

3/10/0432/FP – Redevelopment of site to provide four two-bedroom flats, six two-bedroom houses and eight three-bedroom houses (eighteen total units) with new access and associated units at Beacon Court, Rushen Drive, Hertford Heath for Riversmead Housing Association

Date of Receipt: 15.03.2010

Type: Full – Major

Parish: HERTFORD HEATH

Ward: HERTFORD HEATH

RECOMMENDATION

(A) That, subject to the applicant or successor in title entering into a legal obligation pursuant to s.106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 by the midday on 16th June 2010 to cover the following matters:

1. Financial contributions towards:
 - Primary education of £45,506
 - Nursery education of £6,799
 - Childcare of £2,254
 - Youth services of £277
 - Libraries of £1,328
 - Sustainable transport £12,500; and
2. A financial contribution to cover the cost of providing a fire hydrant at this site.

the Director of Neighbourhood Services be authorised to **GRANT** planning permission subject to the following conditions:

1. Three Year Time Limit (1T12)
2. Materials of construction (2E11)
3. Before first occupation of the approved development, all access and junction arrangements serving the development shall be completed in accordance with the approved plans and shall be constructed to the Local Planning Authority's satisfaction and the associated access roads and parking areas as shown on the approved plans shall be maintained in accordance with those approved details thereafter.

Reason: To secure a satisfactory access appropriate to the development, in the interest of public safety and convenience and to ensure the development makes adequate provision for off-street parking and maneuvering of vehicles likely to be associated with its use

3/10/0432/FP

in accordance with policies TR2 and TR7 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007.

4. Before the new accesses are first brought into use, any existing access within the frontage of the land to be developed, not incorporated in the accesses indicated on the approved plan, shall be closed in a manner to the Local Planning Authority's written approval.

Reason: In the interest of road safety and to reduce the number of points at which traffic will enter and leave the public highway.

5. Prior to first occupation of any of the residential units hereby permitted, provision shall be made within the site for cycle storage in accordance with a detailed plan which shall have been previously submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The cycle storage facilities shall thereafter be retained in accordance with those approved details.

Reason: To promote alternative modes of transport in accordance with policy TR14 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007.

6. Construction parking & Storage (3V22)
7. Wheel washing facilities (3V25)
8. Bats (2E41)
9. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority, no demolition of the existing buildings shall take place on site outside of the months of September, October and March.

Reason: To ensure the safety of all bats roosting in or otherwise using the buildings, in accordance with policy ENV16 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007.

10. Programme of archaeological work (2E023).
11. Tree retention and protection (4P053)
12. Landscape design proposals (4P124 – a, c, e, f, i)
13. Landscape works implementation (4P133)

14. Prior to any construction works commencing on site details of the proposed bins stores shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The stores shall be completed in accordance with the approved details prior to first occupation of the development, and thereafter retained unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the appearance of the area, in accordance with policy ENV1 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007.

15. Construction hours of working- plant & machinery (6N07)
16. Contaminated land survey and remediation (2E332)

Directives:

1. Other legislation (01OL1)
2. Where works are required within the public highway to facilitate the vehicle access requirements of the development the highway authority require the construction of such works to be undertaken to their specification and by a contractor who is authorised to work in the public highway. Before works commence the applicant will need to apply to the Eastern Herts Highways Area Office, Hertford House, Meadway Corporate Centre, Rutherford Close, Stevenage SG1 3HL (Telephone 01438 757880) for further information and to determine the necessary procedures.
3. The applicant is advised that the County Council as highway authority will not consider the proposed on-site vehicular areas for adoption as highway maintainable at public expense.
4. The applicant is advised that photographs of the existing highway that is to be used for access and delivery of materials will be required by the Local Highway Authority. Any subsequent damage to the public highway resulting from the works as shown by the photographs, including damage caused by delivery vehicles to the works, will be made good to the satisfaction of the Local Highway Authority and at the expense of the applicant. Attention is drawn to Section 59 of the Highways Act 1980 in this respect.
5. You are advised that no work should commence on site until a European Protected Species bat license has been obtained from Natural England. The EPS license will contain a Mitigation Strategy and Method Statement to eliminate or reduce impacts on bats. A Working Method will be instigated to

3/10/0432/FP

avoid harm or injury to bats, in particular roof stripping, which will only take place in the presence of a suitably licensed bat consultant.

