

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – 28 MARCH 2019
REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR (PUBLIC PROTECTION, PLANNING
AND GOVERNANCE)

6/2019/0271/FULL

7 STRAWMEAD HATFIELD AL10 0JG

ERECTION OF PART SINGLE, PART TWO STOREY FRONT EXTENSION AND TWO
SINGLE STOREY REAR EXTENSIONS TO FACILITATE CONVERSION OF
EXISTING 4-BEDROOM HOUSE IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION (C4) INTO 2 X 1-BED
FLATS AND 1 X 2-BED FLAT

APPLICANT: Mr S Lordan

(Hatfield East)

1 Site Description

- 1.1 The application site is situated on the north east side of Strawmead and adjoins an open pedestrian access to the front and side. The immediate area is characterised by linear formed residential cul-de-sacs which contain dwellings similar in respect of both size and appearance.
- 1.2 The site comprises a two storey four bedroom semi-detached dwelling which is constructed of buff brick and brown concrete tiles. The site benefits from an existing rear conservatory and private rear garden. There is no on-site car parking provision associated the site.

2 The Proposal

- 2.1 The application seeks planning permission for the conversion of existing four bedroom House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) (use class C4) into three self-contained flats which would include two 1-bedroom flats and one 2-bedroom flat.
- 2.2 The proposal includes the erection of a part single, part two storey front extension and two single storey rear extensions. Planning permission has been granted on site for the erection of a two storey front infill extension under reference 6/2018/0766/HOUSE and a Certificate of lawfulness has been granted under reference 6/2018/1921/LAWP for the erection of two single storey rear extensions.
- 2.3 Flat 1 would comprise a 1-bedroom 1 person ground floor flat to the front of the site which would contain an open plan kitchen, dining and lounge area, single space bedroom and shower room. Flat 2 would comprise a 1-bedroom 2 person ground floor flat to the rear of the site which would contain an open plan kitchen, dining and lounge area, double bedroom and a bathroom. This flat would benefit from an enclosed entrance yard and a separate garden space. Flat 3 would comprise a 2-bedroom 3 person first floor flat which would contain an open plan kitchen, dining and lounge area, double bedroom, single bedroom and bathroom.

Flat 1 and 3 would benefit from a communal garden/yard area which would include an area set aside for the storage of bins and bikes.

- 2.4 In terms of parking, the existing site does not benefit from any existing on-site car parking and no additional car parking provision is proposed. As a result of the layout of the planned estate, it would not be possible to provide any on-site car parking for the site.

3 Reason for Committee Consideration

- 3.1 The application is presented to Development Management Committee because Hatfield Town Council have responded with a major objection.

4 Relevant Planning History

- 4.1 Application Number: 6/2018/1921/LAWP
Decision: Granted
Decision Date: 12 September 2018
Proposal: Certificate of lawfulness for the erection of two single storey rear extensions
- 4.2 Application Number: 6/2018/0757/LAWP
Decision: Granted
Decision Date: 15 May 2018
Proposal: Certificate of lawfulness for loft conversion including installation of rear dormer
- 4.3 Application Number: 6/2018/0796/HOUSE
Decision: Granted
Decision Date: 11 May 2018
Proposal: Erection of a two storey front infill extension
- 4.4 Application Number: 6/2017/2564/HOUSE
Decision: Refused
Decision Date: 02 January 2018
Proposal: Erection of single storey rear extension, two storey front and rear extension, loft conversion to include two rear dormers and alterations to existing openings

5 Relevant Planning Policy

- 5.1 National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF)
- 5.2 Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 (District Plan)
- 5.3 Draft Local Plan Proposed Submission 2016 (Emerging Local Plan)
- 5.4 Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005 (SDG)
- 5.5 Supplementary Planning Guidance, Parking Standards, January 2004 (SPG)
- 5.6 Interim Policy for Car Parking Standards and Garage Sizes, August 2014 (Interim Parking Policy)
- 5.7 Houses in Multiple Occupation Supplementary Planning Document February 2012

6 Site Designation

6.1 The site lies within the town of Hatfield as designated in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

7 Representations Received

7.1 Neighbouring occupiers were consulted by way of letter. A reply has been received from 18 Sandpiper Close located within a different ward; Hatfield West. The comment is summarised below:

- Additional pressures on rubbish, anti-social behaviour and parking as a result of the development

