

**WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL**  
**DELEGATED REPORT**

<b>APPLICATION No:</b>	<b>N6/2008/962/FP</b>
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**NOTATION:**

The site lies in Welwyn Garden City as designated in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

**DESCRIPTION OF SITE:** The Stanborough Road travel inn is a three storey hotel and restaurant. The building has previously been extended to the rear to include an additional three storey extension. The property currently adjoins a number of modestly proportioned, two and a half storey semi - detached residential dwellings that are located to the north eastern property line of the site.

There is currently a 36 metre spacing that exists between the application property and residential properties and the majority of this spacing has been allocated for use as car parking space. The spacing provides views to trees that are located on the rear of the site and enables a distinction between the three storey nature of the application property and the more modest size of the residential properties.

**DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:** It is proposed to erect a three storey extension on the north – eastern side of the property. The proposed extension would feature materials and fenestration to match the existing dwelling and would measure 22.1 metres wide, 15 metres deep and 12 metres tall.

**PLANNING HISTORY:**

Erection of single storey extension [N6/2007/1915/FP] – Approved

Erection of single storey front extension and balustrade to mock balcony [N6/2007/1434/FP] – Withdrawn

Erection of externally illuminated fascia sign [N6/2006/0580/AD] – Approved

Erection of three storey extension to provide 30 additional hotel rooms over part of existing car park [N6/2004/1884/FP] - Approved

Installation of signs [N6/2004/0802/AD] – Approved

Retention of illuminated pole sign and five illuminated signs on building [N6/2003/0387/AD] - Approved

**SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES:**

National Policy:

PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development

PPG13: Transport

PPS24: Planning and noise

East of England Plan:  
WAT1: Water efficiency  
WM1: Waste management objectives

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005:  
SD1 Sustainable Development  
GBSP2 - Towns and specified settlements  
D1 - Quality of design  
D2 - Character and context  
R17 – Trees, Woodland and hedgerows  
M5 – Pedestrian facilities  
D5- Design for movement  
D8 – Landscaping  
M1 – Integrated transport and land use  
M2 – Transport assessments  
M4 – Developer contributions  
M14- Parking Standards for new development  
CLT6 – Hotels  
IM2 – Planning obligations

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Guidance for Parking Standards 2004

## **CONSULTATIONS:**

Hertfordshire County Council Head of Transportation and Policy – “The proposal is to increase the number of bedrooms at the hotel from 90 to 120. The car parking will be rearranged to accommodate the extension and 3 additional parking spaces will be provided to give a total of 167 spaces to serve the hotel and the Stanborough bar and restaurant. In their design and access statement the applicants have submitted a parking survey to demonstrate that there is spare capacity in the car park. I note that the survey was carried out in the early January. This is usually a quiet period after the Christmas rush and I am not sure representative of the use of the car park throughout the year. Although the level of parking provision equates to 80% of the maximum required by the WHBC standards which is acceptable for a site in zone 4 I would like to see this survey repeated to ensure that this is typical of the use of the hotel throughout the year. If the survey is correct and there is spare capacity then the proposal will lead to increased trips on the highway network as visitors to the new rooms will be able to come by car. It is the policy of HCC approved by cabinet in January 2008, to seek a planning obligation, in respect of Sustainable Transport, to provide pooled funding aimed at maximising accessibility by non-private vehicles. PPG 13 promotes accessibility by sustainable means including bus, cycling and walking, and the provisions of S106 of the Town and Country Planning Act allows that planning obligations, governed by the guidance within circular 05/05, may be used to mitigate the impact of development. For clarity and ease, HCC have implemented standard charges for residential developments, these charges are tiered reflecting the accessibility of different sites across Hertfordshire. It is considered that for a hotel development a charge of £375 per bedroom is appropriate. Therefore for this proposal the sustainable transport contribution would be £11,250 (£375 x 30) Full details on HCCs policy towards planning obligations may be found at the following web address; <http://www.hertsdirect.org/infobase/docs/pdfstore/planobsjan8.pdf>. Should the applicant agree to enter into a UU agreement to provide this sustainable transport

contribution, this would be used to mitigate the impact of the proposal on the surrounding highway“.

Hertfordshire Fire safety officer – does not wish to object to the proposal

Hertfordshire Constabulary - does not wish to object to the proposal

**TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS:** None

## **REPRESENTATIONS**

The application was advertised by means of neighbour notification and a site notice.

Welwyn Hatfield Access Group – request that the application is considered subject to the policies regarding access

2 Stanborough Mews – “My house is situated directly next to the Travel Lodge & Car park area. This is the third extension to this building in as many years? Last time the 30 room extension caused problems with the sewers as the system incorporates a collector tank which became overloaded. Also the noise and disruption we have had to put up with seems never ending. My garden runs alongside the car park and we have noticed the noise levels have risen dramatically since the last two extensions I can only assume it will rise more with the extra activity. The car park will also be overloaded and we do not want parking to start blocking the entrance to Stanborough mews“.

