

**WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL**  
**PLANNING CONTROL COMMITTEE**  
**10<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2003**  
**REPORT TO THE CHIEF PLANNING OFFICER**

**PCC 10/04/03**  
**PART 1**  
**ITEM NO**  
**FOR DECISION**  
**CPO**

**N6/2003/0122/FP**  
**ERECTION OF 1.8 METRE HIGH WELD MESH BOUNDARY FENCE**  
**STATION CAR PARK, CORNER OF OSBORN WAY AND CHURCH ROAD,**  
**WELWYN GARDEN CITY**

**APPLICANT: WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL**

(Handside)

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The application site is an open-air car park located to the east edge of the Welwyn Garden City Town Centre on the corner of Osborn Way and Church Road, south of the Howardsgate Shopping Centre. To the east of the site is the railway line and beyond the line are some large commercial/industrial buildings in the Welwyn Garden City Employment Area. The south and west boundaries of the site are bounded by landscaped buffer area with residential properties beyond the buffer area. The site falls within the Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area.
- 1.2 The site has a width of approximately 45 metres and a length of approximately 275 metres. The landscape buffer area to the west of the site has a width of approximately 11 metres and the landscape buffer area to the south has a width of approximately 22 metres. There is an existing double width 1.6-metre high hedgerow located on the east boundary of the site adjacent to Osborn Way with semi mature trees positioned intermittently within the hedgerow. The boundary to the rail line on the opposite side of Osborn Way is also protected by advanced landscaping.
- 1.3 The application is required to be considered by the Planning Control Committee as the applicant for the proposal is Welwyn Hatfield Council

**2.0 THE PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 This proposal in its entirety involves the erection of a new weld mesh fence around the majority of the car park perimeter. However the application is only comprised of the section of the fence abutting Osborn Way, as this is the only element of the proposal, which requires planning permission. Planning permission is required for this element as it is a fence higher than one metre abutting a highway. The weld mesh fence is proposed to have a height of 1.8 metres with support posts of equal height and is proposed to be black in colour. The element of the proposal which requires planning approval is proposed to be positioned on the west (car park) side of the existing hedgerow on the respective boundary and will involve clearance of part of the existing hedgerow width to allow installation.

**3.0 SITE HISTORY**

C6/0452/87/FP

Temporary railway station, ticket office, car park and foot bridge  
Approved 10/07/1987

C6/768/88/FP  
Extension to proposed permanent public car park  
Approved 26/08/1988

#### **4.0 PLANNING POLICY**

##### 4.1 Welwyn Hatfield District Local Plan Alterations No. 1 1998:

- BEV5 Welwyn Garden City
- BEV10 Conservation Area
- Gen Criteria 1 (Design and Siting of Buildings)

#### **5.0 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED**

5.1 The application was publicised by notification of properties adjoining the application site and a notice was displayed on the site for 21 days. No representations were received.

#### **6.0 DISCUSSION**

6.1 An eclectic range of built form characterizes this area of the Welwyn Garden City Town Centre and land uses. This results in a sensitive interface between residential land and public service land such as the subject car park and the railway line. An important feature of the application site is the use of landscaping to soften the visual appearance of this very necessary but less attractive feature of the town. The general aim of the policies guiding the assessment of the proposals in this area is to only allow proposals, which enhance the character of the Conservation Area, in terms of style, form, scale, materials/detailing and landscaping.

6.2 It is considered the proposed 1.8 metre high weld mesh fence will not be visually obtrusive to the character of the area. In my opinion the proposed fence abutting Osborn Way will be a reasonably attractive design solution, which allows a high level of transparency whilst still serving a security function. It is considered the proposal to use a black chain mesh will enable the fence to blend and harmonise with the built form and fabric of the surrounding area. Furthermore it is considered the visual impact of the proposed fence on the surrounding area will be further softened by the retention of a single width of the existing hedgerow and the intermittent trees on the highway side of the proposed fence.

6.3 It is noted that due to the transparency of the fence mentioned above this landscaping will be visible from the highway, from within the car park, and from the surrounding area. To this end, it is considered the proposed fence will not harm the visual amenity of the application site. The surrounding area will not be harmed and the quality of the built environment will be adequately preserved. Therefore the proposal is considered to be consistent with policies BEV 5 – Welwyn Garden City, BEV 10 Development within Conservation Areas and Gen Criteria 1 (design and siting of buildings).

- 6.4 It is considered the proposed fence will not have any adverse impacts on the amenity of the neighbouring residential properties as they are adequately setback and screened from the application site.
- 6.5 It is understood that it is intended to retain the existing chain mesh fence along the western and southern boundaries of the application site and locate the new fence adjacent to the existing fence. Whilst it is acknowledged this element of the proposal does not require planning permission it is considered that the existing fence is in a dilapidated state and removal of this fence would be a visually preferable solution for the site.

## **7.0 CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The proposed fence is considered acceptable in this location and will not harm the character or appearance of the Conservation area. The fence is considered to be consistent with the policies BEV5 – Welwyn Garden City, BEV 10 Development within Conservation Areas and Gen Criteria 1 (design and siting of buildings) of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan.

## **8.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 8.1 I recommend that planning application N6/2003/122/FP be approved subject to the following conditions:

- |    |      |                                     |
|----|------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. | SCO1 | Standard time limit full permission |
| 2. | SC19 | Materials – details to be submitted |
| 3. | SC09 | Standard Landscaping Condition      |

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Welwyn Hatfield District Plan Alterations No. 1 1998

