

WELWLYN HATFIELD COUNCIL
PLANNING CONTROL COMMITTEE
22ND OCTOBER 2003
REPORT OF THE CHIEF PLANNING &
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICER

PCC 22.10.03
PART 1
ITEM NO
FOR DECISION
CPEHO

S6/2003/0957/DE
RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF 322 DWELLINGS AND
ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE (RESERVED MATTERS
PURSUANT TO OUTLINE PERMISSION S6/1999/1064/OP)

APPLICANT: ARLINGTON PROPERTY DEVELOPMENTS LTD

(Hatfield North)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Planning permission in outline for residential development on the former Hatfield Aerodrome site was granted on 29th December 2000 under reference S6/1999/1064/OP, as part of the permission for the overall development of the site. The outline permission reflects the land use allocations and scale of development detailed in the Hatfield Aerodrome Supplementary Planning Guidance adopted in November 1999.
- 1.2 Members may recall that in February 2002 the then Planning Control Board considered and approved a Framework Plan and Design Statement for the residential part of the Hatfield Aerodrome development. This was followed, on 14th March 2002, by the approval of three reserved matters applications for the first phases of development by Bovis Homes (124 dwellings). The first part of the Bryant Phase 2 development, adjoining Central Park, was approved on 8th May 2003 (a further 74 dwellings). These first phases are now under construction and, in the case of Bryant Phase 1.1, virtually completed. Also, the principal residential spine road serving the main part of the new residential area has been constructed.
- 1.3 The current reserved matters application, the largest so far submitted for the Aerodrome site in terms of site area and number of units, relates to land north of Bovis Phase 1 and west of Bryant Phases 1.1 and 1.2. The application site adjoins the Green Belt to the west and the original Hatfield Business Park on the former Dynamics site to the north. The principal east-west cycleway and footpath link from Comet Way and the proposed District Centre to the Green Belt and Ellenbrook Park runs centrally through the current application site.
- 1.4 The application gives details of siting, design and external appearance of, and means of access to, 322 new dwellings ranging from 1 bedroom to 6 bedroom in size. The units are principally a mixture of flats and houses at two and three storey height, with eight bungalows. Parking is provided in garages and

driveways on plot for the larger units, and in parking courtyards for the flats and smaller houses. A number of areas of public open space are shown in this phase, including the central green space identified in the master plan.

2.0 RELEVANT POLICIES

2.1 Welwyn Hatfield District Plan Alterations No 1 (1998) – British Aerospace inset

Hatfield Aerodrome Supplementary Planning Guidance – November 1999

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan Review (revised deposit version, June 2002) – Policies HATAER1, HATAER2.

2.2 Central Government Planning Policy Guidance Notes: No 3 (Housing – 2001), No 13 (Transport – 2001).

3.0 PUBLICITY AND REPRESENTATIONS

3.1 The application was originally advertised in the local press and notification letters were sent to neighbouring commercial occupiers of the adjoining Business Park and to Hatfield Garden Village and Ellenbrook Residents Association.

3.2 No comments have been received from residents or commercial occupiers.

Hatfield Town Council has objected to the application, considering the number of affordable housing units to be insufficient.

3.3 The comments of the County Council as Highway Authority have been taken into account when assessing the proposed layout, and are discussed where appropriate below. The comments of other technical consultees were considered at outline stage and dealt with by condition (eg requiring submission of drainage details). Neither the Environment Agency nor Thames Water have any objections or specific additional comments to make in respect of this reserved matters application.

4.0 DISCUSSION OF PROPOSALS

4.1 In assessing the detailed proposals contained in this application I have had regard to the guidance contained in the Hatfield Aerodrome SPG (particularly Chapter 13 – Area Brief – Residential) concerning housing mix, density, permeability, surveillance, visual continuity and enclosure, and variation in roof height. Advice in PPG3 on housing densities and parking standards has also been taken into account, as well as advice in PPG13 on parking and accessibility.

4.2 The proposals are in accordance with the previously agreed framework plan, which specifies relatively high densities along the main spine road and transport routes, declining to lower densities towards the Green Belt boundary, to provide a softer and more informal edge to the adjoining Ellenbrook Park area. Average density would be approximately 37 dwellings per hectare, in the following mix: 1-2 bedroom units – 41%, 3 bedroom units – 30%, 4 bedroom units – 16%, 5-6 bedroom units – 13%. This is a slightly greater proportion of small units than envisaged in the SPG for the overall development, and a slightly greater proportion of the large 5 bedroom or more units at the expense of a 4 bedroom

units. When considered together with other phases, however, the overall mix of unit sizes is not radically different from that specified in the SPG.

