

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No:	S6/2010/265/FP
------------------------	-----------------------

NOTATION:

The site lies within the Conservation Area and Area of Archaeological Significance as designated in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE:

The site is located in the Old Town of Hatfield and is to the west of the Hatfield House Estate. It is located at the junction of Church Street and Church Lane, which is the vehicular link between St. Etheldreda's Church and the A1000 (Great North Road).

The site is bounded to the west by Church Lane, to the north by Church Street and a row of residential dwellings. To the south and east is Estate land (Gascoyne Cecil Estate) and the newly approved access road from Church Lane serving the coach park for Hatfield House.

The application site comprises the existing St Audrey's Care Home, with 38 bedrooms, which is predominantly a 3 storey building, with some single storey elements. The site includes grassed areas and trees / vegetation, which are mainly located on the site boundaries. The site also comprises staff parking, circulation space and vehicular access points on to Church Street and Church Lane. The site currently provides 16 car parking spaces. The area of the application site is 0.45 hectares.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

The application seeks full planning permission for an extension to the existing care home, which has 38 beds, to provide accommodation for a further 22 rooms (purpose built accommodation and care facilities for people suffering from dementia), reconfiguration of car parking and amenity space.

10 bed / living spaces will be located on the ground floor and 12 will be on the first floor. The extension would be divided into designated areas including living accommodation and the necessary supporting facilities such as

- Kitchen and assisted living kitchen,
- communal sitting and dining areas,
- treatment / utility rooms,
- staff station / office,
- specialist toilets / wash rooms,
- circulation areas & reception / entrance hall.

As part of the proposal the existing parking area closest to Church Lane would be reconfigured and 2 additional spaces created, providing 18 spaces in total. The development is for a two storey extension of 5.1 metres to the eaves and 9.8 metres to the ridge.

PLANNING HISTORY:

S6/2005/1017/FP Erection of conservatory
Approved 05-Oct-2005

S6/1996/0855/FP Erection of part three storey, part single storey extension and alterations to existing Nursing Home together with alterations to existing access to Church Lane and provision of new car park
Approved S6/1996/0855/FP

SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES:

National Policy

PPS1: Delivering sustainable development

PPS5: Planning for the Historic Environment

PPG13: Transport

PPG14: Development on Unstable Land

East of England Plan 2008

SS1: Achieving Sustainable Development

T14: Parking

ENG1: Carbon Dioxide Emissions and Energy Performance

ENV6: The Historic Environment

Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991 – 2011:

None

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005:

SD1: Sustainable Development

GBSP2: Towns and specified settlements

R3: Energy Efficiency

R29: Archaeology

H9: Special needs housing

M4: Developer contributions

M14: Parking standards for new developments

IM2: Planning Obligations

D1: Quality of design

D2: Character and context

D5: Design for movement

D7: Safety by Design

D8: Landscaping

D9: Access and Design for people with disabilities

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Planning Guidance, Parking

Standards, January 2004

CONSULTATIONS

Hertfordshire (Transportation Planning and Policy) – do not object subject to conditions.

Landscaping – No objection subject to conditions

Archaeology – no reply

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS

No response has been received.

REPRESENTATIONS

None. The application has been advertised by means of site and press notices and neighbour notification letters. No letters of response have been received from neighbours.

Welwyn Hatfield Access Group have queried the use of the lift and where refuges are to be located.

DISCUSSION:

The main issues are:

- 1. Principle of Development (and background)**
- 2. Impact of development on design and character of site and surroundings**
- 3. Impact on the amenity of residents**
- 4. Parking and highway matters**
- 5. Other Material Planning Considerations**

1. The applicant has advised that a 22 bed dementia care facility is considered the minimum number of bed spaces required to viably operate a dementia unit and provide all necessary specialist care provision. Currently the site provides care by Heritage Care for residential and supported care.

Details provided show that an additional 619 places will be required by 2010- 2015 for elderly accommodation (residential or extra care) of which, 140 residential dementia and 82 nursing dementia places will be required.

The applicant has advised that discussions between Heritage Care and Adult Care Services highlighted that additional residential dementia care and nursing dementia capacity was required in Hatfield and will continue to be required to meet the growing needs of older people in the County.

There are significant benefits of locating both a care home and a dementia unit together on the same site. There are the economies of scale achieved through the proposals as they offer similar services such as cleaning, cooking and the provision of care to varying degrees. Established staff are immediately on hand.

Importantly it is likely that residents of the existing care home may one day need the additional care provided by the dementia unit and this proposal allows for a degree of continuity to be provided as residents' needs change.

