

**WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - PLANNING, PUBLIC PROTECTION AND GOVERNANCE**

**DELEGATED APPLICATION**

**Application No:** 6/2021/1164/FULL  
**Location:** Beales Hotel Comet Way Hatfield AL10 9NG  
**Proposal:** Change of use and conversion of existing vacant hotel into 53 room hostel and erection of further 40 units of accommodation in the car park for a temporary period of up to 3 years.  
**Officer:** Ms Kelsey Collins

**Recommendation:** Granted

6/2021/1164/FULL

<b>Context</b>	
<b>Site and Application description</b>	<p>The site is located on the northern side of Comet Way close to Comet Roundabout and currently the site is currently the Beales Hotel which closed in October 2020 and is now vacant. The hotel is a modern two storey building with large car parking area to the west.</p> <p>To the eastern side of the site is Parkhouse Court and Harpsfield Hall. Parkhouse Court includes ground floor commercial uses with flats above. Harpsfield Hall is a two storey restaurant/public house located closer to Comet Way. Facing the site on the opposite side of Comet Way is The Galleria shopping centre.</p> <p>The application seeks permission for the conversion of the existing vacant hotel into 53 x room hostel and erection of further 40 units of accommodation in the car park.</p>
<b>Constraints (as defined within WHDP 2005)</b>	<p>EMPL - EA7 (Bishops Square) - Distance: 0            PAR - PARISH (HATFIELD) - Distance: 0            Wards - Hatfield Villages - Distance: 0            A4HD - Article 4 HMO Direction - Distance: 0            CP - Cycle Path (Cycle Facility / Route) - Distance: 3.9            FM00 - Flood Zone Surface Water 1000mm (70631) - Distance: 0            FM00 - Flood Zone Surface Water 1000mm (7593137) - Distance: 0            HAT - Hatfield Aerodrome - Distance: 0            HEN - No known habitats present (medium priority for habitat creation) - Distance: 0            SAGB - Sand and Gravel Belt - Distance: 0            HHAA - Hatfield Heritage Assessment Area(Hatfield Business Park) - Distance: 0            A4DES - Article 4 Direction Employment Sites() - Distance: 0</p>
<b>Relevant planning history</b>	<p>Application Number: 6/2016/2251/MAJ            Decision: Granted            Decision Date: 04 April 2017            Proposal: Erection of second floor extension to existing hotel, including a further 19 bedrooms and gymnasium (renewal of S6/2013/2174/MA)              Application Number: 6/2020/3282/PA</p>

	Decision: Granted Decision Date: 21 January 2021 Proposal: Pre-application for temporary planning consent to use Beales Hotel as a decant residential hostel, funded via housing benefit and existing commissioned income streams, for 53 existing hostel residents, on a fully staffed 24/7 basis		
<b>Consultations</b>			
<b>Neighbour representations</b>	Support: 0	Object: 0	Other: 0
<b>Publicity</b>	Site Notice Display Date: 28 April 2021 Site Notice Expiry Date: 20 May 2021 Press Advert Display Date: 5 May 2021 Press Advert Expiry Date: 26 May 2021 Neighbour letters		
<b>Summary of neighbour responses</b>	None received		
<b>Consultees and responses</b>	Hertfordshire Transport Programmes & Strategy – no objection subject to conditions WHBC Public Health and Protection – no objection Thames Water – no objection WHBC Parking Services – no response		
<b>Relevant Policies</b>			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NPPF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> D1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> D2 <input type="checkbox"/> GBSP1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GBSP2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M14 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supplementary Design Guidance <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supplementary Parking Guidance <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Interim Policy for car parking and garage sizes			
<b>Main Issues</b>			
<b>Principle of development</b>	<p>The existing YMCA in Welwyn Garden City is going to be redeveloped and residents would need to be relocated during construction. A planning application has been submitted for the demolition of the existing hostel and the redevelopment of the site to provide a 4-storey 100-bed YMCA Hostel and 43 residential apartments (ref: 6/2019/2714/OUT). This application was approved at planning committee in March 2021. Temporary permission for a maximum of three years is sought for the proposed use of Beales Hotel and additional modal units as a decant residential hostel.</p> <p>The existing hotel use of the site falls within Use Class C1 and the proposed temporary residential hostel would be sui generis. It is not unusual for hotels to be used for intermediate housing for the homeless.</p> <p>In terms of policy, Paragraph 59 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF), states <i>“it is important....that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed”</i>.</p> <p>Policy H9 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 states that permission will be granted for schemes which provide special needs accommodation particularly in town centres in areas which are close to community facilities and services. This type of accommodation may include accommodation for those with physical disabilities, those with mental health problems, those with learning difficulties and people at risk, which would include temporary accommodation for the homeless.</p>		

