

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL
PLANNING CONTROL COMMITTEE – 5 AUGUST 2010
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR (STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT)

S6/2010/1202/FP

7-15 PARK STREET, OLD HATFIELD, HATFIELD, AL9 5AT

CHANGE OF USE FROM SUI GENERIS TO C3 (DWELLINGHOUSE)

APPLICANT: Professor A Starr

(Hatfield East)

1 **Site Description**

- 1.1 The application site is located on the west side of Park Street. The site comprises a group of terrace properties which have been internally altered to form one building. The site has a prominent position within the Old Hatfield Conservation Area and is adjacent to other listed buildings. The buildings within the site are built up to the edge of the footpath, similar to the other surrounding buildings within Conservation Area.
- 1.2 Numbers 7, 9 and 11 are a collection of three timber framed buildings that are all Grade II Listed. The list description gives the main range and (probably) the south cross wing as 15th century and the north cross wing as 17th century, which is likely as the main framing size is heavy and the open hall with crown post roof form points to a medieval date, perhaps earlier.
- 1.3 Number 15 Park Street is a modern house that is attached to number 11 and forms part of the terrace. Although number 15 is not part of the original listed building it is attached to number 11 both externally and internally.
- 1.4 The surrounding area is characterised by historic buildings on narrow roads. Some of the surrounding roads have controlled parking. Some nearby commercial areas have off road parking and there is a nearby public car park.

2 **The Proposal**

- 2.1 The application seeks a change of use from sui generis to C3 (dwellinghouse). No external or internal changes have been proposed.

3 **Planning History**

- 3.1 Those relevant to this planning application:
- 3.2 S6/2009/0431/DC4 - Conversion of former resource centre into 1 x 2 bed, 1 x 3 bed and 1 x 4 bed dwelling houses. Demolition of side extensions, internal alterations and associated parking and landscaping - Approved (18/8/2009).

- 3.3 S6/2009/0444/LB - Conversion of former resource centre into 1 x 2 bed, 1 x 3 bed and 1 x 4 bed dwelling houses. Demolition of side extensions, internal alterations and associated parking and landscaping - Approved (18/8/2009).
- 3.4 S6/0231/75/DC - 7 – 15 Park Street - Change of use from a guesthouse to house in residential multiple occupation - Approved (21/5/1975).

4 Planning Policy

4.1 National Planning Policy

PPS 1: Sustainable Development
PPS 3: Housing
PPS 5: Planning for the Historic Environment
PPG 13: Transport
PPG 14: Development on Unstable Land

4.2 Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005

SD1: Sustainable Development
GBSP2: Towns and specified settlements
R3: Energy Efficiency
R29: Archaeology
M14: Parking Standards for New Development
D1: Quality of Design
D2: Character and Context
D3: Continuity and Enclosure
D8: Landscaping
H2: Location of Windfall Residential Development
H10: Accessible Housing

4.3 Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005

4.4 Supplementary Planning Guidance, Parking Standards, January 2004

5 Constraints

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

6 Representations Received

- 6.1 This application has been advertised by site notice, newspaper notice and neighbour notifications. No representations had been received at the time of writing this report. The consultation period for neighbour notifications expires on 11 August 2010 and the site notice on 10 August 2010. Any further representations will be reported to the committee at the meeting.

7 Town Council Representations

- 7.1 Hatfield Town Council consider 7-15 Park Street an important part of Hatfield's history. It should therefore be retained as a public property, a museum or similar rather converted in to a private dwelling house. The council therefore object to the proposal.

8 **Discussion**

8.1 This application is presented to the Planning Control Committee because an objection has been received from Hatfield Town Council.

8.2 The main issues to be considered are:

- 1. The appropriateness of the proposed change of use to accommodate a dwellinghouse including impact upon residential amenity of adjoining occupiers.**
- 2. The proposal's impact upon the character and appearance of the locality and the Old Hatfield Conservation Area.**
- 3. The proposed developments impact upon the historic fabric of the Listed buildings.**
- 4. Other Material Considerations.**

- 1. The appropriateness of the proposed change of use to accommodate a dwellinghouse including impact upon residential amenity of adjoining occupiers.**

8.3 The application site is within a residential area. Although there are some offices and other uses within the locality, the predominant use and appearance of the surroundings is residential. The development would consist of reusing the existing building and therefore make use of previously developed land. The application site used to be a guesthouse/boarding house at the time of the 1975 application.

8.4 When considering the previous uses from before 1975, the proposed residential use of site would not result in an intensification of use. At the time of the application the site was vacant, however, when considering the previous number of potential inhabitants when in use as a house of multiple occupation, reasonable use as a single dwelling house is likely to result in significantly less noise and disturbance.

8.5 The proposed development would maintain the external envelope of the existing building. The application has only applied for a change of use. Due to the proposed development not involving external changes there is not felt to be an adverse impact on neighbours.

Accessibility and Parking Provision

8.6 The application site is located within close proximity to a range of shops and services. The site is located within zone 2 as designated by the parking standards of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005. The A1000 which serves several bus routes and Hatfield train station are within a 500m walking distance to the site. The site is considered to be easily accessible and within an appropriate location for residential use.

8.7 The existing parking area can accommodate at least 5 cars. The retained parking area would exceed the maximum requirement of the parking standard of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005. The retained parking space is considered to be sufficient for a dwelling of the proposed size. Whilst the provision would exceed the minimum requirements of the Parking Standards, in this instance due to the restricted number of parking spaces within Old Hatfield, this level of provision is considered to be acceptable.

- 8.8 The proposed development would meet the requirements of Policies M14 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and is considered to be acceptable in terms of parking.

