

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No:	S6/2012/1195/FP
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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 wider site, as outlined in blue, comprises the University of Hertfordshire's de Havilland Campus. It is a modern Campus having been built within the last 10 years or so.

The building, subject to this application is located towards the southern part of the campus, between the academic buildings and LRC, north of the car parking area.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

The application seeks full planning permission for modifications to the ground floor eastern facade of 'Block M' of the Academic Buildings. The proposals seek to improve the outlook from within the accommodation, whilst also improve the amount of natural daylight that the rooms receive.

It is proposed to provide glazed louvre panels behind perforated panels.

PLANNING HISTORY:

SUMMARY OF POLICIES:

National Planning Policy Framework

East of England Plan 2008 Policies:

SS1: Achieving Sustainable Development

ENV7: Quality in the Built Environment

Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991 – 2011:

None

SD1: Sustainable Development

GBSP2: Towns and Specified Settlements

R3: Energy Efficiency

D1: Quality of Design

D2: Character and Context

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005

CONSULTATIONS:

None

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS: None

No comments received from Hatfield Town Council. Consultation expired 20th July.

REPRESENTATIONS:

The application was advertised by means of site notice. The consultation expired on the 12th July. No comments were received.

DISCUSSION:

The main issues are:

1. Design and Character of the Development
2. Impact upon Adjoining Residents
3. Other Material Planning Considerations

1. The proposal comprises altering the external facade of part of the ground floor accommodation of Block M. Currently, it is designed such that there is no outlook from the ground floor, due to the windows within the elevation being high level, above natural eye level. The proposal would provide glazing at what is considered to be a 'normal' height, which will enable an outlook from the building.

The alterations are considered would be reflective of the finish to other buildings, for example the LRC immediately across the grassed area to the east and also the glazing in the upper floors of Block M. The design is acceptable and would comply with the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework and local plan policy D1.

The interventions are minimal and would have very limited impact upon the character of the immediate area. It is therefore considered that policy D2 would be complied with.

2. Due to the distance of the development from adjoining occupiers, the proposals would not have any impact. It is also considered that the provision of additional glazing that users of the ground floor can see out of will not have any detrimental impact on privacy currently enjoyed by users of the grassed area, as this area is already significantly active and overlooked from adjoining rooms and users of this area.

3. Other Material Planning Considerations

Protected Species The presence of protected species is a material consideration, in accordance with the National Planning Policy, 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.

Sustainable Development: The application has been submitted with a sustainability checklist in accordance with local plan policy. This details that recycled materials will be used wherever possible, natural surveillance of the surrounding area will result and the resulting improved facilities, will mean that enhanced teaching will result. The development has limited opportunities to contribute towards sustainable development, but it is considered that the resulting development will be sustainable in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

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 development comprises minimal alterations to the existing building. Those alterations that are proposed will result in an improved building for users of Block M. There will be no impact upon any adjoining residential occupiers, due to the distance of this building from the adjoining residential area.

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS

CONDITIONS:

1. C.2.1 Time limit for commencement of development
2. C.13.1 Development in accordance with approved plans/details
3423/0/2 rev A & 3423/0/4 rev A & 3423/0/5 rev A received and dated 11 June 2012

Post Development

3. C5.2 Matching materials

SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE GRANT OF PERMISSION:

The proposal has been considered against the National Planning Policy, East of England Plan 2008 policies SS1 and ENV7 and development plan policies SD1, GBSP2, R3, D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005, in addition to the Human Rights Act 1998, which, at the time of this decision 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**.....