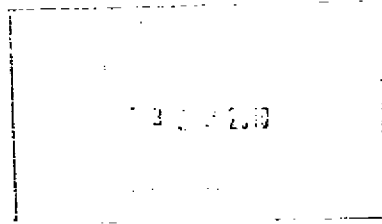


BUTLERS, FORE STREET, OLD HATFIELD, AL9 5AN

30th August 2010

Planning Department
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
The Campus
Welwyn Garden City
AL8 6AE



Planning Reference S6/2010/1710 and 11/FP (11 August 2010)

Dear Sirs

Re: Formation of replacement car park for business use including layout of additional parking for residential occupiers, paths, landscaping and ancillary works at land adjacent The Viaduct Hatfield Park Church Lane HATFIELD

Further to my letter dated 25th August, could you kindly amend my error on page 2, item 4 which should read 'Whitesmith Cottage' and not Whitestone House.

May I also add the following points to my opposition of the above application which is running concurrently with an application for a seven day a week, 6am to 2am Licensing Application in respect of Stable Yard, Hatfield House.

If the application is successful in replacing the North Front Car park and moving it west of the Coach/HGV park in George's Gate, Church Lane, the Estate effectively moves all tourist traffic/customers to Hatfield House and Park to George's Gate, and the main entrance opposite Hatfield train station will be closed to this traffic.

Hatfield House is closed for 6 months of the year but the gated Stable Yard area will be open to all visitors and customers all year around, with access only via George's Gate, Church Lane, Fore St and Church Street.

When the planning consent was given for the new Coach/HGV park, firm time constraints were imposed by the Council on the car park's use, ie maximum 12 coaches on site only between 8am and 8pm Monday to Sunday and no more than 4 coaches shall be parked or within site between 8pm and midnight in the interests of the amenity of adjoining residents, in accordance with Welwyn Hatfield Borough Plan 2005.

If consent is given to the replacement car park will the above restrictions apply to car traffic?

Planning consent for the HGV/Coach Park was also subject to signage, to ensure safety in accordance With Planning Policy Guidance No13 Transport. This has not been implemented and as a consequence it is quite common to see coaches in the Broadway and Park Street having missed the George's Gate entrance. The only signs that have occasionally been evident when main events are planned, are those directing taxis from the A1000 to Church Lane – presumably entering Hatfield Park via the Church Street gate.

The application's supporting Transport Statement page 13, para 6.1 concludes that the proposed car park for tourist visitors/customers next to George's Field will not increase activity at Hatfield House

because staff and visitor numbers will remain unchanged as a result of the proposal. I strongly contest this.

With the retail outlets continuing to open in Stable Yard, Hatfield House, together with the Proposed extension to the Coach House Restaurant and current licensing application mentioned above, this will add to the existing visitor numbers.

Additional activities indicated in the master plan map propose an Education Centre and new Estate Office and the Habitat Survey mentions a proposed new Livestock Farm and Children's Play Area (Bloody Hollows), which will also increase visitors.

Indeed, on Saturday last there were two weddings, one in the Old Palace the other in the Riding School, and the north front and cricket car park were overflowing with bridal and guests' cars, let alone visitors, customers and staff to Hatfield House.

The 0690/2008 application was strongly opposed locally on the grounds of highway safety, noise, Pollution and disturbance to a residential and conservation area – not to mention the green belt aspect – and I oppose this current application on the same grounds.

We now have a precedent, i.e. a coach/HGV park once granted is quickly followed by an application for a car park for all tourist visitors and customers, so it is imperative the Council is assured by the Estate that the 148 car space proposed George's car park is adequate for purpose.

In my 25th August letter, I asked where tourist visitors will enter the Estate to main events such as Living Crafts, County Show, Bonfire Night, Battle Proms. etc. when 8000 people can be expected on one night. It is not clear in the application other than understandably the historic viaduct cannot continue to take this volume of traffic, and the map shown as fig.4 shows the Hertford Road and Saw Mill as exits only. This only leaves George's Gate? Is it a fact that George's Field can be used by the Estate for events without planning permission?

In the heading of the supporting Habitat Survey it refers to 'Proposed George's Field car park' and not 'George's car park' and goes on to summarise in para 1.1 that if George's Field is granted for the new car park, it would have minimal impact on the ecology etc.

This is very confusing. Does it refer to the relatively small George's car park field or the much larger George's Field? If it is the intention to utilise both green belt fields for car parking, highway safety for the increased volume of traffic would be greatly affected. For example, the traffic flow statistics showing only a 1% increase in traffic during weekdays would be incorrect. Indeed, weekend statistics are not indicated and this is when the majority of main events and weddings take place.

Could I also point out that the stretch of A1000 leading up to George's Gate is very dark – as is Church Lane. A good deal of street lighting would be required in the interest of highway safety and this would impact adversely on the homes in The Broadway, Batterdale and bottom of Church Lane, as would the proposed all year round visitor noise, vibration, pollution and disturbance. To indicate in the application that George's Gate area is already noisy because of the A1000 and the trains is no reason to add to the noise.

Much is made in the Planning Application of enhancing the visitor experience to Hatfield House and Park. How, therefore, can creating a main entrance for all tourist visitors and customers adjacent

to 1970's council buildings and opposite a second hand car forecourt, possibly do so ? Few comparable historic homes would contemplate such an entrance.

Finally, I heartily agree with the excellent principles and arguments in the supporting Heritage Statement, but surely these must extend outside the confines of Hatfield House and Park as well as within ? For example, it mentions the Historic Planning Practice Guide which warns about the 'adverse impact of cumulative minor developments' and that change in itself is not harmful unless it has an adverse impact on the heritage asset.

Old Hatfield is an historic environment albeit that most was demolished in the 1960's, but surely what remains is worthy of consideration and appropriate planning ?

I consider the proposed replacement car parks as presented in the application to be harmful in relation to noise, use of green belt land and highway safety. In addition, the adverse effect these 'cumulative minor developments' would have on the Old Town would be incalculable.

Yours faithfully,