8 Town Council Representations

8.1 Major objection stated as follows:

8.2 *“The proposed creation of flats would result in harm to the character of the area by virtue of the change in intensity of use of this narrow crescent as well as detrimentally impact upon the amenity of neighbouring properties. The proposal is therefore contrary to policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005. Members further consider this overdevelopment of the site with insufficient outdoor amenity space for the occupants of the proposed flats.”*

9 Consultations Received

9.1 Hertfordshire County Council Transport Programmes and Strategy – No objection

9.2 Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Public Health & Protection Team – No objection

9.3 Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Client Services Team – No objection

9.4 Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Parking Services Team – No provision of car parking has been made. This area already struggles with parking congestion to the number of vehicles belonging to existing residents. Additional vehicles are only going to make this worse

10 Analysis

10.1 The issues to be considered are as follows:

- 1. The principle of the development**
- 2. Quality of design and impact on the character and appearance of the area**
- 3. Quality of design with regard to the residential amenity and living conditions of neighbouring occupiers and future occupiers**
- 4. Access, impact on the highway network and parking provision**
- 5. Other material planning considerations**
 - i) Refuse and recycling storage**
 - ii) Landscaping**
- 6. Overall balance and conclusion**

1. The principle of the development

- 10.2 District Plan Policy SD1 states that development proposals will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the principles of sustainable development are satisfied and that they will accord with the objectives and policies of the Plan. Policy R1 requires development to take place on previously developed land and Policy GBSP2 directs new development into the existing towns and specified settlements within the district. These objectives are consistent with the Council's Emerging Local Plan.
- 10.3 The NPPF promotes an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Also, as outlined in paragraph 2.7 above, when there is a shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs, it is especially important that decisions avoid homes being built at low densities, and ensure that developments make the optimal use of the potential of each site.
- 10.4 Policy H3 deals with loss of residential accommodation and states that planning permission will not be granted for redevelopment which would result in the net reduction in the number of dwellings within the district. The policy does not deal specifically with the loss of 'family homes'. In this case, the proposed conversion of the existing single dwelling to form three self-contained flats would result in a net increase of two dwellings and therefore accords with Policy H3 of the District Plan.
- 10.5 Policy H4 outlines that the Council will generally support applications for the conversion of large residential units to provide smaller self-contained units provided that it does not result in a development that is detrimental to the appearance of the application building and the visual amenity of the area; would not adversely affect the amenity of neighbouring residential properties; and would provide appropriate amenity space. These issues are discussed below.
- 10.6 The application site currently hosts a two storey 4-bedroom semi-detached dwelling located within the Town of Hatfield. The application site is also located within an area which is accessible by non-car modes of transport and where there are services and facilities available within walking distance of the site. Furthermore, there are no known physical or environmental constraints at this site. Based on the above, the proposal would not be in conflict with District Plan Policies SD1, R1, GBSP2, H2, H4; Emerging Local Plan Policies SP1 and SP3; or the NPPF subject to an assessment of the scheme against the principles of sustainable development governing residential development which are considered below.

2. Quality of design and impact on the character and appearance of the area

- 10.7 In addition to Policy GBSP2, H2 and H4 outlined above, District Plan Policies D1 and D2 aim to ensure a high quality of design and to ensure that development respects and relates to the character and context of the locality, maintaining and where possible enhancing the character of the existing area. These policies are expanded upon in the Council's Supplementary Design Guidance (SDG) which requires the impact of a development to be assessed giving regard to the bulk, scale and design of the proposal and how it harmonises with the existing building and area. These policies are broadly consistent with Policy SP9 of the Emerging Local Plan.

- 10.8 The NPPF places a clear emphasis on high quality design and states in paragraph 130 that planning permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way in functions, taking into account any local design standards or style guides in plans or supplementary planning documents.
- 10.9 The proposal includes extensions to the existing dwelling. As outlined above, the proposed two storey front extension has already benefits from planning permission, granted in May last year under reference 6/2018/0796/HOUSE. The extension would remain subordinate in scale and would respect the design of the existing dwelling in terms of roof pitch, matching materials and fenestration detailing. The extension would reflect the character and appearance of the dwelling and surrounding area.
- 10.10 In addition, two single storey rear extensions are included within the proposal. These extensions have been confirmed as permitted development under Part 1 Class A of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).
- 10.11 As reasoned above, the development would be compatible with the character of this part of Hatfield, and therefore there would be no conflict with either the Local or national planning policies.

