

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No:	S6/2008/0907/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 application concerns the Gatehouse, which is located on the western side of the A1001, Comet Way, on the main entrance road to Hatfield District Centre, between the drive-thru KFC restaurant (to the south) and the new Hertfordshire Constabulary Police Station (to the north).

The Gatehouse is a 1930's, Grade II Listed Building, that was historically used as the main gatehouse building to this former British Aerospace site, however today, it is owned by KFC and is situated within their 0.27ha site.

Given that the Gatehouse is part of the KFC site it is also classed as an A3 use, however under condition 12 of planning approval S6/2004/1851/FP it is meant to be retained as an ancillary office to the restaurant use, and to be used for no other purpose without the prior written permission of the Local Planning Authority, to protect the character of the listed building.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

The application seeks permission to change the use of the Gatehouse from ancillary A3 use (restaurants, snack-bars and cafes) to A1 use (retail). Permission is not sought here for any works to the listed building.

All external features will be retained and the existing layout of the Gatehouse will not change: the room adjacent to the entrance will be used as a display area, the entrance lobby will be maintained, the two rooms leading off of this will become retail areas and the toilet will also remain. In addition to this all internal fixtures and fittings will be free-standing.

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.

S6/2004/1851/FP: Planning permission for alterations to the original building and change of use to fast food restaurant and drive through at the Gatehouse, Hatfield.

S6/2004/1852/LB: Listed buildings consent for internal and external alterations, including partial demolition at the Gatehouse, Hatfield.

SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES:

East of England Plan 2008:

ENV6: The Historic Environment

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005:

R26: Alternative Uses for Listed Buildings

D2: Character and context

TCR2: Retail Development in Village and Neighbourhood Centres

HATAER2: Mixed Use

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005

Hatfield Aerodrome Supplementary Planning Guidance, November 1999

REPRESENTATIONS

This application has been advertised by means of both a site notice, and a press notice, posted in the Welwyn Hatfield Times on the 2nd July 2008. Environmental Health has also been notified. No representations have been received.

DISCUSSION:

The main issues are:

- 1. The impact on the character and setting of the listed building.**
- 2. The continued preservation of the building.**
- 3. Impact on the vitality and viability of the District Centre.**
- 4. Other material planning considerations**

Condition 12 of planning approval S6/2004/1851/FP states that the gatehouse it is meant to be retained as an ancillary office to KFCs restaurant use, and to be used for no other purpose without the prior written permission of the Local Planning Authority, to protect the character of the listed building. However we have been unsuccessful in getting the applicant to comply with this condition, despite having written and spoken to the owner of the Gatehouse on numerous occasions. We therefore conceded that a change of use application could be submitted for this unit, on the condition that it had no adverse effect on the character of the listed building.

This application has been considered against the requirements of the East of England Plan, which states that local planning authorities should “*identify, protect, conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the historic environment of the region, its archaeology, historic buildings, places and landscapes, including...listed buildings...and their settings*” (Policy ENV6), and Welwyn Hatfield District Plan policies D2 (character and context) and R26 (alternative uses for listed buildings), which states that applications for the change of use of Listed Buildings will only be permitted when all of the following criteria are met:

- The proposal would not harm the character or setting of the building;
- The change of use could be successfully implemented without the essential need for other development which would harm the building’s character or setting; and
- The change of use results in the continued preservation of the buildings fabric or its restoration.

Having considered the proposals for this unit, it is evident that the character and setting of the Gatehouse will not be impacted on as a result of a change in its use from A3 (ancillary use to the restaurant) to A1 (retail), as no alterations are proposed as part of this application and all internal fixtures and fittings will be free standing. If work is however proposed in the future, then separate applications will need to be submitted for full planning permission and listed buildings consent. Also, by bringing the Gatehouse into a more active use and through

encouraging increased public interaction with the building, it is more likely to be preserved for the future.

