

1-5 Park St (Chequers): 6/2018/2497/FULL and 6/2018/2498/LB Further Submission by Old Hatfield Residents Association

We are surprised that the officer's report was published and that this planning application is coming to committee whilst a consultation period for the listed building and full planning application (above) is still open and we have major outstanding concerns, which we outline in this further submission here:

1. The application is not at all clear how they would carry out building works. Both Park Street itself and the pavement alongside 1-5 are very narrow but this forms an important access route for local residents / businesses. In view of this and the minimal private space available to the developer, we feel that the works could potentially significantly disrupt traffic on this road and also deliveries to the 8 Bells through, for example, scaffolding needed for the works facing the street. The informatives currently proposed regarding highway obstruction, noise, dust and storage are insufficient. A clear and effective condition must be included requiring a construction plan to be approved, before work commences, covering those points plus (at least):
 - What external work will be done
 - Phasing of the work
 - Planned use of scaffolding (timings and location)
 - How materials will be brought to site etc.Every effort should be made to minimize the impact on local movement and activities.
2. The internal conversions for the 4 flat option are likely to be more problematic than those of the house or house + 2 flat options, which could be more closely linked to the existing internal lay out. But the internal plans are vague on all this. We are furthermore concerned that the tensions between protecting the historic fabric and providing flats that comply with building regulations, will make it difficult to complete the project and are likely to further increase the costings in a way that a different configuration could have avoided.
3. The viability assessment is very poor with no substantive basis for the figures and estimates given. These look just designed to support their predetermined conclusion. It does not seem credible that the costs of the 4 flat option can be as much as 26% lower than the other options, such as 1 house and 2 flats, when these are closer to the current configurations. This raises severe doubts about the credibility of the viability assessment and claims that 4 flats conversion is the only viable option. **Consequently, we reiterate our demand that WHBC need to scrutinise carefully and publicly this viability assessment, especially its dubious costings.** The officer's report fails to do this.
4. We agree with the Officer's report recommendation of a condition 4 regarding the need "To ensure a satisfactory standard of refuse and recycling provision and to protect the residential amenity of adjoining and future occupiers". We worry that the current allocated space for bins and bikes will not provide sufficient space for the separate bins needed for the wastes and recyclables for an additional 4 flats – as under current requirements: let alone future requirements – including Defra's latest consultation on proposed requirement for separate collection of food waste: See <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/environmental-quality/consultation-on-consistency-in-household-and-busin/>. This raises further doubts about the viability of the proposed 4 flats and need for greater consideration of a smaller number of units.

Our preference remains for a commercial occupation (as outlined in our original submission), and we do not believe that there is no demand for commercial premises locally. The progress towards letting York House confirms that what can be done, albeit in a very different property.

However we do want to see the building brought back into use and, if it is going to be residential, then we want to see a good scheme approved and implemented within a sensible time frame. We fear that this scheme, as presented will hit problems and may prove unachievable.

Chairman, Old Hatfield Residents Association
26 February 2019