against refusal of consent under the Scheme of Management of Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation for the application submitted on 9 November 2023 and subsequently revised.
 - Consent for the revised scheme was refused by the Heritage Foundation's Advisory Management Committee on 3 July 2024. It was reviewed by the Householder Applications Committee on 20 September 2024 and the decision to refuse was upheld.
 - The development proposed is: Single storey side extension, first floor side extensions, two storey rear extension, front porch, and frontage alterations (revised scheme).
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Decision

1. The appeal against the refusal of an application for single storey side extension, first floor side extensions, two storey rear extension, front porch, and frontage alterations (revised scheme) is upheld in part and dismissed in part. The appeal against refusal of the single storey side extension, first floor side extensions, and two storey rear extension is dismissed. The appeal against the frontage alterations, namely the external porch and the hardstanding is upheld.

Preliminary matters

2. The proposals have received full written support from the neighbours at [redacted] and [redacted] and this has been noted, however consideration has also been given to the impact on future occupiers of these properties and the potential cumulative effect of permitting the proposal on the character and appearance of the area and the residential amenities of all occupants.

Main Issues

5. The main issues in this case are the impact of the proposals on the scale and appearance of the house itself, the impact on the occupiers of adjacent properties, and the impact of the alterations on the street scene and the character of the area.

Reasons

6. 66 Lawrence Avenue is a semi-detached dwelling in a Modern Character Area. It is of brick with a tiled, straight-ridged roof and a two-storey front gable projection with an enclosed porch at ground floor level. To the front it is very similar in appearance to the adjoining house, number 64, with the exception of the enclosed porch. The pair of semi-detached houses to the south are of similar design but each has a lean-to porch on gallows brackets.
7. To the rear, the house is un-extended. The adjacent house, number 64, has a full-width single-storey flat roof extension to a depth given as 4.715m. On the appeal site, number 66 has a single garage set back to the rear of the house. This shares a party wall with the garage to number 68. Number 68 has full-width single storey pitched roof extension and beyond, number 70 has a two-storey extension visible, that is approximately half the width of the rear elevation.
8. The examples provided to me by the appellants and images on Google Earth show that a substantial number of the houses in the area have side and rear extensions. Although some of the two storey rear extensions appear to exceed the 3.6m distance given as the normal requirement in the current Modern Character Area guidance, dated November 2020, none extend as far as the proposed 4.995m of the appeal proposal.
9. A two-story extension of the depth proposed would have significant impact on the adjacent properties in terms of dominance and over shadowing and be out of proportion to the original house. This aspect of the scheme is not in accordance with the guidance and there is little or no justification for an exemption. In addition, the use of a hipped roof is inconsistent and does not compliment the design of the house.
10. The single storey rear extension is within the guidelines in terms of depth, but the shallow roof pitch is also inconsistent with the design of the house generally. Overall, the rear extensions are disproportionate in size to the original house, despite the length of the rear garden.
11. The drawings submitted with the appeal show that the ground floor side extension has an inconsistent shallow pitch, contrary to the statements made

by the appellant. This inconsistency is highlighted by the proposed barn gable porch which would be the same pitch as the main house roof. The overall arrangement of massing and pitches is muddled and inconsistent with the architectural character of the area.

12. The appellants drew my attention to _____ as an example of how the side and rear extensions could appear from the road, however this house had existing hipped roofs to the front gable and main roof before it was extended, and the resultant massing is very different.
13. The appeal proposal included a new external porch in a barn gable design. The Guidelines state that *Front porches are acceptable when they already exist as an acceptable feature within the context and will not break up the symmetry of, or unbalance a group of properties.* The introduction of external porches appears to be a common feature of houses on Lawrence Avenue.
14. The appellants drew my attention to a number of external porches that had been added. I noted that these can vary from those on adjoining houses and that there a number of examples where the symmetry of semi-detached properties has been lost as a result. It is apparent that this has become an acceptable feature on this particular road.
15. However, in terms of the design of the porch in the context of the house, most of the examples are on houses with hipped roofs and there are no examples of the type of porch proposed that I could identify. The closest examples to the appeal site of porches on houses with straight ridges are the lean-to porches on _____ and _____.
16. Although the proposal can be justified as part of the acceptable changes to properties on this road and the appeal is allowed on this point, I suggest that a more consistent approach would be to have a porch similar to the two on _____ and _____ Lawrence Avenue.
17. The proposed loss of the drive and garage has resulted in a scheme for a larger front parking area and 60% of the front garden area would be under hard landscaping. Whilst I note that the current guidelines suggest up to 50% of the front garden can be hardstanding, this is exceeded frequently along Lawrence Avenue and there is sufficient local precedent to justify the exception. This element of the appeal proposal is allowed.

Conclusions

18. Having read the submissions and seen the site and its context, I conclude that the proposed single storey side extension, first floor side extensions, and two storey rear extension are not in accordance with the Design Principles. The negative impact of the proposals on the scale and appearance of the house, the impact on the occupiers of adjacent properties, and the impact of the

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alterations on the street scene and the character of the area are not in accordance with the Design Principles for Modern Character Areas. The appeal is dismissed in respect to these aspects of the proposal.

19. I also conclude that the external porch and the hardstanding are consistent with evolving the character of the street scene of Lawrence Avenue and are therefore acceptable. The appeal is allowed in respect to these aspects of the proposal.

Ruth Reed
Independent Scheme of Management Inspector