The dementia facility would include 5 new living spaces to cater for the individuals who require Intermediate Care, who are on a short stay basis, allowing assessment, rehabilitation and re-enablement to take place. The Intermediate Care will be located closer to the main entrance on the ground floor. There will also be 5 living spaces for people who are experiencing Early Onset Dementia, which will also be located at ground level. The Early Onset occupiers will have a greater degree of mobility and so will benefit from access to the secured garden area.

These details and discussions would appear to be drawn from 'flexicare housing Hertfordshire, January 2010 (Issue 2)' which supports the case above. Welwyn Hatfield is a partner to providing accommodation services for older people.

Local plan policy H9 (Special Needs Housing) is most applicable for the type of accommodation proposed. This states permission will be granted for schemes,

particularly in town centres or in areas close to community facilities and services. Additionally, special needs schemes in residential developments in central areas will be encouraged.

The proposal would not comply with the second part of this policy. It would however be sited to the edge of the Old Town, Hatfield which provides a small shopping area (Salisbury Square) as well as other community services, both within the Square and outside, for example the community hall at St Ethelreda's. It is considered that the principle of providing dementia care on this site would accord with this policy and the aims of County and Welwyn Hatfield.

2. The site is within the conservation area and therefore the design of the proposal needs to comply with general planning policies on design in addition to national policy statement PPS5. The objectives of this policy are to provide sustainable development, provide development which contributes to the local character and sense of place.

The extension would be located to the south-west of the existing building and would be at right angles to this. The extension would be subordinate to the existing building by virtue of its reduced eaves and ridge height. The detailing of the link to the existing building would help ensure that the original character of the building would remain and be 'visible' from the outside, whilst providing a feature that would clearly identify the new main entrance to the building.

The design of the accommodation would ensure that all residents would have an acceptable outlook from rooms and whilst the layout would extend the building across a much wider footprint, it is considered that this would not have an adverse impact on the character of the area.

The fenestration and doorway details would match the existing (older part) of the building and brickwork proposed would be in the 'Hatfield blend' and English bond (Hatfield blend is the typical brickwork used across the Hatfield Park Estate). The proposed roofing materials would be plain clay tiles to match the existing. The applicant has requested a condition to specify the materials. These materials would match the existing and therefore are acceptable.

The proposed detailing, design, layout are all considered to contribute to the character and design of the existing building and area in general. As such the proposal complies with national, regional and local plan policies.

3. The closest residential dwelling is approximately 18 metres away (on Church Street). Due to the topography of the site, glimpses of the proposed development may be seen towards the site which is at a slightly higher level than this dwelling, through the trees. It would not be such that their amenity would be affected. Accordingly policy D1 would be complied with.

4. The applicant advises that parking spaces would be increased by 2. The information provided states that only 2 additional spaces are being provided as the current provision (16) is underused. Parking standards state that 0.25 spaces per resident bed space should be provided plus resident staff based on general needs standards.

The number required for the existing and proposed accommodation is a maximum of 12.5. The application form indicates that no additional staff will be employed as a result of this development. The additional number of spaces required for the 22

bedrooms is a maximum of 5.5 spaces. As the site is zone 2, 25-50% of the maximum number of spaces needs to be provided. As the total number is being increased by 2 and the number required ranges between 1.375 and 2.75 and during various visits to the site, there has always been an under utilisation of the number of spaces, this level of provision is considered acceptable. The proposal therefore complies with local plan policy M14 and supplementary parking guidance.

The County have reviewed the proposal in terms of its impact upon the highway network and have advised that they consider that the proposal would not have an unreasonable impact on the safety and operation of the adjoining highways.

Developments of this scale for commercial uses would normally attract, subject to evidence, of a financial contribution towards sustainable transport modes, improvements to footpaths and/or similar. The applicant has submitted as part of the application a statement stating that they are a not-for-profit organisation and that the proposal would not require any works to existing highways or generate highway use of any significance. Additionally, the residents would rarely leave the home due to their disabilities.

For these reasons, in this instance, it is agreed that there is no requirement to secure any financial or other contribution.

5. Other Matters Chalk Mining

The site is outside of any of the identified areas that might be subject historically to chalk mining. It is therefore appropriate in accordance with guidance and advice to include an informative to have regard to the possibility of chalk mining.

Community Involvement

The applicant as part of the statement of community involvement undertaken consultation with the community. This formed part of the Old Hatfield Charrette (October 2008). They have also advised that discussions have taken place between Gascoyne Cecil Estate and Hertfordshire County Care Services.

Landscaping – the applicant has submitted a landscape report which has been assessed by landscaping section.

