

**WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - PLANNING, PUBLIC PROTECTION AND GOVERNANCE**

DELEGATED APPLICATION

Application No: 6/2019/2208/EM
Location: 177 Parkway Welwyn Garden City AL8 6JA
Proposal: Extension of existing driveway
Officer: Mr James Homer

Recommendation: Refused

6/2019/2208/EM

Context			
Site and Application description	<p>No.177 Parkway is a two storey mid-terrace dwelling located on the eastern side of Parkway and opposite the entrance to Stanborough Green. The property set back from the highway and at a lower level than the adjacent public footpath.</p> <p>The property received estate management consent (W6/2010/1276/EM) for the existing driveway which is set within the front garden and partly on an area of highways land between the front boundary of the property and the public footpath, however, the current layout of the front garden is not in accordance with the Estate Management Scheme consent that was granted.</p>		
Constraints	Estate Management Scheme, as defined within the Leasehold Reform Act 1967		
Relevant history	<p>Enforcement</p> <p>Application Number: ENF/2016/0343 Decision: Decision Date: Proposal: Removing conifers and works to hedge</p> <p>Planning</p> <p>Application Number: W6/2010/1276/EM Decision: Granted Decision Date: 15 September 2010 Proposal: Formation of Vehicle Hardstanding and Crossover</p>		
Notifications			
Neighbour representations	Support: 0	Object: 1	Other: 0
Summary of neighbour responses	<p>Mr & Mrs Routledge 179 Parkway</p> <p>Comment: Object due to the rise in height of the front garden to accommodate the driveway. Concerns about loss of privacy and the front of the property being out of keeping with the rest of Parkway. Also concerned that the development will lead to further loss of hedges and soft/green landscaping.</p>		
Consultee responses	None received.		
Relevant Policies			

EM1 EM2 EM3 EM4

Considerations

Design (form, size, scale, siting) and Character (impact upon amenities and values of Garden City)

Policy EM4 of the Estate Management Scheme seeks to retain the appearance of the Garden City while accommodating the increased pressure for vehicle hard standings due to the rise in car ownership over recent years. In doing so, Policy EM4 states that proposals to construct hardstanding should retain or create sufficient soft 'green' landscaping to help preserve the character of Welwyn Garden City. To help achieve this, the council aims to ensure that a significant proportion, 50% minimum, of the frontage is retained as soft/green landscape to retain the amenities and values of the Garden City, unless individual circumstances indicate that this would not be appropriate. In addition Policy EM3 seeks the retention of hedgerows and trees within the estate management area as they are a key provision in helping the Garden City to retain its unique character.

The application seeks to increase the current driveway by extending the area of hardstanding further into the front garden. As stated previously, the existing driveway is partly located on highways land, therefore only the area within the curtilage of the property has been used to calculate the quantity of hardstanding proposed.

The front garden has an approx. area of 62m². At present, hardstanding covers approx. 29m² which represents 47% coverage and includes a footpath which was not part of the application previously approved (W6/2010/1276/EM). This application would see the area of hardstanding extended further into the front garden resulting in approx. 34m² of the front garden being hard landscaped, approx. 54%. In addition to the increase in size, the application proposes to raise the height of the hardstanding so that it is level with the existing hardstanding, rather than follow the natural slope of the garden. The elevation drawing does not show what the height of the raised driveway will be but does include the addition of steps from the front of the property to access the driveway. From visiting the site it would clearly be a significant increase. The surface of the driveway would be permeable block paving, however, no detail has been provided regarding how the raised area will be constructed or how the rest of the front garden will relate to the raised hardstanding.

Although the amount of hardstanding may be considered acceptable due to the restricted parking along Parkway, the proposal to raise the driveway would result in a change in land levels which would be inconsistent with surrounding properties. This is considered an incongruous addition to the front of the property and would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the street scene and the wider amenities and values of the area. Once a vehicle is parked on the driveway it would particularly effect the amenity of the neighbouring properties, as the vehicle would be much closer to the dwelling than at present, and would result in a negative impact on privacy and outlook.

Policy EM3 seeks the retention of hedgerows and trees within the estate management area as they are a key provision in helping the Garden City to retain its unique character.

The existing and proposed site plans show hedges running along the edge of the public footpath on Parkway. In reality, these hedges are back from the footpath and are located on the property boundary. The proposed plan shows a section of the right hand side hedge missing, which is on highways land. In addition, the small hedge in the garden of no.177 that runs along the boundary

	with no.179 is shown as removed, presumably to be replaced with grass. It is not clear from the proposed plan if the hedges on highways land would be removed. As such they are outside of the curtilage of the property and cannot be considered as part of this application. The hedge on the boundary with no.179 is shown as being removed, which is not considered necessary to accommodate the proposed driveway. Consent to remove hedges is rarely given without sound justification and no justifiable cause has been given within the application.
Impact on neighbours	The proposal would impact upon neighbour amenity in terms of privacy and outlook – see above.
Landscaping issues (incl. hardstandings)	Landscaping issues are discussed above.
Any other considerations	None.
Conclusion	
The proposed alterations to the level of the front garden to accommodate the extended hardstanding would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the street scene and the wider amenities and values of the area. The proposal would also effect the amenity of the neighbouring properties which would result in a negative impact on privacy and outlook. In addition, sound justification for the removal of the hedge on the neighbouring boundary has not be given. The application, therefore, does not satisfy the requirements of Policies EM3 and EM4 of the Estate Management Scheme.	

Reasons for Refusal:

1. The proposed alterations to the level of the front garden to accommodate the extended hardstanding would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the street scene and the wider amenities and values of the area. The proposal would also effect the amenity of the neighbouring properties which would result in a negative impact on privacy and outlook. In addition, sound justification for the removal of the hedge on the neighbouring boundary has not be given. The application, therefore, does not satisfy the requirements of Policies EM3 and EM4 of the Estate Management Scheme.

REFUSED DRAWING NUMBERS

2.

Plan Number	Revision Number	Details	Received Date
4794-E01		Existing Plan	5 September 2019
4794-OS1		Location Plan	5 September 2019
4794-P01	C	Proposed Plan	16 October 2019
4794-OS2	A	Block Plan	6 September 2019

Informatives:

1. The existing layout of the front garden is not in accordance with the plans approved under application W6/2010/1276/EM. It is recommended that an Estate Management Scheme application is submitted in an attempt to regularise the existing scheme, or return the front garden to a condition that reflects the plans approved under application W6/2010/1276/EM.

Determined By:

Mr Michael Robinson
11 November 2019