

**WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT  
DELEGATED REPORT**

**APPLICATION No:** W6/2015/0930/EM

**SITE ADDRESS:** 15 Sherrardspark Road

**DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT:** Formation of grasscrete driveway and installation of a new side access gates

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**RECOMMENDATION:** APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS

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**1. SITE AND APPLICATION DESCRIPTION:**

The application site is located centrally south of Sherrardspark Road in a small cull de sac off the main highway and comprises of a large two storey detached dwelling house with front and rear gardens. The immediate street scene is residential in character with large two storey detached dwellings similar in size, design and appearance to the application dwelling. Soft landscaping is present with grassland and hardstanding to the front. The front of the dwelling is set back from the highway. The dwelling is finished in a mixed red/brown brick with pitched roof and concrete tiles.

The application seeks estate management consent to replace part grass with a grasscrete driveway and installation of a new side access gates.

**2. SITE DESIGNATION:**

The site lies within the town of Welwyn Garden City under the Leasehold Reform Act 1967.

**3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:**

None

**4. CONSULTATIONS:**

None

**5. NEIGHBOUR REPRESENTATIONS:**

No representations have been received from the public.

**6. POLICIES**

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

EM1 – Extensions and Alterations

EM4 - Hardstandings

**7. ANALYSIS**

The main issue is:

- **Whether the proposal maintains and enhances the amenities and values of Welwyn Garden City and neighbouring occupiers**

## **EM1 – Extensions and Alterations**

Policy EM1 of the Estate Management Scheme is relevant and concerns extensions and alterations. It seeks to preserve the unique architectural heritage of the town and its buildings and only allows extensions and alterations if they are in keeping with the design, appearance, materials and architectural detailing used in the existing building and do not have a detrimental impact on the amenities and values of the surrounding area or the residential amenity of adjoining occupiers.

The proposal to erect new wrought iron gates near to the application sites south eastern boundary would be a relatively small alteration. The proposed gate matches the existing gate near to the application sites south western boundary. It is considered to be acceptable in relation to the existing dwelling and is in context with other nearby dwellings most notably no. 17 Sherrardspark Road which access gates sited each side of the dwelling. The proposal therefore reflects the front access and appearance to other dwellings in the vicinity of the site. Furthermore the proposed gate would be well screened by hedging located along the south eastern boundary. It is therefore considered that the proposal, by virtue of its siting, scale and design maintains and enhances the amenities and values of the Garden City in accordance with policy EM1.

## **EM4 – Hardsurfacing**

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 hard standings within the EMS area, members of the council have agreed to the following approach. In assessing applications for hard standings 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 hard standing 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 hard standings 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 hard standing.

The proposed replacement of a strip of grassland with grasscrete along the south eastern border between an existing hedgerow and an existing path is not considered a significant alteration given it does not propose extending the sites existing hardstanding. In this context the proposal would be considered in accordance with the provisions of Policy EM4 as it retains a sufficient balance between hard and soft landscaping. Furthermore the proposal is partially obscured by the existing hedgerow sited along the eastern boundary, this hedgerow would be retained. Overall it is considered that the proposal would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the existing streetscene and would sufficiently maintain the amenities and values of the Garden City.

**8. CONCLUSION:**

It is considered that the proposed development does not have an unacceptably harmful impact on the residential amenity or the character of the area in which it is located. By virtue of the proposed side gate being in accordance with policy EM1, and the proposed replacement of grass with grasscrete is in accordance with EM4. It is therefore in compliance with the Estate Management Scheme.

**9. CONDITIONS:**

EM01. 1 – 5.

6. EM.13.1 The development/works shall not be started and completed other than in accordance with the approved plans and details: Site Location Plan 1:1250 and DD2187-1 Rev A and DD2187- 2 (1 of 4) Rev A and DD2187- 2 (2 of 4) Rev A and DD2187- 2 (3 of 4) Rev A and DD2187- 2 (4 of 4) Rev A received and dated 1st May 2015 unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Council.

7. EM03.

**INFORMATIVE:**

1. INF11- Damage to Grass Verges

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