



## Soft Landscaping

Consent is rarely given for the complete removal of hedgerows or trees without sound justification and a replacement element of landscaping will nearly always be required. If you are planning on any changes to the landscaped frontages of your property then Policy EM3 'Soft Landscaping' applies:

**POLICY EM3 – 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.**



## \*Soft and Hard Landscaping

The use of generous landscaping, tree planting, hedgerows and open space provision within the town is what helps the town to retain a particular and unique character. The council acknowledges that there is a need to prevent the erosion of landscape within the town and believes the retention of frontages, hedgerows and trees are critical to preserve this character.

There are visual amenity issues in relation to the formation of hard standings within the town used to accommodate the rise in car ownership never anticipated when Welwyn Garden City was conceived. It has to ensure that a balance is achieved between the requirements of accommodating cars and the need to preserve the town's unique character and amenities.

In particular, the need to accommodate the rise in car ownership has resulted over time in a change to the street scene within the town. Accommodating private motor vehicles off street can erode the street scene, over time, by the excessive removal of soft landscaping within front gardens and its replacement with hard landscaping.

\* Soft landscaping – trees, shrubs, bushes, hedges, grass, flower beds

\* Hard landscaping – hard surfaces, paths, patios, drives.





## Hard Landscaping

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 per cent 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.

This policy will also apply to side gardens facing either open space, footpaths or roads.

**POLICY EM4 – 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.**

