

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

DELEGATED APPLICATION

Application No: W6/2015/0739/EM
Location: 56 Broomhills Welwyn Garden City AL7 1RD
Proposal: Retention of vehicle hardstanding, new pathway and shrubbery
Officer: Mr S Dicocco

Recommendation: Refused

Context			
Site and Application description	<p>The site contains a two storey terraced dwelling with an attached garage projecting to the front on the west side of the dwelling. This results in an L shaped frontage wrapping around the garage. The frontage is approximately 4.6m deep from the garage, and approximately 11.6m deep from the front of the main part of the two storey dwelling.</p> <p>The proposal is for the retention of landscaping works to the frontage of the property. The existing frontage is entirely hard surfaced to a depth of approximately 4.5m level with the front of the garage. The remaining frontage beside the garage hosts a hard surfaced footpath between two planting areas. The boundary between the host dwelling and No.58 Broomhills is currently a hedgerow.</p> <p>Prior to the works, the frontage had hard surfacing to the front of the garage, as well as a narrow footpath alongside the garage to the front door of the property. The remainder of the frontage was soft landscaping, with approximately 3m of front facing hedgerow.</p>		
Constraints	Estate Management Scheme, as defined within the Leasehold Reform Act 1967		
Relevant history	None		
Consultations			
Neighbour representations	Support: 1	Object: 0	Other: 0
Summary of neighbour responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broomhills is very crowded with parked vehicles and I think my neighbours are to be commended for their action in taking a car off the road as well as being prepared to layout their front garden with thought and care 		
Relevant Policies			
<input type="checkbox"/> EM1 <input type="checkbox"/> EM2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EM3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EM4			
Considerations			
Landscaping issues (incl. hardstandings)	<p>The landscaping works which have taken place has resulted in an inappropriate balance of hard and soft landscaping. Additionally, the removal of the front hedgerow is contrary to policy EM4 which restricts the loss of hedgerows along the boundary, other than the minimum required to access the hard standing.</p> <p>The proposal has resulted in two side by side car parking spaces across the width of the frontage of the property. The limited soft landscaping proposed</p>		

	<p>would be set back approximately 4.5m from the street, and regularly obscured by parked vehicles. Given the purpose of policy EM4 is to retain the appearance and ethos of the Garden City through reducing the visual prominence of parked vehicles in light of the increased pressure for on-site car parking, the landscaping works which have taken place are in conflict not only with the aims and targets of the policy, but also the purpose behind the policy.</p> <p>The over-arching aim of policy EM4 is to maintain the values and amenities of the street scene in which the property is located. Having visited the street, one property benefits from similar hard landscaping and lack of screening (No.62 Broomhills). There is no record of Estate Management Consent having been given in for the works which have taken place at No.62, and as such, it is not considered that a precedent has been set.</p> <p>It is noted that other properties host significant hard landscaping while retaining good front soft landscaping screening. These examples are materially different to this application. It is felt that the frontage of No.56 Broomhills is visually prominent and contrasting to the majority of other frontages within the street. Accordingly, the retention of the landscaping works would be harmful to the values and amenities of the street scene in which it is located.</p> <p>Policy EM3 suggests that complete removal of hedgerows is rarely consented unless sufficient justification for the works have been given, or other considerations apply. In this case, the entirety of the front hedgerow has been removed. A letter stating that the application should be approved as many other houses in the estate have already completed similar work and therefore a precedent has been set has been put forth as justification. Given the above discussion in regards to any precedent being set, this justification is not considered sufficient. No other considerations apply.</p>
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Conclusion

The retention of the landscaping works which have taken place, by virtue of the inappropriateness of the balance of soft and hard landscaping and the removal of the front facing hedgerow screening would harm the values and amenities of the street scene. The frontage results in visually prominent car parking in contrast with the rest of the street which, for the most part, retains soft landscape screening of parked vehicles. No justification, individual circumstances or other considerations have been put forth which would outweigh the identified harm and conflict with the purposes of policies EM3 and EM4 of the Welwyn Garden City Estate Management Scheme. Accordingly, the proposed retention of the landscaping works should be refused.

Reasons for Refusal:

1. The retention of the landscaping works which have taken place, by virtue of the inappropriateness of the balance of soft and hard landscaping and the removal of the front facing hedgerow screening would harm the values and amenities of the street scene. The frontage results in visually prominent car parking in contrast with the rest of the street which, for the most part, retains soft landscape screening of parked vehicles. No justification, individual circumstances or other considerations have been put forth which would outweigh the identified harm. Accordingly, the proposed retention of the landscaping works conflicts with the aims, targets and purposes of policies EM3 and EM4 of the Welwyn Garden City Estate Management Scheme.

REFUSED DRAWING NUMBERS

2.

Plan Number	Revision Number	Details	Received Date
1:100		Planned (Current)	20 April 2015
1:100		Existing (Previous)	20 April 2015
1:1250		Site Location Plan	20 April 2015

Determined By:

Mr C Carter
5 May 2017