	<p>The Draft Local Plan 2016 does not have a specific policy for either hotels or hostels, however, providing an adequate supply and mix of housing types and tenures is a borough-wide objective. Draft Policy SP7 states that provision will be made for a range of housing to support the needs and requirements of different households, including Specialist Housing. Specialist schemes will be supported in the borough's towns and excluded villages where accessibility to services and facilities is good.</p> <p>The site is an accessible location for pedestrians, cyclist and public transport. It is adjacent to Parkhouse Court Local Centre and near to Town Centre facilities and services, as well as education and employment opportunities. The principle of the conversion of the existing hotel and adding further modular accommodation within the car park is considered acceptable.</p>
<p><b>Design (form, size, scale, siting) and Character (appearance within the streetscene)</b></p>	<p>No external alterations or extensions are proposed to the main building. The sitting of the modular units will be to the rear of the site and not highly visible within the street scene. The appearance of the modular units are influenced by their pre-fabricated nature and can be described as functional. Similarly, the materials are partly determined by their ability to be transported and re-used. Whilst the design and appearance of the building would not necessarily be of satisfactory quality for a permanent structure, the proposal is acceptable for a temporary period of up to 3 years, which can be controlled by condition.</p>
<p><b>Impact on neighbours</b></p>	<p>In respect to neighbouring amenity, the proposal does not include any alterations to the main building, it does include the sitting of temporary modular accommodate which will house 40, 1-bed en-suites, sitting on the west boundary of the site. The area is made up of mix of commercial uses. To the western side of the site is surface level car parking and beyond this are a cluster of four, four storey commercial buildings. Surface level car parking also abuts the northern boundary of the site. Facing the site on the opposite side of Comet Way is The Galleria shopping centre.</p> <p>To the eastern side of the site is Parkhouse Court and Harpsfield Hall. Parkhouse Court is a 5-6 storey building including ground floor commercial uses with flats above. Harpsfield Hall is a two storey restaurant/public house located closer to Comet Way.</p> <p>Therefore the proposal, is situated away from residential buildings and the proposed use is unlikely to cause significant increases in noise nuisance, disturbance or activity compared with the existing situation, in addition the council environmental health team were consulted and did not raise any concerns with the development. It is not considered that the residential amenity of neighbouring properties would be adversely affected.</p>
<p><b>Living conditions of future occupiers</b></p>	<p>The proposal will provide temporary accommodation for those experiencing homelessness within the local area, and temporary consent is sought while the existing hostel is to be demolish and redevelop to provide a modern and contemporary hostel facility which better serves the needs of the residents.</p> <p>The room sizes of the hotel are not designed to be suitable for temporary accommodation and are therefore smaller in size than what would usually be acceptable for permanent residential accommodation. The modular accommodation will be of similar layout to the hotels rooms with a double bed, desk and en-suite bathroom and are of a smaller size that what would be acceptable for a permanent residence. However, as the YMCA is not intended</p>

