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jb planning associates

Our Ref: PA/1040/sf
Your Ref: S6/2011/1994/MA

29 November 2011

Mr M Peacock
Planning Division
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
The Campus
Welwyn Garden City
Herts
AL8 6AE

PLANNING
DEPARTMENT

01 DEC 2011

RECEIVED

Dear Mr Peacock

Salisbury Square, Old Hatfield, Herts

Further to our recent telephone conversation and our further discussions, I am setting out below comments on some of the issues raised on the application including amended drawings and additional information as requested. I confirm that we are arranging a meeting with yourself and Lisa Hughes week beginning 12 December to go through the application.

Amended Drawings

Please find enclosed amended drawings reference **789-025B** – Existing Sections, **789-109P** – Proposed Site Plan – Ground Level, **789-120C** – Proposed Elevations, **789-130E** – Proposed Sections. The Drawing Issue Sheet 1 has been updated accordingly (24 November 2011).

In summary, the amended plans included minor amendments to the position of disabled persons parking spaces; revised tree planting/landscaping; installation of cycle racks; additional information relating to bin stores; updated existing/proposed sections.

Disabled Access

Please find enclosed a letter to Brian Wilson, Access Officer from Brooks Murray responding to points raised in his letter of 26 October 2011.

Bat Survey

I confirm that the applicants have instructed a bat surveyor to assess the potential for bats and to carry out initial inspections of the loft areas of nos. 1-7 Salisbury Parade. We will forward the report to you as soon as it is available.

Public Realm

With reference to your e-mail dated 24 November to Brooks Murray and commenting on various points relating to the quality of the public space and other public realm issues, we set out our further comments below:



As you are aware, the Gascoyne Cecil Estates carry out their developments to a very high standard in terms of construction materials, design and specification. The whole basis for the development is to raise the quality of the environment in and around Old Hatfield – this has been a consistent aim from the outset and was highlighted at all meetings held in connection with the Old Hatfield Charrette. May I suggest visiting Dunhams Yard, or the recent improvements in the Stable Yard area and within Hatfield Park itself which will highlight again to you, the applicants commitment to quality in terms of new buildings, construction materials and finishes.

I have enclosed with this letter, a copy of the Gascoyne Cecil Estates Building Code for Hertfordshire Part 1 and Part 2 – the Shopfronts, Blinds and Signs Design Guide for your reference. The proposed development at Salisbury Square will be following this guidance. This will ensure that the new public spaces are attractive. Indeed, use of high quality materials and finishes in the overall design is one of the reasons why the cost of the development is high. Attractive appearance and intrinsic quality is an essential part of the overall design. As well as use of quality materials, street furniture, signage, lighting and paving, the applicants have held initial discussions with the University of Hertfordshire regarding the possibility of displaying public art from the University in key areas both within the application site and areas within Old Hatfield.

The current landscaping is not of any significant quality and as set out in the submitted Planning, Design & Access Statement, the quality of the existing public spaces is poor and unwelcoming.

Use of the Square

With regard to your comments on the feasibility of community events such as Farmers Markets and Christmas Fairs, please be aware that Gascoyne Cecil Estates have significant experience in hosting outdoor events and fairs. Salisbury Square should not necessarily be considered in isolation and potential fairs might operate with a variety of stalls and attractions in Salisbury Square and in parallel with events elsewhere within the Park, for example at Stable Yard, Palace Green. As well as the new public space on the southern side of the development, space is available to lay out stalls and attractions on the upper deck of the new car park. There is significant opportunity to brand events alongside activities at Hatfield Park and also to take advantage of the future significantly enhanced railway/bus interchange. One of the design concepts of the scheme and discussed in the Old Hatfield Charrette is to enable to free flow of potential visitors and tourists between the Square, Hatfield Park and the station. A shared public space offers maximum flexibility.

In terms of the frequency of 'special' events within the new Salisbury Square, we envisage that at most these might be held once a month or possibly bi-monthly depending on public interest. By way of example, we have enclosed photographs of a square in Trinity Street, Cambridge. This hosts an art market (perhaps 12 -15 stalls) once a month and we understand has done so on a successful basis for a number of years. The railings, surface and trees with a central statue / monument /work of art provide some potential parallels with Salisbury Square which we trust you will find of interest.

