

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL
PLANNING CONTROL COMMITTEE – 17 JANUARY 2008
REPORT OF THE CHIEF PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICER

S6/2007/1132/FP

ERECTION OF 8 FLATS, BIN AND CYCLE STORES, CAR PARKING, ACCESS AND AMENITY SPACE FOLLOWING DEMOLITION OF EXISTING DWELLING AT 200 ST ALBANS ROAD WEST, HATFIELD.

APPLICANT: LIONCREST HOMES LIMITED

Hatfield Central

1 Site Description

- 1.1 The application site is located on the north side of St Albans Road in Hatfield. The site currently comprises a two storey detached dwelling with painted render walls under a plain tile roof. The plot is approximately rectangular apart from the front boundary which is splayed and runs parallel to the road. The width of the site is approximately 14m to the front tapering to approximately 13m at the rear boundary.
- 1.2 The application site is sandwiched between the open car park area to the Galleria to the northwest and a new block of flats to the south east which has been recently completed. To the rear of the site is a garage court which serves the adjoining properties in De Havilland Close. Opposite the site and across the road are semi-detached dwellings.
- 1.3 The site is screened from the adjoining flats by a 2m high boarded close fence. A 2m high brick wall on the common boundary with the Galleria screens the site from the adjoining car park.

2 The Proposal

- 2.1 Members will recall that a previous application for the same development site was presented at the September 2007 Planning Control Committee for a similar development which was granted planning permission.
- 2.2 This application is an amendment to the previous one and is seeking full planning permission for 8 flats instead of 7 with proposed parking spaces to increase by one from 6 to 7. The external appearance of the proposed building is identical to that of the previous approval (S6/2007/1132/FP) and the only changes relate to the internal layout at second floor level which has changed from one 2 bed flat to two 1 bed flats. The access and location of the cycle store has also been changed to facilitate the addition of the extra parking space.
- 2.3 The extent of the works previously approved and resubmitted in this application involve the removal of the current dwelling and to replace it with 2.5 storey building with a pitched roof, with flat roofed dormers are proposed at second floor level to the front and rear.

- 2.4 This revised application is to accommodate 8 flats with 3 on the ground and first floors (as before) and 2 flats on the second floor (where there was previously only one). In total, there are 6 one bed flats proposed and 2 two bedroom flats all of which are served by a central staircase.
- 2.5 The building is set back from the highway by 15m at its closest point and a new centrally located vehicular access is proposed from St Albans Road West. There are 7 parking places proposed to the front (including a disabled parking space) and also a bin store located close to the front boundary. A cycle store is proposed to the rear of the site which is accessed by a pathway which runs along the side boundary from the front parking area.
- 2.6 The width of the building would be approximately 11.8m wide and 19.4m deep. The open rear amenity space is approximately between 8-12m deep and 13m wide. The maximum height of the building is approximately 18.5m to the main ridge line. Three Juliet style balconies are proposed at the front and rear of the building to serve first floor lounges of each proposed flat and also a further two to the ground floor flats.
- 2.7 The proposed external materials consist of facing brick work, plain tiles and UPVC windows with lead finishes to the dormers and brick. A 1.8m close boarded fence is proposed to the boundaries.

3 Planning History

- 3.1 No S6/2007/1132/FP - Erection Of 7 Flats, Bin And Cycle Stores, Car Parking, Access And Amenity Space Following Demolition Of Existing Dwelling – granted at committee on 27/09/07

4 Planning Policy

4.1 National Planning Policy

PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development
PPS3 – Housing
PPG13 – Transport
PPG14 - Development on Unstable Land

4.2 Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005

- SD1 – Sustainable Development
- GBSP2 – Towns and Specified Settlements
- M6 – Cycle Routes and Facilities
- M8 – Powered Two-Wheelers
- M14 – Parking Standards for New Development
- D1 – Quality of Design
- D2 – Character and Context
- D5 – Design for movement
- D8 – Landscaping
- D9 – Access and Design for people with Disabilities
- H2 – Location of Windfall Residential Development
- H6 – Densities
- H8 – Dwelling Type and Tenure
- R3 – Energy Efficiency

- R19 – Noise and Vibration Pollution

4.3 Supplementary Design Guidance, Statement of Council Policy February 2005.

4.4 Supplementary Planning Guidance – Parking Standards –January 2004

5 Representations Received

5.1 The application has been advertised by means of a site notice and by neighbour notification letters. No representations have been received apart from Welwyn Hatfield Access Group who requested that the proposal is considered subject to the standards and criteria outlined in the District Plan in regards to detailed access requirements.

6 Consultations

6.1 **Highways Authority** does not wish to restrict the grant of permission subject to planning conditions agreeing the construction of the new access onto St Albans Road West, the closing up of the existing access and other requirements including visibility lines.

7 Town Council

7.1 Hatfield Town Council “objected to this application as it was significant Over-development of the site, was out of character with other properties in the vicinity and provided insufficient parking.