They advise that the Tree Survey does not include all the trees on site nor does it comply with BS5837:2005 Trees in Relation to Construction. The Tree Survey included with the application is a basic condition survey of the trees adjacent to the road. Of the 14 trees assessed, nine are recommended for removal. This is a high proportion but the area is not part of the managed garden but an area of overgrown vegetation. Six of these trees are ash, this species has not done well in this area in the last few years. All the recommended works are appropriate for the trees current condition.

An area of trees which was not surveyed and will have to be removed for the proposal currently stands to the south-west of the building, near to the parking area. It contains a pine, sycamore and poplar. None of these trees has a high enough amenity value to warrant an individual TPO (Tree Preservation Order) and therefore it would be inappropriate to object to this application for these trees. However this group do add to the general amenity of the area and currently help to screen the residential home from the view down the hill to the A1000, Citroen garage and train line and the town houses, 12-19 Church Lane from Hatfield House's coach access.

The loss of the trees adjacent to the road and within the grounds will have an impact on this part of Old Hatfield. The care home will also have very little garden remaining and no landscape plan has been included with the application documents. It has been suggested that a careful design which includes ornamental areas around the home, heavy screening along both the road and the eastern boundary and diffuse screening along the southern boundary, will ease the appearance of the proposed site dramatically.

Lastly conditions have been suggested for the submission of an Arboricultural Method Statement to include pre-development works; a plan showing the Root Protection Area (RPA) of the trees and location of protective fencing; areas where the working or construction zone will effect the RPA; method of fencing and ground protection; details of soil level changes within the RPA; in addition to conditions regarding the matters discussed above.

Biodiversity

The applicant has submitted a biodiversity assessment as part of the application. No protected species were identified as part of the assessment, however due to vegetation and roof voids there is the potential for nesting birds and bats to be present.

The relevant guidance for local authorities dealing with protected species are the Habitat Regulations, EU Directive (EC Habitats Directive), as well as PPS9. The Regulations provide four tests for local authorities to consider as part of a proposal. They are that there is no alternative solution, the development must be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, and where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type or a priority species, the reasons referred to above must be either-

- (a) reasons relating to human health, public safety or beneficial consequences of primary importance to the environment, or
- (b) other reasons which in the opinion of the European Commission are imperative reasons of overriding public interest.

The report details that further bat surveys are not deemed necessary since the proposed extension will not affect the roof. In view of there not being any known protected species and the works not affecting the roof of the existing building, it is agreed that further surveys are not required as part of the application. However, the applicant should be advised that if protected species are found and if they would be affected by the development, then works should stop until a licence is obtained.

It would be reasonable as the proposal would involve the removal of some of the trees to include a condition to prevent felling during times when birds might be nesting.

On the understanding that these conditions are included, the proposal would comply with European legislation and regulations as well as national, regional and local plan policies.

Energy

Policy ENG1 of the East of England Plan 2008 requires developments where the floor area created is more than 1000m² to provide 10% of their energy requirements from renewable means or for carbon reduction.

An energy statement has been submitted as part of the application. Various options have been put forwards for providing energy of carbon off-set. These include CHP, wind turbine, biomass heating, solar hot water (SHW), solar voltaic and ground source heat pumps (GSHP). The report details that either GSHP or SHW could be provided which would provide a 15% CO₂ saving and a 25% reduction in non-renewable energy for the GSHP and for the SHW – 10 % reduction is CO₂ and non-renewable energy usage of 11%.

Either of these methods would be acceptable and it is recommended that a condition is attached for one of these to be implemented.

Archaeology

Herts County Archaeology have responded to the application with the following observations. the site lies partly within Area of Archaeological Significance no. 17. This notes the medieval settlement of Hatfield and is also recorded in a 10th century charter of Ely Abbey. Excavations in Hatfield have found evidence of medieval occupation. The Historic Environment Record (HER) notes that the parish church of St Etheldreda dates from the 13th century and lies approximately 70m away, the graveyard 30m away (HER2368). Evidence of medieval and post medieval occupation has been found at Gray's Yard. St Audrey's Care Home appears on OS mapping from the late 19th century.

The position of the proposed development is such that it should be regarded as likely to impact on remains of archaeological interest. It is therefore recommended that the following provisions should be made by condition:

1. the archaeological evaluation of the proposed development site before any development commences.
2. Such appropriate mitigation measures indicated as necessary by that evaluation. These may include:
 - a) the preservation of any remains *in situ*, if warranted,
 - b) appropriate archaeological excavation of any remains before any development commences on the site, with provisions for subsequent analysis and publication of results,
 - c) archaeological monitoring of any other groundworks of the development (also including a contingency for the preservation or further investigation of any remains then encountered),
 - d) such other provisions as may be necessary to protect the archaeological interests of the site.
3. the analysis of the results of the archaeological work and the production of a report

Subject to a condition PPS 5, Policy HE12 and the Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide and local plan policy would be complied with.

