

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL
PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE - 22ND NOVEMBER, 1990
REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND PLANNING SERVICES

P & T 22.11.90.
PART 1
ITEM NO. 6
FOR DECISION
DEPS

N6/0632/90/CA
PARTIAL DEMOLITION OF EXISTING BUILDING
THE CHERRY TREE PUBLIC HOUSE
BRIDGE ROAD, WELWYN GARDEN CITY

(Handside)

N6/0631/90/FP
ERECTION OF NEW RETAIL SHOP (USE CLASS A1)
WITH ANCILLARY OFFICES, STORAGE AND STAFF
AMENITY AREAS, TOGETHER WITH SERVICING
AREA AND CAR PARKING, FOLLOWING
PARTIAL DEMOLITION OF EXISTING BUILDING
THE CHERRY TREE PUBLIC HOUSE
BRIDGE ROAD, WELWYN GARDEN CITY

(Handside)

The above applications relate to the demolition of the majority of the existing Cherry Tree Public House and rebuilding to create a supermarket on the site. Before I comment on the current proposal I feel some previous history of this site would be worthwhile.

The Cherry Tree Public House is a significant building in the Welwyn Garden City Town Centre, which is within the Conservation Area. The building is designed in an Italianate style with the use of Tuscan columns to most facades and colonnades. The walls are built in Flemish Bond brickwork with rendering at first floor level, and the roof is finished in Roman tiles. The design for the building, its materials and position in Bridge Road are sufficient to ensure the existing building is of extremely high quality on the perimeter of the Town Centre.

For some considerable time, the use of the Cherry Tree has declined from its original concept as a public house, restaurant and dance hall to merely the public house part. This has led to a serious effect on the building due to the lack of maintenance, resulting in a decline in its appearance.

It was obvious that an alternative use for the site was necessary and in December, 1987, an application to change the use to a supermarket was received. This application was considered by the Planning & Transportation Committee on the 9th June, 1988, when it was resolved to approve the proposal subject to the completion of a Section 52 Agreement regarding "off-site" work. This Agreement was never completed thus no decision was issued.

On the 25th July, 1990, I received further applications for the development of the Cherry Tree site for a Waitrose Supermarket. Since the site is within the Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area, the applications have been advertised and notices erected on site. Furthermore a letter of notification was sent to British Railways since one boundary adjoins railway operational land. As a result of these notifications I received comments from the Welwyn Garden City Society and these are circulated in the normal fashion. In the current proposals the majority of the existing building is being demolished with the existing Bridge Road facade being retained. The building has been designed to ensure that many of the existing details are repeated with respect to matching brickwork, details, windows and the re-introduction of a colonnade.

The building will comprise a ground floor of approximately 1,720m² (of which 1,600m² is for the retail sales) and a first floor of 1,720m² which is intended for warehouse, freezers, offices, toilets etc. Car parking for 245 vehicles will be provided on the former bowling green. Because of the importance of the trees within the site it has been accepted that some car parking spaces can be omitted to ensure the retention of individual trees as well as those in groups. Access to this car park, together with vehicular access to service the store will be from College Way. This will entail the access to the Council car park being relocated and as a result of a traffic study which has been undertaken in relation to the proposal it has been decided that a new ramp and access to the existing main car park is required off College Way. Some minor modifications to the road system around College Way are also required. The details of the access and highway works will be needed to be incorporated in a separate legal agreement if Members are minded to approve this proposal.

The application as presented is the result of considerable negotiation to ensure that the design of the new store complements the original Cherry Tree design concept. A considerable period of time has lapsed since the proposal was originally suggested and I am pleased to be able to support this scheme.

I recommend that, subject to the completion of a Section 106 Agreement or other such Agreement considered by the Solicitor to be appropriate to cover the necessary highway and access works, the applications are approved subject to the following conditions:-

N6/0631/90/FP

1. SC1 Time Limit Full Permission
2. The retail sales to the public shall only be permitted within the ground floor area of the building.

Reason

Any increase in the retail floorspace would require additional "on-site" car parking which would result in the loss of a considerable number of trees and other landscape features within the site.

3. Notwithstanding the submitted details large scale details showing the design for the Tuscan style columns and entablature to the colonnade shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority before work commences.

Reason

To ensure the design reflects the style of the existing building which is an important building historically and architecturally within the Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area.

4. Notwithstanding the provision of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, or any subsequent amending Order, permission is hereby granted only for a single convenience retail unit to comply with Policy WGC2 of the Deposited Draft District Plan.

Reason

The site is divorced from the main Town Centre complex and not in a location where the Local Planning Authority would generally wish to encourage a retail use. Permission is only granted in this instance due to the need for a modern well-served food store in the Town Centre.

5. SC24 Parking maintained
6. SC31 No open storage

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1. SC2 Time Limit full permission Listed Buildings
2. No demolition shall take place until a contract for the carrying out of works of redevelopment of the site is made and planning permission has been granted for the redevelopment for which the contract provides, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason

The site is in a prominent position with the Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area and the Town Centre, and if left in a derelict condition would have a severe detrimental effect on

the visual amenities of the Town Centre.

Background Papers

1. Planning application files N6/0632/90/CP
and N6/0631/90/FP

TONY MOORE

DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND PLANNING SERVICES

NOVEMBER 1990