- 4.3 A total of 82 units in the current application are shown as affordable housing. This equates to approximately 25% of the total, and not the 30% which would normally be required. It is noted that Hatfield Town Council have objected to the application on the grounds that insufficient affordable housing is shown. The Bovis Phase 1 development, however, included a greater number of affordable units than was required, such that if the phases are taken together, a 30% proportion is achieved across the development which has come forward in detail to date. The affordable element on this Phase 3 scheme comprises 24 1 and 2 bedroom flats, 8 2 bedroom bungalows, 31 2 bedroom houses, 13 3 bedroom houses and 6 4 bedroom houses. The Council's Housing Officers are generally satisfied with the mix of units offered, which includes 15 units for shared ownership.
- 4.4 There are several important urban design features in this phase of development which are reflected in the submitted proposals. The frontages to the central green space are quite formal and are composed principally of terraced town houses, in keeping with the units already approved and constructed by Bryant Homes on part of the northern frontage to the green. Opposite the western end of the green two 'L-shaped' flat blocks act as gateway features for the main pedestrian – cycleway heading out towards the Green Belt area. Adjoining this route to the north another substantial, but this time informal, open landscaped space is proposed which ideally will allow visual interaction between the development and the Ellenbrook Park adjoining. Two further open space areas are proposed, one immediately to the north of Phase 1 and the other adjoining Bryant Phase 1.2. These areas will be equipped with play facilities as required.
- 4.5 Wherever possible, the same principles which have guided the negotiation of earlier phases have been applied to the current proposal, in terms of trying to create active street frontages to both roads and cycleways, with a variety of roof heights, and the use of house types to create character areas within the development. The minor roads and access ways, together with the parking courtyards, have been refined following consultation with the Highway Authority, and designed with speed control in mind, through the use of bends, speed tables and surface changes. In addition to the principal east-west cycleway, a 3m wide cycleway is shown alongside the residential spine road. Given the advice in PPG3, and the intention to maximise use of alternative means of transport to the car, a limited reduction in the parking standards below the SPG maximum standards has been accepted. All 1 and 2 bedroom flats are shown with at least one allocated parking space, while all larger units have at least two allocated spaces. The largest 5 and 6 bedroom units have at least three spaces on plot.
- 4.6 One area of significant concern is the relationship at the northern boundary of the site between the proposed housing and the existing distribution centres (Securicor and Booker) within the Business Park. It is inevitable that the outlook from the houses in this part of the development will to some extent be compromised by the proximity of the distribution centre buildings which are approximately 17m high. The Securicor building is particularly close, at 40m from the rear walls of the nearest proposed dwellings and 25m from the rear garden boundaries. Because of the orientation of the buildings, however, there will be no significant obstruction to sunlight reaching the new houses and gardens. The

SPG indicates a depth of 20m from the rear walls of the new housing to the Business Park boundary, and the layout observes this.

- 4.7 Close examination of the boundary effects related to the Securicor depot has been necessary, particularly as this depot operates 24 hours a day, with heavy goods vehicle movements concentrated at night. The Council's Environmental Health Officers have assessed the noise likely to be caused by these operations, with reference to supporting information submitted by the developer's consultant and their own measurements. After considerable discussion it has been accepted that adequate protection against noise for the affected houses can be achieved through a scheme of secondary glazing and acoustic ventilation, together with a barrier at the site boundary comprising a 2m high landscaped bund surmounted by a 2m high acoustic fence. These protective measures would need to be addressed by a condition imposed on any reserved matters approval. Four proposed townhouses, with an upper storey particularly vulnerable to noise, have been replaced in a revised layout by two-storey houses.
- 4.8 An additional factor with a potential to cause nuisance is the floodlighting of the vehicle circulation area around the southern end of the Securicor building. The SPG considers this (paragraph 13.34) and quotes an earlier assessment to the effect that that light levels in this location decline to less than 5 lux at a distance of 15m or more from the site boundary. This is within recommended guidelines. It is also intended that boundary planting, once mature, will provide some screening from light overspill.
- 4.9 Although indicative areas for planting are shown throughout the scheme, a fully detailed landscaping scheme has not been submitted. This would need to be the subject of a condition on any approval granted. In respect of sustainability issues, which form a central part of the SPG for the Aerodrome development, the sustainability statement submitted at the time of approval of the Framework Plan applies to the implementation of this phase.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 Having assessed the submitted details in respect of the siting, design, external appearance and means of access to this part of the residential development at Hatfield Aerodrome, I am satisfied that they are appropriate and should give rise to a high standard of development in keeping with the aims of the SPG as expressed through the previously approved Framework Plan and Design Statement. If members are minded to approve these details, conditions should be imposed to deal with the submission of materials and landscaping details and the implementation of an approved scheme of noise protection measures. The provisions of the Section 106 Agreement attached to the outline planning permission continue to apply to this development.

6.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 I recommend that the reserved matters of siting, design, external appearance and means of access are approved in respect of application S6/2003/0957/DE, pursuant to the outline planning permission S6/1999/1064/OP, subject to the following conditions:

1. SC19 MATERIALS – DETAILS TO BE SUBMITTED

2. Reserved matters have not been discharged in relation to landscaping, and a full landscaping scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to commencement of development and the approved scheme shall be subsequently implemented in accordance with Condition 6 of outline planning permission S6/1999/1064/OP dated 29th December 2000.

REASON: To enhance the visual appearance of the development.

3. Prior to the commencement of development a scheme of noise amelioration measures relating to the dwellings on plots 437,438 and 490 to 537 inclusive to include the erection of a noise barrier and bund on the northern site boundary and suitable forms of glazing and ventilation to the dwellings themselves shall be agreed in writing with the local planning authority. The approved measures shall be implemented in full prior to the first occupation of the dwellings to which they relate.

REASON: To prevent an unacceptable level of noise nuisance to occupiers of the new dwellings.

Informative

No development shall commence until the details of a system for minimising the quantity of water drawn from the public supply have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

REASON: To reduce the impact of the development on the water environment in the interest of sustainable development.

Background Papers

Applications S6/1999/1064/OP, S6/2003/0957/DE

