

ELLENBROOK AREA RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION



Planning application: 6/2016/1739/MAJ, Comet Hatfield, St Albans Road West, Hatfield, AL10 9RH

We have a number of concerns regarding the impact of the proposed development on the Ellenbrook Area which lies adjacent to the Comet Hotel.

University/student location

Whilst we welcome the economic benefits which the University brings to the town, everyone is well aware of the difficulties in absorbing such a large student population in a small town with limited facilities.

The Applicant refers to the difficulties with HMOs in Hatfield and states the Comet development "...will ensure communities are balanced, which represents a significant public benefit which must be weighed in favour of the application (Paragraphs 14 and 134 of the NPPF)....". However, better balance elsewhere would be at the cost of a new imbalance here. We have approximately 520 dwellings in Ellenbrook, and so 308 students would have a significant effect, bringing to our area the imbalance and change of character previously attributed to HMOs in other parts of town.

In addition, consideration must be given to the increased noise potential and, therefore, disturbance that this number of students living on a single site adjacent to residential properties occupied by families of all ages would bring.

We support Mr Pattison's view expressed during the previous application that the students targeted for this accommodation should be housed within the College Lane Campus or the De Havilland Campus. The Comet is alongside an established residential area and is not a suitable location for student accommodation.

Parking

The Applicant states that student accommodation would be "car free" and "managed and secured through individual tenancy agreements and a Travel Plan". The local press has quoted Leo Glass of Fusion Students as stating: "It's written into the contract that they the students are not to bring a car. It's something actively enforced."

This was the aspiration when the university's expansion was first proposed: as residents we were assured that students would "sign up" to the car free environment and would face disciplinary action if found to have a car. This has not happened:

- Exhibit 1 is a chat on Studentroom, and shows that the university does not suggest that cars are banned for any students, but recommends the "Park and Ride".
- Exhibit 2 shows that the "solution" adopted to parking problems has not been banning cars, but has been the funding of parking restrictions.

ELLENBROOK AREA RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION



- Exhibit 3 shows that the problem continues, and that the “Park and Ride” is closed overnight.

The Ellenbrook area had parking restrictions imposed once the De Havilland Campus was established, the most common being “No Waiting Mon-Fri 0900-1600; 4th Jan - 30th March 15 April-30 June 15 Sept-15 Dec”. If only a small proportion of the 308 students (presumably affluent, given the luxury format of the accommodation) bring cars with them and look for free local overnight parking, we will face the dilemma of clogged roads or a further extension of already unpopular parking restrictions. Either way, our residents and their visitors will be unable to park outside their own homes.

Other issues


We would also like to draw the following to the committee’s attention:

- The Site Location map produced by Corstophine and Wright and presented in the Application appears to be misleading, significantly overstating the extent of the University De Havilland campus, and failing to show the extent of the residential area (see Exhibit 4). The university is a relatively small part of the former aerodrome and most of the area identified by C&W as De Havilland Campus is actually office, retail, leisure and residential land.
- The Application notes a “Surface water discharge connection to Ellenbrook”. We are already in discussion with HCC as to the possible impact on water levels of the proposed Ellenbrook Fields gravel extraction, and would ask that any decision on this application should take into account the aggregate effects of the various proposals in the area on surface water and on flows in the Nast and Ellenbrook.
- Whilst we appreciate that the size of the buildings has been reduced from the original application, we believe that they still remain disproportionately large in comparison with the adjacent residential dwellings, and completely inconsistent with the character of the Ellenbrook area.
- A submission suggests that there should be a S106 requirement to fund a playground so that our residents have some benefit from the development. Should the application be passed, we would ask for funding, but would also ask that local residents be consulted as to the best use of such funds.

Overall

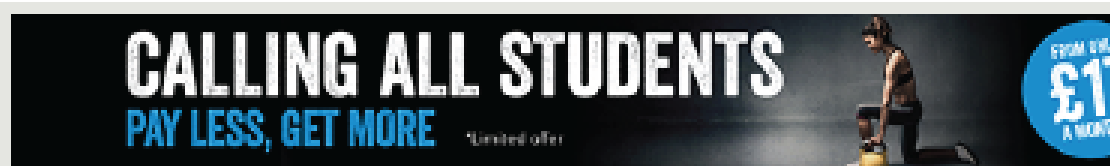
The Comet is adjacent to the Ellenbrook residential area. We believe that the introduction of over 300 students to this single site would change the character of the area, more than offsetting any public benefit achieved by the possible balancing of other communities. In addition, the application overlooks the fact that past attempts to provide a “car free” environment have simply moved the cars from the student accommodation to nearby residential roads, such that the residents face either blocked roads or ever more draconian parking restrictions. We believe that this location is unsuitable for the housing of students.