The applicants do not believe that the new public square will be windswept. The space will be finished to a high specification and the design allows for a number of specimen trees. In respect of street furniture, the applicants are seeking to create a vibrant, high quality environment. We envisage and would hope that at least one cafe would become established alongside a range of retailers and the Square can become a popular meeting place. Good quality street furniture and public art is part of the design ethos. The applicants are seeking



to create an exemplar scheme that echoes the best of European cafe culture. The proximity of Hatfield Park, the railway station, the mix of existing employers, residents and tourist visitors means that there is potential to generate substantial public realm benefits.

Old Hatfield Residents Association

We refer to comments received from Old Hatfield Residents Association dated 17th November 2011.

'Salisbury Square is currently struggling'

The applicants acknowledge this, and believe the current position to have arisen from a lack of passing trade, poor visibility and signage together with poor pedestrian permeability or access. The proposed scheme seeks to address all of these issues.

'The redevelopment is centred around a housing scheme with just four retail units'

The proposed development is a true mixed use development and when viewed alongside the current Dunham's Yard development provides for a mixture of high quality B1 office units, retail and residential uses. The residential units provide a variety of house types and sizes. The retail units have been designed with potential for subdivision into a number of smaller units should this be appropriate. Architectural 'bays' have been designed to suit the incorporation of traditional shop frontages. The applicants also intend to refurbish York House within Salisbury Square and will take the opportunity to reinstate retail use at the ground floor level of this building, thereby adding to the retail attraction.

'Retail uses are not considered economically viable'

The applicants consider the potential for Salisbury Square to be very high. Located as it is, between the busy locations of Hatfield Park and Hatfield Station provides natural footfall which should provide demand subject to an attractive environment and the right tenant mix. The addition of new high quality flats and houses will further serve to provide local demand for convenience stores and services. The existing location is inaccessible, unattractive with a poor quality retail offer. The applicants have spoken to a number of prospective occupiers but it is difficult to secure firm obligations from prospective retailers without the benefit of planning permission.

'The current occupiers will be forced out'

All existing occupiers will be considered in accordance with their lease terms. Where appropriate, retail tenants will be offered opportunities to re-locate to neighbouring units for the duration of the building works. The viability of this or any other scheme is based upon its ability to secure sustainable levels of rental income. Rents will be assessed in line with market conditions.

'Park Street will be overshadowed by the new car park'

The applicants have updated the architectural sections (please see Drawing 789-130E) showing the relationship between the existing and the new buildings. This shows that the height of the car park is comparable to the existing car park which is on rising ground and partly enclosed by a series of retaining walls and landscaped planting beds. The new car park utilises the natural slope of the land and the lower deck is achieved through excavation rather than an overall increase in height. There is a reasonable degree of separation between the properties in Park Street and the new buildings which as you are aware are



architecturally superior to existing and an overall enhancement to the visual scene. The applicants are meeting with some of the Park Street occupiers to further explain the drawings and the relationship between existing and proposed.

'The new road will create a 'rat run'

The new road is essential to create passing trade, re-introduce vibrancy and also to service the new retail units. The design of the surface and overall environment will ensure low traffic speeds. It is not proposed that the roads will be adopted and they will be carefully managed. The route into the Square from Park Street is 'one way' only and no exit would be permitted. The vision splays and width are sufficient for this purpose and tracked path analysis has demonstrated the suitability of the proposed layout.

The fact that the proposed new access was originally a two way carriageway further demonstrates the adequacy of width. The comment about creation of a busy crossroads implies that Fore Street is a busy road. It isn't of course and is a dead end. The fact the new road will be 'access only', further erodes the 'cross roads' argument. The slow speed environment would deter the notion of a rat run. Assuming this route were to be chosen to bypass queuing traffic on the Great North Road it is illogical since one would have to exit by Station Lodge and thus re-join the same queue. Faced with the queue jumping scenario, motorists are more likely to drive along Park Street and exit by the Red Lion – this option already exists and the applicants are not aware of it being a particular problem.

