

DESIGN & CONSERVATION OFFICER'S REPORT:

25 January 2021

Site Address: 3 QUEENS ROAD, BRIDPORT, DT6 5AW

Application Reference: WD/D/20/002982

Application Proposal: Erection of two storey rear extension and front porch

Case Officer: Rob Piggot

Site Visit Date: Remote (Covid-19 Restrictions)

CONSERVATION & DESIGN OFFICER COMMENTS

SUPPORT	
SUPPORT SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS	
UNABLE TO SUPPORT	✓
NO OBJECTION	
REQUEST FOR FURTHER INFORMATION	
OTHER / PRE-APP	

SUMMARY

We are unable to support this application.

Based on our assessment below, we are unable to support this application, which will result in **less than substantial harm** to the character and appearance of the Bridport Conservation Area.

National and local policy requires that 'great weight' be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets, with any harm requiring 'clear and convincing justification'. The application does not advocate any public benefits from the proposals and we have not identified any as part of our assessment.

In the comments below we have suggested some ways in which the harm could be fully or partly addressed.

SITE DESCRIPTION / CONTEXT

The building is situated on the SE side of Queens Road adjacent to its junction with Alexandra Road. The building, which dates from the early 1920s, comprises a semi-detached dwelling of rendered brickwork with a hipped roof of concrete interlocking tiles. The render is broken only by a 3-course band of red brickwork beneath the first-floor windows and the red-brick round arch above the front door. The latter is slightly recessed to form a small inset porch. The windows are generally uPVC replacements.

The building forms part of a planned 20th century 'Garden Suburb' extension to Bridport, the area being called Skilling. The latter name refers to its position on the slopes of Skilling Hill and the land having been part of Skilling Farm. Indeed the layout appears to respect a number of historic field boundaries, probably post-medieval in date (17th or 18th century). The land was purchased by Bridport Town Council in 1919 or 1920 with the view of building 278 houses for 'working-class' families. Construction began in 1920 at the N end with houses in Alexandra Road (1920-23), followed by the housing in Queens Road in 1923-27.

The suburb was designed by Barry Parker (1867-1947), most famous for his partnership with Raymond Unwin and their prominent involvement in the early-20th-century 'Garden City' concepts, such as Letchworth (1904) and Hampstead (1906). After their partnership was dissolved in 1914, Parker moved into town planning projects.

SIGNIFICANCE

The building is not listed, but is within the Conservation Area, which was extended as part of a boundary review undertaken with the Conservation Area Appraisal (2010). The building is also considered to be a **non-designated heritage asset**, for the following reasons:

- **group value** – The building forms part of the earliest phases of the suburb, focussing on housing along Alexandra Road and around a prominent oval green ringed by Queens Road. There is a strong degree of spatial and architectural uniformity throughout the two early phases, with very few significant changes having occurred to the buildings;
- **historical association** – The building is significant for its part in the overall development and its association with Barry Parker, one of the most prominent Arts and Crafts architects of the early 20th century. In addition, the suburb has a place in illustrating the continuation of the 'garden suburb' concept throughout the early decades of the 20th century.

The Bridport Conservation Area Appraisal (2010) provides a brief overview of the Skilling extension (pp. 64-67), from which certain characteristics of the area emerge:

- high degree of surviving architectural uniformity to the Phase 1 (Alexandra Road) and Phase 2 (Queens Road), distinctive from later phases;
- the consistency and simplicity of the design of the original housing scheme remains legible, with original materials (brick, pebble-dash, roof tiles) in evidence;
- spacious plots with houses set back from the roadside evident in both phases and distinguish the 1920s elements from later, more dense development, emphasised by the large green at Queens Road;
- retention of earlier field boundaries in the phase layout; and
- key views through the site, including the view NE along Queens Road which is aligned with the Town hall cupola and N and W views along Alexandra.

Though the building is not identified as an important local building in the Appraisal, it is considered to be a **positive contributor** to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

PROPOSALS

As well as some internal alterations, the proposals broadly comprise the construction of a porch to the front elevation and, at the rear, a two-storey extension to provide an enlarged kitchen/dining room at ground-floor level and 2No additional bedrooms and a study on the first-floor. In addition, a further single-storey extension would be added to provide additional ground-floor space to the kitchen/dining room.

MAIN ISSUES

3 Queens Road is not listed, but is situated within a Conservation Area. Therefore the main issues to be considered are:

- 1. the impact of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the Bridport Conservation Area;**
- 2. the impact of the proposed development on the significance of the building as a non-designated heritage asset, including any contribution made by its setting;**
- 3. if harm is identified to the significance of designated heritage assets, any substantial public benefits that could outweigh any harm caused, along with any other relevant tests in national or local policy; and**
- 4. if harm is identified to non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement taking into account the significance of the affected asset(s) and the scale of harm or loss.**

COMMENTS ON PROPOSALS

Though we have no objections in principle to some form of extension, we have several concerns about the scheme as currently proposed, particularly in light of the characteristics of the Conservation Area identified above.

One of these characteristics is the extent to which the original appearance and form of the buildings around Queens Road survives with few significant changes. Porches/front extensions have been added to Nos. 10, 11 and 18 and to a handful of buildings along Alexandra Road, but overall the majority of the houses retain their original, simple frontages and these aforementioned additions detract from the area's character and appearance. Added to the semi-detached pair of Nos. 1 and 3 are situated at a prominent position at the junction of Queens Road and Alexandra Road, with their frontages prominent from Alexandra Road to the N. Though the proposed porch is modest in size, it will considerably alter the front elevation, not least by obscuring the current inset porch with the distinctive rounded brick arch that characterises the houses on the S side of Queens Road and, indeed, distinguishes them from surrounding houses with their flat-head doorways. For these reasons we do not feel able to support the introduction of a porch.

At the rear of the property, there is an existing single-storey extension providing the current Dining Room and Utility Room. These are simple structures and clearly later additions and we have no objections in principle to their removal and replacement. Looking at aerial

imagery, large-scale rear extensions are present in the locality, but are rarer than simple, single-storey extensions which go further in retaining the original scale and character of the houses which, again, are remarkably uniform in these respects. The scale and character of No. 3 is particularly appreciable as it is set forward from the line of Nos. 5-7, meaning that its W gable (and rear extension) are visible from Queens Road. It is considered that a two-storey extension here would out-of-character and visually prominent, and thus detrimental to the character of the Conservation Area.

On the above basis, we consider that the proposals would result in harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area through eroding the characteristic uniformity of scale and design of the existing development. However, we consider that our concerns could be fully or partly addressed through one or more of the following means:

- removal of proposed porch element, or some other innovative solution which lessened its scale and retained a rounded brick arch brick detail; and
- reduction in scale of rear extension to single storey.

POLICY CONSIDERATION

In assessing the proposals, particular consideration has been given to the following:

- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended), sections 66, 72
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): section 16, in particular paras. 189, 190, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 200, 201
- West Dorset Weymouth and Portland Local Plan, in particular Policies ENV4, ENV10, ENV12
- Bridport Area Neighbourhood plan, 2020-2036, in particular Policy HT1

ADDITIONAL POLICY CONSIDERATION / GUIDANCE

Bridport Historic Urban Characterisation (Dorset Historic Towns Survey, 2011)
Bridport Conservation Area Appraisal (2010)
Design and Sustainable Development SPD (2009)

CONDITIONS

N/A

Informative

N/A

OFFICER: James Weir

TITLE: Senior Conservation Officer (Spatial Planning & Majors)

DATE: 21/01/2020