3. Quality of design with regard to the residential amenity and living conditions of neighbouring occupiers and future occupiers

- 10.12 As the acceptability of the extensions has been established through granted planning permission and formal confirmation of compliance with permitted development rights, it is concluded that this proposal would result in no greater impact upon the living conditions or residential amenity of the occupiers of neighbouring properties in terms of overlooking, loss of light or overbearing impact.
- 10.13 In terms of the potential for the proposal to result in additional noise disturbance to the occupiers of the adjoining property, whilst the use may intensify to some degree due to the separate units, it is notable that the number of bedrooms within the building would remain the same, albeit across three separate dwellings. This proposal would not result in additional noise generation beyond what would be expected as reasonable noise within a residential environment. Furthermore, it is noted from the proposed floor plans that in regard to Flat 2, a bedroom, bathroom and landing adjoin the party wall of No.8 Strawmead. The noise from these rooms is not anticipated to be materially different to a single dwelling and therefore presents a potential betterment over the existing situation whereby the property is occupied as a HMO.
- 10.14 In addition, the potential for a small increase in the total number of car journeys and the associated noise from vehicles would be relatively minor in comparison to the total amount of vehicles which use Strawmead and the surrounding estate. Therefore, the increase in visitors is unlikely to have any material impact on neighbour amenity in comparison to the existing situation. A concern has been raised by a resident, albeit in a different part of Hatfield, in regard to the disturbance of anti-social behaviour as a result of the development. It should be noted that noise disturbance from anti-social behaviour is covered by other

legislation and therefore can only be given very limited weight in the consideration of this planning application.

- 10.15 The resultant increased density of dwellings at the site is not considered to be substantial and the potential for additional noise or disturbance as a result would not be sufficient to justify a refusal on this basis alone. In this respect, no objections are raised with regard to District Plan Policies H4, D1 and R19 or Emerging Local Plan Policies SP9, SADM11 and SADM18.
- 10.16 Turning to the amenity of future occupiers of the proposed flats, Paragraph 127 NPPF outlines that decisions should always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings. Policy SADM11 of the Emerging Local Plan 2016, requires as a minimum, for all proposals for C3 dwellings will be required to meet the Nationally Described Space Standard, unless it can be robustly demonstrated that this would not be feasible or viable. The Standards outline the minimum requirements floor space and storage for new dwellings. The proposed Floor Plans demonstrate that the three resultant flats at the site would comply with Nationally Described Space Standards for internal spaces in accordance with Policy SADM11 of the Emerging Local Plan.
- 10.17 Policies H4 and D1 and the Supplementary Design Guidance requires all residential development to incorporate private amenity space for the use of residents. The Council does not apply rigid standard sizes but space should be functional and usable in terms of its orientation, width, depth and shape.
- 10.18 Hatfield Town Council have expressed concern regarding insufficient outdoor amenity space for the occupants of the proposed flats. The proposed ground floor plan outlines that Flat 2 would benefit from a private rear garden which would be accessed through the open plan lounge, dining and kitchen area. This flat would also benefit from a private entrance yard with space for bin and bike storage. In addition, there would be a communal garden/yard area for Flats 1 and 3 to the rear of the site accessed through a separate side gate. Given the limited size of space, it is anticipated that it would largely be used for refuse and cycle storage, however, this would not necessarily provide unacceptable living conditions for occupiers who are content with this type of accommodation. It is noted that there are public recreational areas within close walking distance from the application site, including St Albans Road East Recreational Ground. Whilst the concerns raised by Hatfield Town Council are noted, the NPPF does not stipulate the requirement for outdoor amenity space but does state that a high standard of amenity should be provided for future occupiers. For the above reasons, there would be no conflict with national policy.

4. Access, impact on the highway network and parking provision

- 10.19 Hertfordshire Highways have been consulted on this application and consider that the level of development proposed is unlikely to generate any significant additional vehicular movements which would lead to demonstrable harm to the highway network in terms of free flow and capacity.
- 10.20 Car parking standards are set out within the Council's SPG. In August 2014 the Cabinet Housing and Planning Panel approved the Interim Parking Policy. This document identifies the car parking standards set out in the SPG Parking Standards as guidelines rather than maximums and states that parking provision will be assessed on a case by case basis.