1 Stanborough Mews – “The car park for the Hotel in its current form is often full, and cars and lorries are often parked along the entrance road to The Stanborough, making access to and from Stanborough Mews difficult and sometimes dangerous. This problem will only increase with fewer parking spaces and more customers. This could be alleviated by painting double yellow lines along the access road, but we really feel that, for the size of the site the Stanborough occupies, the hotel is already too large. In addition, over the past five years there have been problems with the overloading of the sewerage system which has meant that pumping lorries (with the associated smell and noise) have been a frequent issue, particularly over the summer months. This has only recently been resolved and we are concerned that increasing the number of rooms will mean a return of these problems”.

**DISCUSSION:** The main issues are:

- 1. Maintaining or enhancing the character and appearance of the property and surrounding area**
- 2. The impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring dwellings**
- 3. The impact of the proposal on providing a sufficient parking allocation and on highway safety**
- 4. Sustainability**
- 5. Planning obligations**
- 6. Other material planning considerations**

1. The area surrounding the application site is distinguished by the presence of Gosling Sports Park which lies to the south of the site and modestly proportioned semi detached residential dwellings. There are a variety of land uses surrounding the site but the area is predominantly distinguished by spacing that exists between the land uses. It is considered that the existing built form results in a degree of

spaciousness between buildings and provides views to soft landscaped areas at the rear of the site, providing a more open feel to the area.

The design of the proposed extension would appropriately feature materials and fenestration to match the existing dwelling and the pitched roof of the proposed extension would not form an incongruous addition to the property, which features roofs that are built to a variety of heights and to a variety of depths. The positioning of the proposed extension on the north – western side of the site would result in the application property being closer to the neighbouring residential properties. The separation between the three storey application property and the two and a half storey residential properties is distinguished through spacing that exists between the application property and the neighbouring residential properties. Whilst the proposed extension is set back from the frontage of the street scene it is considered that the scale and positioning of the proposal would result in the extension being highly visible from the surrounding area and would therefore have a significant impact on the character and appearance of the application site and the street-scene of Stanborough Road.

The extension proposed would feature a three storey building and although the eaves heights at the edges of the development have been designed to reflect the height of the neighbouring buildings, it is considered that this does not enable the development to be considered in-keeping with the built form of the street-scene. From this basis it is considered that the proposed development, height in proximity to the neighbouring residential dwelling, would fail to reflect or respect the character of the existing street-scene of Stanborough Road. It is therefore considered that the proposal would result in a form of development that would be dominant on the frontage of the street scene and surrounding area and would by virtue of the reduced spacing would result in the loss of open views to the rear of the site and the formation of a dominant form of development.

2. The impact of the proposed development on the residential amenity of neighbouring dwellings is considered in terms of the impact on neighbouring properties access to day/sun/sky light, privacy and overshadowing. The proposed extension would be north – east facing and would be located closer to residential properties that are located adjacent to the north - eastern property line of the site.

Whilst the proposed extension would be three storey the applicant has provided shadow diagrams to justify that the proposal does not have an impact on neighbouring properties access to day/sun/sky light or result in overshadowing. In terms of the impact of the proposal on the privacy of neighbouring properties it is considered that the proposal would result in windows that would face the residential properties. It is considered, however, that by virtue of the modest scale and number of the windows, the proposal would not result a loss of privacy to neighbouring properties to an extent that would warrant refusal on these grounds.

In terms of the potential for increased noise generation on the site resulting in adverse impacts on the neighbouring residential properties, it is considered that whilst the proposed extension would be closer to the residential properties than the existing position of the building, the amount of noise generated under the hotel use would not be considered to be detrimental to the amenity of neighbouring dwellings to an extent that would warrant refusal on these grounds.

3. The application site currently provides access to 149 parking spaces and the proposed parking scheme would provide access to 154 parking spaces. The application has stated however that currently the site has access to 164 parking

spaces and following the proposed development there will be the allocation of 167 parking spaces.

Unfortunately the applicant has failed to submit a detailed account of the number of staff that will be present on site at any one time or clearly indicate where the provision of the 167 parking spaces would be. They have also not provided information as to the amount of space used for conference facilities, whilst the existence of conference facilities has been mentioned in the sustainability checklist. Indeed, whilst the application has stated that there would be the provision of 167 parking spaces the submitted drawing [2587/P2B] annotates that there would only be a maximum parking allocation of 154 spaces.

In calculating the standards it has therefore been necessary to estimate that if it is stated there would be 77 staff in total, a maximum of two thirds of the total staff would be present during the day, which would result in their being a maximum of 49 staff at any one time. It is also estimated that there would be a maximum of two managers present at any one time. In addition to this, it has not been demonstrated that there would be any on site staff bedrooms.

In terms of the actual number of bedrooms, it is noted that the submitted drawings [2587/P3A & 2587/P4A] floor plans do not fully annotate the total number of bedrooms on the site, which is shown at a total of 115. In addition to this the design and access statement submitted with the application states that “there are currently 90 bedrooms and the proposed extension will add another 30 bedrooms making a total of 120”.

