WELWYNHATFIELD COUNCIL PLANNING CONTROL BOARD 27 TH SEPTEMBER 2001 REPORT OF THE CHIEF PLANNING OFFICER

PCB 27.09.01
PART 1
ITEM NO
FOR DECISION
CPO

S6/2001/1026/DE

APPROVAL OF RESERVED MATTERS DETAILS (EXCLUDING LANDSCAPING), 1600 UNITS OF STUDENT RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION, UNIVERSITY SPORTS CENTRE AND SPORTS PITCHES, LAND AT HATFIELD AERODROME SITE, HATFIELD.

APPLICANT:

ARLINGTON PROPERTY DEVELOPMENTS LTD

(HATFIELD WEST)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This application relates to 13.3 Hectares of land designated for University development within the Hatfield Aerodrome site. The application proposals are for two adjoining sites, both lying north of St Alban's Road West.

2.0 PROPOSALS

- 2.1 This is an application for approval of reserved matters for development for the University of Hertfordshire pursuant to the outline planning permission for the Hatfield Aerodrome site (ref S6/1064/1999/OP).
- 2.2 This is the second reserved matters application submitted by the University for their site, and Members will recall that approval has already been given for the reserved matters details of the academic buildings which lie to the south of this site.
- 2.3 This reserved matters application deals with the siting, layout and design of three key elements of the University site, the student residential accommodation consisting of 1600 student rooms and associated facilities, the sports centre and associated facilities and the sports pitches and outdoor changing facilities.

The student residential accommodation

- 2.4 The residential accommodation occupies the northern part of the University site, adjacent to the public transport corridor and opposite the residential site to be developed by Bovis Homes. The greenbelt area which is to be developed as open space lies to the west of this site.
- 2.5 The residential portion of the site is roughly rectangular in shape and extends to approximately 5.9 hectares. The scheme consists of 11 grouped four storey blocks in linear, crescent, 'U' and 'L' shaped forms. The layout of the accommodation blocks is generally oriented to face into the centre of the site, with landscaping to the transport corridor, internal circulation routes and landscaped courts providing the setting for the buildings. A separate single storey building with ancillary retail and management office accommodation is also proposed, at the south western corner of the site.
- 2.6 The precise landscaping details are still being developed as part of the overall approach to landscaping of the University site as a whole so have not been finalised at this stage and will be dealt with as a separate reserved matters item.
- 2.7 The residential blocks follow a common approach in providing groups of 11 student rooms sharing kitchen facilities. Each 'standard' student room is en-suite and is approximately 10.7m² and every block is fully accessible to each floor. Two residential units for students with disabilities are provided on the ground floor of each block (18 number units in total). Accommodation is also provided for staff within the student blocks and staff occupying these units will have a pastoral role in relation to students in those blocks, as part of the overall management of the residential accommodation.
- 2.8 Limited on site parking has been provided as this student accommodation Is intended to be car free other than for students with disabilities. 30 number spaces for disabled parking have been provided in discrete locations around the site, proximate to the individual student blocks, 20 spaces for visitors and the management offices have also been provided adjacent to the main reception building. All of these spaces will be designated for their particular purpose.
- 2.9 The residential blocks are four storeys in height (being 10m high to eaves, 12m high to ridge and 14.5m high to plant room) with 10 degree monopitch roofs with projecting lift and plant rooms at roof level. The proposed materials are buff brick (as the main material) with red brick and reconstituted stone detailing, with render and grey metal cladding used for the core areas. The roofing material is to be a profiled metal sheet with raised standing seams. The window frames are grey aluminium type material, within timber surrounds.

The University sports centre

- 2.10 The sports centre consists of single and two storey buildings housing a swimming pool, cricket hall, climbing wall, squash courts, fitness centre, badminton hall, offices, conference rooms, a crèche and associated facilities. A food Hall and 450 seat dining area intended to serve the University site as a whole is located at the northern end of the buildings. The sports centre complex of buildings lies adjacent to the proposed public transport access road off St Alban's Road West, to the rear of the proposed new De Havilland Sports and Social Club building.
- 2.11 The building footprint is approximately 150m by 80m (at the widest point) and the buildings themselves range in height from 4.5m to 13m (at the highest point), with the taller buildings located centrally. The distance to the nearest property on St Albans's Road West is just under 90m. Proposed materials are brickwork, render, curtain wall glazing, grey paneling (dark and light) with standing seam metal roofing.
- 2.12 Access to the buildings is via the sports centre main entrance which faces eastwards into the body of the University site. Car, coach and cycle parking related to this use is located on the eastern side of the building, and is part of the main University car park.

