

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No:	S6/2007/795/FP
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NOTATION:

The site is located within the Hatfield Aerodrome, Inset 3, as outlined in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE:

The masterplan for the redevelopment of the Hatfield Aerodrome site, as adopted in the relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance dated November 1999 states that the “*creation of a District Centre is a key component of the overall development*” and that the “*area will become the heart of the scheme creating a sense of place within a high quality, safe environment*”. It is intended that the District Centre will contain, amongst other elements, appropriate shopping, food and drink, and health care uses, to serve the population of the new residential development.

The land covered by this designation is some 9.8 hectares adjoining the west side of Comet Way, located partly behind Waters Garage and Harpsfield Broadway, and stretching westwards to Mosquito Way, to include the listed hangar building. To the north of the District Centre site is the Commercial Area and the listed Administration Block and Canteen Block, whilst to the south are the Bishop Square offices and the recently rebuilt Beales Hotel.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

The proposal is for an amendment to reserved matters approval reference S6/2005/675/DE for a mixed use development of a District Centre comprising shops, food and drink uses, hotel, health centre, day nursery, 267 residential units including affordable and key worker housing, bus interchange, servicing, car parking and landscaping (reserved matters application following outline permission S6/2003/1137/OP) at Comet Square, Hatfield District Centre, land at former Hatfield Aerodrome, Comet Way, Hatfield.

The proposed amendment is to allow for the relocation/ swap of class A1 (shop) and class A3 (restaurant, bars and cafes) uses within the scheme, at units 8, 8A and 12A, Comet Square, Comet Way, Hatfield District Centre.

Under the provisions of the current permission, a single unit (unit 8) is proposed for Class A3 use (Class A3 – A5 under the provisions of the Use Classes Order 2005). However, the applicant is now proposing to sub-divide this large unit to provide accommodation for a hairdresser (Class A1) in unit 8 and a dry cleaners (Class A1) in unit 8A.

Similarly, under the provisions of the current permission, unit 12 provided a non-food retail unit (Class A1). It is now proposed this unit will be sub-divided, with the larger portion being occupied by a pharmacy (Class A1) and the smaller portion will be occupied by an Indian Tapas Restaurant (Class A3) (as part of a larger unit also incorporating part of unit 13, which already benefits from a Class A3 use).

PLANNING HISTORY:

S6/1999/1064/OP – Outline planning permission for the redevelopment of the Hatfield Aerodrome site in accordance with masterplan (including District Centre).

S6/2003/1137/OP – Full permission for 200 flats and Nursing Home, also outline permission for District Centre including shops, food and drink uses, hotel and health centre, day nursery, residential uses including affordable and key worker housing, bus interchange, servicing and car parking.

SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES:

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005:

D1 - Quality of Design
D5 – Design and Ease of Movement
HATAER2 – Mixed Use
HATAER3 – Requirement for a Masterplan

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005

REPRESENTATIONS

The Welwyn Hatfield Access Group requested that the application be considered in relation to Policies D3 and D5 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan (2005), Building Regulations Part M, BS8300 Code of Practice and BS5588 Part 8 Emergency Access.

This application has been also advertised by means of a site notice and no representations have been received.

DISCUSSION:

The main issues are:

- 1. Quality of design**
- 2. Impact on ease of movement**
- 3. Impact on the mix of uses proposed for Hatfield District Centre**
- 4. Impact on the aims and objectives of the Hatfield Aerodrome Masterplan**

Policies D1 Quality of Design and D5 Design and Ease of Movement are relevant (Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005), in addition to the material contained within the Supplementary Design Guidance (2005).

The proposal accords with Policy D1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan (2005), which requires all new development to be of a high quality of design, incorporate the design principles of the District Plan & Supplementary Design Guidance (2005), be appropriate to the setting and context of the area and be of the highest quality and Policy D5 which requires all new development to take account of its impact on existing and proposed movement patterns.

The proposal accords with Policy HATAER2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan (2005) which states that the *“redevelopment of the Hatfield Aerodrome Inset Site, outside the Green Belt, should provide for a variety of landuses”* and that *“any retail and leisure development shall be located within the local centre for the site and will be limited in scale to that necessary to meeting local needs”*. The range of uses proposed for the District Centre has already been approved as part of the outline and reserved matters planning consent relating to the District Centre and we consider that the proposed change of use complements and adds to the approved mix of uses on the site.

The S106 Agreement outlines the maximum floor area permitted in relation to each of the Use Classes. In addition to this the S106 also confirms that development/ occupation should only be in accordance with this mix/ disposition of uses. The proposed relocation/ swap of uses is consistent with the overall limits set by the S106 Agreement, albeit the Class A1 Use (relating to the unit shops) which increases marginally as a result of the proposal. Given that

the S106 Agreement specifically allows for flexibility, no formal variation of the S106 is required. We therefore deem that this proposal is acceptable, as the proposed changes of use would improve the retail offer available for residents and the proposal is not on a scale that would have an adverse impact on other centres.

In addition to this the proposal also remains consistent with the overall aims and objectives of the Hatfield Aerodrome masterplan, as outlined in Policy HATAER3 and the provisions of the current consents for the District Centre.

CONCLUSION:

This application is acceptable given that it only seeks a minor amendment to the reserved matters approval relating to the relocation/ redistribution of uses within the scheme and does not introduce additional new uses, or any other changes to the consented scheme. It also remains consistent with the overall aims and objectives of the Hatfield Aerodrome masterplan and the provisions of the current consents for the District Centre.

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS

CONDITIONS:

- 1. C.2.1 – Time limit for the commencement of development

The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: In order to comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act (as amended).

Reason for Grant of FP (Approvals only):

The proposal has been considered against development plan policies (i.e. Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 D1, D5, HATAER2, HATAER3), in addition to the Human Rights Act 1998, which indicate that the proposal should be approved. Material planning considerations do not justify a decision contrary to the Development Plan (see Officer’s report which can be inspected at these offices).

DRAWING NUMBERS:

Site Location Plan 478/17/1 3a, date stamped 24th May 2007 and Drawing Number G2120 G (05) 200, date stamped 5th June 2007.

Signature of author..... Date.....

