

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL  
ESTATE MANAGEMENT SCHEME PANEL – 17 OCTOBER 2019  
REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR (PUBLIC PROTECTION, PLANNING  
AND GOVERNANCE)

6/2019/1460/EM

8 PICKETTS WELWYN GARDEN CITY AL8 7HJ

FORMATION OF HARDSTANDING

APPLICANT: Mrs F Faulkner

**1. Background**

- 1.1 This is an appeal against the refusal of Estate Management (EM) Consent for the formation of hard standing. The application was refused on the 7 August 2019 for the following reason:

*“The proposed development would result in the loss of soft landscaping and removal of hedgerow to the front of the dwelling, making the hard standing appear unduly prominent within the street scene, which would adversely affect the character and appearance of the property and street scene, detrimental to the amenities and values of this part of the Garden City, contrary to Policies EM3 and EM4 of the Estate Management Scheme.”*

**2. Site Description**

- 2.1 The site contains a two storey, mid-terraced dwelling, located on the east side of Sherrards. The row of terraced properties, including the appeal property itself, feature soft landscaping to the front of the site, with hedgerows along the boundary treatment. The front of these properties are visible within the street scene.

**3. The Proposal**

- 3.1 The appellant seeks to extend the existing hard standing within the front of the garden and remove 3.4m of the existing hedgerow along the front boundary. The proposed hard standing would measure approximately 3.4m in width and 5.0m in depth. The hedgerow would also be reduced from 4.4m in width to 1m.

**4. Relevant Estate Management History**

- 4.1. None relevant

**5. Policy**

5.1. Estate Management Scheme Policies (October 2008)

EM3 – Soft Landscaping

EM4 – Hard Landscaping

**6. Representations Received**

6.1. A neighbour representation has been received from No.3 Picketts, which is in favour of the scheme. The owner/occupier comments can be summarised as follows:

- The scheme would alleviate a congested cul-de-sac; improve highway safety, particularly in winter; and would improve the turning facility in the road end;
- Visually the effect of this hard standing would not be detrimental to the street scene; and
- The visual impact comes from the green spaces at the north and south ends of the lower stretch of the road.

**7. Discussion**

7.1. This is an appeal against the refusal of Estate Management consent. The appellant's letter of appeal is attached at Appendix 1, and the original officer's delegated report is attached at Appendix 2.

7.2. The key issue in the determination of this appeal is the impact of the proposed hard standing and loss of hedgerow upon the amenities and values of the surrounding area. The impact on the residential amenity of adjoining occupiers is considered acceptable.

7.3. In recognition of the importance of Welwyn Garden City as a unique town and in order to protect the amenities and values of the Garden City, the Estate Management Scheme (EMS) was set up. The purpose of the Management Scheme and its importance to homeowners is to ensure that homes and street scenes are kept in harmony with the original design and concept of the town.

7.4. Policy EM3 of the EMS states that works to trees and hedgerows will only be allowed where the works would not result in the loss of landscaping which would harm the character and amenities of the area and where sufficient justification for the works has been given or there are other considerations that apply.

7.5. Policy EM4 of the EMS states that proposals for hard surfacing, for the parking of private vehicles in front gardens will only be allowed where the works would retain an appropriate balance between hard and soft landscaping and do not result in the loss of any existing hedgerows or landscaping along the boundary, other than the minimum required to access the hard standing, that would be harmful to the amenities and values of the street scene in which it is located.

- 7.6. The appeal property is located within a row of terraced properties of similar design. The majority of these properties have hedgerows along the front boundary treatment, with soft landscaping behind and hard standing forming a footpath from the street to the front door. This is a key characteristic of Picketts and the wider Garden City values and amenities.
- 7.7. The loss of the hedgerow would be visible from the street scene, and is considered to be harmful to the amenities and values of the property itself and to the wider surrounding area.
- 7.8. Furthermore, works to hedgerows will only be allowed where sufficient justification has been given. In this instance, the appellant has provided justification, in that, there is a lack of on street car parking spaces. Nevertheless, this is not considered to justify the harm identified in the removal of the hedgerow upon the values and amenities of the immediate locality and the Garden City. The loss of the hedgerow within the EMS would therefore conflict with Policy EM3 of the EMS.
- 7.9. The loss of the hedgerow would also increase the visibility of the hard standing proposed. Whilst over 50% of soft landscaping would remain, the removal of the majority of the front hedge and the siting of hard landscaping proposed within the front garden would result in the hard standing being significantly prominent within the street scene and would disrupt the uniformity shared amongst the terraced properties. For this reason, it is considered that the proposal would be detrimental to the amenities and values of the area.
- 7.10. A case has been advanced by the appellant in support of their appeal. This includes photographs indicating numerous large commercial vehicles parked in the road. In addition to this, the appellant expresses that their property is at the end of the cul-de-sac, and the hard standing would allow a safer turning area and that the design proposed would not eradicate soft landscaping detrimental to the guidelines.
- 7.11. Whilst it is appreciated that the parking of cars on the highway can impact upon highway safety, this is not within the remit of the EMS.
- 7.12. The appellant also proposes to reduce the amount of hedgerow lost to 3m as opposed to the 3.4m that was originally proposed, and also proposes to reduce the amount of hardstanding for parking provision to 4.8m rather than 5m.
- 7.13. This would not however overcome the harm identified. The majority of the terrace properties have soft landscaping to the front with hardstanding forming a path from the street to the front door. The loss of the hedgerow and installation of hardstanding would therefore disrupt the uniformity shared amongst these properties. The proposal would consequently appear out of keeping and prominent within the street scene. As such, it would still be contrary to Policies EM3 and EM4 of the EMS.
- 7.14. Despite the appellant's submission and alterations proposed a compelling case has not been demonstrated why the circumstances advanced by the occupants

of this particular property, when considered in its context, should override the wider values and amenities of this part of Picketts and the surrounding streetscene.

7.15. For this reason, the view remains that the proposal fails to reflect the character and appearance of the street scene. The proposed development therefore fails to maintain the amenities and values of the EMS.

## **8. Conclusion**

8.1. No substantial additional evidence or information has been put forward by the appellant which adds to or would alter the Officer's recommendation. The proposed development would result in a loss of soft landscaping and removal of the hedgerow to the front of the dwelling, resulting in the hardstanding appearing unduly prominent within the street scene, which would adversely affect the character and appearance of the property and street scene, detrimental to the amenities and values of this part of the Garden City, contrary to Policies EM3 and EM4 of the EMS.

## **9. Recommendation**

9.1. That the Members uphold the delegated decision and dismiss the appeal.

Author Clare Howe (Development Management Officer)

Date: 3 October 2019

### Background papers:

Appendix 1: Appellant's grounds of appeal

Appendix 2: Original delegated officer's report



 <p>Council Offices, The Campus Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 6AE</p>	Title: 8 Picketts Welwyn Garden City		Scale: DNS
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