The University sports pitches

- 2.13 The outdoor sports pitches occupy an area of some 7.4ha on land fronting St Alban's Road West the land is all within the greenbelt. There will be 4 football pitches, 1 hockey and 1 rugby pitch and these will be fenced on all sides (with 4m safety fencing fronting St Alban's Road West), access will be via a gated entrance opposite the sports centre. Outdoor changing facilities are also proposed, this will take the form of a single storey building with 10 team changing rooms, officials changing rooms, plant and storage rooms. The building faces out towards the sports pitches and will measure 10.6m by 69m, 4.3m high. Proposed materials are facing bricks, render or metal infill panels and standing seam metal roof.
- 2.14 The northern most pitches, adjacent to the greenbelt are the subject of a separate application for floodlighting which is not being considered at this meeting.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 Recent relevant history of this site

Application S6/1064/1999/OP – Outline application for redevelopment of the Hatfield Aerodrome Site, approved subject to conditions and s.106 obligation

University of Hertfordshire site, Reserved matters approval Ref S6/2000/1471 - academic buildings and carpark - approved with conditions.

De havilland Sports and Social Club site – application for new club house ref S6/2000/1574/FP – approved with conditions.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 4.1 PPG 1 General Policy and Principles 1997 PPG 2 Greenbelts 1995 PPG 13 Transport

PPG 17 Sport and Recreation

- 4.2 Welwyn Hatfield District Plan Alterations No 1 1998
- 4.3 Hatfield Aerodrome Site SPG 1999

5.0 **PUBLICITY**

- 5.1 This application has been advertised in the local paper, site notices have been displayed at the site and individual letters of notification have been sent to local residents. Meetings have been held with representatives of the Ellenbrook Area Resident's Association.
- 5.2 The applicants also held a public exhibition about their proposals on 29 August at the former Comet Hotel in Hatfield. This was attended by over 100 local people.

6.0 **CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

6.1 Hertfordshire County Council - Transport Strategy Division

> "Access to the proposed accommodation from the adopted highway will be taken from the Bishops Square roundabout. This roundabout, together with the Comet Roundabout, will be the subject of an improvement scheme to signalise these roundabouts, which is due to start this month. This improvement scheme will be completed before this development is occupied as required by the S106 agreement signed in association with the outline planning consent for the whole site.

(Transport Strategy Division comments continued)

The direct access to the site will be from the proposed Spine Road, which is due to be completed by Feb 2002, via the proposed roundabout to serve the whole of the proposed University Campus. All vehicles accessing this proposal will use the internal roads proposed as part of detailed planning consent 6/2000/1471.

One issue we have discussed on the internal layout is that the main area of parking proposed is accessed from the main shared footway/cycleway. I would suggest that it would be better to delineate any areas that vehicles will use as roads which can also be used by pedestrians and cyclists. This will then make pedestrians and cyclists aware that they need to check for vehicles manoeuvering in this area.

In terms of parking there are a limited number of spaces proposed. To be consistent with the adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) for the site only 15 visitor spaces should be provided together with disabled parking and spaces for loading and unloading. To ensure that this development is consistent with the SPG the spaces provided should be clearly designated.

This application needs to be included in the parking management strategy for the whole of the proposed University Campus and a report on this issue was submitted by WSP in support of the application for the first phase of the faculties (6/2000/1471). This parking management strategy needs to be completed and approved prior to the occupation of the Campus to be consistent with the requirements of the S106 agreement required in association with the outline consent for the site.

In addition to this I believe that a S106 agreement should be sought in association with this planning consent to ensure that all the leases for the accommodation include suitable covenants that no student living in this accommodation will bring a car to Hatfield and to set out the actions that the University will take if students break these terms of their lease.