6. You are advised that the presence of any significant unsuspected contamination that becomes evident during the development of the site should be brought to the attention of the Local Planning Authority as soon as possible.
- (B) Where the legal agreement referred to in recommendation (A) is not completed by midday on 16th June 2010 the Director of Neighbourhood Services be authorised to REFUSE planning permission for the following reason:-
1. The development fails to make the appropriate financial provision for infrastructure improvements considered necessary to support the proposed development. As such, it would be contrary to the provisions of saved Policy IMP1 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007.

Summary of Reasons for Decision

The proposal has been considered with regard to the policies of the Development Plan (East of England Plan May 2008, Hertfordshire County Structure Plan, Minerals Local Plan, Waste Local Plan and the saved policies of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007), and in particular policies ENV1, ENV2, ENV3, ENV9, ENV11, ENV16, ENV20, ENV21, HSG1, HSG3, HSG4, HSG6, IMP1, OSV1, SD1, TR1, TR2, TR3, TR7, TR14 and BH3 of the Local Plan and PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development, PPS3 – Housing and PPS23 – Planning and Pollution Control. The balance of the considerations having regard to those policies is that permission should be granted.

_____(043210FP.MC)

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The application site is shown on the attached OS extract. It has a lawful use as sheltered accommodation for elderly persons comprising 24 units, together with a warden's house. The facilities date from the early 1970s, and include twelve bed-sits which make use of shared bathroom facilities, and twelve one-bedroom flats. It is, however, currently vacant the previous residents all having left the building by December 2009.

3/10/0432/FP

- 1.2 The application seeks permission for the demolition of the existing buildings on the site and its redevelopment to provide four flats and fourteen houses, which would be wholly retained as affordable housing. In addition, a new access is proposed together with 25 car parking spaces and secure cycle storage facilities.
- 1.3 The applicant, Riversmead Housing Association, has chosen to redevelop the site as “current accommodation is felt to be inappropriate and unsuitable in the longer term, comparing unfavourably to other sheltered housing schemes in the District.” They indicate that there is no realistic prospect of re-using the existing buildings as the layout is based on an outdated bed-sit configuration. It was also a costly building to run, suffering from higher than average maintenance costs.
- 1.4 The proposed development would provide for a range of unit types across the site, all of which would be affordable and will be available on a general needs, social rented basis. All of the units would meet lifetime homes requirements and the applicant is committed to meeting Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3. Renewable energy measures are also incorporated into the scheme.

2.0 Site History

- 2.1 The relevant planning history of the site can be summarised as follows:-
 - E/578-58 – Extension to housing estate to meet local needs – Outline permission approved May 1958
 - 2032/70 – Twenty-four warden-controlled units, one warden’s house, fifteen house and twenty-eight garages – Reserved matters approved March 1971
 - 3/00/0735/FP – Two lift towers and motor rooms and second storey link extension – Approved August 2000
 - 3/09/1620/FP - Redevelopment of site to provide 21 residential units (2 x 1 bed flats, 4 x 2 bed flats, 6 x 2 bed houses and 9 x 3 bed houses), new access and associated works – Officers had recommended refusal of this application on the following grounds:-
 1. Overdevelopment.
 2. Detriment to outlook of adjoining properties.
 3. Poor design.

3/10/0432/FP

4. Loss of trees on the site.
5. Lack of information on bat habitats at the site.

The application was, however, withdrawn immediately prior to being considered at the committee meeting on 10th February 2010.