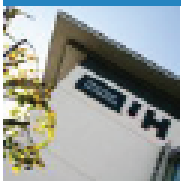
EXHIBIT 1

 Hercules5 *Offline* 03-03-2015 13:43:11

1 Rep:

I'll be transferring into Herts in September and want to take my car with me. I'll be living in campus and I know most unis don't allow on-campus residents to bring their car with them so where would I be able to park?



 University of Hertfordshire *Offline* 03-03-2015 14:33:21

3 Rep:

Hi Hercules5,

Congratulations on joining the University of Hertfordshire!

Unfortunately parking for students is limited on our College Lane campus and restricted on de Havilland, however we do offer a Park and Ride facility for a daily fee.

All the information you need is on [this link](#).

Hope that helps,

Heather
University of Hertfordshire

TRANSCRIPT

I'll be transferring into Herts in September and want to take my car with me. I'll be living in campus and I know most unis don't allow on-campus residents to bring their car with them so where would I be able to park? 8/3/15 Hercules 5

Hi Hercules5, Congratulations on joining the University of Hertfordshire! Unfortunately parking for students is limited on our College Lane campus and restricted on de Havilland, however we do offer a Park and Ride facility for a daily fee. All the information you need is on [this link](#). Hope that helps, Heather University of Hertfordshire

EXHIBIT 2

Double yellows to stop student parking in Hatfield

06:25 25 January 2012

[By Simon Wesson](#)



County councillor Stuart Pile with borough councillors Kim Langley and Roger Trigg by the newly painted double yellow lines in Bishops Rise

DOUBLE yellow lines, which have been painted as a temporary measure to cure the problem of student parking in Hatfield, are to become a permanent feature.

Put down in Bishops Rise in February last year, they were introduced following complaints from residents, businesses and bus companies, that inconsiderate parking was making the road difficult to drive down.

On several occasions traffic had been totally blocked.

There was a six-month objection period, during which time Hertfordshire Highways monitored the effectiveness of the scheme and the impact on the surrounding area. The end result was the scheme met all objectives, so the decision was taken to make the Traffic Regulation Order permanent.

Funding for the scheme has been provided by the University of Hertfordshire and approved by the police. The restrictions are enforced by the borough council.

Cllr Colin Couch, executive member for environment at Welwyn Hatfield Council, said it was “great news”, a “welcome relief for residents and users” of the busy road and thanked those who found a solution.

Cllr Stuart Pile, Hertfordshire County Council’s cabinet member for highways and transport, also thanked those involved to help what had become a “major issue”.

EXHIBIT 3

I'm at my wit's end' says Hatfield mum as ambulance blocked by parked cars

07:00 29 March 2016

[Anne Suslak](#)



An ambulance struggling to get through Holly Close Picture: Julie Simson

A Hatfield resident is frustrated by students double-parking on her road after an ambulance struggled to reach an elderly patient suffering from chest pain.

The ambulance service was called at 3.43pm on Tuesday, March 15, to Holly Close, Hatfield to help a woman in her 80s.



An ambulance struggles to get through Holly Close Picture: Julie Simson

An ambulance and a rapid response vehicle attended and the woman was taken to Lister Hospital for treatment.

Julie Simson, 49, of Holly Close, said: "We have got four elderly and disabled bungalows at the end of the road.

"The ambulance couldn't get down to one of the ladies because of the way students park



Serco struggle to get through Holly Close

Picture: Julie Simson

“It was freezing cold and they had to wheel her to the ambulance.

“They have double-parked. They park opposite each other and it’s a really narrow road.”

The following day rubbish collectors were unable to get down the road to collect the bins.

“They had to wheel all the bins down to the end of the road,” Ms Simons said: “We now have a smaller rubbish lorry because the large one can’t get down the road. Some days we are blocked in.”

Ms Simson, who lives in the close with her partner and 19-year-old son, has complained to the university, as well as contacting the council and the police.

She said: “I suggested to the uni that they have free on-site parking for all the students and I was laughed at.

“I also raised it at a community forum and got accused of threatening behaviour. They won’t admit there’s a problem.

“I am at my wit’s end. I spoke to someone at the uni and she said they have nowhere else to park because the park-and-ride is shut overnight.”

Geri Ward, dean of students, said: “The university is committed to maintaining good community relationships and we will be working closely with local residents, police, students, council and local businesses to address the issues that were reported at the last Community Forum regarding parking in the local area.

“We have informed Hertfordshire’s Highways team about concerns regarding parking in Holly Close and the university police team has been issuing tickets to any cars which are found parked illegally in the local area.

“We will continue to encourage students to use the park-and-ride and inform them about spaces on campus where they can park.”



EXHIBIT 4


 UNIVERSITY  BUSINESS PARK

PER CORSTORPINE + WRIGHT → OVERSTATES CAMPUS AREA.



ACTUAL

 UNIVERSITY  BUSINESS PARK - OFFICE, RETAIL, LEISURE, RES'L

 RESIDENTIAL