8 Discussion

8.1 This application is being brought to committee for determination as the application has been objected to by Hatfield Town Council and called-in by Councillor Colin Croft.

8.2 The main issues to be considered in the determination of this application are the same as the previous application and are:

- 1) The principle of replacement residential accommodation.
- 2) Design and the impact on the character of the surrounding area
- 3) The impact on the amenity of adjoining residents
- 4) Highway and Parking Issues
- 5) Other Matters

The principle of replacement residential accommodation.

8.3 This has already been considered acceptable under the previously approved application.

Design and the impact on the character of the surrounding area

8.4 Policy D1 and D2 are relevant design policies in regards to establishing the quality of the proposed design and its potential impact on the established character and context of the surrounding area. As mentioned previously, the external appearance of the proposed building has not changed from the last application. The proposed layout of the accommodation has a second floor level that has been amended to create two 1 bed flats with a floor area of 42 and

44sqm in a roof space with a clear 2m headroom (and 54 & 60 sqm with a more restricted headroom of 1.5m). Although these are not large flats and the layout is not as tidy as the previous approval, they are however still considered to be adequately functional for their proposed use. The proposal is therefore still considered to comply with the design requirements of Policy D1 and D2.

8.5 Turning to design Policies D1, D5 & D8 along with the accompanying Supplementary Design Guidance, these set the required standards of the design quality proposed, which includes the proposed layout of the flats, parking and landscaping. The revised scheme still meets an acceptable design standard with respect to these.

8.6 In summary, the design requirements of the above policies are complied with subject to the same planning conditions that were imposed on the last permission.

The impact on the amenity of adjoining residents

8.7 Policy D1 and the accompanying Supplementary Design Guidance is relevant. The window layout in this revised scheme remains the same, however, the functional use of some of them is now different on the second floor due to the revised floor layout. Two previously approved side rooflights are now secondary windows to serve bedrooms, and as these would look towards the blank roofslopes of the adjoining flats, there is considered to be no loss of privacy as a result to these neighbours. The other side rooflights serve the open plan lounge/kitchen areas to the flats and look towards the car park of the adjoining Galleria and so no amenity concerns arise from this arrangement.

8.8 In summary, the proposal would not have any undue impact on the residential amenity of adjoining neighbours subject to conditions requiring obscure glazing for some of the flank wall windows and so the proposal complies with Policy D1 and the accompanying Supplementary Design Guidance.

Highway and Parking

8.9 The Highways Authority have raised no objection in regards to the revised parking layout or the level of parking provision, subject to planning conditions which include the closing off of the existing entrance and the approval to their specification of the new entrance details.

8.10 The revised parking layout and increase to 8 flats in total means that in this location 6 one bed flats and 2 two bed flats would require 6.5 parking spaces. This calculation has been based on the fact that 2 of the rooms shown on the plans are studies not bedrooms. As previously discussed above, the aspect from these rooms is poor and so taking into the size of the room shown it would be reasonable to assume that their future use would indeed be as studies. The proposal therefore complies fully with the parking requirements of Policy M14 as 7 spaces are proposed in accordance with the standards in the accompanying Supplementary Planning Guidance – Parking Standards.

Other Matters

8.11 Policy D1 and the Supplementary Design Guidance does not give specific dimensions but requires private amenity space to be appropriate for the location and function. Although the rear garden is not generous, it is considered that the

addition of an extra flat on the upper floor would not increase the number of bedrooms in the development as a whole compared to the previous approval and so the level of provision is still compatible with that provided at the existing flat development next door.

- 8.12 Policy H6 in regards to densities relates to National Policy PPG3 which has now been superseded by PPS3. The minimum density required by PPS3 is 30 units per hectare. The current proposal easily complies with this as it is around 125 units per hectare. Although the proposed density is higher than that of the adjoining flats granted permission in 2004 and also that indicated by Policy H6, the proposal still complies with the thrust of Central Government policy contained within PPS1 and PPS3 which seeks to make best use of previously developed land for new housing whilst respecting the existing character of the surrounding area.
- 8.13 The application site is located in the Hatfield chalk mining assessment area and the risk level has been calculated as 'low' according to the Hyder Consulting assessment method. Normally it would be appropriate to add a planning condition requiring a desktop study in these circumstances, however, the requirement was not implemented at the time of the previous application in September 2007 and it would therefore be unreasonable now to impose a planning condition on such a similar scheme to any planning permission granted. An informative, however, would be appropriate to inform the applicant of potential hazards that may arise during the development process.

9 Conclusion

- 9.1 It is considered that the previously approved building and development site can accommodate the addition of an extra flat whilst still maintaining the character of the existing area and streetscene. The design of the building has still respected the amenity of adjoining residential properties and so no harmful impact will result to the amenity of the neighbouring occupiers. The design of the building will respect that of the surrounding area and the revised parking provision is fully compliant with the Councils standards. The proposal therefore complies with the above planning policies.