3.0 Consultation Responses

- 3.1 The County Property Planning Obligations unit indicates that financial contributions are sought in relation to primary education (£45,506), nursery education (£6,799), childcare (£2,254) youth (£277), libraries (£1,328) and the provision of a fire hydrant (to be determined).
- 3.2 County Highways have no objection in principle to the proposed development, subject to appropriate conditions, and comment that “although the scheme will undoubtedly increase traffic movements on the surrounding highway network there will not be a significant impact sufficient to justify an objection on highway safety or capacity grounds. The proposed access arrangements together with on-site parking and vehicle turning provision are appropriate”. The Highway Authority also seeks a financial contribution of £12,500 towards sustainable transport measures in the vicinity of the site.
- 3.3 Herts Biological Records Centre have reviewed the submitted bat report; confirm that the report meets the relevant tests of the Habitat Regulations and consider the proposed development to be acceptable, subject to conditions relating to the protection of bats on site, and the provision of additional roosting facilities.
- 3.4 Thames Water raises no objections on ground of sewerage or water infrastructure. Discharge of ground water to the public sewer is the responsibility of the developer.
- 3.5 The Environment Agency comments that the development is assessed as having a low environmental risk.
- 3.6 The Police Architectural Liaison Officer indicates that he entered into discussions with the applicant with a view to agreeing details for the prevention of crime on the development. Of note, additional windows are suggested in the west flank walls of plots 11 and 15 looking onto the access road and parking area. Any amendments to the plans would however need to be considered at a later stage either as minor amendments or via a further planning application.
- 3.7 The Council’s Housing Development Officer comments as follows:

The application has been submitted on behalf of the housing association which owns the site. The association has worked closely with the Housing Department, developing a project which will best meet the social housing needs of residents within the district.

To this end the proposal to demolish the existing sheltered housing scheme and replace it with general needs family housing is supported in this section of the Council. The existing sheltered housing scheme has been difficult to let for some time because the majority of the units are bedsitters with shared bathrooms. This standard of housing is considered to be inappropriate, indeed elderly residents were reluctant to apply to live in the accommodation and many units remained empty as a result. The scheme is currently unoccupied, existing residents have been housed in better accommodation elsewhere.

The new proposal has the full support of the housing section as it will provide much needed family accommodation that will go some way to meet the social housing needs of residents in the district.

- 3.8 The County Historic Environment Unit states that the site is largely within an Area of Archaeological Significance, and disturbance of significant remains is likely. A condition has been recommended to control any impact and allow the investigation of any uncovered features.
- 3.9 The Environmental Health unit has no objection in principle. Conditions are recommended in relation to hours of construction work, the management of dust and asbestos, and soil decontamination.
- 3.10 The Council's Landscape Officer has no objection to the development. The proposals would allow for the retention of a significant number of trees along the north of the site. The development would employ 'no dig' techniques that would prevent harm to the roots of the trees. These revised proposals retain much of the green space lost in the previous scheme. The addition of four new trees within the site would mitigate for the loss of others. The layout is reasonable and effective.
- 3.11 Veolia Water have no comment has been received on this application. With regard to the previous application, Veolia commented as follows: The site is within the Source Protection Zone of Molewood pumping station. Construction work must therefore meet the necessary British Standards and Best Management Practises to prevent contamination. Any on-site pollution should be addressed accordingly.

4.0 Parish Council Representations

4.1 Hertford Heath Parish Council has objected on the following grounds:

- Loss of facilities to local residents
- Lack of bat survey
- That the provision of 100% affordable housing is contrary to Council policy
- That the development would result in increased on-street parking
- Loss of trees
- That the local primary school is full and the proposal would result in children having to travel to Hertford for schooling
- That the relationship between the flats and houses would be cramped, and that the flats and proposed materials would be out of keeping with the surrounding area
- Storage of bins at the front of the houses to the detriment of the street scene
- No attempt was made to look at the conversion of Beacon Court
- The Transport Statement is inaccurate with regard to the available public transport and safety of the local road network
- Inaccurate information submitted with the application
- Concerns about local water pressure.
- Subsidence resulting from the development

5.0 Other Representations

5.1 The applications have been advertised by way of press notice, site notice and neighbour notification.

5.2 Twenty-four letters of representation have been received. The letters raise many of the same objections as raised by the Parish Council, with additional objections which can be summarised as follows:

