

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No:	N6/2008/2104/FP
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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 application property is a three storey hotel and restaurant located on an area of 0.97 hectares. The property currently features 90 bedrooms and provides 156 parking spaces on the hard surfacing that is located on the site. The site is located to the south of the town centre and on the south – eastern side of the highway.

The hotel 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. To the south – western side of the site lies the gosling sports park.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL: It is proposed to erect a three storey extension on the south – eastern side of the property. The proposed extension would provide an additional 30 bedrooms, would feature materials and fenestration to match the existing building and would measure 25 metres wide, 14.6 metres deep and 12.7 metres tall.

The proposed extension would be built on a section of the site that is currently hard surfaced and used for car parking. The proposal would involve the reordering of the positioning of car parking spaces on the site and would result in a reduction in the number of car parking spaces from 156 to 152, which would include 7 disabled spaces. The reordering of the parking space would reduce the level of greenery on the frontage of the site that adjoins Stanborough Road.

PLANNING HISTORY:

Erection of three storey extension to accommodate 30 bedrooms [N6/2008/962/FP] - Refused

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Erection of single storey front extension and balustrade to mock balcony [N6/2007/1434/FP] – Withdrawn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

Hertfordshire Waste Local Plan 1999:

Waste Policy 3 – Waste minimisation and new development

Waste Policy 7 – Reuse of waste arising from new developments

Waste Policy 8 – use of recycled materials in new developments

East of England Plan:

WAT1: Water efficiency

WM1: Waste management objectives

SS1 – Achieving sustainable development

T14 – Parking

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005:

SD1 Sustainable Development

GBSP2 - Towns and specified settlements

D1 - Quality of design

D2 - Character and context

R3 – Energy efficiency

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

M6 – Cycle routes and facilities

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 Highways – Does not wish to restrict the grant of permission subject to conditions

“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 car parking will be reduced from 164 spaces to 155 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. This

demonstrates that a car park of 155 should be able to accommodate the level of parking demand generated by the proposal. However WHBC are the parking authority and will determine the level of parking appropriate for this development. I consider that this level of parking would not impact on the highway network

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) The applicant has agreed to pay this contribution”.

Hertfordshire Fire Safety Officer – does not wish to object to the proposal

Thames Water – advised that with regard to sewerage infrastructure they did not wish to object to the proposal

Hertfordshire Minerals and Waste Officer – there is a need to ensure that the use of able forms of waste management are encouraged at the site. In the event of approval suitable conditions can be used to ensure that a waste management plan is provided.

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS: None

REPRESENTATIONS

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

2 Stanborough Mews – Raised concerns with regards to issues relating to noise, sewage and overcrowding in the parking facility.

8 Stanborough Mews – Raised concerns with regard to the validity of the car parking survey given the time of year it was taken. Was also concerned with regards to the impact of the proposed development on parking as they consider the current parking facility to already be an under provision for the site.

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 highway safety and whether the proposal will provide a sufficient parking allocation**
- 4. Planning obligations**
- 5. 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.

Policy CLT6 – Hotels of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 states that “the Council will grant planning permission for proposals which increase and improve hotel accommodation within the district. The preferred locations for hotels are in the district's town centres and on the designated sites on the Hatfield aerodrome site. Where there are no suitable sites in the town centres, the Council may consider development proposals in edge of centre locations, at district or neighbourhood centres or in areas with high accessibility by public transport. In all cases the Council will only permit proposals for hotels where:

- There is no harmful impact on the amenities of nearby residential properties and other uses
- The development is in keeping with the scale and character of the surrounding area; and
- The development is easily accessible by passenger transport, walking and cycling

The existing built form on the site 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 is considered to reflect the design of the existing building and would feature materials, fenestration to match the existing property. The position of fenestration and design of the roof slope is considered to maintain symmetry with the existing fenestration and roof design on the building. In terms of the bulk of the extension, it is considered that at three storeys the proposal would be no taller than the existing property and the scale of the extension can be considered appropriate to the overall scale of the existing property on the site. In addition to this it is considered that the extension would be set back from the existing property and would be positioned on the south – eastern side of the site behind the existing building which would have a minimal impact on the character and appearance of the site from the north – western frontage of the site that adjoins Stanborough Road. The proposal is therefore considered to maintain the spacious feel on the frontage of the site and would maintain views to soft landscaping that is located to the rear of the site. The proposal is therefore considered to maintain the character and appearance of the property and surrounding area.

