



GASCOYNE CECIL
ESTATES

7th November 2018

REF:

Att: Mrs Sarah Madyausiku
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
Planning Department

To be submitted online & via email

Dear Sirs

6/2018/2497/FULL

1-5 PARK STREET, HATFIELD, AL9 5AT CHANGE OF USE TO OFFICES
PLANNING APPLICATION COMMENTS

Gascoyne Cecil Estates manage Hatfield House, Park, Gardens and surrounding Estate on behalf of the Marquess of Salisbury and the Cecil family. As a long term owner with significant long term and local interests, Gascoyne welcome the opportunity to comment upon the latest proposals for Chequers (1-5 Park Street), located within the heart of the Old Hatfield Conservation area.

- 1) Gascoyne Cecil Estates welcomes the intention to find a beneficial use for Chequers, noting its prominent location within the Conservation area and the fact that it has been vacant for a number of years.
- 2) In noting the above, it is not felt that the present proposals for subdivision into flats provide the optimum conversion in spatial terms nor those which are most sympathetic to the building's fabric. Rather it is felt that subdivision along the lines of the building's historic uses would be more favourable – that is to say vertical subdivision into small self-contained houses with perhaps a small retained commercial element. Residential use within the majority of the building is not considered to be problematic and architecturally the building's elevations lend themselves to domestic use. It is thus a question of how this is best achieved.
- 3) Noting the above, and whilst partly an issue of Building Regulations, one questions the challenges associated with subdivision of an older property whilst simultaneously meeting current requirements for good fire and acoustic performance. This can be especially problematic when



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noting the balance to be made between conservation, use of traditional building techniques and acceptable risk management / performance.

- 4) Notwithstanding the above, it should be noted that Gascoyne Cecil Estates (Hatfield Park) continue to rent a number of smaller commercial units within Old Hatfield and continues to see demand for premises in Old Hatfield. It is not accepted that residential use should be the sole or only viable use for the building.
- 5) Noting the site constraints and the virtual lack of external curtilage, the lack of areas for bin and bike storage is of concern. Noting the severely constrained car parking in the locality, the applicant ought to be encouraged to ensure development supports sustainable modes of transport including cycling, car sharing, etc. Whilst the former office use represented a theoretically higher level of vehicle movements, it must be noted that a considerable number of years have elapsed since the building was occupied at anything like its full potential. Any suggestion therefore that the proposed use represents a reduction in vehicle movements is, in part, misleading.
- 6) The preference would be for WHBC and the applicant to further consider how best to adapt Chequers for a further period of positive beneficial use. This ought to be beneficial both for the heritage asset and the way in which the building fulfils a positive role within Old Hatfield.
- 7) Should WHBC, however, be so minded to grant approval to the existing proposals then it is felt that the consent should, at the very least be appropriately conditioned noting as follows;
 - i) Details of all replacement joinery should be separately approved by the Conservation Officer including all sections and moulding details.
 - ii) The building should be properly recorded and subject to a full photographic and measured survey prior to the removal of any existing fabric.
 - iii) All replacement guttering should be in cast iron.
 - iv) All external materials should generally match existing. Details of proposed changes to be subject to Conservation Officer approval.
 - v) All colours for external decoration should be subject to approval by the Conservation Officer and be sympathetic to the present Conservation area.
 - vi) Removal of internal fabric including floorboards etc. can be difficult and can only be successfully undertaken if handled with great care. An appropriate form of monitoring and inspection ought to be required during the works. Where appropriate method statements ought to be agreed with the Conservation Officer prior to the commencement of work.
 - vii) Whilst it is appreciated that it does not form statutory guidance, some suitable guidance can be found within Gascoyne Cecil Estates Building Code. This can be found at <http://www.gascoynececil.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Hatfield-Building-Code.pdf>

It is hoped that the above comments are considered helpful and Gascoyne Cecil estates will be happy to engage in any future discussions regarding the future of this building.



Yours faithfully

P. P

ANTHONY DOWNS
Director – Planning and Development

Cc. Beatrice Mason
Rural Property Manager
Gascoyne Cecil Estates