In terms of parking for the proposed sports pitches we have discussed the concerns of local residents and I support the intended approach of agreeing a management strategy for the sports pitches with the University to try to en sure that no parking in residents areas occurs and securing this by way of a S106 agreement.

(Transport Strategy Division comments continued)
I do not intended to comment on the issue of the bus link, which is the subject of the recent petition from the Ellenbrook residents, in my response to this application as I will be writing to you about this separately.

The main pedestrian and cycling access to the site is proposed to the south of the accommodation and connects directly to the Spine Road. This is supported, but the design of this section of the Spine Road is still to be approved in detail and the on-site provision will need to link to the footway and cycleway provision along the Spine Road. I would suggest that this is covered by a condition requiring the details of the connection to be approved prior to the commencement of the footway/cycleway.

Cycle parking must be provided on the site in accordance with the County Council's adopted standard of 1 per 3 student accommodation units. This requires a minimum of 533 safe and secure cycle parking spaces.

From recent discussions with Chris Conway and yourself I am aware that the red line for this application has been amended to allow the opportunity to provide a better bus interchange for the whole University Campus at the eastern edge of this part of the site. This is supported by the County Council and Mouchel TSC have been commissioned to design some options for this facility for us to discuss.

This proposal must be included in the Green Travel Plan required for the whole of the proposed University Campus".

6.2 Environmental Health Officer — raises no objection to the application subject to the following matters being addressed: Agreement is needed on construction hours and methods for construction of the University site pursuant to condition 17 of the outline planning permission; wishes to see the establishment of a regular liaison meeting for the entire construction phase which would be attended jointly by the University and their contractors, key Council staff and local residents to ensure that construction operations are considerately managed and progress in the most effective and efficient way. Applicants need to be aware that noise insulation may need to be enhanced around launderette areas in the student residential accommodation to avoid noise transmission from equipment and machinery.

Environmental Health Housing section make comments that the specification adopted for the provision of certain facilities such as the number of students sharing a kitchen, are lower than the Council would normally advise. The University has confirmed that the standards of facilities being provided meet their requirements and are consistent with what is provided elsewhere on their campus. (Ultimately this is not a matter over which the Council has discretion as local planning authority – the comments have however been passed to the University's agents for information).

7.0 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

7.1 Ellenbrook Area Resident's Association – "Our stance on the Ellenbrook gateway into the airfield development is well documented by the recent petition. However for the purposes of this application we have assumed that the petition has failed. We would like to make the following comments:

1/There needs to be only one managed entrance/exit between the University and the sports field.

2/The fencing onto St Alban's Road West needs to be of sufficient height to stop balls etc going over onto the traffic using the road. There should be a sufficiently dense screen of hedging etc to stop the distraction of drivers whilst they pass the fields.

3/ The Weds peak amongst others use of the football pitches could require spectator control to illuminate(sic) the impact on the surrounding area.

4/ No bus stop positions are shown at the entry to the bus priority route which if not provided will cause confusion to residents who may wish to use the new bus routes. Further we believe that all buses going into Hatfield should use the same route thus avoiding the 'splitting' at Ellenbrook.

5/ The water pressure in some areas of Ellenbrook is already low. Will this development make matters worse?

6/ The parking restrictions on residential students only covers the campus and the immediate environs. Could some other parts of Hatfield suffer parking problems which could cause further friction between the town and the University?

Your suggestion that once building is underway regular meetings takes place between all concerned is welcomed, we also appreciate that when the landscaping policy has become firm we will be consulted once more".

1 Individual letter of representation was received from 365 St Albans Road West however these concerns have not been subsequently raised following renotification on amendments to the scheme's internal layout.

8.0 ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 The key issues in the assessment of this reserved matters application are as follows:
 - Consistency with the outline planning permission and SPG
 - 2. Acceptability of proposed design and layout and use of the development
 - Transport and highway implications
 - 4. Outcome and acceptability of the sustainability assessment
 - Representations made by local residents.

