

# REPORT FOR INDEPENDENT INSPECTOR

## Comments on the Appellant's Statement of Case

66 Lawrence Avenue, Letchworth Garden City

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Please see my responses where relevant below to the appellant's Statement of Case

### 2. THE PROPOSALS

- 2.1 It is proposed to demolish an existing detached garage and erect a two-storey rear and side extension plus a ground floor side extension. A front porch is to be added, and the frontage hard standing is to be increased.

### 3. POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 3.1 The Design Principles state:
- Rear extensions shall complement the character of the original house, using the detailing and complementing materials, and have balanced proportions and scale.
  - Roof pitches can have a substantial impact on the character of the original house, therefore proposed roof pitches shall be consistent with the original roof design of the house.
  - Extensions that protrude past the side/gable wall of the original house are subject to the requirements for side extensions.
  - Due to the likely impact on the neighbouring property, 2 storey extensions shall not normally exceed 3.6 metres from the original main rear building line. When 2 storey extensions have an impact on neighbouring properties, a reduction in depth and/or width may be required.
  - Ground floor extensions up to a depth of 5 metres from the original main rear building line of the house may be acceptable.
  - Roof pitches can have a substantial impact on the appearance of a building and the street scene; therefore, all proposed roof pitches and design of the roof and roof line shall be consistent with the original roof design of the house, unless it can be demonstrated that the extension does not damage the character and quality of the existing property and its context
  - Side extensions shall 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.
  - Porches shall complement the character of the original house and street scene, using materials that are in keeping with the existing property and have balanced proportions and scale.
  - When creating hardstandings on front gardens, at least 50% of the original frontage area shall normally be maintained as soft landscaping, free of car parking, footpaths, bases for bin storage etc.

- 3.2 The main concern of the Heritage Advice Service is that at 4.995 metres deep, the first-floor element is significantly contrary to a Design Principle which is felt to be fundamental, and we would not wish to set an unhelpful precedent.
- 3.3 The demolition of the garage removes a parking space from the property. The depth of the frontage is limited, and the porch further limits the available room to the frontage to provide parking for two vehicles whilst maintaining 50% of the frontage as a soft landscaped area free of parking.
- 3.4 It would appear that rather than use the Design Principles as guidance, the designers have used them as limits and have extended as far as possible and in the case of the first floor beyond.
- 3.5 The design of the roofs of the extension are considered to be contrived and do not compliment the original design of the house.

#### 4. APPEAL SITE AND ITS CONTEXT

- 4.1 The original house and street scene consisted of semi-detached houses with pitched roofs and ground floor additions (garage) topped with a flat roof and parapet. It would be the Foundations ideal that any two storey additions should be topped with a pitched roof to match the existing house and any ground floor additions topped with a flat roof with parapet. However, it is clear when surveying the street that in recent years this design feature has been ignored and precedent with roof pitches has been set with shallow pitches.
- 4.2 The appellant has highlighted a number of cases which they believe has set precedent with depths of extensions and frontages. Please see below results from our survey on these:

Depth of extensions: These were all approved prior to the current Design Principles –

The Plans approved by LGCHF were for a first-floor extension at 3.6 metres deep.

The approval was for a first-floor extension at 4.0 metres deep.

The approval was for a first-floor extension at a depth of 4.6 metres.

The approval was for a first-floor extension 4.6 metres deep.

The approval was for a first-floor extension 4.0 metres deep.

**Porches:** The document shows examples of other porches which in most cases were approved prior to 2015.

The picture titled \_\_\_\_\_ are actually pictures of \_\_\_\_\_ and

The porch was approved in 2014.

We can find no approval for this porch.

This was approved in 2002 prior to Design Principles.

This was approved in 2012.

This was approved pre-2005.

This was approved in 2020.

**Front Hard Standings:  
Avenue:**

This was approved in 2021 with a 50% divide between hardstanding and soft landscaping which has not been implemented in accordance with the approved plans.

No consent has been granted for front hard standing.

No consent has been granted for front hard standing.

No consent has been granted for front hard standing.

Consent was granted in 2023 for a hard standing within acceptable parameters to 50/50 rule.

We could not identify the second house titled 41 Lawrence Avenue.

## **5. RESPONSE - APPELLANTS RESPONSE TO REFUSAL**

- 5.1
- The extension to \_\_\_\_\_ ue is single storey and therefore complies with Design Principles.
  - It is stated that the reduction to the depth of the 1<sup>st</sup> floor element to 3.6 metres will create additional structural work and will create a step in on the rear elevation should the ground floor be at 4.995 metres. However, the design of the whole extension has step ins on all elevations. This could also be overcome by reducing the ground floor depth to 3.6 metres.

- 5.2 Whilst supportive neighbour comments were received from both sides, any impact on neighbours has to be fully considered for the benefit of future residents. It is our opinion that most of the impact would be on  
and not

## **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 The first-floor extension is contrary to the Design Principles and its approval would result in an unwelcome precedent and impact on future neighbours.
- 6.2 The porch does not compliment the house design and further contributes to the lack of available frontage space to provide parking of two vehicles whilst maintaining 50% of the frontage as a green landscaped area