

ADDENDUM REPORT

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – 08 FEBRUARY 2024
REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (PLANNING)

6/2022/1355/MAJ

FORMER BEALES HOTEL, COMET WAY, HATFIELD, AL10 9NG

DEMOLITION OF EXISTING BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION OF 142 RESIDENTIAL UNITS (USE CLASS C3) WITH PRIVATE AND COMMUNAL AMENITY SPACE, LANDSCAPING, ACCESS, ASSOCIATED CAR AND CYCLE PARKING, REFUSE AND RECYCLING STORAGE, AND SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE

APPLICANT: HATFIELD PARK HOMES LTD

1. Introduction

1.1 Members will recall that this application was presented to Development Management Committee on 11 January 2024 with officers recommending that planning permission be approved subject to:

- a) Completion of a satisfactory S106 planning agreement and the agreement of any necessary extensions to the statutory determination period to complete this agreement; and
- b) The suggested conditions.

1.2 Members voted however to defer the application to allow the applicant the opportunity to further explore issues raised by members pertaining to affordable housing, housing mix, and car parking. The full officer report is attached as Appendix A. The applicant has provided further information for each of these matters which are dealt with in turn below.

2. Affordable housing

2.1 The applicant has introduced an on-site affordable housing contribution of 10% shared ownership tenure, equating to 15 units. This has been supported by a Viability Appraisal Addendum (see Appendix B) and results in an adjusted developer return/profit of 12.78%. Whilst this is below the recommended range considered a suitable return to developers (as outlined in Planning Practice Guidance. Paragraph: 018 Reference ID: 10-018-20190509), the applicant is willing to take the scheme forward on this basis with the prospect of better market conditions.

2.2 Members are reminded that viability review mechanisms are included in the draft S106 Agreement which will allow the Council to benefit from any favourable uplifts. Uplifts can be used toward the provision of additional affordable housing.

2.3 The reduced financial contribution of £250,000.00 for infrastructure provision remains.

3. Housing mix

3.1 An updated Market Review Letter has been submitted (see Appendix C) which confirms that there is a significant local market for 1-bed units, with the supply of 1-bed units not meeting demand. The Market Review Letter concludes that a greater proportion of 1 and 2 bedroom apartments would be the most suitable stock and that one bedroom apartments provide a vital part of the first time buyer market in terms of affordability and access to property ownership for a large proportion of buyers.

3.2 Officers are satisfied that this additional information fully considers the supply and demand for 1-bed apartments and addresses the shortcoming raised in this respect within paragraph 10.114 of the Committee Report. Officers also consider that the proposed affordable housing offer will assist toward inclusive and mixed communities.

3.3 Members are reminded that the Housing Mix informing Policy SP7 is that which is sought across the borough over the life of the plan, and there are some sites which will naturally provide more family sized dwellings, whilst others are more suited to smaller unit sizes. Officers are content that the proposal complies with Policy SP7 of the Local Plan

4. Car parking

4.1 In response to concerns raised regarding the lack of visitor car parking spaces, revised plans have been submitted which show 2 x visitor spaces at the front of building. Appendix D comprises the revised ground floor plan. Officers and Hertfordshire Highways are satisfied that the location of these additional car parking spaces are both safe and suitable.

4.2 Furthermore, Officers wish to reiterate that a Car Park Management Strategy is to be secured through the S106 Agreement. To confirm, the Car Park Management Strategy will require the written approval of the Council and include (but shall not be limited to):

- a) allocation of the car parking spaces for residents and visitors;
- b) measures to address any unauthorised, unsafe, or obstructive parking; and
- c) details for managing the car park and car parking spaces provided pursuant to the development;

4.3 Clauses will also be written into the S106 Agreement to require compliance with the approved Car Park Management Strategy as well as annual reviews.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Officers maintain the recommendation in paragraph 11.1 of the Committee Report that planning permission be approved.