1. Consistency with the outline planning permission and SPG

- 8.2 The SPG sets out specific area based requirements for the University site as follows:
 - To provide a high standard of new academic facilities for the consolidation of the University of Hertfordshire in Hatfield
 - To create a new university campus integrated with the overall site developments and the existing College Lane campus by optimizing pedestrian and cycle linkages
 - To provide sustainable and innovative architecture for the academic, residential and sports centre facilities, with a high quality landscaped setting. To accommodate the requirements of the de havilland Sports and Social club within the University facility.
- 8.3 The proposals have been deemed to meet these requirements in principle through the approval of the outline planning permission. Detailed consideration in relation to the last requirement is undertaken through this and other reserved matters applications, and the following assessment deals with this in detail.

2 Acceptability of design and layout

The student accommodation

8.4 The student accommodation is of contemporary design, not untypical of many post modern institutional buildings of this nature. Architecturally the form of the buildings reflects their non-domestic residential use and given the amount of accommodation being provided are substantial buildings of considerable mass. This amount of development was envisaged in the SPG and outline planning permission by reference to the 1600 student rooms and associated accommodation.

- 8.5 The residential blocks are set in from the northern edge of the site by a landscaped margin which is to be between 19 and 12m depth. The buildings then orient towards the centre of the residential site. There is also approximately 40m between the edge of buildings and the nearest housing on the Bovis homes site and this distance combined with intervening landscaping and public highway land is sufficient to provide the site with a suitable external setting and mitigate the impact of these buildings upon the nearest residential properties. The scale of buildings and their bulk and mass in relation to the University's other buildings, landscaped spaces and internal circulation routes is considered to be an appropriate urban design solution.
- 8.7 The landscape setting for the new buildings will be of key importance to the creation of a successful and pleasant new residential environment. Whilst it is disappointing that the details of the landscaping are not yet finalised, the landscape concept and detail is progressing and the general arrangement of residential blocks to open spaces is considered to be an appropriate one, such that the finer details of the landscape design can be dealt with separately. Details of matters such as the planting treatment of these areas and details of bike and bin stores can be safely dealt with by planning condition.
- 8.8 The proposed materials for the residential blocks are to be a mixture of traditional (brick) and more contemporary (metal sheeting and paneling). Given the emerging context of the redeveloped aerodrome site and the nature of the proposed buildings I consider that these are appropriate materials for this development and location.
- 8.9 Clearly the use of the land for student residential accommodation has been agreed in principle through the SPG and outline planning application. The main issues arising in relation to use of the residential accommodation is to ensure that student parking is prohibited (other than for students with disabilities) and that there is pastoral supervision of the accommodation. Parking issues are dealt with later. Management and supervision of the accommodation will be undertaken by resident staff, and students will be expected to meet a code of behavior as part of their condition of occupation, a planning condition is proposed to require a management presence at the site at all times given the close proximity of housing on the Bovis homes site. In overall terms the student residential scheme is considered consistent with the requirements of the SPG.

The sports centre

8.10 The sports centre consists of a building with a number of constituent elements which have dictated the height of particular parts of the building eg. the need for spectator seating above the swimming pool, and the

height requirement of the badminton hall and the climbing wall. The buildings are essentially one and two storey but with enhanced storey heights in places up to a maximum of 13m. The buildings wrap around the de Havilland Sports and Social Club which lies to the south of the site. The mass, relationship and disposition of the buildings to the DHSSC and with residential properties the other side of St Alban's Road West is considered an appropriate one.

- 8.11 The University anticipate that they will make greatest use of the sports centre facilities on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons, and weekday evenings. Users of the facility will park in the main University car park which has over 800 spaces, 100 of which have been identified as needed for the sports centre, to be used on a dual use basis. Teams coming to the site for games on coaches or mini-buses will also park within the University car park. Cycle parking facilities are to be provided as part of the main University cycle park. The use of the centre and sports pitches are likely to take place at times when the use of the University car park is at its lowest thus providing capacity to cater for this use.
- 8.12 The use of the sports centre buildings will be contained within the structure (other than where undertaken on the outdoor pitches) and the fabric of the buildings should be sufficient to minimize the impact of any noisy activities which take place within the building. Notwithstanding this, because of the potential for external noise and disturbance it would be prudent for the local planning authority to restrict the hours during which this centre may be open and this may need to be limited to between 06.30 and 23.00 in the interests of protecting residential amenity.
- 8.13 Public access to these facilities is a requirement of the s.106 for the Hatfield aerodrome site and the precise details of the public access requirement are being discussed with the Leisure Department.