Sustainability

The applicant has completed the sustainability checklist as required. This details measures, including those previously discussed such as biodiversity and renewable energy provision, will be implemented as part of the scheme. Details provided include solar gain, close proximity to shops, separate bins for recycling, new landscaping proposals, local employment, and accommodation for a part of the community that is currently under catered for. In conclusion the proposal would contribute towards sustainable development.

Fire Exit

Welwyn Hatfield Access Group have queried with the agent's emergency egress facilities. The agents have advised that the lift would be a combined fire-fighting and evacuation lift, with an area annotated conservatory on drawing number 759/002A for people with mobility difficulties to be accommodated whilst awaiting the fire brigade.

Other matters

Other details such as the connections to mains electricity and drainage are all considered to be acceptable.

CONCLUSION:

The proposal would provide 22 bed accommodation for people with dementia and would extend the existing accommodation from 38 beds to 60. The principle of the accommodation is acceptable.

The design of the scheme would compliment the area and comply with policies. Conditions are recommended for landscaping, archaeology, highway matters and so forth. Contributions are not required towards highway improvements because the scheme would not result in any significant impacts upon the highway network.

Overall the proposal is acceptable and is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS

CONDITIONS:

1. C.2.1 – Time Limit

2. No felling of trees shall be carried out on site between 1st March and 31st August inclusive in any year, unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To protect breeding birds in accordance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and PPS9.

3. C.11.3 – If protected species are discovered

DEVELOPMENT

4. C.13.1: Development in accordance with approved plans/details
759-001 & 759-005 & 759-006 & 759-007 & 759-008 received and dated 19 February 2010
759-002 A received and dated 6th April 2010

5. All areas for parking and storage and delivery of materials associated with the construction of this development shall be provided within the site only on land which is not public highway and the use of such areas must not interfere with the use of the public highway.

REASON: To ensure that no obstructions to the public highway occur during the construction period in the interests of highway safety

6 The measures for generating the predicted energy requirements as detailed within the 'St Audrey's Care Home Energy Strategy, December 2009 by Bobby Gilbert & Associates Ltd comprising either Ground Source Heat Pumps or Solar Hot Water

shall be implemented before the development is first occupied and shall remain operational for the lifetime of the development unless otherwise agreed by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure that the development contributes towards Sustainable Development and Energy Efficiency in accordance with Policy SS1 of the East of England Plan 2008 and Policies SD1 and R3 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005

7. The development hereby permitted shall be finished in 'Hatfield mix' with black headers, as used across Gascoyne Cecil Estate, and handmade clay plain peg tiles.

REASON: To ensure a satisfactory standard of development in the interests of the visual amenity in accordance with policies GBSP2, D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

8. The brick work of walls hereby permitted shall be constructed in English Bond to match the original building.

REASON: To ensure a satisfactory standard of development in the interests of the visual amenity in accordance with policies GBSP2, D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

PRE-COMMENCEMENT

9. C.8.9- No occupation until spaces laid out

10. C.8.10 – Unbound material/surface dressing

11. C.4.1 – Scheme of landscaping (f, g)

(l) A tree survey of all the trees on or adjacent to the site. This shall comply with BS5837:2005 Trees in Relation to Construction.

(m) Any soil level changes within Root Protection Areas of trees

12. C.9.3 – Full archaeological excavation and evaluation (**)

POST-DEVELOPMENT

13. C.4.2 – Implementation of landscaping

SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE GRANT OF PERMISSION:

Reason for Grant of FP/LB/CA/DT/ (**Approvals only**):

The proposal has been considered against Planning Policy Statement/Guidance PPS1: Delivering sustainable development, PPS5: Planning for the Historic Environment, PPG13: Transport and PPG14: Development on Unstable Land, East of England Plan 2008 policies SS1: Achieving Sustainable Development, T14: Parking, ENG1: Carbon Dioxide Emissions and Energy Performance and ENV6: The Historic Environment and development plan policies SD1: Sustainable Development, GBSP2: Towns and specified settlements, R3: Energy Efficiency, R29: Archaeology, H9: Special needs housing, M4: Developer contributions, M14: Parking standards for new developments, IM2: Planning Obligations, D1: Quality of design, D2: Character

and context, D5: Design for movement, D7: Safety by Design, D8: Landscaping and D9: Access and Design for people with disabilities 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. INF9 – chalk mining

- 2. For information the submitted tree survey does not include all the trees on or adjacent to the site or comply with BS5837:2005 Trees in Relation to Construction.

- 3. A careful design which includes ornamental areas around the home, heavy screening along both the road and the eastern boundary and diffuse screening along the southern boundary, will ease the appearance of the proposed site dramatically

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