

CONSERVATION AND URBAN DESIGN

Reference Number	3/18/0432/FUL	Date of Consultation	07/01/2019
DM Case Officer	Williams Richards	Date of Response	28/01/2019

Address	EHDC Car Park, Northgate End, Bishop's Stortford, CM23 2ET
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Listing Grade		Conservation Area	Yes	
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	Recommended Refusal
X	Recommended Permission / Consent / Approval
	Further information or minor amendments required

OBSERVATIONS

C&UD team observations have previously been provided on this case, dated 04/04/2018 and 06/07/2018, which recommended that permission was granted. Amendments have now been made to the application to remove the proposals for a multi-use games area, and to submit further documentation.

The proposals are for a new multi-storey car park associated with the redevelopment of the Old River Lane site, and a new mixed-use residential and commercial building. The proposal site is on Northgate End, and is situated within the Bishop's Stortford Conservation Area. The multi-storey car park will provide similar levels of car parking to the existing site plus that which will be lost by the redevelopment of the large surface level car parks on Old River Lane. Greater density in parking around the area will allow for better use of these town centre sites, and will avoid the large swathes of surface level parking which currently blight this part of the town centre and Conservation Area.

The proposed mixed-use residential and commercial building will contain a commercial unit on the ground floor and 15 apartments on the floors above. When compared to the existing surface level car parking, this aspect of the development will result in built form along a strong building line that provides an active edge to the street. The new uses will allow for all day passive security by overlooking the street. The massing and height of this corner block will help to reduce the prominence of the new multi-storey in views looking along Hadham Road by breaking up the visible massing. As stated in the Liz Lake Associates Urban Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, the "proposals will create a new focal point in views by providing new active facades creating a more positive relationship with the street frontage".

The architectural design of the new multi-storey car park has been well considered in the circumstances, with carefully proportioned detailing and massing, and a fenestration rhythm that avoids large blank surfaces on prominent elevations. The height of the building has been designed to sit along the tree line, so as not to appear prominently in longer views across Bishop's Stortford across Swarder's Field and Castle Gardens, and from the Waytemore Castle mound, a Scheduled Monument. The window reveals and laser cut metal shutters facing the Link Road are a high quality detail that helps to give character to what is normally a fairly soulless building type. Instead, this well designed elevation will result in a positive contribution to the eventual Old River Lane development, as it will appear in views along Old River Lane

looking north. Character is also given to the multi-storey by the large cylindrical ramps to the rear, which avoids car park users overlooking nearby residents, and are an honest architectural approach to the internal use of the structure. The metal mesh side elevations will allow for climbing greenery to soften the building in views, and will allow for good ventilation levels to the interior.

Whilst careful consideration has been given to the massing of the car park through the architectural approach undertaken for the whole scheme, the proposed multi-storey car park is of a fundamentally large building typology of singular grain and bulky massing, which no design considerations can overcome. This singular grain and bulky massing will be visible from various locations in its immediate surroundings. It is considered that the proposed multi-storey car park due to the above singular grain and bulky massing will result in a degree of harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, which we assess to be less than substantial, when compared with the general openness of the existing site. However, this harm is partially limited by the proposed residential and commercial building that will break up the bulk of the massing in views of the site looking along Hadham Road, and by the enclosed nature of the site to the east.

Paragraph 196 of the NPPF states: “Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use”. In this instance this less than substantial harm is seen to be outweighed by the significant public benefits of this scheme, including in the densification of parking in the area (by removing the swathes of unsightly surface level parking), the provision of new residential units and commercial space, and as part of the wider public benefits of the eventual Old River Lane redevelopment to which these proposals are a key part.

Policy HA4 states that new development should “preserve or enhance the special interest, character and appearance of the area”, and whilst harm has been identified, the enhancements identified above to the character and appearance of the conservation area are on balance seen to outweigh this harm. It is recommended that permission is granted subject to suitable conditions for samples of materials, details of hard surfacing, and details of landscaping.

STANDARD DIRECTIVE		LISTED BUILDING CONDITIONS	
	25LB Listed Building Advice		8L01 Timber Structure
GENERAL CONDITIONS			8L02 New Timber Frame
	2E02 Programme of Archaeological Work		8L03 New Windows
	2E07 Boundary Walls and Fences		8L04 New Doors
	2E11 Materials of construction		8L05 New Plasterwork
X	2E12 Sample of Materials		8L06 New Brickwork
	2E13 Matching materials		8L07 New Weatherboarding
	2E15 Matching brickwork		8L08 New External Rendering
	2E16 External Timber Work		8L09 Rainwater Goods
X	3V21 Hard Surfacing		8L10 Making Good
X	4P12 Landscape design proposals		8L11 Repair Schedule