

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL  
ESTATE MANAGEMENT APPEALS PANEL – 30 MARCH 2020  
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR (PUBLIC PROTECTION, PLANNING AND  
GOVERNANCE)

6/2019/2122/EM

6 BROADFIELD PLACE, WELWYN GARDEN CITY, AL8 6LJ

ENLARGEMENT OF DRIVEWAY

APPLICANT: Mr A TURNBULL

**1. Background**

- 1.1. The appeal is against the refusal of Estate Management Consent for the enlargement of a driveway. The application was refused on the 11 November 2019 for the following reason:

*“It is considered that the development would result in an unacceptable amount of hard landscaping, contrary to policy EM3 and EM4 which in turn would have an unacceptable impact on the appearance and ethos of the Garden City.”*

**2. Site Description**

- 2.1 The appeal site, No.6 Broadfield Place is a detached dwelling located in a cul-de-sac situated off Attimore Road.

**3. The Proposal**

- 3.1. The proposal seeks Estate Management Consent to extend the existing hardstanding on the frontage.
- 3.2. The proposed hardstanding would replace the existing soft landscaped area and extend the existing hardstanding across the frontage. Additionally 0.5m of the front boundary hedge would also be removed.

**4. Relevant Estate Management History**

- 4.1 W6/1993/5429/EM - Erection of single storey rear extension, Granted 18 January 1994
- 4.2 W6/1998/5026/EM - The erection of a first floor rear extension, Granted 09 arch 1998
- 4.2.1 W6/2003/0140/EM - Erection of a single storey side extension, extension to garage and widening of hardstanding, Granted 17 March 2003

## **5 Policy**

### **5.1 Estate Management Scheme Policies (October 2008)**

EM3 – Landscaping

EM4 – Hardstanding

## **6. Representations Received**

### **6.1 No representations have been received.**

## **7 Discussion**

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

7.2 The key issue in the determination of this appeal is the impact of the proposed development upon the amenities and values of the Garden City.

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 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 With proposed hardstanding, the challenge with Garden City settlements is how to manage change whilst at the same time ensuring that the fundamental aesthetics, amenities and values of the Garden City remain intact. 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.

7.5 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.

7.6 The Council aims to ensure that a significant proportion, around 50 per cent of the frontage is retained as landscaped 'greenery' unless individual circumstances indicate that this would not be appropriate, to retain the appearance and ethos of the Garden City.

7.7 Policy EM3 of the Estate Management Scheme 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.

- 7.8 Policy EM4 of the Estate Management Scheme seeks to preserve the unique architectural heritage of the town and its buildings and only 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.
- 7.9 The appeal proposal would result in an increase in the amount of hardstanding at the site and removing some of the remaining boundary hedge on the frontage of the site. It would result in very limited soft landscaping being retained and result in an unbalanced proportion of soft and hard landscaping. Although the plans show the side boundary hedges would be retained the extent of hardstanding proposed would cause detrimental harm to the appearance of the property and the street scene. This would result in an unbalanced proportion of soft and hard landscaping at the property, detracting from the overall character of the area.
- 7.10 In addition, the proposal would result in the loss of some of the hedgerow at the front of the site, which is not justified in this instance. Furthermore, the loss of the hedgerow would result in the amount of hardstanding appearing more prominent within the street scene. As a result the proposal would have a detrimental impact upon the uniform character and appearance of the street scene and wider amenities and values of the area. As such, the development is contrary to Policy EM3 of the Estate Management Scheme.
- 7.11 A case has been advanced by the appellant in support of the appeal. The appellant states that Broadfield Place is a cul-de-sac and as such has pressure on the increasing numbers of vehicles requiring parking spaces and that other residential properties within the cul-de-sac have significant amounts of hardstanding.
- 7.12 The appellant attaches several photographs to demonstrate this. It is acknowledged that there are areas of hardstanding at properties in the area, however, no historic consents can be found for these properties and every application must be considered on its own merits. The appeal proposal would result in approximately an 83% coverage by hardstanding and the loss of some of the front hedgerow and soft landscaping. This is an excessive amount of hardstanding that has a detrimental impact to the values and amenities of the property and the street scene.
- 7.13 A compelling case has therefore not been made by the appellant to demonstrate why the circumstances advanced, when considered in its context, should override the wider values and amenities of Broadfield Place and the Garden City. Accordingly, the proposal fails to reflect the character and appearance of the other properties to which it is located and the street scene of Broadfield Place. The proposed development therefore fails to maintain the amenities and values of the Estate Management Area.

## **8 Conclusion**

- 8.1 No significant new evidence or information has been put forward by the appellant which adds to or would alter officer's recommendation.