2. The impact of the proposed development on the 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 south – east facing and would be located well away from adjoining buildings.

Whilst the proposed extension would be three storey it is considered that the extension would be located approximately 50 metres away from adjoining residential properties on the northern side of the site and would be positioned in proximity to landscaping that is located on the disused railway line that is located to the east of the site. Given the distance from neighbouring properties it is considered that the proposal would not impact on neighbouring properties access to day/sun/sky light or cause overshadowing.

In terms of the impact of the proposal on the privacy of neighbouring properties it is considered that the proposal would not result in windows that would face the residential properties but windows that would overlook the adjoining Gosling running track and the disused railway line that is located to the east of the site. It is considered that the proposal would not result a loss of privacy of any adjoining properties to an extent that would warrant refusal on these grounds.

3. The application site can currently be accessed via Stanborough Road. Following the submission of the application a consultation was arranged with Hertfordshire County Council Highways in order to assess the impact of the proposal on the safe and efficient flow of the highway. The response received stated that the increased use of the site would result in an increased frequency of trips on the highway as a result of the proposal. 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. It is therefore considered necessary that sufficient contributions are provided through a section a S106 agreement.

It is noted that there will be no further alteration to the existing access road to the site. It is therefore considered that providing a sufficient contribution is made to mitigate any adverse impacts on the highway network (as a result of increased traffic) in the event of proposal being approved, then the proposal would be would not be considered to be detrimental to highway safety to an extent that would warrant the refusal of the application on these grounds.

The highway consultation response also stated that a condition should be attached in the event of approval to ensure that in the event of approval the section of the extension of the building shall not be occupied until a scheme for hard surfacing on the car park areas has been approved by the Local Planning Authority and completed in full. It is considered that in this instance if a parking areas have not been provided prior to the occupation of the site there may be adverse impacts on the highway and therefore a suitable condition should be attached in the event of approval.

The application site is located in zone 4 in accordance with the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and currently provides access to 156 parking spaces. The proposed parking scheme would provide access to 152 parking spaces. The applicant's parking surveys, as carried out between 15/08/2008 – 20/08/2008 has demonstrated that there was a maximum use of 90 spaces even during full occupancy of the current 90 bedroom facility.

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. They have also not provided information as to the amount of space used for conference facilities. Indeed, whilst the application form has stated that there would be the provision of 164 parking upon further discussions a revised drawing was submitted [2587/P11] which annotates that there would only be a maximum parking allocation of 152 parking spaces.

Whilst the application form has annotated that there are currently 19 full time members of staff and the proposal would result in an additional 6 full time members of staff resulting in a total of 25 full time staff. However, in the sustainability checklist the hotel and restaurant are stated to currently employ a total of 70 staff and the proposal would result in the employment of 6 additional staff members. In calculating

the maximum recommended parking allowance required it has been necessary to estimate that if it is stated there would be 76 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 51 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/P12 & 2587/P13] floor plans demonstrate that there will be an additional 30 Bedrooms. This in relation to the existing 90 bedrooms would result in the site having 120 bedrooms.

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 210 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 51 at any time	34
Managers	Max of 2 at any time	2
Bar	48 sq/m	16
Total spaces		210

It is 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. In the event of approval it will be necessary to ensure that sufficient cycle parking facilities are provided on the site.

If there was an allocation of 152 spaces as shown in the submitted drawing [2587/P11] then the applicant would only provide 72.4% of the total maximum standard of car parking spaces. The applicants has submitted a design and access statement and carried out two parking surveys which they have used to demonstrate the current usage of the car park. It has been stated that the results from the survey would justify the provision of 0.8 spaces per bedroom as apposed to 1 space per bedroom. This which would justify a reduction in the number of parking spaces at the facility from 120 spaces to 96 spaces. Further to this it is noted that the site is located in zone 4 in accordance with the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and accordingly a reduction from the maximum standards would be considered to be appropriate. Following a consultation with Hertfordshire County Council Highways it was stated that the proposed "level of parking would not impact on the highway network". Given the evidence provided through the applicant's parking surveys and the position of the application site in relation to the town centre (zone 4) it is considered that a reduction from the maximum parking standards would be appropriate and in this instance the provision of 152 parking spaces would be appropriate for the potential use of the site.