The outdoor sports pitches

- 8.14 The outdoor sports pitches are located adjacent to St Alban's Road West and are to be fenced and landscaped along all boundaries. The outdoor changing facilities are in a low key building appropriate for a location in the greenbelt. The doors to the changing facilities face towards the pitches and access to the sports pitches will be through a gated access. The gated access is opposite the sports centre and a short pedestrian/cycle bridge across the Ellenbrook will need to be provided to complete the access route.
- 8.15 Users of the sports pitches who arrive by car, coach or mini-bus are to park in the University car park, including third parties who it is anticipated will be hiring pitches for evening training and matches at weekends. In

anticipation of the concerns of local residents in Ellenbrook about vehicles possibly parking in the adjoining streets, the University has committed itself to a management regime to deal with this. Pitch bookings will only be undertaken for full or half seasons so will be limited to teams who play on a regular basis. As well as the usual publicity and information about where people should park when playing or spectating at matches on the University sports pitches, when third parties are using the pitches, staff will be on duty at the entrance to the sports pitch site, monitoring where players have parked. Should any team members have parked in Ellenbrook then the match booking will be forfeited and the team will be asked to leave. This arrangement will be in place at all times when third parties are using the facilities and would be secured via a s.106 obligation.

- 8.16 Having considered the balance to be struck between promoting public access to these facilities and managing any overspill of parking into the Ellenbrook area this seems to me to be a practical and pragmatic solution.
- 3 Highway and transportation issues
- 8.17 The principle of this amount of development has been established through the granting of the outline permission so no further strategic assessment of the transport implications has been necessary. A number of detailed transport and highway issues have arisen in relation to this proposal that require resolution as follows:
- 8.18 The application proposes a standard of cycle parking provision of 25% or 1 space per 4 student rooms. The Hertfordshire Structure Plan SPG parking standards requirement is 1 cycle space per 3 rooms so the level of provision currently proposed will need to be increased. The details of this will be resolved through planning conditions, however, there is adequate space at the site to accommodate these requirements satisfactorily.
- 8.19 The outline planning permission and associated s.106 obligation require the student accommodation to have zero parking provision other than for the disabled. The Sports centre is required to have access to around 100 parking spaces (which would be used on a dual use basis). The proposed layout complies with these requirements and the University are also obliged to agree a site wide parking and access strategy with the County and District Council's pursuant to the planning obligation requirements. To ensure that future parking problems do not arise particularly in relation to the student residential accommodation, the original s.106 obligation also provides for a financial sum towards the provision of a system of parking control in the Ellenbrook Park residential area in the event that this proves necessary, consultation on the form of this control system is currently being undertaken with local residents.

4 Sustainability Assessment

- The application was required to be submitted with a sustainability statement identifying how the development meets the 12 key sustainability tests set out in the SPG. In summary the developments sustainability credentials are as follows: - This is a brownfield development which will assist in supporting economic regeneration, employment and inward investment in this area. The proposals will facilitate the decontamination and re-use of the site consistent with requirements for the efficient use of urban land. The scheme will meet green transport requirements and will promote travel to the site by non car modes. Construction design meets and exceeds current standards for thermal insulation. Construction materials will be sourced locally where possible and use will be made of recyclable materials from demolition activities elsewhere within the BAe site. Water efficiency measures will be incorporated into the development and drainage proposals will be to the standards required by the relevant bodies. An on site recycling facility will be provided and operated for the University site. The site will be fully accessible by a range of modes and by people with disabilities and community access is to be facilitated. Consideration has been given to the minimisation of pollution in the design and layout and attention will be given to pollution minimisation and health and safety in the construction phase.
- 8.21 The sustainability measures and actions that have been put forward are considered to be a reasonable response to the sustainability test requirements of the SPG and given the pragmatic way in which these matters must be dealt with at the moment are considered appropriate. The contribution of the development to urban design principles has been dealt with elsewhere.