The Gatehouse building is located within Hatfield District Centre as defined in the Hatfield Aerodrome Masterplan (1999). The Section 106 Agreement relating to the land at Hatfield Aerodrome, Comet Way, Hatfield, sets out the agreed retail floorspace breakdown for the District Centre, and makes provision for a total of 1672 sq.m of A1 retail floorspace: this figure has since been revised upwards however, as part of the development process. Whilst this proposal will increase the amount of A1 floorspace in the development, it is not on a scale that will impact on existing uses in the District Centre. In addition to this, policy HATAER2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan (2005) states that the redevelopment of the Hatfield Aerodrome site should provide for a variety of landuses, and that any retail and leisure development should be located in the 'local centre' for the site, and limited in scale to that necessary to meet local needs. A range of uses was approved for the District Centre as part of the outline planning consent (application reference number S6/2003/1137/OP) and it is considered that this proposed change of use complements and adds to the approved mix of uses on the site.

The proposal is also in line with policy TCR3 (retail development in village and neighbourhood centres) of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, which states that proposals for retail development will be permitted within the districts village and neighbourhood centres, where it can be demonstrated that they:

- Maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the centre;
- Enhance the centres local shopping and service function;
- Be in scale with the size of the centre and its surroundings;
- Not harm the vitality and viability of other nearby centres; and
- Not give rise to significant harmful environmental impacts, such as unacceptable traffic generation.

The change of use would therefore be acceptable under these terms.

Other material considerations relevant to this application are access arrangements, car parking and waste disposal. The Gatehouse is owned by the KFC drive thru restaurant situated on Comet Way and is located within the curtilage of that site, meaning that it has (and will continue to have) the full use of the restaurants associated car parking facilities, which at present are not operating at full capacity, meaning that it would be able to accommodate any potential demand from the Gatehouse (however this is anticipated to be minimal). In addition to this, the Gatehouse will also have full use of KFCs waste disposal facilities. The site is also easily accessible by pedestrians via existing pedestrian routes, and vehicular access is through the access road to KFC.

CONCLUSION:

This application is acceptable given that no works are proposed to the Listed Building that could impact on its character and setting, and that by bringing it into a more active use (A1 retail) there is a greater chance of preserving the building for the future. It is also considered that the proposal will not have a detrimental impact on the District Centre or surrounding shops, given the size of the unit, and the proposal therefore remains consistent with the overall aims and objectives of the Hatfield Aerodrome masterplan, the provisions of the original planning approval for the District Centre and the S106 Agreement for the Aerodrome site.

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS

CONDITIONS:

1. C.13.1 – The development/ works shall not be started and completed other than in accordance with the approved plans and details: drawing number A7.1 (proposed elevations), drawing number S2.2 (survey elevations), drawing number A2.1 (proposed

ground floor), drawing number S2.1 (survey ground floor), drawing number S2.3 (survey block plan) and drawing number OS-01 (OS site map), received and dated the 10th June 2008.

2. C.7.13 – Prior to the commencement of the development hereby granted, details of the location and design of the refuse bin and recycling materials storage areas shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. These stores shall then be provided prior to the occupation of the Gatehouse.

Reason: To protect the character and setting of the listed building.

SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE GRANT OF PERMISSION:

Reason for Grant of FP (*Approvals only*):

The proposal has been considered against the East of England Plan 2008 and development plan policies R26, HATAER2, TCR2, D2 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 (see Officer's report which can be inspected at these offices).

INFORMATIVES:

Drawing number A7.1 (proposed elevations) shows an indicative sign on external elevation of the Gatehouse. The plan states that this sign will comprise of pin mounted letters, which will be externally illuminated using trough lit illumination. The plan also confirms that the signage details will be confirmed by the future operator. Applications will therefore need to be submitted by the applicant for advertisement consent and listed building consent at a later date. These applications will need to demonstrate that the proposed signage is in keeping with the 1930s Art Deco style of the listed Gatehouse building and should respect the character and setting of the building.

In addition to this, any future works materially altering the character and/ or appearance of the Gatehouse will also require planning permission and listed building consent.

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