Density

- 8.9 PPS3 (Housing) encourages the provision of more housing within towns and other specified settlements and encourages local planning authorities to avoid the inefficient use of land and to make full use of previously developed land. Paragraph 41 provides a national target of 60% of housing to be built on previously developed land, which includes land and buildings that are currently vacant. There is, however, no presumption that previously developed land would be suitable for housing. Annex B of PPS3 defines previously developed land as *“...land is that which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure.”*
- 8.10 Efficient use of land should be made and authorities should provide their own density figures. Development should be well designed, integrating with, and complementing, the neighbouring buildings and the local area, readily accessible to public transport, provide outdoor private space, car parking and creates or enhances the distinctive character of the area.
- 8.11 Policy H2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 assesses the potential and suitability of windfall housing developments against a number of criteria. This includes the availability of previously developed land, location and accessibility to services, capacity of infrastructure to absorb further development, ability to reinforce existing communities and the physical and environmental constraints on the land. The site is previously developed land and is within walking distance of the railway station and a range of shops and services.
- 8.12 Density details within PPS3 have recently been amended, so that there is no longer a lower limit restriction. PPS3 states that local authorities should provide policies at a local level detailing density requirements. In the case of this vacant site within an area of relatively high density development, the proposal would add to the mix of housing types without having an impact upon the character and appearance of the locality.

Amenity Space

- 8.13 No alterations have been proposed to the amenity space. The amenity space is considered to be a sufficient size for the proposed dwelling and would have a good level of privacy. The residential use of this area would not have an adverse impact upon the adjoining occupiers.

2. The proposal’s impact upon the character and appearance of the locality and the Old Hatfield Conservation Area.

- 8.14 No physical alterations have been proposed to the building or its external appearance. The proposed change of use is not considered to have any adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the locality.

3. The proposed developments impact upon the historic fabric of the Listed buildings

- 8.15 The application site is currently vacant. The proposed development would bring the buildings back into use and allow their repair and maintenance. As stipulated

within PPS5, new uses may often be the key to a building's or area's preservation. The change of use of a building can allow for its continual upkeep and prevent a historic building from running into disrepair.

- 8.16 The applicant is aware that works to the building would require listed building consent through discussions prior to the submission of the application. The proposed change in use is likely to reduce the number of occupants, but also ensure the upkeep of the building. The proposed use is not considered to be detrimental to the historic fabric or architectural merit of the building. When compared to the previous use the proposal would not result in any further harm.
- 8.17 It has been noted that the site comprises listed buildings that have a significant importance within the surrounding conservation area. The proposed development would maintain the existing form of the development and would not involve any material alterations.
- 8.18 This application must be assessed on its own merits and there are no proposals to retain the building for public use. As the building has now been vacant for some time it is appropriate that maintenance of the Listed Buildings is considered. It has been noted that Hatfield Town Council would prefer for the building to be converted for public use, however, without an application proposing an alternative, a different scheme cannot be assessed.
- 8.19 The proposed development would respect the architectural merit and historic fabric of the Listed Building and would therefore comply with PPS5.

4. Other Material Considerations.

Chalk Mining

- 8.20 The application site is within an area of Hatfield that contains historic chalk mines. The site lies within the buffer zone for a moderately high risk area, however, as the proposed development would not result in any increased risk to future inhabitants, a risk assessment is not necessary.

Disabled Access

- 8.21 The development is on relatively level ground. Some internal areas cannot be altered due to the historic layout. The existing parking area is sufficient to accommodate disabled car parking.

Archaeology

- 8.22 Due to the proposal not involving any works the application would not affect any archaeological remains.

Sustainable Development

- 8.23 The application has included a sustainability checklist as detailed within the Supplementary Design Guidance. This includes details such as using previously developed land and includes matters such as energy efficiency. Considering the proposal would comprise the reuse of an existing building without physical alterations, these measures are considered to be acceptable.

9 **Conclusion**

- 9.1 The application site is within an accessible location that is considered to be acceptable for residential use. The proposed development would allow the restoration of an existing group of listed buildings. The proposed development would not have an adverse impact upon the residential amenity of the adjoining occupiers. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with national, regional and local plan policies.
- 9.2 At this stage, a decision cannot be made on the application as the consultation periods have not expired. It is therefore recommended that the Committee consider the application in light of the objection raised by Welwyn Parish Council. Any further representations received after the Committee are considered by the Head of Development Control in discussion with the Chairman and Vice Chairman.

10 **Recommendation**

- 10.1 After the expiry of the consultation period any additional representations shall be discussed with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Committee by the Head of Development Control with the recommendation that application S6/2010/1202/FP be approved subject to the following conditions:
- 1 C.2.1 – Standard Time limit (Three Years)
 - 2 C.13.10 – Development in Accordance with plans and details: Site Location Plan 1:1250 & 01 A and dated 18 June 2010.

Summary of reasons for grant of permission

The proposal has been considered against Planning Policy Statement/Guidance PPS 1: Delivering Sustainable Development , PPS 3: Housing, PPS 5: Planning for the Historic Environment, PPG 13: Transport, PPG 14: Development on Unstable Land and development plan policies SD1: Sustainable Development, GBSP2: Towns and specified settlements, R3: Energy Efficiency, R29: Archaeology, M14: Parking Stands for New Development, D1: Quality of Design D2: Character and Context, D3: Continuity and Enclosure, D8: Landscaping H2: Location of Windfall Residential Development, H10: Accessible Housing 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).

Damian Manhertz (Strategy and Development)
Date (22 July 2010)

Background papers to be listed (if applicable)

PARK STREET

FORE STREET

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