- 10.21 The site is located within Zone 2 where the Council's SPG recommends 0.75 off street space for a 1-bedroom flat and 1 off street space for a 2-bedroom flat. On this basis, 2.5 spaces would typically be required for the proposed conversion, which can be rounded up to 3 spaces. A comparison with the existing situation is a material consideration. In this regard, the existing use of the property as a 4-bedroom HMO has a requirement for 2 spaces. However, the existing internal layout together with extant permissions for extensions would allow for an additional bedroom and tenant, resulting in a 5-bedroom 5 occupant HMO. In this case, 3 car parking spaces would be required which is the same as the proposed development.
- 10.22 The existing site does not benefit from on-site car parking provision. Communal parking is provided within a parking court immediately to the rear of the site. The proposal does not include any amendments to car parking provision and, due to the layout of the estate, it would not be possible to incorporate any on-site car parking. The wider area benefits from unrestricted off-street parking which is unallocated. Whilst comments have been received from Parking Services with concern regarding existing congestion in the area and additional vehicles on the road, clarification has been made that the proposal would not result in a material requirement of additional parking provision in comparison to the existing requirement of a HMO. The impact of the proposal on parking provision would be broadly neutral. The proposal therefore accords with Council's Parking Standards and Policy M14 of District Plan, and Policy SADM12 of the Emerging Local Plan.
- 10.23 In terms of cycle storage, the SPG identifies a requirement for one long term secure cycle storage space per residential unit. The location of the cycle store is shown on the proposed Ground Floor Plan. A planning condition requiring further details with regard to the design of the cycle store is required and can be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in accordance with Policies M14, D1 and D2 of the District Plan; and Policy SADM12 of the Emerging Local Plan.

5. Other material planning considerations

i) Refuse and recycling storage

- 10.24 The proliferation of bins can create a considerable amount clutter which in turn has a harmful impact upon the visual amenity of the streetscene and the character of the area contrary to District Policies D1 and D2 and Policies SP9 and SADM12 of the Emerging Local Plan. Inappropriate storage of bins on the highway can also disrupt pedestrian and the traffic movements.
- 10.25 The Council's Client Services team have been consulted for this application and have advised that the development can be incorporated into the Council's existing Alternate Refuse and Recycling Scheme.
- 10.26 The Ground Floor Plan shows the storage of bins to the rear of the site within the site boundary. The proposed area set aside for bins would be screened by an existing boundary fence which would protect the visual amenity of the area from the clutter of the additional bins on site and there would be enough space to provide a storage enclosure. This would be an improvement on the existing situation where following a site visit, the bins were stored to the front of the site and were visible within the streetscene. It would be reasonable to condition the provision of a bin store to encourage the occupants to return the bins to the

designated area and maintain a satisfactory communal space for the occupiers of both flats. A planning condition is therefore suggested requiring details of the design of a bin store to be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in accordance with D1 and D2 of the District Plan; and Policies SP9 and SADM12 of the Emerging Local Plan.

ii) Landscaping

- 10.27 District Plan Policy D8 requires landscaping to form an integral part of the overall design, and in this respect the high quality design required by Policy D1 and D2 would again be relevant. Landscaping is important in order to protect and maintain, or ideally enhance, the existing character of the area and to reduce the visual and environmental impacts of the development.
- 10.28 In terms of landscaping, there is an existing landscaped buffer to the front of the site separating the dwelling from the pedestrian footpath. This area is currently used to store bins and provides only a limited contribution to the visual amenity of the area. The proposed ground floor plan provides only limited landscaping details, therefore, conditions are suggested requiring these details to be approved and implemented for the benefit of future occupiers and visual amenity of the immediate area in accordance with GBSP2, D1, D2 and D8 of the District Plan; and Policy SADM1 of the Emerging Local Plan.

11 Overall balance and conclusion

- 11.1 The proposed development would provide a satisfactory level of accommodation for its future occupants, would maintain the character and context of the area, respects the amenity of the occupiers of adjoining premises and provides sufficient parking while also promoting sustainable methods of transportation.
- 11.2 The proposal would make a small contribution of two additional units towards the Council's supply of housing and makes optimal use of the application site. This is especially important given the Council cannot show a five year supply of deliverable housing site and that that the scale of supply falls considerably well short of five years.

12 Recommendation

- 12.1 It is recommended that planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:
1. No above ground development shall take place until details of the design and specification of a store for the refuse and recycling bins to serve the residential units shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Subsequently the refuse and recycling store shall be constructed, equipped and made available for use, in accordance with the approved details, prior to first occupation and retained in that form thereafter.

REASON: To ensure a satisfactory standard of refuse and recycling provision and to protect the visual amenity of the streetscene in accordance with Policies GBPS2, D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005, Policies SP9 and SADM12 of the Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Draft Local Plan Proposed Submission August 2016 and the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.