10 Recommendation

- 10.1 It is recommended that application S6/2007/1027/FP be approved subject to the following conditions:
1. C.2. 1 – Time Limit for Commencement of Development
 2. No development shall take place until full details on a suitably scaled plan of both hard and soft landscape works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Subsequently, these works shall be carried out as approved. The landscaping details to be submitted shall include:-
 - a) proposed external finished ground levels
 - b) means of enclosure and boundary treatments (Note: front boundary treatment must comply with visibility sightlines required in conditions below).

- c) hard surfacing, other hard landscape features and materials
- d) planting plans, including specifications of species, sizes, planting centres, number and percentage mix, and details of seeding or turfing

REASON: The landscaping of this site is required in order to protect and enhance the existing visual character of the area and to reduce the visual and environmental impacts of the development hereby permitted in accordance with Policy D8 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

- 3. C.4.2 – Implementation of Landscaping Planting.
- 4. C.5.1 – Sample of Materials to be submitted and agreed
- 5. Before first occupation of the approved development, the proposed new access onto St Albans Road West shall be completed and constructed to the specification of the Highway Authority and Local Planning Authority's satisfaction.

REASON: To ensure that the access is constructed to the current Highway Authority's specification as required by the Local Planning Authority and to comply with Policy D5 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

- 6. The existing access to the site shall be permanently stopped up to vehicular traffic and the highway reinstated to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority before the development is brought into use.

REASON: In the interest of road safety and to comply with Policy D5 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

- 7. Concurrent with the construction of the access, visibility splays of 2.4m x 33m shall be provided and permanently maintained to the east of the access within which there shall be no obstruction to visibility between 600mm and 2 m above the carriageway level.

REASON: To provide adequate visibility for drivers entering or leaving the site and to comply with Policy D5 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

- 8. C.8.12 – No occupation until spaces laid out
- 9. C.8.18 – Visibility Splay
- 10. C.8.13 – Unbound Material/Surface Dressing
- 11. All areas for parking and storage and delivery of materials associated with the construction of this development shall be provided within the site on land which is not public highway and the use of such areas must not interfere with the use of the public highway.

REASON: In the interest of highway safety and free and safe flow of traffic in accordance with Policy 29 of the Hertfordshire Structure Plan 1991-2001.

12. C.8.5 – Wheel Washing Equipment
13. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), before any demolition, clearance, building or other works commence on site, details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, specifying the parts of the site to be used for the stationing of site huts, storage of materials, and plant and parking of employees cars during the construction period, and any proposal for fencing of a site compound. Thereafter the compound and fencing shall be retained until building and clearance work has been completed.

REASON: To ensure satisfactory provision in relation to adjoining property and circulation within the site to protect the residential amenity of adjoining occupiers in accordance with Policy D1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005

14. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby granted, details which shall include appropriately scaled drawings of the location and design of the refuse bin and covered cycle store areas shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. These stores shall be provided prior to the first occupation of the units to which they relate.

REASON: To protect the residential amenity of adjoining occupiers in accordance with Policy D1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and in order to ensure that there is adequate provision for secure cycle accommodation within the application site, encouraging alternative modes of transport in accordance with policies M6 and M8 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

15. No development shall take place until details of the proposed floor levels within the building, have been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: To protect the residential amenity of adjoining occupiers in accordance with Policy D1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005

16. The kitchen windows of flats 3 & 6 and windows to bathrooms of all flats of the proposed building shall be glazed with obscured glass and shall be retained in that form thereafter.

REASON: To protect the residential amenity of adjoining occupiers in accordance with Policy D1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005

INFORMATIVES

To ensure that work undertaken on the highway is constructed to the current Highway Authority's specification, to an appropriate standard and by a contractor who is authorised to work in the public highway. All works to be undertaken on the adjoining highway shall be constructed to the satisfaction of the Highway Authority and in

accordance with Hertfordshire County Council publication "Roads in Hertfordshire - A Guide for New Developments". Before proceeding with the proposed development, the applicant should contact the Mid West Hertfordshire Area Office (01727 816025) to obtain their permission and requirements

The planning authority has determined the application as very low risk, on the basis of the information available to it but this does not warrant or indicate that the application site is safe or stable or suitable for the development proposed, or that any nearby land is structurally stable. The responsibility for safe and suitable development rests upon the developer and/or land owner and they should take a watching brief during construction for any chalk mines. Should evidence be found, expert advice from properly qualified experts should be sought, to ensure that the historic chalk mining activities in the area will not adversely affect the development. Details should be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval.

SUMMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE GRANT OF PERMISSION:

The proposal has been considered against National Planning Policy PPS1, PPS3, PPG13 & PPG14 and development plan policy 29 of the Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991 – 2011 and development plan polices SD1, GBSP2, M6, M8, M14, D1, D2, D5, D8, D9, H2, H6, H8, R3, & R19 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005), 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.

Chris Conway, Chief Planning and Environmental Health Officer
Date 18/12/07 (PJ)

Background papers to be listed : None