- 8.2 When assessing whether any harm would result from the balance of hard and soft landscaping retained, as well as the removal of any hedgerow screening, full consideration is given to the existing condition of the street scene. In this case, the loss of a front hedgerow and the amount of hard surfacing proposed would cause harm to the values and amenities of the street scene. Accordingly, the landscaping works proposed fail to accord with policies EM3 and EM4 of the Welwyn Garden City Estate Management Scheme.

## **9 Recommendation**

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

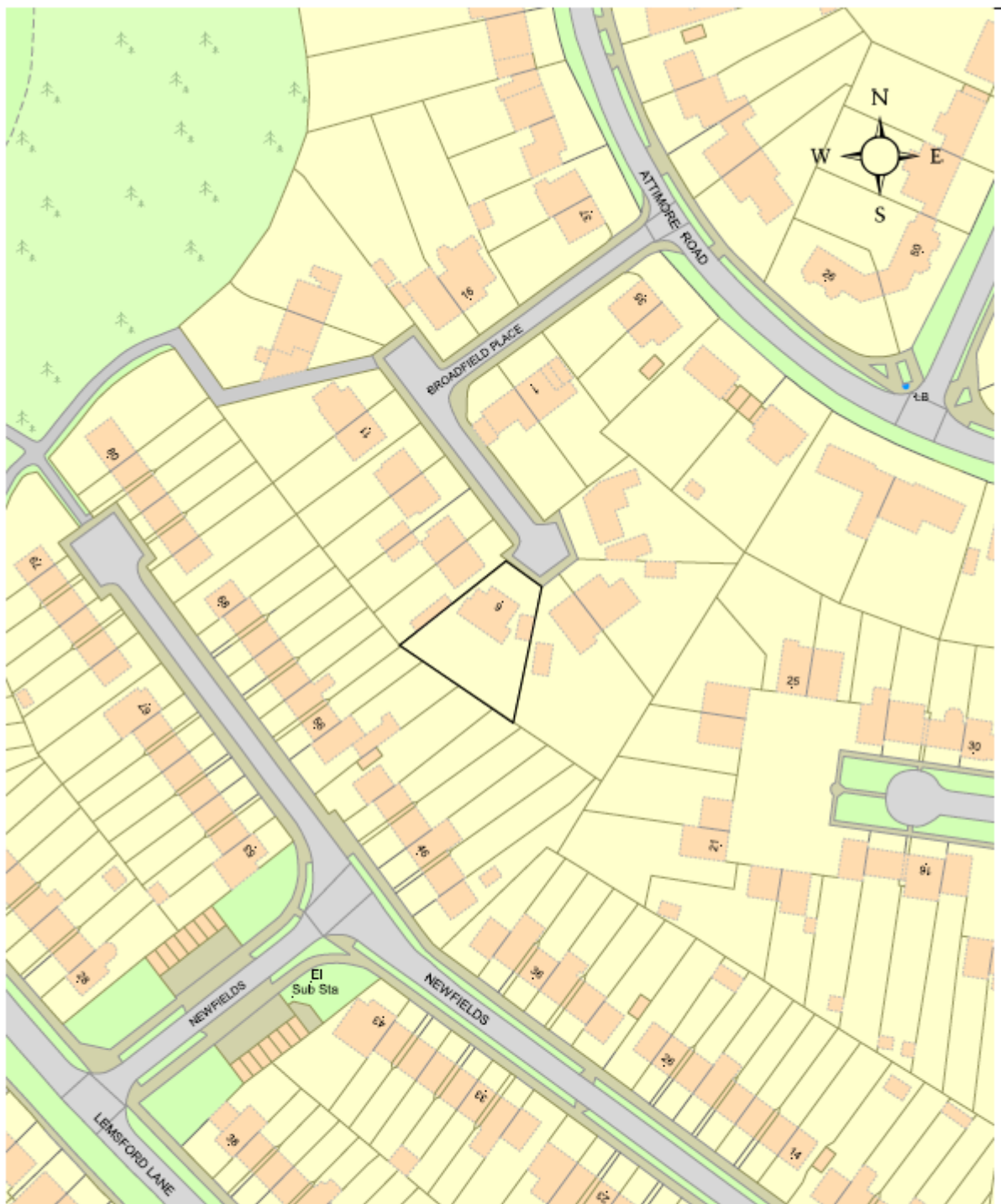
Author: Kerrie Charles (Development Management)


Date: 4 March 2020

### **Background papers:**

Appendix 1: Appellants grounds of appeal

Appendix 2: Original delegated officer's report



 <p><b>WELWYN HATFIELD</b></p> <p>Council Offices, The Campus Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 6AE</p>	Title: 6 Broadfield Place Welwyn Garden City AL8 6LJ		Scale: DNS
	Project: Development Management Committee		Date: 16-03-2020
	Drawing Number: 6/2019/2122/EM		Drawn: Cynthia Palmer
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