2. No above ground development shall take place until a scheme for the provision of secure cycle parking on site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Subsequently the secure cycle parking shall be constructed, equipped and made available for use, in accordance with the approved details, prior to first occupation and retained in that form thereafter

REASON: In order to ensure that there is adequate provision for secure cycle accommodation within the application site, encouraging alternative modes of transport in accordance with Policies GBSP2, M14, D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005; Policies SP9 and SADM12 of the Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Draft Local Plan Proposed Submission August 2016 and the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.

3. No development above ground level in any phase of the development shall take place until full details on a suitably scaled plan of both hard and soft landscape works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved details. The landscaping details to be submitted shall include:

- (a) means of enclosure and boundary treatments;
- (b) hard surfacing, other hard landscape features and materials; and
- (c) planting plans, including specifications of species, sizes, planting centres, number and percentage mix, and details of seeding or turfing.

REASON: To ensure a satisfactory standard of development in the interest of visual amenity, to provide usable private amenity space for the benefit of the future occupiers, and to enable acceptable privacy between the private rear gardens in accordance with Policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005, Supplementary Design Guidance 2005 (Statement of Council Policy), Policies SP9 and SADM11 of the Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Draft Local Plan Proposed Submission August 2016 and the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.

4. The brickwork, roof tile, bond, mortar, detailing, guttering, soffits and other external decorations of the approved extension/alterations must match the existing dwelling/building in relation to colour and texture.

REASON: To ensure a satisfactory standard of development in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with and Policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005, Policy SP9 of the Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Draft Local Plan Proposed Submission August 2016 and the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.

5. Any upper floor window located in a wall or roof slope forming a side elevation of the extension hereby approved must be obscure-glazed and non-opening unless the parts of the window which can be opened are more than 1.7 metres above the floor of the room in which the window is installed, and shall be retained in that form thereafter.

REASON: To protect the residential amenity and living conditions of adjoining occupiers in accordance with Policy D1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005, Policy SADM11 of the Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Draft Local

DRAWING NUMBERS

6. The development/works shall not be started and completed other than in accordance with the approved plans and details:

Plan Number	Revision Number	Details	Received Date
4260-OS2-P02	A	Block Plan	6 Feb 2019
4260-P02	J	Plans and Elevations as Proposed	6 Feb 2019
4260-E01	B	Plans and Elevations as Existing	6 Feb 2019
4260-OS1-P02		Site Location Plan	6 Feb 2019

REASON: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans and details.

1. POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT

The decision has been made taking into account, where practicable and appropriate the requirements of paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework and material planning considerations do not justify a decision contrary to the development plan (see Officer's report which can be viewed on the Council's website or inspected at these offices).

Informatives:

1. This permission does not convey any consent which may be required under any legislation other than the Town and Country Planning Acts. Any permission required under the Building Regulations or under any other Act, must be obtained from the relevant authority or body e.g. Fire Officer, Health and Safety Executive, Environment Agency (Water interest etc. Neither does this permission negate or override any private covenants which may affect the land.
2. The applicant is advised to take account the provisions of The Party Wall Act 1996 insofar as the carrying out of development affecting or in close proximity to a shared boundary.
3. The granting of this permission does not convey or imply any consent to build upon or access from any land not within the ownership of the applicant.
4. The development will involve the numbering of properties and naming new streets. The applicant MUST contact Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, Transportation (Lorraine Davis 01707 357546 before any name or number is proposed. This is a requirement of the Public Health Act 1875 and Public Health (Amendment) Act 1907.
5. Road Deposits: It is an offence under section 148 of the Highways Act 1980 to deposit mud or other debris on the public highway, and section 149 of the same Act gives the Highway Authority powers to remove such material at the expense of the party responsible. Therefore, best practical means shall be

taken at all times to ensure that all vehicles leaving the site during construction of the development are in a condition such as not to emit dust or deposit mud, slurry or other debris on the highway. Further information is available via the website:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roadsand-pavements/highways-roads-and-pavements.aspx>