According to the maximum standards from the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Guidance for Parking Standards 2004 the development would result in the application site requiring 206 parking spaces. This calculation of the required allocation can be seen in the table below:

Area of allocation	Total	Allocation required
Hotel rooms	120	120
Dining space	190 sq/m	38
Employees	Max of 49 at any time	33
Managers	Max of 2 at any time	2
Bar	48 sq/m	16
Total spaces		209

It is also noted that no provision has been made for the allocation of bicycles, which under the provisions would be required at a level of 1 space per 10 beds plus 1 space per 10 staff on site. It would also be necessary to provide a minimum of 1 coach space and it is considered that the current access way would provide sufficient access to the site, providing that there are sufficient parking spaces for vehicles and coaches which may cause an obstruction otherwise.

If there was an allocation of 154 spaces as shown in the submitted drawing [2587/P2B] then the applicant would only provide 73.68% of the total maximum standard of car parking spaces. According to the applicants' design and access statement and parking survey the current usage of the car park would justify 0.77 spaces per bedroom or less. In this instance, in line with other considerations, the proposal would result in a total maximum requirement of approximately 92 spaces for hotel rooms. This in accordance with the other requirements (outlined in the table above) would result in the proposal requiring 181 car parking spaces. The proposed

provision would therefore not be considered to be in line with the requirements of the Welwyn Hatfield guidance for parking standards or the demand demonstrated by the applicants parking survey and is accordingly not considered to be able to appropriately cope with the increased demand for car parking as a result of the proposed extension.

The response from the consultation with the Highways Authority also raised concerns with regards to the time of year the survey was carried out stating that “this is usually a quiet period after the Christmas rush and I am not sure representative of the use of the car park through out the year”. It was also suggested that an additional parking survey be carried out to ensure that it is representative of the use of the hotel throughout the year.

The applicants sustainability statement has also stated that the a percentage of the hotel users will be arriving by taxi and the Welwyn Garden City railway station that is located 800 metres away from the site. It has also been stated that the location of there would be good access to the site and there would be an addition 5 spaces allocated to disabled persons, raising the total number from 5 to 7.

The consultation from the Highways Authority also suggested that the increased use of the site would result in increased pressure on highway facilities as a result of the proposal. However, it is considered that providing sufficient contributions are provided to mitigate this then the proposal would not be detrimental to the use of the highway to an extent that would warrant refusal.

4. The applicant has stated in their design and access statement that the proposal would not affect the biodiversity of the site and wider locality. It has also been stated that the building will comply with the demand for water report 1996 and would also be sufficiently energy efficient to comply with building regulations. In terms of the surface drainage, it is considered that as the proposal would be sited on an existing hard surfaced area, the proposal would not cause any change to the existing surface drainage. The proposal is therefore considered to be sustainability development in accordance with PPS1.

5. Following a consultation with the Highways Authority, it was considered that the proposal would result in increased trips on the highway network as visitors to the new rooms will be able to come by car. It was recommended that financial contributions of £11,250 towards the Highway Authority would mitigate these concerns. The Local Planning Authority considers that it would be inappropriate to secure the required financial contributions by any method other than a Unilateral Undertaking.

6. None

## **CONCLUSION:**

The proposal is considered to sufficiently maintain the residential amenity of neighbouring dwellings. However, the proposal by virtue of the scale and positioning of the proposed extension would form a dominant addition to the application site and would result in the loss of views and spacing between the application property and neighbouring residential dwellings. This proposal is therefore considered to result in a dominant form of development that would be to the detriment of the character and appearance of the property and surrounding area.

In addition to this, the application site would fail to provide a parking provision that would be sufficient to deal with the increased demand for car parking as a result of

the proposed development. The proposal would therefore be detrimental to highway safety. Contributions to mitigate the concerns of the Highways Authority regarding the increased trips on the highway as a result of the proposal have also not been secured.

**RECOMMENDATION: REFUSAL AND REASONS**

- 1. The proposal by virtue of the positioning and scale of extension would result in a loss of significant spacing between the application property and neighbouring residential properties. This would result in the loss of the open feel on the site and the property subsequently forming a dominant addition to the application site and surrounding area. The proposal is therefore contrary to policies SD1, GBSP2, D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan statement of council policy 2005.
- 2. The proposed parking provision would fail to deal with the increased demand for car parking as a result of the proposed development. The proposal would therefore result in an insufficient amount of parking space and would fail to comply with policy M1, M2 and M14 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan statement of council policy 2005.
- 3. The applicant has failed to satisfy the sustainability aims of the plan and to secure the proper planning of the area by failing to ensure that the impact of the proposal on the highway is mitigated. The applicant has failed to provide a planning obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) relating to the payment of financial contributions required for Sustainable Transport Measures. The Local Planning Authority considers that it would be inappropriate to secure the required financial contributions by any method other than a Unilateral Undertaking and the proposal is therefore contrary to Policy IM2 and M4 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

**INFORMATIVES:** None

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