



PLANNING STATEMENT

Site: 43-45 Broadwater Road
Welwyn Garden City
Herts
AL7 3AX

For: Marbrook Care

Project Ref: 18065_PS

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CONTENTS PAGE



Section	Title	Page
1.0	INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	2
2.0	THE SITE	3
3.0	PLANNING POLICY	6
4.0	THE NEED	9
5.0	THE DESIGN	11
6.0	CONCLUSION	13

1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This report accompanies a planning application for the erection of a Care Home comprising 104 units. Marbrook Care is an established company specialising in the provision of Care Homes. They are the owners of the application site, 43-45 Broadwater Road, Welwyn Garden City.

1.2 The application site was formerly the site of a B1 office building. In March 2016 planning permission was granted for the:

“Demolition of existing office building (B1a) and change of use to and creation of, part two, three and four storey residential institutions (care homes - c2) for 83 residents, associated car parking and landscaping.”

1.3 The LPA reference is N6/2014/2715/MA dated 8 March 2016. This consent remains extant.

1.4 The application, the subject of this statement is for the same use as previously permitted, however, the design has been altered and the number of units has been increased to 104, comprising 91 bedrooms and 13 one-bedroom suites.

2.0 **THE SITE**

2.1 The application site is located on the eastern side of Broadwater Road, which lies to the south east of Welwyn Garden City town centre. Historically, Broadwater Road has been a commercial area, with large office buildings on a number of sites. In the last decade, the commercial uses have declined and, as a consequence, a significant amount of redevelopment has occurred in the area. This development has primarily been for residential use. The site extends to an area of 0.3985Ha (0.985acres) boundaries.

2.2 To the north is a recently built residential development which is located on a part of the original site. To the east, the boundary has a mature tree screen behind which are the grounds of Peartree Primary School. To the south are residential properties in Moatwood Green and Well Garth, which are set well back from the boundary along which there are a number of mature trees. At the south west corner of the site there is an electricity substation. Across Broadwater Road to the west is an area of substantial new development comprising new apartment blocks of three and four storeys of a modern design and rectangular form. Access is taken directly from Broadwater Road (A1000).

2.3 This document should be read in the context of the accompanying reports relating to this proposed development. A number of technical reports accompany the application

2.4 From a planning and townscape view, the proposed use has the following advantages. It is:

- a) A use which will not substantially increase traffic generation along Broadwater Road and will effect a reduction in vehicle trips during the weekday peak hours.
- b) A building of a modern design and in scale with the new build developments in this area of Broadwater Road.
- c) It will retain an employment use on the site whilst meeting a demand for a care home.

2.5 Views of the proposed development are restricted from the east side of the site as a consequence of the trees on the boundary with the school playing fields. From the south, the backs of existing houses in Moatwood Green and Well Garth face directly at the site. These houses are set some 28.3m and 30.5m away from the proposal with the established tree belt between. A more recent development of flats and houses have been constructed immediately to the north of the site on land which formed a part of the site on which the proposed development is also located.

2.6 As a consequence of the location of the site and character of the new development in the immediate area of Broadwater Road, it is considered appropriate to provide a development of four stories, similar to more recent development in the area.

2.7 The development has been designed to provide the appropriate scale and design for the proposed care home. In this regard, the following criteria guided the proposal.

- The physical size and shape of the site.
- The relationship to the residential properties immediately to the south of the site, even though they are some distance away.

- The relationship to the new residential properties on the opposite side of Broadwater Road, even though they too are some distance away with a busy road set between them.
- The perception that any building should be of a scale complimentary to other new buildings opposite on the western side of Broadwater Road.
- To reflect the rectilinear and relatively simple modern style of other new development in the area.
- For the design and elevational treatment to be contemporary and in harmony with the street scene of Broadwater Road using similar materials and style.
- The physical requirements and standards dictated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in respect of the accommodation within the Care Home.

3.0 **PLANNING POLICY**

3.1 Planning policy of relevance to this proposal is primarily contained within the NPPF (July 2018).

3.2 As appropriate, in the specific consultant's reports accompanying this application, relevant planning policies are referenced.

National Planning Policy Framework, July 2018

3.3 In the wider context, the following is considered relevant to the consideration of this proposal. Section 2 Achieving Sustainable Development, (paragraph b) is specifically relevant to this proposal, it states that:

"To support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being."

3.4 Section 5 Delivering a Significant Supply of Homes, paragraph 59 states:

"To support the government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay."

3.5 Paragraph 61 notes:

“Within this context, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes.)”

Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan(s)

District Plan 2005

3.6 The application site falls within an area located on the eastern side of Broadwater Road in an area reserved entirely for commercial purposes in the 2005 Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan. Since that time, planning legislation has changed and with the advent of the changes to the Use Classes Order 2015, existing offices (B1a) are permitted to be converted to offices. The implementation of this legislation has resulted in redevelopment of significant parts of Broadwater Road to be developed as housing sites or existing buildings to change the use of office space into flatted development. The current draft Local Plan (Proposed Submission Document 2016) allocates the western side of Broadwater Road as largely residential areas.

3.7 It is quite clear from recent developments in the area that the primary use of this area is now largely residential. The grant of planning permission in 2015 has confirmed that the use of the site for the proposed Care Home has been acknowledged as being appropriate in the area.