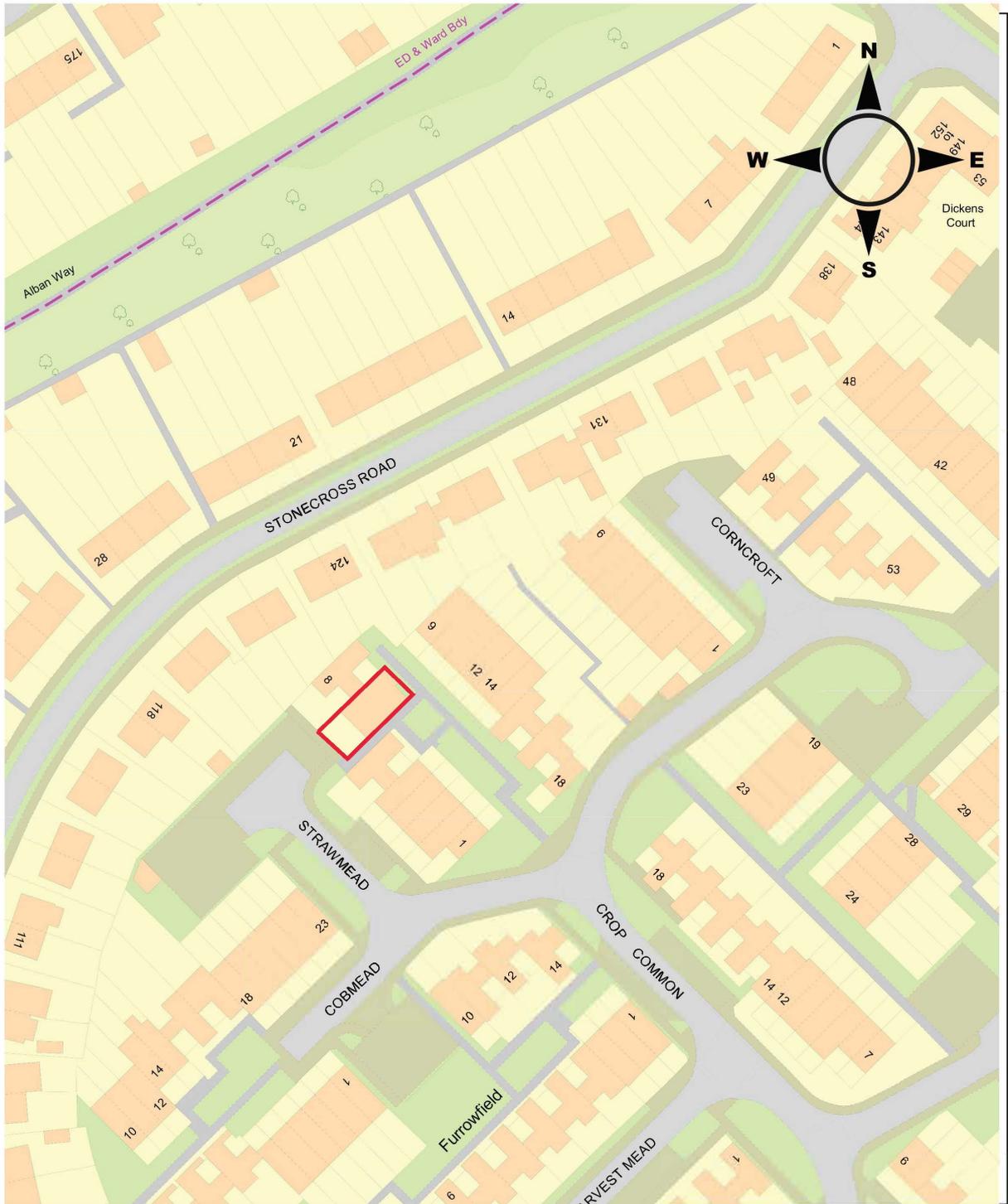
6. Storage of materials: The applicant is advised that the storage of materials associated with the construction of this development should be provided within the site on land which is not public highway, and the use of such areas must not interfere with the public highway. If this is not possible, authorisation should be sought from the Highway Authority before construction works commence. Further information is available via the website <http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/transtreets/highways/> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

7. Obstruction of public highway land: It is an offence under section 137 of the Highways Act 1980 for any person, without lawful authority or excuse, in any way to wilfully obstruct the free passage along a highway or public right of way. If this development is likely to result in the public highway or public right of way network becoming routinely blocked (fully or partly) the applicant must contact the Highway Authority to obtain their permission and requirements before construction works commence. Further information is available via the website <http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/transtreets/highways/> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

Lucy Hale (Development Management)

Date: 11/03/2019

Expiry date: 03/04/2019



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	Project: DMC Committee		Date: 2019
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