	<p>as a permanent residence and provides a much needed service to the wider community, the room sizes would meet the needs of the hostel and are considered to be acceptable for a temporary permission.</p>
<p><b>Access, car parking and highway considerations</b></p>	<p>The car parking standards set out in the Supplementary Planning Guidance – Parking Standards 2004 (SPG) are now treated as guidelines rather than maximums. Car parking provision is now decided on a case-by-case basis in order to achieve a sensible level of provision taking account of existing SPG standards, NPPF guidance, and the relevant circumstances of the proposal, its site context and its wider surroundings.</p> <p>The vacant hotel site comprises 53 bedrooms. Vehicular access is via a left-in left-out only access onto the A1001 Comet Way. The access is in the form of a bellmouth and is bound on both sides by a segregated footway cycleway.</p> <p>The site is within a sustainable location, close to public transport links and is within walking distance of the bus stop along Cavendish Way, as well as day-to-day services and facilities.</p> <p>The existing site provides 119 car parking spaces. The proposals include the change of land use to hostel (Sui Generis) for the existing 53 bed hotel and the erection of 40 modular units on the car park. The building in the car park will result in the loss of 29 spaces. Following the development, there will be a provision of 90 car parking spaces to serve the development of 93 bedrooms and staff. The ‘Welwyn Hatfield Supplementary Planning Guidance Parking Standards Adopted January 2004’ states for a development of a ‘Hotels &amp; Hostels’ a maximum of three car parking spaces per four units is required. Levels of car ownership are likely to be low among the hostel residents. There would be ample on-site parking for staff who are likely to work on a shift basis, it is therefore considered the parking would be adequate for the proposed use.</p> <p>The Highway Authority request by way of condition that active charging provision for electric vehicles be provided at 5% of all spaces (i.e. 5 spaces). The site currently has two EV charging points, the agent provided additional information and the Highway Authority are satisfied the existing provision of two active EV charging ports is sufficient and the condition is no longer required.</p> <p>The development proposals include the provision of 32 cycle parking spaces. Based on the ‘Welwyn Hatfield Supplementary Planning Guidance Parking Standards Adopted January 2004’ standards of 1 long term space per 3 rooms, the provision of 32 cycle spaces is acceptable. Herts CC highways raised corners that the cycle parking will be provide via storage hoops and therefore not secure, covered or well-lit and would discourage residents from using sustainable means of transport and recommend that a condition be attached to any approval requesting that cycle parking is secure (locked), covered and well-lit, it is therefore recommendation a condition for additional information in relation to cycle parking be attached via condition to address this issue.</p> <p>Servicing and refuse collection for the temporary hostel will continue as currently undertaken for the hotel. Refuse vehicles serve the site using the car park at the front of the hotel building where bins will be located on collection days. The Highway Authority are satisfied with this arrangement.</p>

	Taking into account the current use, and the proposed use, it is considered that the highway impacts of the proposal would not be severe, to cause an unacceptable impact on highway safety.
<b>Landscaping Issues</b>	There is currently mature existing hedgerow to the side, front and rear of the site which screen it from Comet Way and the adjacent sites. The temporary accommodation will rest on existing car park area, therefore the existing trees will not be adversely affected. Additional low level planting will be provided to give the ground floor of the temporary unit's privacy from the road, in addition. There are therefore no objections in raised in relation to landscaping.
<b>Conclusion</b>	
Subject to the suggested planning conditions, the proposed development would be in accordance with the aims and objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework, the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan and Supplementary Design Guidance.	

**Conditions:**

1. This permission is for a limited period only, expiring on 18 June 2024. Thereafter, the operational development hereby permitted shall be removed, the use hereby permitted shall be discontinued, and the land fully restored to its former condition on or before that date, unless planning permission is granted on an application made to the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To enable the Local Planning Authority to fully consider the effects of the development in the interests of quality of design and impact on the operation of the local highway network in accordance with Policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

2. Prior to the first occupation / use of the development hereby permitted a scheme for the parking of cycles that is secure, covered and well-lit and compliant with design standards contained in the DfT LTN 1/20 'Cycle Infrastructure Design' must be fully implemented.

REASON: To ensure the provision of adequate cycle parking that meets the needs of occupiers of the proposed development and in the interests of encouraging the use of sustainable modes of transport in accordance with Policies 1, 5 and 8 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).

