

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL – ESTATE MANAGEMENT SCHEME
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No:	W6/2013/1062/EM
APPLICATION Site:	65 Lemsford Lane, Welwyn Garden City

NOTATION:

The site lies within the Estate Management Scheme area under the Leasehold Reform Act 1967

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND PROPOSAL:

The application site is an end of terrace dwelling located along Lemsford Lane. The dwelling is set back from the highway, separated by a small front garden and public amenity space. The dwellings in the area are of similar architectural design.

EMS HISTORY:

W6/2012/2525/EM: Loft conversion comprising of two rear Velux roof windows. Approved.

POLICIES:

Estate Management Scheme (EMS) Policies (October 2008):

EM3 – Soft Landscaping

EM4 - Hardstandings

CONSULTATIONS:

WHBC Landscaping and Ecology – The vehicular cross over would impact on the hornbeam tree at the front of the site.

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS:

None

REPRESENTATIONS:

This application has been advertised and no representations have been received.
Period expired

DISCUSSION:

The main issue is:

1. **Whether the proposal maintains and enhances the amenities and values of Welwyn Garden City and neighbouring occupiers;**
2. **Protected species; and**
3. **Other material considerations**

1. The need to accommodate the rise in car ownership has resulted in pressure for vehicular hard standings on the frontages of homes and this has over time resulted in a change to the appearance of streets. The removal of excessive areas or prominent landscaping such as trees and hedges rather than the hard standing itself can over time erode character. Accordingly, the Council will only allow hard surfacing (paths, paving, concrete, gravelled areas, drives and hard standings) in front gardens for the parking of private motor vehicles which retain or create sufficient soft 'green' landscaping (grass, flower beds, shrubs, trees and hedges) and a sufficient length of hedgerow (if applicable) along the frontage of the property to reduce the visual prominence of parked vehicles. The Council will aim to ensure that a significant proportion, around 50% unless individual circumstances indicate that this would not be appropriate, of the frontage is retained as landscaped 'greenery' to retain the appearance and ethos of the garden city.

The space for a single hard standing for a car must be no less than 4.8 x 2.4m and this policy also applies to side gardens facing either open space, footpaths or roads.

Because of the sheer number of unauthorised hardstandings within the EMS area, members of the Council have agreed to the following approach. In assessing applications for hardstandings that may not retain a balance of hard and soft landscaping, or involve removal of a hedge or landscaping beyond the minimum required to access the hardstanding and therefore are contrary to EM4, the case officer is to make an assessment based on the existing amenities and values of the street scene (to include an assessment of the number of unauthorised and authorised hardstandings and characteristics of the street scene and in the case of unauthorised hard standings the likelihood of obtaining injunctive relief to remedy the breach) and to then weigh the disadvantages of allowing the hardstanding.

In this case the proposal would incorporate slate chips and concrete to the entire frontage of the dwelling contrary to policy EM4. Whilst slate chips forming hardstanding already exist across the majority of the frontage of the property, the existing hedge to the front boundary obscures the view of this predominately from Lemsford Lane. The proposal includes the central section of hedge to the front of the site to be removed which would make the hardstanding visible from the street frontage. However, whilst unauthorised, the slate chips have been to the front of the property for a period of over 6 years which was when the applicant moved to the dwelling and which was confirmed by the applicant. In addition, the number of authorised and unauthorised hardstandings in the area has significantly altered the character and appearance of the street scene, such that the current proposal which is for 100% of hard standing would not be detrimental to the amenities and values of the area and it would not be expedient.

The proposal includes the loss of approximately 2m of the existing central section of the hedge to the front of the site to make way for the vehicular access. Given that the amount of hedge proposed to be removed is this minimum amount necessary to enable a vehicle into the site, it is considered that no objections would be raised in this regard.

The proposed crossover would come very close to the base of the hornbeam tree at the front of the site which is on highway land and will require the severing of roots

which will have detrimental effect on the tree. There will also be issues with canopy clearance for vehicles on and off the drive. The tree in question is part of group on the highway verges which are an important feature and contribute to the landscape in this area. However this tree is outside of the application site and outside the Estate Management Scheme therefore a refusal in this regard would not be warranted. However, Hertfordshire County Council would be able to make an assessment of the acceptability of this when the applicant makes an application to drop the kerb.

The proposed development maintains and enhances the amenities and values of the Garden City and no objections are raised with regard to the Estate Management Scheme, Policies EM3 and EM4.

CONCLUSION:

It is considered that the proposal maintains and enhances the amenities and values of the Garden City and no objections are raised with regard to the Estate Management Scheme.

CONDITIONS:

- 1-5. EM01a
6. C.13.1: The development/works shall not be started and completed other than in accordance with the

Site Location Plan & Proposed Driveway received and dated 16 May 2013.

REASON: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved drawings and any changes must be agreed in advance in writing by the Council.

REASON FOR APPROVAL

It is considered that the proposed development does not have an unacceptably harmful impact on the amenities and values of the area in which it is located. It is therefore in compliance with the Estate Management Scheme.

INFORMATIVES

1. Hertfordshire County Council Transportation Planning and Strategy requires the construction of the vehicle cross-over to be undertaken such that the works are carried out to their specification and by a contractor who is authorised to work in the public highway. The applicant will need to apply to the County Council Highways via either the website

<http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/transtreets/highways/> or telephone 0300 1234047 to arrange this.

2. INF11

Signature of author..... Date.....