3/10/0432/FP

- Hertford Heath does not possess adequate local infrastructure to cope with the increase in residents as a result of the proposed development.
 - The proposed provision of off-street parking spaces would be insufficient, and would result in additional on-street parking on Rushen Drive.
 - Loss of existing street lighting and lack of provision for the proposed parking area
 - Impact on the street scene with the reduction of the green space along the north side of the site
 - The development would result in increased noise and disturbance to the local residents.
 - The development would result in an unacceptable increase in overlooking and a loss of privacy to local residents.
 - The development would result in a shortfall of sheltered housing in the village
 - The density of development would be inappropriate in this relatively low-density location and that the development would be out of scale with the local area.
 - The development could result in subsidence, as there is a history of this in Rushen Drive.
- 5.3 In addition, concerns were raised about problems arising during the construction period due to the narrowness of Rushen Drive and the problems this would cause for large construction vehicles.
- 5.4 The Council has received three letters from local residents noting that they support the Parish Council's comments without offering further comment.
- 5.5 The Council has also received two letters of support for the proposal. Those residents consider that the scheme would bring longer term benefits for families in the village; would represent a small proportion of development bearing in mind the number of private houses built within the village and that these benefits outweigh the perceived inconveniences of the construction of the new development.

6.0 Policy

6.1 The relevant 'saved' Local Plan policies to this application include the following:-

ENV1	Design and Environmental Quality
ENV2	Landscaping
ENV3	Planning Out Crime – New Development
ENV9	Withdrawal of Domestic Permitted Development Rights
ENV11	Protection of Trees and Hedgerows
ENV16	Protected Species
ENV20	Groundwater Protection
ENV21	Surface Water Drainage
HSG1	Assessment of Unallocated Housing Sites
HSG3	Affordable Housing
HSG4	Affordable Housing Criteria
HSG6	Lifetime Homes
IMP1	Planning Conditions and Obligations
OSV1	Category 1 Villages
SD1	Making Development More Sustainable
TR1	Traffic Reduction in New Developments
TR2	Access to New Developments
TR3	Transport Assessments
TR7	Car Parking – Standards
TR14	Cycling – Facilities Provision (Residential)
BH3	Archaeological Conditions and Agreements

6.2 In addition to the above it is considered that the Supplementary Planning Document on Affordable Housing, the 2008-2011 Housing Strategy and the New Affordable Housing Commissioning Brief (September 2008) are relevant to the consideration of this application. National Planning Policy Statements 3: Housing, 1: Delivering Sustainable Development and 23: Planning and Pollution Control are also relevant.

7.0 Considerations

7.1 The site is within Hertford Heath, a Category 1 settlement where there is no in principle objection to development in accordance with policy OSV1 subject to detailed planning and policy considerations.

7.2 The main planning issues to consider in the determination of this application are as follows: Layout, density and design of development; trees and landscaping; affordable housing provision; ecology; highways and parking matters; and neighbour amenity.

Layout, density and design

- 7.3 The proposed development would result in a redistribution of the built form on the site. At present, the building is generally located in the centre of the site, running from west to east. There are large north and south wings, with the building being a minimum of 13 metres to the nearest dwelling in any direction.
- 7.4 The proposed development would result in development surrounding an open central area, with the houses and flats facing outwards onto Rushen Drive and Trinity Walk.
- 7.5 The site has an area of approximately 3,700m², and a density of approximately forty-nine dwellings per hectare, against a minimum recommendation of thirty dwellings per hectare in national guidance (PPS3). This is a higher density than is typical in the surrounding area, which is more typically around thirty to thirty-five dwellings per hectare. However, this is expected in a scheme where flats are included and in any event the properties on the north side of Trinity Road (13-55 Odds, approximately fifty dwellings per hectare) and Oak Tree Close (11, 13, 28-51 all, approximately fifty-two dwellings per hectare) also have a higher density than is typical in the area. Officers therefore consider that the proposed density of development would not be out of keeping with or detrimental to the character of the area. No demonstrable harm would therefore be caused to the area.
- 7.6 In terms of layout, the development has been significantly redesigned from the previously submitted application which was recommended for refusal. It would address the surrounding area in a more acceptable manner, with all the proposed buildings fronting public roads and areas that surround the site. This would strengthen the street form relative to the existing buildings.
- 7.7 The open green space to the south of the site would be retained, and bunds would be created to screen the car park area from view from the Trinity Walk properties.
- 7.8 The density of the development, and the need to incorporate parking and landscaping, would necessitate a separation of one metre between the block of four flats and the adjacent terraces of houses. This would effectively turn the west side and north-west corner into a single terrace. In addition, the development proposes three terraces of four houses. Within Rushen Drive, there are terraces of three, four and five houses already existing, as well as the terrace of nine houses on Trinity Walk facing the south of the site, although nos. 2 – 30 Rushen Drive (evens) are all detached houses. The proposed terraced arrangement would therefore

