

Whitesmiths Cottage
Hatfield Park
Hatfield
AL9 5NB

Dear Ms Hughes

30th August 2010

**Gascoyne Cecil Estates ["GCE"] Planning Application
for Replacement Car Parks
Application number S6 2010/1711/FP**

I am writing to you with comments, observations and objections in relation to the above Planning Application.

My first observation is that no Planning Application Notices have been/are being displayed in the vicinity of the proposed car parks.

Overall the Supporting Planning Statement ["SPS"] makes a lucid & logical case for the North Front ["NF"] and Cricket Pitch ["CP"] car parks to be moved away from the north side of Hatfield House to less sensitive areas. Sensible proposals have been put forward to make a clear distinction between visitor/tourist vehicles [Georges Field car park] and business/residential tenants [Viaduct car park]. The existing arrangements whereby all visitor and tenant vehicles approach NF/CP car parks via the Station Lodge entrance on the A1000 opposite Hatfield Railway Station are far from satisfactory and any proposals to divert most existing Park traffic away from this entrance are to be welcomed.

However I have concerns that the proposals for Georges Field [Planning Application 1] will be insufficient to meet future visitor demand.

SPS states that the proposed Georges Field car park will be the main entrance for visitors [page 15, para 4.1], with parking spaces for 148 vehicles [p4.2], effectively replacing both NF/CP* car parks [p4.3]. Until now on busy days "overflow" car parking has been accommodated along the tree lined North Avenue leading to Hatfield House [p3.2]. Even now, with 152 parking spaces in NF [p3.1] and 59 in CP* [p4.13] there are, on busy days, more than 250 vehicles parked in the vicinity at any one time. Given the expected visitor increases during the 400th celebrations [p4.11] and the likelihood that other planned new attractions [p1.7; p4.9] will boost demand over the coming years it would seem that the proposed 148 parking spaces in Georges Field will be inadequate to meet demand at peak times.

Looking at the Site Plan [Figure 6 on pages 14/15 of SPS] there appears to be no provision for overflow parking at Georges Field.

*CP car park is currently used by a mixture of visitor & tenant vehicles. I will return to this issue below.

OBJECTION to Planning Application 2: Proposed Viaduct car park

Superficially, the proposals for a new car park [for the use of business & residential tenants] near the Viaduct seem logical and innocuous. Closing the CP car park and replacing it with landscaping more appropriate to its position [and Green Belt status] in close proximity to Hatfield House has strong merits. The most appropriate position for the re-siting of a similar sized car park is indeed at the south eastern end of the viaduct, which is out of sight of Hatfield House; not in Green Belt land but in relatively close proximity to the business offices/retail units/residences situated in & around Melon Ground.

However, before the Council Planning Committee make a decision concerning this application, there are a number of issues that need to be raised/clarified and questions asked about GCE's longer term plans for this corner of Hatfield Park that may have a bearing on any decision to approve or reject the current Application.

At present a number [unspecified] of the spaces in the NF/CP car parks are used by GCE employees who work in Hatfield House. In addition there are [presumably] a number of spaces used by the newly let retail unit tenants and by staff who work in the Coach House Restaurant /Riding School/Old Palace.

NB The planned and approved new Estates office [p6.4] will entail the transfer of GCE employees from Hatfield House in 2011, thus further easing future demand for parking spaces in the proposed Viaduct car park.

Most, if not all, of the employees who work in the offices bordering the existing Melon Ground car park [approx 30-40 spaces]; in the offices in the adjacent courtyard to the south of Melon Ground [??spaces] and in the offices in Carters Row [approx 10 spaces] do not, therefore, need to make use of the current CP car park. **Presumably there are no plans to change these existing parking arrangements?**

No reference is made in the SPS to the future traffic flows in the vicinity of the Melon Ground/Viaduct/Cricket Pitch parking areas. Presumably the tree lined North Avenue leading up to Hatfield House will be closed and vehicular access to the Coach House Restaurant, Riding School, Retail units, Melon Ground & Carters Row car parks will be via a curtailed clockwise one way system that utilises the existing exit road [from Hatfield House to the viaduct & Station Lodge] as the entry road; with the entrance to the proposed Viaduct car park [& subsequent exit route over to viaduct to Station Lodge] via the current access road that runs along the eastern side of Park Row Cottages. **This issue should be clarified by the Applicant.**

Does GCE have a clear idea of the tenant demand for parking spaces in the proposed Viaduct car park? Is it likely to be anywhere near as many as the 59 spaces proposed in the Application? Further clarification should be sought from the Applicant. I contend that tenant demand for parking will not exceed 30 spaces at any time. A smaller number of parking bays will significantly lessen the visual impact/noise on the residents of Hill House [Grade 2 Listed building] and the residents living at the northern end of Park Close.

There are omissions from the SPS relating to this Application that may have an influence on any Planning decision.

Firstly, the Plan Proposals Map [Figure 7, page 21] gives a misleading impression regarding the extent of the proposed car park, edged in red ink. As the Site Plan [Figure 6, page 14] clearly shows, the area comprising the proposed car parking bays for the residents of Park Row Cottages – the four semi-detached properties on the south side of the proposed car

park- has been omitted on Figure 7. If these proposed car parking bays and two lane "new private access road" are inked in on Figure 7 it becomes immediately apparent that a considerable proportion of the existing rear gardens of these four cottages [in particular the more northerly cottages nos 1 & 2] will be lost to the development. All four cottages are owned by the Estate. Three of these cottages are currently unoccupied.

Even if GCE can justify the need for the provision of a car park with 59 spaces, a more logical site for the cottage residents' car parking bays would be lengthwise alongside the current access road/planned future exit road [more or less where residents park their cars now]. This would entail residents "losing" about 2 metres of their front gardens, but of course retaining all of their existing rear gardens. Any such parking would have no detrimental effect on the residents of Hill House/Park Close.

Secondly, although no mention is made in the Planning Application, the Site Plan [Figure 6, page 14] infers that the two lane private access road extends in a southerly direction beyond the residents' parking bays, through what appear to be substantial gates....into an unnamed, unmarked area. This area is the garden of Whitesmiths Cottage, the property that I rent from GCE. Currently, vehicular access to Whitesmiths is, and has been for many years, through the Carters Row "courtyard" into a single track driveway – a perfectly satisfactory arrangement. Why replace this with a two lane "new private access road" that would entail the "loss" of Park Row Cottages' rear gardens and much extra noise to the nearby residents of Park Close?

Why, unless there are as yet undisclosed future plans to extend the two lane access road a further 10 metres through Whitesmiths' garden into the adjacent large orchard area that extends to Fore Street?

Summary

I object to Planning Application 2 [Viaduct Car Park] for the reasons stated above.

I believe there should be further consultation between all interested parties before any future Application is submitted, on the grounds that the current Application does not address the various important issues raised above.

Finally, despite assurances in SPS [p1.18] that " all residents and business tenants within the Park have been consulted of the proposed new parking arrangements..." the first time I became aware of Planning Applications 1 & 2 was quite by chance only five days ago, hence this somewhat late submission.

Yours sincerely,

Adrian Akers.