

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No: N6/2014/1741/FP

**SITE ADDRESS: WELWYN AMBULANCE STATION, ASCOT LANE, WGC, AL7
4HL**

DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT: ADDITIONAL EXTERNAL PARKING

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE

1. SITE AND APPLICATION DESCRIPTION:

The application site comprises part of an area of grassed amenity land containing a number of mature and semi-mature trees situated on the north side of the Welwyn Garden City Ambulance Station (garage building). Also on site, to the west is the 2-storey associated Ambulance office block which is located on the west side of Ascots Lane directly opposite the Queen Elizabeth II Hospital on the east side of Ascots Lane. The land itself is marked/bounded by railings on the north side of the site and wire fence. The southern and western boundaries of the land are marked by public footpaths connecting the cul-de-sac at Dayemead with West Mead to the west, and Howlands to the north.

2. SITE DESIGNATION:

The site lies within the Town Boundary for Welwyn Garden City as designated on Inset Map No. 3 in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

None

4. CONSULTATIONS:

None

5. NEIGHBOUR REPRESENTATIONS:

No representations have been received from the public.

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) The principle of development
- b) The impact on the character and appearance of the site and surroundings arising from the public amenity land being used as private garden land
- c) other material; considerations

8. ANALYSIS:

- a) The site lies within the settlement boundary for Welwyn Garden City where in principle proposals for the development of land in relation to residential uses is acceptable subject to the provisions of Policies contained in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 – in this case Policies D1, D2, D3, D4 and D8; advice contained in the National Planning policy Framework 2012, (NPPF), and to any other material planning considerations.
- b) The proposal is for the change of use of this pocket of amenity land. The land is well-related to the dwelling at No. 7 Dayemead and is tucked away around the corner adjacent to the footpaths described in 1. above. It reads as part of the garden serving this dwelling and not really as an area of public amenity land that makes a visually important contribution to the character of the site and surroundings. It does not provide for any public recreation provision given the fencing around it.

The present fence around it is between 82 and 90 cm high and is in poor condition, the proposed replacement wooden picket fence would be approximately 91.5 cm in height with the vertical slats being linked by horizontal wooden strips as opposed to the present wire. This slight change in appearance is considered to be acceptable as it would not have an unacceptably adverse visual impact on the character of the site and surroundings. It would arguably be an improvement in visual terms. Any change in the colour of the new fence can be conditioned.

The amenity area is in public ownership and is planted with shrubs. It has not been maintained for a number of years and appears untidy and unloved. The proposal presents an opportunity for its appearance to be improved, and maintained in the longer term.

- c) Other material considerations

There are no other material planning considerations connected with this case that have not been covered in a) and b) above. No neighbours amenities are affected.

- 9. CONCLUSION:** The application is acceptable and should be approved. It accords with the provisions of Policies contained in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 – in this case Policies D1, D2, D3, D4 and D8. Permitted Development rights regarding fences (see Part 2 of the PGDO 1995 as amended) should be removed to enable the LPA to control the visual impact of any future changes to the means of enclosure of the land, thus minimising any potentially adverse visual impacts on the character of the site and surroundings.

10. CONDITIONS:

1. C.2.1 - Time limit for commencement of development

2. C.13.1 - Development in accordance with approved plans and details comprising Drawing Nos. AEA 2 – Site location plan at 1:1,250 scale & Block Plan at 1:200 scale & Proposed Site Layout Plan and New Fence Details on A4 sheet. All received and dated 22 July, 2014.
3. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any Order revoking or re-enacting that Order with or without modification) no fences, gates or walls (other than those expressly approved by this planning permission) shall be constructed within the site or on the site boundaries, unless permission is granted on an application made to the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To enable the Local Planning Authority to fully consider the effects of development normally permitted by that order in the interests of residential and visual amenity in accordance with Policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE GRANT OF PERMISSION:

The decision has been made taking into account, where practicable and appropriate the requirements of paragraphs 186-187 of the National Planning Policy Framework and material planning considerations do not justify a decision contrary to the development plan (see Officer's report which can be inspected at these offices).

INFORMATIVES:

The applicant is advised that the site lies within the Welwyn Garden City Estate Management Area and that any proposals for the erection of fencing around the site area subject of this planning permission require Estate Management Consent from the Borough Council. This is because the dwellings in Dayemead, including the application property, lie within the Historic Garden City Area of Welwyn Garden City. The purpose of the Estate Management Scheme is to apply controls for the preservation and enhancement of the character, values and amenity of the Historic Garden City, and applies to developments which may or may not require planning permission . Details and forms are available on-line at the Borough Council's website www.welhat.gov.uk

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