'Job Centre clients would 'circle' the new Square'

Visitors to The Job Centre would be interspersed with other retail customers. Given that adequate car parking exists elsewhere on the scheme the applicants are not convinced that Job Centre visitors would circle around.

'Destruction of existing green space'

There is no evidence that the existing green space is widely used by business users or residents. Indeed, experience suggests quite the opposite. The existing planting beds are raised which further exacerbates the problem of sight lines across the Square. Given the raised nature of the planting and beds, they are not considered to be particularly accessible for the elderly. In our view, the proposed level square is a considerable improvement.

All residents of Old Hatfield can apply for a 'blue pass' which provides access for recreation and walking in Hatfield Park. This clearly represents a large green space which is accessible for the majority of residents. Generally speaking all of Old Hatfield is on an incline, particularly if traversing an East West axis and it is a misnomer to suggest removal of the existing planting will remove an easily accessible asset.

Landscaping / aesthetics

As discussed above under the heading Public Realm as you are aware, the aim is to create a high quality public space which is appropriate to Old Hatfield. The existing landscaping is not considered to be very good and does little to heighten the sense of security when walking through Salisbury Square after hours. The aim of the new square will be to provide flexible space with appropriate landscaping and street furniture suitable for occasional markets or themed events.



Public toilets

The applicants would be prepared to consider installing public toilets but any consideration would need to be balanced by management costs and measures necessary to prevent vandalism etc. There are already public toilets at the Station and the Visitor area at Hatfield Park. Success in attracting a café or similar such operation would further augment toilet provision. We understand that previous provision of Public Toilets in Salisbury Square was removed some years ago.

Parking

The scheme complies with current parking standards. The applicants also advise that funding has recently been secured which will allow for further improved parking provision at Hatfield Station. The recent revisions to visitor parking at Hatfield Park and the imposition of the CPZ mean that in the applicants view, parking provision has been significantly improved within Old Hatfield when compared to the relatively recent past.

Sun path/shadow diagrams

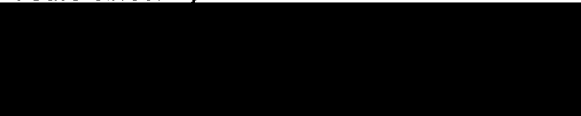
The applicants confirm that an initial analysis of sun screening and resultant shadow has been undertaken and does not suggest a major problem and indeed the situation for certain properties has been improved.

Waste management plan

A Waste management plan is included in the submitted Planning Design and Access Statement – Appendix 7.

We trust the above points are helpful in your consideration of this important regeneration scheme for this part of Old Hatfield. We will be pleased to discuss the above in further detail with you at our forthcoming meeting. Please contact me if there are any further points arising from the application public consultation.

Yours sincerely



Paul Atton MRTPI MRICS
Associate
paul.atton@bplanning.com

Encs: Drawings Issue Sheet 1 (24.11.11)

Amended Drawings **789-025B** – Existing Sections
 789-109P – Proposed Site Plan – Ground Level
 789-120C – Proposed Elevations
 789-130E – Proposed Sections

Letter to Brian Wilson – Access Officer (26.10.11)

Gascoyne Cecil Estates – Building Code for Hertfordshire Pt 1

Gascoyne Cecil Estates – Building Code Pt 2 – Shopfronts , Blinds and Signs

Gascoyne Cecil Estates – Example Photographs Trinity Street, Cambridge (for information)

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ARCHITECTS

25th November 2011
Job No 789

Brian Wilson,
Welwyn Hatfield Access Group,
Hazel Grove Community Centre,
Hazel Grove,
Welwyn Garden City,
Hertfordshire,
AL7 2DG

BROOKS / MURRAY

Dear Mr. Wilson,

Re: Salisbury Square, Old Hatfield, Hertfordshire – Planning Application S6/2011/1994/MA

Thank you for your comments received 27/10/11 in regard to our planning application for the above site. To respond to your queries:

