

Application Number: S6/2015/0408/FP

Description of Development: Change of use from class B1 (Business Use) to class C3 (Dwelling) with extension and alterations to existing building to form four dwellings

Recommendation: APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

Site Designation: The site lies within the town of Hatfield and within Old Hatfield Conservation Area as designated in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

Relevant planning history

S6/2014/0021/OR – Prior approval for the change of use of ground, first and second floor office building (Use Class B1) to 6 x 2 bedroom flats (Use Class C3 residential) (Prior Approval Not Required 06/03/2014)

S6/2001/0042/FP – Alterations to rear elevation and construction of boundary wall to maximum height of 2.4m (Granted 06/07/2001)

S6/1997/0677/FP – Change of use of ground floor from Class A2 to B1 office (Granted 26/09/1997)

Consultations

No objections have been received in principle from Hertfordshire County Council, Transport, Programs and Strategy; Hertfordshire Constabulary; Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service; Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Building Control and Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Contract Services.

Neighbour representations

None received Object Support Comment

Welwyn Hatfield Access Group commented on access arrangements and the provision of a fire escape in a letter addressed directly to the applicant's agent. A copy of their letter was forwarded to the Council. The letter did not state any objection to the proposal.

Town / Parish representations

None received Object Support No comment/objection

Relevant Policies

NPPF
 D1 D2 GBSP1 GBSP2 M14
Policy H2

Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005

Supplementary Planning Guidance, Parking Standards, January 2004

Interim Policy for Car Parking Standards and Garage Sizes, August 2014

Main issues

Is the development within a conservation area?

Yes No

Would the significance of the designated heritage asset be conserved or enhanced?

Yes No

Comment: This application seek full planning permission for the erection of a 2.5 storey building within the car park to the rear of the application site. The building would comprise 1no 2-bedroom and 2no 1-bedroom apartments linked to the existing property by a small bridge. In addition, it is also proposed to create a new 2 bedroom apartment on and within the roof space of the existing building including

The proposal is not considered to have an adverse visual impact on the conservation area or the visual amenity of the street scene. The materials and appearance of the proposed development would adequately maintain the character and appearance of the application property and the conservation area in accordance with the NPPF.

Would the development reflect the character of the area?

Yes No N/A

Comment: The application site is located to the west side of Salisbury Square and accommodates a three storey terrace building with an enclosed parking court to the rear. Salisbury Square to the front of the site is a pedestrianised area characterised by public open space mostly laid to lawn surrounded by a mix of uses including retail, office and restaurants/takeaways.

Subject to a planning condition requiring the approval of materials, it considered that the scheme would be adequately compatible with the maintenance of the character and context of the area. In this respect, no objections are raised with regard to the NPPF and Policies D1 and D2 of District Plan 2005 and the SDG.

Would the development reflect the character of the building?

Yes No N/A

Comment: See comments above.

Would the development maintain the amenity of adjoining occupiers? (e.g. privacy, outlook, light etc.)

Yes No N/A

Comment: Giving consideration to the scale of the proposal, orientation and its setting, it is considered that the proposal would not have an unreasonable impact on light amenity or the level of privacy afforded to the neighbouring residencies and would not appear visually overbearing. The amenity of the adjoining occupiers would be maintained to an acceptable level in accordance with Policy D1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005, the SDG and the NPPF.

Would the development provide / retain sufficient parking?

Yes No N/A

Comment: Local Plan Policy M14 concerns parking provision and is complemented by the Council's 2004 Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on parking standards. Policy M1 promotes the integration of transport and land use, promoting non-car modes of travel. Policy M6 promotes cycle routes and facilities.

In terms of parking, paragraph 39 of the NPPF states that in setting local parking standards authorities should take into account the accessibility of the development, the type, mix and use of the development, availability of public transport; local car ownership levels and the overall need to reduce the use of high emission vehicles. Local Plan Policy M14 and the Parking Standards SPG use maximum standards which are not consistent with the NPPF and are therefore afforded less weight. In light of the above, the Council has produced an interim Policy for Car Parking Standards that states that parking provision will be assessed on a case by case basis and the existing maximum parking standards within the SPG should be taken as guidance only.

In this case accessibility by non car modes of transport is excellent given the close proximity to Hatfield Railway Station and the associated bus/taxi interchange. The application site is also well served by pedestrian and cycle routes. Old Hatfield and Hatfield Town centre, with their associated facilities and services, are within a reasonable walking/cycle distance from the application site.

Whilst the proposal would result in the loss of three parking spaces...

Drawing P02 also shows a cycle storage area although no further details have been provided. **Condition...** Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority does not wish to restrict the grant of permission. Overall it is considered that the proposed development would not impact unduly on highway safety and no objections are raised in this regard.

Other issues: None

Refuse and recycling

1. Provision of private amenity space

Amenity space is generally green space and planting which softens the urban fabric, allows for informal leisure, and provides a setting for buildings. The SDG makes it clear that all new residential developments should provide adequate private gardens. Communal amenity space required for flats must be available both for the use of and large enough to accommodate the needs of all residents. Whilst no specific dimensions are stipulated, amenity space should nonetheless be functional and useable in terms of width, depth, shape and orientation. All of the proposed flats feature private balconies or roof terraces of various sizes. In addition to those private amenity areas, a communal roof terrace and communal garden is proposed which would allow for semi-private enjoyment. In this instance, I consider that the amount of amenity space provided for the occupants of the flats would be commensurate to the size and number of units. Notwithstanding this, I suggest that any future planning application is supported by a detailed landscaping scheme to demonstrate the quality of the proposed private amenity space and how it would be used in accordance with the aims of Policy D1, the SDG and the NPPF.

Conditions

Pre-development

1. C.2.1 – Time limit for commencement of development
2. C.13.1 – Development in accordance with approved plans and details: P01 & P02 & P03 received and dated 2 March 2015
3. C.4.1 – Landscaping scheme

Post -development

1. C.5.2 – Materials to match

Implementation?

REASONS FOR APPROVAL

The decision has been made taking into account, where practicable and appropriate the requirements of paragraphs 186-187 of the National Planning Policy Framework and material planning considerations do not justify a decision contrary to the development plan (see Officer's report which can be viewed on the Councils website or inspected at these offices).

Informative:

INF 1 – Other legislation

Signature _____

Date _____