4. The applicant has stated in their sustainability 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 and the applicant has provided a completed unilateral undertaking for the sum of £11,250. Accordingly it is considered that the applicant has provided a sufficient unilateral undertaking to mitigate any adverse impact on the highway network from the proposed development and the proposal is therefore justified in accordance with policies IM2 and M4 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

6. In terms of waste Management it has been stated that refuse storage facilities are provided on site and all refuse will be recycled, where possible. It has also been stated that the site will use a private refuse collector. However, as detailed information with regard to waste management issues have not been provided it is considered that in the event of approval a detailed site waste management plan should be submitted to the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development in order to comply with policies R5 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and Hertfordshire Waste Local Policy 1999 waste policy 3, waste policy 7 and waste policy 8.

It terms of the sustainability if the proposal it is noted that the applicant sustainability statement has specified that there would be a more efficient use of energy and water consumption at the site. Considering the development would comprise extensions to an existing hotel, these provisions are considered to be a reasonable effort to meet the requirements of Policy R3 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

Turning to the impact of the proposal on drainage on the site, it is considered that the response received from Thames water did not wish to object to the proposal with regards to the drainage on the site. The applicant has not provided details with regard to drainage and it is therefore considered necessary that in the event of approval a condition be attached requiring that details of the drainage on the site are provided.

CONCLUSION:

The proposal is considered to sufficiently maintain the character and appearance of the property and surrounding area, would not impact on the residential amenity of the neighbouring properties and would provide a sufficient parking allocation. It is also considered that the proposal would mitigate any impact of the proposal on highway safety through the unilateral undertaking that has been submitted for contributions to the highway network.

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS

CONDITIONS:

1. C.2.1 – Time limit for 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)

2. C.13.1 – The development/works shall not be started and completed other than in accordance with the approved plans and details: 2587/P12 & 2587/P13 & 2587/P14 & site location plan received and dated 06 November 2008 & 2587/P10 & 2587/P10 received and dated 30 December 2009 unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved drawings and any changes must be agreed in advance in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

3. C.5.1 - Matching materials - No development shall take place until samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the building hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be implemented using the approved materials and subsequently, the approved materials shall not be changed without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure a satisfactory standard of development in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005

4. The building(s) hereby approved shall not be occupied until the roads and footpaths associated with the building(s) have been constructed and surfaced in accordance with details which have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority and to the specification of the highway authority.

REASON: In order to ensure that adequate vehicular and pedestrian access is provided in the interests of highway safety in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 13: Transport

5. Prior to the commencement of development a detailed site waste management plan shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Subsequently the approved scheme shall be implemented in full, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

REASON: To ensure sufficient waste management on the site in accordance with policies R5 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and waste policies 3, 7, 8 and 11 of the Hertfordshire County Council Waste Local Policy 1999.

6. C.9.13 – Drainage - The development hereby permitted shall not commence until details indicating the drainage works exact position and course, manufacturer's specifications, type and discharge of final effluent are submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority. Thereafter the approved scheme shall be installed and maintained in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

REASON: To protect the surrounding environment from pollution in accordance with Policy R7 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005

7. C.8.20 – Cycle parking provision - The cycle parking provision shall be provided in accordance with the requirements of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan Review

Supplementary Planning Guidance, Parking Standards 2004, details of which shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority prior to the commencement of the development. Subsequently the cycle parking shall be provided in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

REASON: To ensure a satisfactory standard of cycle parking provision in accordance with Policy M6 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005

SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE GRANT OF PERMISSION:

The proposal has been considered against Planning Policy Statement 1, Planning Policy Guidance 13, Planning Policy Statement 24, Hertfordshire Waste Local Policy 1999 waste policy 3, waste policy 7, waste policy 8 and waste policy 11, East of England Plan policies WAT1, WM1, SS1 and T14 and development plan policies SD1, GBSP2, R3, R17, M5, D1, D2, D5, D8, M1, M2, M4, M6, M14, CLT6 and IM2 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:

1. The applicant is advised that no development (including demolition) should commence until wheel-cleaning apparatus to prevent the deposit of debris, mud etc on the highway has been agreed with the Highway Authority. Hertfordshire County Council Transport Planning and Policy can be contacted on 01727816025.

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