Draft Local Plan – Proposed Submission Document



- 3.8 The proposed development is not dissimilar to the development originally approved at the site. It has continued to have due regard to policies SP9 Place Making and High Quality Design; SADM 11 Amenities and Layout; SADM 12 Parking Servicing and Refuse; SP10 Sustainable Design and Construction, SADM 13 Sustainability Requirements; SADM 14 Flood Risks and Surface Water Management.

Reports Accompanying the Application

- 3.9 In association with this application an Ecological Appraisal prepared by ELMAW Consultants is attached which refers to the relevant policies.
- 3.10 Current policies have also guided both the Transport Statement and Travel Plan prepared by Mayer Brown to accompany the application.

4.0 **THE NEED**

4.1 Welwyn Hatfield has been the subject of considerable growth in recent years. The most recent Annual Monitoring Report 2016/2017 indicates at paragraph 1.7 that:

“Welwyn Hatfield’s estimated population increase during the year was the second largest in percentage terms of the UK’s 440 local authorities”.

Age structure of those living in Welwyn Hatfield mid-2017

	Welwyn Hatfield	Hertfordshire
Aged 0-4	7300	75400
Aged 5-9	7500	81000
Aged 10-14	6500	71600
Aged 15-19	8000	65500
Aged 20-24	13600	63700
Aged 25-29	9300	73200
Aged 30-34	8400	77500
Aged 35-39	7900	84500
Aged 40-44	7200	82100
Aged 45-49	7400	85900
Aged 50-54	7900	86800
Aged 55-59	7000	74200
Aged 60-64	5500	60100
Aged 65-69	4900	54800
Aged 70-74	4500	50200
Aged 75-79	3200	35000
Aged 80-84	2900	29200
Aged 85-89	2000	19000
Aged 90+	1200	11100

Source: Office for National Statistics, Mid Year Population Estimates

- 4.2 In the emerging Local Plan, under the heading Indicator H09 New Specialist Needs Housing, the Council has estimated a delivery requirement of 340 new care home bedrooms with a further 267 bedrooms identified. It should be noted, however, that these figures are out of date. The age profile of those living in Welwyn Hatfield is set out in the table above.
- 4.3 If the cohorts of age between 70-74 to 90+ (the greatest potential ages for people to require care) are added together, the figure is 13,800. It is acknowledged that only a proportion of older people require care outside their homes, but increasingly elderly people are choosing the security and comfort of 24-hour high quality care.
- 4.4 The proposal is for a high-quality care home, offering a variety of residential rooms and providing for a range of facilities, including a Café at ground level and communal lounge/dining areas on each of the four floors. A Hair Salon/Spa and activity room on the second floor and a Cinema on the third floor. The fourth floor offers larger accommodation with most of the rooms having a small external terrace. There is also a Library and a private Dining Room on this floor.
- 4.5 From experience of the market, the applicants know that the residents of homes such as is proposed, require not only extremely high standards of care, but also safe and attractive communal spaces. The development has been designed to achieve this.

5.0 **THE DESIGN**

5.1 The design of the proposed building has been altered to enable 104 rooms, but remains located on a similar footprint to that previously approved. Careful consideration has been taken to minimise the impact of the new building on adjacent properties, both the original dwellings to the south and the more recent developments to the north.

5.2 The rationale for the design of the building is set out in the architect's statement. The flat roof design is a common theme throughout many of the new developments in the area. Care has been taken to ensure that the external elevations are appropriately articulated, thus breaking up the massing of the building. The mix of brickwork and render on each elevation adds interest to the structure and lightens the design.

5.3 Fenestration has been carefully considered, particularly in relation to the residential properties to the north and south. The elevation to the south is 26m+ from the rear façades of the residential dwellings to the south. In addition, a large inset area providing for a landscaped amenity area for residents, reduces the bulk and massing of the building to an approximate level. Additional landscaping is designed around the building to provide footpath access and small areas of outdoor space for the ground floor flats on both the east and west flanks.

Car Parking and Access

5.4 This has been altered from the original proposal and the access now lies to the north of the site.

5.5 This car parking area provides for a buffer between the building and the adjacent properties to the north of between 21m and 24m. Twenty Nine

car parking spaces are provided, three of which provide for wheelchair access close to the main entrance.



5.6 The reports attached to this application by Mayer Brown (Transport Statement and Travel Plan) sets out in detail the impact of vehicle movements associated with the proposed care home. In brief, table 6.5 sets out that there is a considerable reduction in overall *"trips"* between the original office use and the proposed care home use particularly during the weekday peak periods. Mayer Brown have also supplied a Travel Plan, which will be implemented by the management of the care home. It is the case that the location of the site is extremely well located, being close to the town centre and with bus stops close by to the proposed building on Broadwater Road.

6.0 **CONCLUSION**

6.1 There is an extant approval for the use of this site as a care home. This proposal seeks to amend the original scheme to provide additional accommodation. The revised application, whilst larger than the original has, however, fully embraced the need to minimise the impact on the adjacent properties. The design is attractive and in keeping with the overall character of new development in Broadwater Road. The development will provide high quality alternative accommodation for elderly people in the area in a modern, well designed and attractive location.