**DRAWING NUMBERS**

3. The development/works shall not be started and completed other than in accordance with the approved plans and details:

<b>Plan Number</b>	<b>Revision Number</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Received Date</b>
Location Plan		Location Plan	12 April 2021
1		Existing Topographical Survey Plan	12 April 2021
AS21.13.L.04 .01	02	Proposed Elevations	12 April 2021

AS21.13.L.04 .02	01	Proposed Elevations	12 April 2021
AS21.13.L.09 .01	02	Existing Site Plan	12 April 2021
AS21.13.L.09 .02	01	Existing Ground Floor Plan	12 April 2021
AS21.13.L.03 .01	02	Proposed Site Sections	12 April 2021
AS21.13.L.01 .01	02	Proposed Site Plan	12 April 2021
AS21.13.L.09 .03	01	Existing First Floor Plan	12 April 2021
AS21.13.L.02 .03	01	Proposed Roof Plan	12 April 2021
AS21.13.L.02 .01	02	Proposed Ground Floor Plans	12 April 2021
AS21.13.L.09 .04	01	Existing Roof Plan	12 April 2021
AS21.13.L.02 .02	02	Proposed First Floor Plans	12 April 2021

REASON: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans and details.

#### 1. POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT

The decision has been made taking into account, where practicable and appropriate the requirements of paragraph 38 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 Council's website or inspected at these offices).

#### **Informatives:**

1. The applicant is advised that the storage of materials associated with the construction of this development should be provided within the site on land which is not public highway, and the use of such areas must not interfere with the public highway. If this is not possible, authorisation should be sought from the Highway Authority before construction works commence. Further information is available via the website <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/business-licences/business-licences.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.
2. It is an offence under section 137 of the Highways Act 1980 for any person, without lawful authority or excuse, in any way to wilfully obstruct the free passage along a highway or public right of way. If this development is likely to result in the public highway or public right of way network becoming routinely blocked (fully or partly)

the applicant must contact the Highway Authority to obtain their permission and requirements before construction works commence. Further information is available via the website <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/business-licences/business-licences.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

3. It is an offence under section 148 of the Highways Act 1980 to deposit mud or other debris on the public highway, and section 149 of the same Act gives the Highway Authority powers to remove such material at the expense of the party responsible. Therefore, best practical means shall be taken at all times to ensure that all vehicles leaving the site during construction of the development are in a condition such as not to emit dust or deposit mud, slurry or other debris on the highway. Further information is available via the website <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/highways-roads-and-pavements.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.
4.
  1. All works and ancillary operations which are audible at the site boundary, or at such other place as may be agreed with the Council, shall be carried out only between the hours of :  
8.00am and 6.00pm on Mondays to Fridays  
8.00am and 1.00pm Saturdays  
and at no time on Sundays and Bank Holidays
  2. The best practicable means, as defined in section 72 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974, to reduce noise to a minimum shall be employed at all times
  3. All plant and machinery in use shall be properly silenced and maintained in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions
  4. All compressors shall be sound reduced models, fitted with properly lined and sealed acoustic covers, which shall be kept closed whenever the machines are in use. All ancillary pneumatic percussive tools shall be fitted with mufflers or silencers of the type recommended by the manufactures.
  5. All machines in intermittent use shall be shut down during intervening periods between work, or throttled down to a minimum. Noise emitting equipment, which is required to operate continuously, shall be housed in suitable acoustic enclosures.
  6. Items of plant and equipment shall be maintained in good condition so that extraneous noise from mechanical vibration, squeaking or creaking is reduced to a minimum.
  7. All pile driving shall be carried out by a recognised noise reducing system.
  8. Where practical, rotary drills and bursters, actuated by hydraulic or electric power shall be used for excavating hard material
  9. In general, equipment for breaking concrete and the like, shall be hydraulically actuated.
  10. 'BS 5228 Noise Control on Construction Sites' should be referred to for guidance in respect of all work carried out by the developer, their main contractor and any sub contractors.

11. Any emergency deviation from these conditions shall be notified to the Council without delay

12. Any planned deviations from these conditions for special technical reasons, shall be negotiated with Council at least 14 days prior to the commencement of the specific work.

13. Permissible noise levels are not specified at this stage.

5. Dust control

1. All efforts shall be made to reduce dust generation to a minimum

2. Stock piles of materials for use on the site or disposal, that are likely to generate dust, shall be sited so as to minimise any nuisance to residents or neighbouring businesses. Materials for disposal shall be moved off site as quickly as possible.

3. Water sprays shall be used, as and when necessary, to reduce dust from particularly "dusty" activities or stock piles.

**Determined By:**

Mr Mark Peacock  
18 June 2021