

**WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL – ESTATE MANAGEMENT SCHEME**  
**DELEGATED REPORT**

**APPLICATION No:** W6/2013/2112/EM

**SITE ADDRESS:** 9 Stanborough Mews, Welwyn Garden City

**DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT:** Formation of vehicle hardstanding

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**RECOMMENDATION:** REFUSAL WITH REASON

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**1. SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL:**

The property at the application site forms the left hand side of a pair of semi-detached dwellings located within a road of similar dwelling house types. The streetscene is characterised by modern dwellings, each with off-street parking for multiple vehicles to the front and sides. The properties on Stanborough Mews have a mixture of lawn, hedgerows and planting as part of their frontage. An area of approximately 6sqm of hedgerow and bushes to the front of the dwelling has already been removed without consent and has been not replaced by any other form of soft landscaping.

This application seeks for Estate Management consent for the formation of an of vehicle hardstanding, measuring approximately 35sqm to the front of the property.

**2. SITE DESIGNATION:**

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

**3. RELEVANT ESTATE MANAGEMENT HISTORY:**

None

**4. CONSULTATIONS:**

None

**5. NEIGHBOUR REPRESENTATIONS:**

The application has been advertised through neighbour consultation and 2 responses have been received, raising the following comments:

- Concern over the potential disruption caused by the increase in vehicle movements from creating additional parking.
- An area of shrubs/hedge has already been removed in readiness for formation of hardstanding.
- The area of greenery to be removed is excessive.
- There have been no other extensions to hardstanding to the frontages of neighbouring properties along Stanborough Mews.
- Less than the required 50% of soft landscaping would be retained as a result of the works.

**6. TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIONS**

No representations have been received from the town/parish council.

## **7. MAIN PLANNING ISSUES AND RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES:**

The main planning issues with this application are:

- (a) Whether the proposal maintains and enhances the amenities and values of Welwyn Garden City (EM3 & EM4)

## **8. ANALYSIS:**

### **(a) Whether the proposal maintains and enhances the amenities and values of Welwyn Garden City**

The need to accommodate the rise in car ownership has resulted in pressure for vehicular hardstandings 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.

Originally, the soft landscaping forming the frontage of the application site covered an area of approximately 44sqm. Approximately 6sqm of hedgerow and bushes have already been removed and it is proposed to remove a further area of approximately 29sqm of lawn (removal of 35sqm in total) and replace it with a hard surface for vehicular parking. The application also involves the creation of a 3sqm flower bed abutting the front wall, to the left of the front door. Therefore, as a result of the works, the area of soft landscaping retained as part of the frontage would be approximately 27%. The proportion of soft landscaping to be retained is considered to be insufficient as there would not be an appropriate balance between hard and soft landscaping. The neighbouring properties along Stanborough Mews have retained an appropriate proportion of soft landscaping on the land forming their frontage. Therefore the proposal would be harmful to the appearance of the streetscene and the amenities and values of the Garden City contrary to the criteria of Policy EM3 and EM4.

## **9. CONCLUSION:**

It is considered that the proposal fails to maintain and enhance the amenities and values of the Garden City and is therefore not compliant with the Estate Management Scheme.

## **10. REASON FOR REFUSAL:**

1. The proposed formation of the hardstanding and the removal of 6msq of hedgerow and bushes would not retain an appropriate balance between hard and soft landscaping and would fail to maintain and enhance the amenities and values of the Garden City. The proposal is therefore contrary to the requirements of policies EM3 and EM4 of the Estate Management Scheme.

**SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE REFUSAL OF PERMISSION:**

The decision has been made taking into account material planning considerations and where practicable and appropriate the requirements of paragraphs 186-187 of the National Planning Policy Framework (see Officer's report which can be inspected online at the Council's website or at these offices).

**INFORMATIVES:**

None

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