

## Supporting Planning Statement

### FULL PLANNING APPLICATION

**Erection of a front and rear dormer to facilitate loft conversion into habitable space and two new outbuildings, all to create an additional 16 self-contained rooms to the existing guest house.**

*5 West View, Hatfield, Hertfordshire, AL10 0PJ*

#### 1. SITE CONTEXT

The development site is located along the corner of Birchwood Avenue and West View. Therefore, the site is a corner plot currently occupied by a detached two-storey property which faces southwest onto the roundabout junction of Birchwood Avenue and the A1001. The site's forecourt is characterised by hardstanding and two entrances: one to West View and one to the intersection of West View and Birchwood Avenue. At present, the rear has an extensively deep garden which is currently undeveloped.

The wider area primarily comprises residential properties of a similar nature to the property at the development site in terms of their architectural merit.

#### 2. SITE HISTORY & DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

The most relevant planning history related to the site is planning application, 6/2017/0513/FULL, which granted planning permission on the 19<sup>th</sup> of October 2018 for the use of the property as a short-stay self-catering Guest House (Use Class C1) for up to 21 people.

The proposed development is for the erection of a front and rear dormer to facilitate loft conversion into habitable space and two new outbuildings, all to create an additional 16 self-contained rooms to the existing guest house.

### 3. POLICY CONTEXT

#### *Principle of development*

The principle of development is already established as the building's use as a selfcatering, temporary accommodation guest house was granted under application; 6/2017/0513/FULL. The proposed development would not change this existing established use. Therefore, there should not be a principal objection to extending these facilities.

Further to the above, there has been a sharp rise in the need for temporary accommodation within Welwyn Hatfield Council in the last year. As of October 2022, the number of households living in temporary accommodation has risen 55 per cent relative to the figures from the previous year ([Herts Live \(2022\)](#)). Therefore, there is clear evidence showing a need for this kind of accommodation in this area.

In terms of policy provision, paragraph 62 of the NPPF (2021) states that 'the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies and decisions. In this instance, as per paragraph 62 of the NPPF, temporary accommodation is an essential form of housing that needs to be accounted for in planning decisions, especially in the context of Welwyn Hatfield Council, where there is a clear need for it.

Overall, the provision of extra rooms within the existing guest house and site is considered acceptable in principle based on the site's current use and the need for this type of accommodation in this area.

#### *Character and Appearance*

Paragraph 130 of the NPPF (2021) states that proposals are expected to function well and add to the overall quality of the area. Furthermore, proposals are expected to be visually attractive due to good architecture and layout. Policy D1 & D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan (2005) and Policy SP9 & SADM11 within the Welwyn Hatfield Draft Local Plan (2016) echo the guidance within the NPPF (2021) and further state that development should be of high quality and respect and relate to the character and context of the area in which it is proposed. Lastly, development proposals should maintain or enhance the character of the existing area.

The proposed front dormer will be set down from the main ridge line and constitute a gable end pitched roof design, which is considered to complement the principal roof's design. The rear dormer will also be set down from the main ridge line along the rear roof slope. It is acknowledged that the rear dormer will span across the rear roof slope in terms of its width, and it will also be of a flat roof design. However, due to its location to the rear of the site, its visual prominence from the public vantage points in the immediate vicinity will be significantly limited.

The two rear outbuildings will have a height of no more than 3 metres. As such, they will be low-level structures within the confines of the site, which are considered to be modest additions. It is accepted that the rear end of the site where the two outbuildings would be located is slightly narrow. Therefore, due to this the outbuildings will sit directly on the side boundary lines mutually shared with the adjacent neighbouring properties. However, considering that the height of the outbuildings will not exceed 3 metres and that the site will still retain some considerable open amenity space between the buildings, the development layout is not considered to be cramped and contrived. Furthermore, it's not uncommon for single storey outbuildings of a modest height to be located directly adjacent to site boundary lines due to their lack of prominence.

Overall, it is considered that the proposed development would have an acceptable impact on the character and appearance of the site and wider area.

### *Amenity*

Paragraph 130 of the NPPF (2021), Policy SADM11 of the Welwyn Hatfield Draft Local Plan (2016) states that any new development should not impact neighbouring properties' amenities in terms of light loss, outlook, and privacy and together with any noise disturbances and nuisance.

The proposed use will remain the same, whilst the number of occupants on-site will increase. Due to the use of the guest rooms on-site as self-contained and self-sufficient units, there would still be no anticipation of numerous large deliveries as noted by the council within the approved application; 6/2017/0513/FULL. The council also further noted that any potential for additional noise or disturbances as a result of the site's use as a guest house would not be sufficient enough alone to justify a refusal. Furthermore, it was also stated that noise disturbances from things like anti-social behaviour are covered by other legislation and, therefore can only be given very little weight in the planning consideration.

Notwithstanding the above, the applicant is prepared to introduce noise insulation measures into the development (i.e., acoustic fences & sound absorbing walls) to mitigate any additional potential noise the proposed development would generate. Such noise mitigating measures can be secured via a pre-commencement of works condition if need be.

The dormer windows are not considered to introduce any material outlooks into the neighbouring properties. Therefore, the proposed development is not considered to cause any overlooking or loss of privacy issues to the adjacent properties.

Due to their modest dimensions, the single storey outbuildings are not considered to cause any overshadowing effects and appear obtrusive when viewed from the nearby neighbouring plots.

Overall, the proposed development is not considered to cause any amenity issues to the neighbouring properties in terms of loss of light, outlook, and privacy, together with any nuisance and noise disturbances.

### *Transport and Highways*

The current development will retain the existing access arrangements and on-site, and the existing parking spaces will also be retained. The proposed development will introduce 16 extra self-contained single rooms. The additional guest rooms will require additional parking spaces on-site according to the parking standards. However, the council's current parking standards were adopted in 2004. Therefore, they are very outdated. Further national guidance in relation to parking for developments has emerged since then, most notably within the NPPF (2021).

Paragraph 108 of the NPPF states that maximum parking standards for residential and non-residential development should only be set where there is a clear and compelling justification that they are necessary for managing the local road network or for optimising the density of development in city and town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport. There is no clear and compelling evidence that the parking standards should be imposed to manage the local road network considering that the development is located in Hatfield. Therefore, the site is within a close walking distance to a number of convenience shops, services, and areas of employment. Also, nearby bus stops provide frequent links into the town centre, Hatfield Business Park, and The University of Hertfordshire and link further afield via Hatfield railway station and bus interchange.

Therefore, based on the site's sustainable location and the stipulations in the NPPF (2021), a development which would not solely rely on the private car as a means of transport should be supported. Furthermore, it was noted within the previous determination ref; 6/2017/0513/FULL that there are several on-street parking spaces on adjacent streets which are unrestricted. Therefore, there is parking within the immediate area which the future users of the development can utilise if need be.

In regard to cycle parking, 6 additional cycle parking spaces would be required to accommodate the additional rooms being provided within the guest house. These will be provided within a safe and secure location and can be secured via a planning condition. The provision of additional cycle parking will mitigate the lack of additional vehicle parking by providing an alternative mode of active transport in line with Section 9 (Promoting sustainable transport) of the NPPF (2021).

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The proposed development is considered to comply with the relevant planning considerations as detailed within this statement. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that planning permission be granted for the proposal.