

**WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
DIRECTORATE OF STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT**

DELEGATED APPLICATION

Application No: 6/2015/2271/EM
Location: 104 Cole Green Lane, Welwyn Garden City, AL7 3JD
Proposal: Extended Driveway - removal of flower bed and small wall
Officer: Ms R Collard

Recommendation: Refused

1. SITE AND APPLICATION DESCRIPTION:

The application site comprises of an end of terrace dwellinghouse located on the southern side of Cole Green Lane.

The proposal seeks the retention of an existing paved driveway/parking area, which takes up the entire frontage.

2. SITE DESIGNATION:

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

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

None

4. CONSULTATIONS:

None

5. NEIGHBOUR REPRESENTATIONS:

None

6. TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIONS

Not Applicable

7. MAIN ISSUES AND RELEVANT POLICIES:

The main planning issues with this application are:

- a) **Whether the proposal maintains and enhances the amenities and values of Welwyn Garden City and neighbouring occupiers (EM4)**

8. ANALYSIS:

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

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 the character of an area. Therefore 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 existing frontage of the property at No.104 Cole Green covers an area of approximately 41.4m². It should be noted that Estate management consent was granted in 1992 for the formation of a vehicle hard standing and this was in accordance with the Council's Estate Management policies. This application is retrospective as the applicant has increased the area of hard standing to cover 100% of the property's frontage and the hedge along the front boundary has been removed.

Photographs have been submitted and show driveways to neighbouring properties including properties round the corner on Homestead Lane. It is noted that a number of properties within the immediate vicinity of the dwelling have hard standings, however it is observed that these tend to be suitable for one vehicle. The only property which has a hard standing that covers the whole frontage is no.105 Cole Green Lane, however no Estate Management consent would appear to have been granted at this site and therefore it is not considered that this site sets a precedent. It is noted that No.101 has a larger hardstanding than most, however its frontage is larger than other dwellings in the area, and is considered proportionate.

Whilst some sites have breached the 50% limit, it is considered that properties within the street still maintain soft landscaping in the form of grassed areas. It is considered that whilst the hard standing has been in place for a year, however it is contrary to Estate Management policies EM3 & EM4. Whilst properties benefit from hard standings in the area, they are of a suitable proportion maintaining sufficient areas of soft landscaping, maintaining the character of the area. In this instance an insufficient balance between hard and soft landscaping is provided and is therefore unacceptable.

9. CONCLUSION:

The proposal, by virtue of the extent of hard surfacing, results in harsh appearance within the street scene. Furthermore, the hard standing creates an unbalanced appearance and the lack of vegetation within the frontage and along the front boundary impacts the street scene adversely. Therefore the proposal will detrimentally impact upon the visual amenity of the area. This subsequently fails to comply with the provisions of Policy EM3 and EM4 of the Estates Management Scheme.

Reasons for Refusal:

1. The extent of the hard surfacing and lack of soft landscaping results in an adverse impact within the street scene and detrimentally impacts the amenities and values of the Estate Management area. The proposal therefore fails to comply with Policy EM3 of the Estate Management Scheme Policies.
2. Location Plan & Site Plan received and dated 23rd December 2015

Informatives:**Approved By:**

Mr A Mangham
24 February 2016