3/10/0432/FP

respect the local pattern of development in accordance with policy ENV1 of the Local Plan.

- 7.9 Furthermore, the buildings would be of a comparable height to houses in the area and, given the variety of styles of the various houses, Officers do not consider that there is an issue with some variance in appearance from the existing development.
- 7.10 The introduction of a block of four flats to the area would be the first in Rushen Drive. This, in itself, is not an unacceptable situation. The block of flats would occupy the north-west corner of the site, which Officers consider to be the most appropriate siting for the largest building in the development as it would benefit from an uninterrupted green frontage and some screening from established trees.
- 7.11 The development would bring the front building line on the north side of the site significantly further forward than existing and this would clearly be a very different arrangement than presently exists on site. However, there would still be a separation of around 24 metres between the front walls of the existing and proposed properties, as well as the presence of the retained trees to soften the appearance of the new houses. Officers do not therefore consider that this form and layout would be detrimental to the character of the area. It is not dissimilar to a typical street layout.
- 7.12 A number of objectors have noted that the development would rely on storage areas at the front of the houses for refuse bins. However, Officers consider that these could be located within the rear gardens of the houses, and a condition is suggested to require further details in this respect to be submitted for approval prior to the houses being occupied.
- 7.13 The Parish Council and a number of local residents feel aggrieved by the process by which this application has come about, specifically to the intention to demolish Beacon Court rather than refurbish it. Although the process by which this occurred is not a material planning consideration, the re-use of existing buildings is encouraged by the Council in principle as being more sustainable than demolition and new build.
- 7.14 However, as mentioned previously, the current accommodation offered by Beacon Court is of a poor standard in comparison to modern developments, and is energy inefficient and costly to maintain. The applicants have also been experiencing difficulty in attracting new tenants and this has been confirmed by the Council's Housing Development Manager.
- 7.15 Although the Council is keen to encourage the re-use of existing buildings where possible, it acknowledges that it is sometimes necessary to

3/10/0432/FP

completely redevelop a site. The applicant contends that the redevelopment of the site is the most economical way forward, and that the existing facilities cannot be converted in whole or in part to housing that would meet modern standards. The new build development would be more energy efficient and sustainable than that which currently exists on site, and accordingly, the total redevelopment of the site is considered to be acceptable in this case.

Trees and landscaping

- 7.16 The northern edge of the application site at present comprises approximately thirty trees that the Council's Landscape Officer has indicated are of considerable amenity value to residents and the street scene.
- 7.17 The proposal would involve the removal of approximately forty percent of these, generally the less significant trees, along this side of the site in order to create space for parking bays and access to the houses proposed along this side of the site.
- 7.18 The retained trees would however continue to provide amenity to the street scene. The applicant has worked with the Council's landscape officer to identify the trees with the most value in the street scene to enable these to be retained via the use of 'minimum dig' methods while still providing amenity in the area. On balance, officers consider the compromise to be acceptable in terms of policies ENV2 and ENV11 of the Local Plan.
- 7.19 The large area of open space proposed to the south of the site will provide an attractive, publicly accessible buffer between the development and the existing houses in Trinity Walk. Officers consider that this would be a significant improvement to the appearance of the area.

