

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No:	S6/2012/0264/FP
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NOTATION:

The site lies within the excluded settlement of Hatfield as designated in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE:

The application site consists of a large modern building which is part of the University Campus. The building is located towards the east side of the site and a large car park is located to the south. To the other elevation (west), the land leads to the sports facilities on the de Havilland Campus.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

The proposal is to extend the western elevation with a single storey extension between the Auditorium and the academic building to provide facilities for the Student Union.

PLANNING HISTORY:

S6/2010/0578/FP – Replacement of ground floor façade – Granted 17th May 2010

S6/2009/1120/FP – Erection of reception building - Granted 28/07/09

S6/2007/1266/FP - Erection Of Small Wind Turbine (1.8m Diameter) And 2 Solar Panels On Roof – Granted

S6/2007/1238/AD – Installation of 2 illuminated Signs at De-Havilland Campus – no decision

SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES:

National Planning Policy Framework

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

D1: Quality of design

D2: Character and context

D5: Design for movement

D7: Safety by Design

D9: Access and Design for people with disabilities

EMP 12 – University of Hertfordshire

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005

CONSULTATIONS

Welwyn Hatfield Access Group - unable to determine the travel distance from the nearest disabled parking bay to the student union entrance

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS

None

REPRESENTATIONS

None. Period expired 14th March 2012

The main issues are:

- 1. Design Issues**
- 2. Amenity Issues**
- 3. Other Material Considerations**

1. Design Issues

Policies EMP13 and D1 are relevant. The location of the proposed changes is limited only to the ground floor level. The proposed extension would be sited between the two existing elevations to the auditorium and western atrium, not projecting from the existing facades. It is designed to reflect the appearance of both the adjoining developments.

The proposal therefore would have no significant visual impact on the surrounding area and would complement the design of the existing building on where it will be located and so complies with the design requirements of Policies EMP13 & D1

2. Amenity Issues

The proposed changes are of a sufficient distance from any other buildings to not have any impact on amenity.

3. Protected Species

The presence of protected species is a material consideration, in accordance with Natural Environment & Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (section 40), Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as well as Circular 06/05.

Protected species such as great crested newts, otters, dormice and bats benefit from the strictest legal protection. These species are known as European Protected Species ('EPS') and the protection afforded to them derives from the EU Habitats Directive, in addition to the above legislation. Water voles, badgers, reptiles, all wild birds, invertebrates and certain rare plants are protected to a lesser extent under UK domestic law (NERC Act and Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981).

The existing site and development is such that there is not a reasonable likelihood of EPS being present on site nor would a EPS offence be likely to occur. It is therefore not necessary to consider the Conservation Regulations 2010 further.

Disabled Access – Welwyn Hatfield Access Group comment that it is not clear from the drawings how far the nearest disabled parking space is from the development. Details have not been provided as part of the application. Notwithstanding this, as the development is just a small extension to the existing building which is provided with level access and that the building would assist students by providing a Student Union building/office at de Havilland mitigating the effect of students needing to travel to College Lane, the development is considered acceptable.

East of England Plan 2008: On 10th November 2010, The High Court quashed the decision of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to unilaterally revoke Regional Spatial Strategies in England on two grounds:

That he acted outside his statutory powers in circumventing the need for parliamentary scrutiny of such a fundamental change to the national planning system; and

He failed to consider the likely environmental effects of revoking Regional Strategies

However, the Government is still committed to the abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies through the Localism Act. In the meantime, the policies in the East of England Plan are re-established and form part of the development plan again and are therefore a material consideration which can be taken into account in reaching a decision. However, the Government's intention to abolish Regional Spatial Strategies is also a material consideration that could be considered to reduce the weight to be attached to policies in Regional Spatial Strategies.

The application has been considered against policies in the East of England Plan, which at the time of this decision forms part of the development plan for the Borough but that the weight accorded to these policies, in light of the above circumstances, has been carefully considered in reaching a decision.

CONCLUSION:

The proposal is considered to be in keeping with the character of the existing building and surrounding area and would not conflict with the existing use of the buildings. The proposal therefore complies with the above policies.

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS

CONDITIONS:

1. C.2.1 - Standard Time Limit
2. C.13.1 – In accordance with approved plans and details
AB-(EX)-001 Rev A & AB-(EX)-010 Rev A & AB-(GA)-100 Rev A & AB-(GA)-301 Rev A & AB-(GA)-302 Rev A received and dated 9th February 2012
3. C.5.2 – Matching materials

SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE GRANT OF PERMISSION:

The proposal has been considered against National Planning Policy Framework, East of England Plan 2008 SS1 and Development Plan policies SD1, GBSP2, D1, D2, D5, D7, D9 and EMP12 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.....