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## RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

**1 LONGCROFT GREEN, WELWYN GARDEN CITY, AL8 6EP**

**LPA REF: 6/2022/1106/FULL**

### Introduction

This document should be read as an addendum to the previously submitted planning report by Chris Watts. The document will assess the application in light of the proposed amendments to the scheme that was originally submitted and changes to planning policy.

### Amendments to original proposal

The revised drawings show the following amendments which are designed to address concerns raised by the planning officer during the course of the application:

- The removal of the third floor accommodation
- The two 3-bedroom upper floor, duplex apartments become 2-bedroom flats
- The ridge height and eaves heights reduced by approximately 1m
- The part reduction in the width of the access road
- The removal of 2 car parking spaces to reflect the reduced number of bedrooms
- An increase in amenity space and space around the building

### Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework was amended in December 2023. The main alterations are a change in housing supply delivery required by LPAs and an emphasis on providing “beauty” in design.

The Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan was adopted in October 2023. The Plan’s Spatial Vision advises that the two towns of Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield will continue to be the main focus for housing. Policy SP 1 seeks to prioritise previously developed land and to ensure sustainable patterns of development. It states that the Council will take a positive approach when considering development proposals that reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF. Policy SADM 1 relates to windfall sites and states that proposals will be supported on previously developed sites which are accessible to a range of services and facilities by transport modes other than car.

### Assessment

1. **Housing Supply** Paragraph 76 of the revised NPPF advises that LPAs are not required to identify a 5-year housing supply where the Local Plan is less than five years old and they were able to demonstrate a 5-year supply at the time of its adoption. However, footnote 79 advises that this exemption does not apply for applications that were submitted prior to the adoption of the current NPPF. It therefore does not apply to this application which was submitted in 2022.

The Council acknowledges that it cannot currently demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply, recently estimating that it can demonstrate a supply of 3.1.-4.4 years. In these circumstances the 'tilted balance' applies and the application should only be refused if any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. The provision of housing would support the aims of Local Plan Policies SP 1, SP 2, and SADM 1, which seeks to deliver housing in sustainable locations.

- 2. Size, scale and design** The removal of the third-floor accommodation and the lowering of the ridge and eaves height by approximately 1m has significantly improved the appearance of the building. The removal of the crown roof element and numerous dormer windows results in a simpler and less cluttered roof form. An email from the case officer suggested the removal of one-storey, but it is considered that the above alterations are a more effective way of improving the appearance of the building and reducing its bulk and prominence. The proposal would therefore ensure good quality design in accordance with Local Plan Policy SP 9.
- 3. Impact on neighbours** The changes referred to above would also ensure a better relationship with neighbouring properties. The lower height and less bulky roof form reduces any sense of overbearing impact. The drawings indicate that a mixture of privacy screens to the balconies, angled windows and obscure glazing would prevent any direct overlooking of neighbouring properties and gardens. The proposal would therefore preserve neighbouring amenity in accordance with Local Plan Policy SADM 11.
- 4. Car Parking / Access** Local Plan Policy SADM 12 advises that the requirement for car parking will be informed by the Council's parking standards document. The removal of the third-floor accommodation has reduced the car parking requirement by two spaces and this is reflected in the revised layout. The site has good access to public transport links and shops and services, so it would not be appropriate to exceed the parking standards in this location.

Various sections of the access road have been reduced in width. Revised tracking drawings have been submitted which demonstrate that a refuse vehicle could manoeuvre within the site and exit in a forward gear. It is noted that HCC Highways did not object to the original application and that the vehicle used in the tracking diagram is longer than the size of the actual refuse vehicle as advised by WHBC Client Services.

- 5. Amenity space and space around the flats** The amendments described above have allowed for an increase in amenity space. The Local Plan does not set amenity space standards, instead it advises that they should be large enough to accommodate the needs of residents. Factors

such as the type of accommodation and the proximity to open space can be taken into account.

It is considered that the amenity space would be acceptable for the following reasons:

- Residents of flats do not generally use amenity space in the same way as residents of houses as they do not provide the same level of privacy. Nonetheless, there are several areas where residents could sit out in if they wish.
- All flats would have a balcony which would provide a genuinely private area for sitting out and drying clothes.
- All units are two bedroom and so do not provide family sized accommodation.
- Cassie's Field is within 200m of the site and is easily accessible via a footpath. This provides a large area of public open space.

Extra space is also now provided between the building and the access drive. The pinch points where the building was located very close to the edge of the road have been removed. This has improved the setting of the building. The proposal would therefore comply with Local Plan Policy SADM 11 which seeks to ensure a good environment for future occupiers of buildings.

In all the above circumstances it is considered that the proposal would deliver a good quality development. Furthermore, there are no harmful impacts that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefit of providing 6 dwellings.