1. **Missing 2-bed unit** – We believe the discrepancy has occurred on drawing number 789-112 C - there are seven two-bedroom flats shown, (there are three in the block above commercial unit D).
2. **Lift in Commercial Unit D** – The lift will be available for the use by staff wheelchair users with level access internally through the basement area.
3. **Disabled parking bays** – Six disabled parking bays are proposed, as shown on drawing 789-109 P, which have been distributed around the site to be as close to the principle building entrances as possible and to provide level access to all elements of the scheme.
4. **Fire evacuation lift** – This will be addressed as part of the Building Control application.
5. **Entrances** – We confirm that all principle entrances will be designed to Part M recommendations, particularly in respect of door effective clear widths and level thresholds.
6. **Lift access to flats** – Stairs are designed for ambulant use and to Part M recommendations and a lift is provided to the largest block, providing wheelchair accessibility to the greatest number of flats.
7. **Pedestrian access to the station** – The development proposes the opening up of a pedestrian route to the station between the Hatfield Arms and the job centre. It is hoped that future development will provide a safe road crossing linking this new route to the station.
8. **Street furniture and finishes** – Noted, the details will be addressed in the Building Control application and will consider all building users carefully.
9. **Street lighting** – Noted, street lighting is to be provided and the details will be addressed in the Building Control application.

We therefore feel that the proposed scheme offers a considerable improvement for disabled persons when compared with the existing rather unsatisfactory facilities.

We trust the above points will address your concerns, if you require any further information please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,


Gavin Murray
Director

CC. Anthony Downs, Gascoyne Cecil Estates
Mr. P. Atton, JB Planning Associates Ltd.
Mr. M Peacock, Planning Officer, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

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ARCHITECTS

DATE 24.11.11

JOB NO 789

SHEET NO 1

SUBJECT Hatfield- Salisbury Square

BROOKS / MURRAY


DRAWING NO	DRAWING TITLE	Scale	SIZE	4.2.11	16.3.11	25.3.11	31.03.11	24.05.11	02.06.11	16.06.11	10.08.11	17.08.11	24.11.11
	SITE												
789-001	QS Site Plan	1:500/ 1:1250	A4	*									
789-010	Site Plan	1:200	A1	G	H	I	J		K				
789-020	Demolition Drawing	1:1250	A1	C					D	E			
789-025	Existing Section	1:400	A1						A				B
789-027	Existing Building Plans & Elevations	NTS	A1							*			
789-091	Street Furniture & Finishes	NTS	A3	A						A			
	GENERAL ARRANGEMENT Retail and Apartment Blocks												
789-109	Proposed Site Plan (Red Line)	1:500	A1	G		J	K		L	M	N	O	P
789-110	Proposed Basement Floor	1:200	A3	A		C			D		E		
789-111	Proposed Ground Floor	1:200	A3	A					C		D		
789-112	Proposed First Floor	1:200	A3	A					C				
789-113	Proposed Second Floor	1:200	A3	A					C				
789-114	Proposed Third Floor	1:200	A3	A					C				
789-115	Proposed Roof Plan	1:200	A3	A					B				
789-120	Proposed Elevations (hand-drawn pre 04/11)	1:200	A1	*				*	A	B	C		
789-121	Proposed Elevations (hand drawn)	1:200	A1	*									
789-130	Proposed Sections	1:200	A1	A	B			C	D			E	

DISTRIBUTION													
Client	Anthony Downs							E	E	E	E	E	E
Planning Consultant	Paul Atton							E	E	E	E	E	E
Council	Welwyn Hatfield Council												
Transport	WSP							E	E	E	E	E	

E email issue H hard copy issue



Attractive paved square in Trinity Street, Cambridge engendering a high quality public realm, elements of which might be re-created in the proposed new Salisbury Square in Old Hatfield

PROJECT	Salisbury Square, Old Hatfield
TITLE	Applicant's Photographs – Example of Public Square In Cambridge
CLIENT	Gascoyne Cecil Estates
SCALE	NTS
DATE	November 2011
DRG NO.	1040/100
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