

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

<b>APPLICATION No:</b>	<b>S6/2009/1019/FP</b>
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**NOTATION:**

The site lies within the Hatfield Aerodrome Site as designated in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

**DESCRIPTION OF SITE:**

The application site is located to the west of Comet Way and east of Mosquito Way. The site covers an area of approximately 2.5 hectares and is irregular shaped. It falls within the Employment Area 6, Hatfield Business Park.

Grade II\* listed in 1998, the site consist of the former Flight Test Hanger and Control Tower for the de Havilland Comet. The main Hangar was built in 1952-3 with the tower completed 1954. The Comet Hanger was the most sophisticated example of aluminium construction at the time and was also the world's largest permanent aluminium structure. The site also has significant historical connections with the aviation industry.

In December 2000 outline permission was granted for the entire aerodrome re-development. Following this, full planning permission and listed building consent were granted in June 2002 for alterations to the hangar to allow its use as a members club to provide a range of sports, leisure and social facilities together with associated car parking and landscaping. The site is currently in use as a Next Generation Club (sports, leisure and social facilities and associated offices).

**DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:**

The proposed development would involve the resurfacing of an area to the front of the main buildings principle elevation. Currently this area is laid to lawn and was previous granted consent to be a grass tennis court within an application to redevelop the site for its existing use. The area of the proposal measures 95m in width by 21m in depth.

**PLANNING HISTORY:**

Relevant Planning History:

S6/1999/1064/OP Former Hatfield Aerodrome – Approved

S6/2002/0098/FP – Alteration to Listed Flight Hanger for Use as a Members Club Providing a Range of Sports, Leisure and Social Facilities Together with Associated Car Parking and Landscaping. (Reserved Matters Pursuant to Outline Planning Consent S6/1999/1064/OP) – Approved

S6/2002/0097/LB – Demolition of Modern Annexe Building to the West of Listed Flight Test Hanger and Works of Alteration and Refurbishment to Retained Building – Approved

S6/2003/1686/FP – Change of use of the third, fourth and fifth floors of control tower to tennis academy lodge accommodation – Approved

S6/2004/0074/AD – Erection of 2 free standing non-illuminated signs – Approved

S6/2004/1091/AD – Installation of internally illuminated sign and mounting of flag on pole – Approved

S6/2004/1379/FP – Installation of a combined heat and power unit in an acoustic attenuated container – Approved

S6/2007/0006/FP – Change of use from hotel room (Class C1) to office (Class B1) – Approved

S6/2007/1264/LB – Single storey glazed staff room extension to east elevation – Approved

S6/2009/0994/AD – Installation of 2 replacement logo signs – Pending

S6/2009/0995/LB – Installation of 2 replacement logo signs – Pending

## **SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES:**

National Policy

PPS1: Delivering sustainable development

PPG13: Transport

PPG 15: Planning and the Historic Environment

East of England Plan 2008

SS1: Achieving Sustainable Development

Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991 – 2011:

None

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005:

SD1: Sustainable Development

GBSP2: Towns and specified settlements

R3: Energy Efficiency

D1: Quality of design

D2: Character and context

D8: Landscaping

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Planning Guidance, Parking Standards, January 2004

Hatfield Aerodrome SPG 1999

## **CONSULTATIONS**

### **TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS**

No comments received.

## **REPRESENTATIONS**

This application has been advertised by site notice and neighbour notification letters and no representations have been received. Period expired 4 August 2009.

## **DISCUSSION:**

**The main issues are:**

- 1. The proposed developments impact upon the character and appearance of the locality**
- 2. Other Material Planning Considerations**

1. The proposed development would involve resurfacing an area to the front of the site to accommodate two tennis courts. As existing the area is laid to lawn and in some parts has not been maintained particularly well. The proposed development would have a green finish and a lawn area would be to the southern and eastern edges of the site.

The existing building is mostly viewed from a distance and the proposed works would be set back from the surrounding public footpath. Although relatively close in some areas the frontage of the site would be well landscaped areas surrounding the proposed development.

It has been noted that the existing grass areas have a natural appearance and the proposal would be artificial. However, the proposed development would have a similar appearance to grass and would not appear out of place when viewed from the surrounding public areas. Furthermore, the proposed surfacing could be conditioned to ensure that an appropriate shade of green is used that would harmonise with its surroundings.

When the existing listed building is viewed from the surroundings the height and dominance of the building is its key feature, whilst the surrounding ground covering does not appear particularly prominent. The proposed development would achieve a similar result to the previously proposed grass court and the resultant ground surfacing would not interfere with the appearance of the main building.

The resultant site would not have a significantly different appearance to the existing. When considering the appearance of the existing grass area the proposal would have a better appearance than the poorly maintained patches of grass. The proposed development would not affect the character and appearance of the existing listed building and the development would comply with Policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and PPG15.

2. The proposed development would add an additional tennis court to the site, however, this is not considered to significantly increase the capacity of the site as a leisure facility. The applicant has not indicated an increase in the amount of customer or a need for any further parking space. The proposed development is not considered to result in a need to reassess the parking provision on site. Therefore, from a parking and highways point of view the proposed development does not have an adverse impact upon the safety and free flow of the adjacent public highway network.

The application has not included any details of additional lighting or any enclosures to the proposed courts. Any further additions are likely to require consent through a separate planning application.

The application has been submitted with a sustainability checklist that notes the development would a permeable surface and all of the surrounding landscaping would be retained. These provisions are considered to ensure the surface is constructed in a sustainable manner.

**CONCLUSION:**

The proposed development would not have an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the locality. Subject to conditions to agree the colour of the proposed surface, the development would not have an adverse impact upon the character, visual amenity of setting of the adjacent Grade II\* Listed Building.

**RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS**

**CONDITIONS:**

- 1. C.2.1: Standard Time Limit
- 2. C.13.1: Development in accordance with approved plans/detail Site Location Plan 1:1250 & L(0)10 & L(0)11 received and dated 16 June 2009.
- 3. C.5.1:Materials to be agreed

**SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE GRANT OF PERMISSION:**

Reason for Grant of Full Planning Consent:

The proposal has been considered against Planning Policy Statement/Guidance PPS1, PPG 15, PPG13, East of England Plan 2008 and development plan policies SD1, D8, R3, D1, D2, GBSP2 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:** None.

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