Representations made by local residents

8.22 Members will have considered the petition submitted by the Ellenbrook Area Residents association so will be familiar with the issues that are of concern locally. In relation to the detailed matters raised, points 1,2 & 6 will be addressed by the range of planning conditions and s.106 requirements proposed. The management of bus routes is matter for the bus operator and the County Council (these comments will be passed on to them however). Low water pressure is a matter for Three Valleys Water who are the water authority responsible for approving water supply details, however this was not an issue that was raised as a problem at the outline application stage.

6 CONCLUSION

8.23 Examination of the details that have been submitted with this reserved matters application has shown them to be satisfactory. I consider that the development meets the requirements of the SPG and reserved matters approval should be given.

RECOMMENDATION

- 8.24 That the reserved matters application for the siting and design, layout and means of access for 1600 student rooms and associated facilities, University Sports Centre and sports pitches and associated facilities (as amended) be approved subject to a s.106 obligation requiring the following:
- requirement upon the University to make it a condition of all tenancy agreements permitting occupation of this student residential accommodation that any vehicles owned or used by students (other than those with disabilities) are not parked within 1mile of the site, to include arrangements for monitoring and acting upon any breaches discovered
- The arrangements for monitoring/managing the use of University sports pitches by third parties is to be agreed and in place before first use by third parties and the pitches not to be let otherwise than in association with the agreed monitoring and management arrangements being in place
- Land within the area of undeveloped land at the eastern end of the University site, adjacent to the public highway shall be made available for the provision of a bus layby and bus stops/shelter positions in agreement with the County Council.

And subject to the following planning conditions:

- No development shall be commenced until full details of the following at a scale of 1:50 (or as otherwise agreed) have been submitted to and approved by the local planning in writing:
 a) secure covered cycle stores and bin stores (for the student
 - accommodation, sports centre and the outdoor changing facilities and to the standard of provision required by Hertfordshire County Council)
 - b) CCTV and lighting
 - c) the rooftop plant room, windows, doors, eaves and verges on the student residential accommodation
 - d) Signage

e) Precise details of the footpath/cycle way interfaces with the public highway.

Thereafter only the approved details shall be implemented on site, unless agreed otherwise with the local planning authority in advance and in writing.

Reason - To ensure that satisfactory details are received

Prior to the first occupation of any of the development hereby approved, full details of the designation and management of the parking spaces within the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Thereafter the spaces shall only be used in accordance with the approved management scheme or as otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority.

Reason – To ensure that use of parking at the site is limited to visitor and the needs of disabled students and visitors only, consistent with the requirements of the outline planning permission and green travel requirements of this development.

No use shall be made of the outdoor sports pitches until an access from the sports centre across Ellenbrook, to a detail and specification agreed in writing by the local planning authority has been provided in accordance with agreed details, or as otherwise agreed by the local planning authority.

Reason – to ensure that access to the sports pitches is in the appropriate location and to the required specification.

The sports centre shall be closed between the hours of 23.00 and 06.30 unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority.

Reason – In the interests of residential amenity.

No development shall be commenced until full details including operating specification, and details of any screening of plant required in relation to the sports centre, cafeteria/dining hall shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Thereafter the equipment shall be installed and operated in accordance with the agreed details unless agreed otherwise in writing with the local planning authority.

Reason – in the interests of residential amenity.

No development shall be commenced until full details of any external amplification or announcement system for the sports pitches, and a protocol for its useage has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Thereafter only the agreed system may be used unless agreed otherwise in writing with the local planning authority.

Reason - In the interests of residential amenity

No occupation of the student residential accommodation shall take place unless arrangements for pastoral supervision of those students and any associated visitors have been implemented by the University or parties acting for them. Full details of these arrangements are to be submitted to the local planning authority for information.

Reason – To ensure that management supervision of the accommodation is undertaken in the interests of amenity of occupants and surrounding residential properties.

INFORMATIVE

The applicant's are reminded that a full reserved matters submission in relation to the landscaping of this site is required and attention is drawn to the requirements of planning conditions 2, 4, 6, 9, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 and 26 of the outline planning permission for this site and the requirements of the associated planning obligation which need to be satisfied before any development may proceed or thereafter on an ongoing basis.