Affordable housing provision

- 7.20 The Parish Council and a number of objectors have commented that the provision of 100% affordable housing on the site is contrary to policy and inappropriate in the area. However, one of the key aims and objectives of the Council's planning strategy for meeting the District's housing requirements, as set out in the Local Plan, is:-
- To ensure that the housing provided meets the needs of the population in respect of location, size, affordability and accessibility
- 7.21 It is clear from the Council's Housing Needs Survey that there is a considerable shortage of affordable housing to meet local needs within the District and therefore a clear need to provide additional affordable

3/10/0432/FP

housing where possible.

- 7.22 This need is met by the various Housing Associations and other Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) in the District. Where those RSL's own land themselves, a provision of 100% affordable housing on a site is clearly common, and serves to meet some of the identified need. Where other market housing is proposed, however, developers are required to provide up to 40% affordable housing to help meet the additional needs of the District. This requirement forms part of policy HSG3 of the Local Plan.
- 7.23 Whilst the provision of wholly affordable housing on a site exceeds the 40% figure that is specified in the policy, in officers view this should not be weighed against the scheme given that the clear aim and objective of the policy is to maximize the provision of affordable housing. If any weight is applied to this issue then Members should consider whether any harm would be caused as a result of the additional affordable provision.
- 7.24 It is Officers view however that, on suitable sites, the provision of a greater proportion of affordable units can be accommodated without any harm being caused to the area as a result. The key consideration is whether the provision of a greater proportion of affordable housing would result in an imbalance in the community mix within that area.
- 7.25 PPS3 – Housing seeks to promote more mixed communities by encouraging a variety of housing types and tenure within settlements – including the provision of affordable housing. In Hertford Heath there are currently 974 households on the Council Tax register. Of these, a approximately 135 units are affordable housing. This is approximately 14% of households in the area. Officers cannot therefore agree that the provision of a further 18 units of affordable housing within the village would result in a disproportionate concentration of affordable units in the village, or result in any detriment to its community balance. The proposal would not therefore be contrary to the aims of policies HSG3 and HSG4 of the Local Plan but would help to meet one of the key aims and objectives of the Council's planning strategy for meeting the Districts housing requirements.

Ecology

- 7.26 Hertfordshire Biological Records Centre have reviewed the submitted bat survey and responded that the relevant tests of the Habitat Regulations are met and that the development would be acceptable, provided that conditions relating to the protection of bats within the development are

attached to any approval.

Highways and parking issues

- 7.27 Highways officers have confirmed that the present proposal does not raise any material concerns regarding Highways impacts. The parking provision, of twenty-five spaces for the eighteen mixed units, would be in line with the Council's adopted parking standards. Given that the units are intended for affordable housing, it is considered that the pressure for parking spaces will be accommodated within the provision made available. Therefore the provision of parking spaces is considered to be acceptable in accordance with policy TR2 of the Local Plan.

Neighbour amenity

- 7.28 The development would result in a greater density of occupation of the site, with the proposed buildings typically closer to the existing houses on Rushen Drive than is currently the case.
- 7.29 However, the relationship between the proposed and existing dwellings is not considered to be such that it would result in an undue loss of privacy to neighbouring residents. The Juliet balconies proposed to the first floor flats in the north-west corner of the site would only overlook the front gardens of properties on Rushen Drive, which are all publicly visible, and would be more than twenty metres from the houses themselves. Accordingly your Officers do not consider that there would be any undue loss of privacy as a result of the development.

Other matters

- 7.30 Some objectors have raised concerns at the loss of community facilities previously available at the site. It is understood that the communal facilities at Beacon Court were previously used by a number of community groups. Other local Riversmead tenants have also been able to use the communal washing facilities at Beacon Court in the past when their own were unavailable.
- 7.31 However, it appears that the primary use of the space at Beacon Court was for sheltered housing rather than the provision of facilities for outside groups. Whilst other groups may have used the facilities with the applicants' permission, there was no planning requirement for such provision to be made on the site. Officers do not consider it unreasonable, therefore, for the applicant to choose to withdraw such facilities which had previously been offered on a permissive basis.

3/10/0432/FP

- 7.32 The development involves the loss of a sheltered housing facility from Hertford Heath and this has caused some concern locally. However, although there would be a loss within the village, the provision within the District remains sufficient to meet established need. Bearing this in mind, and as the facilities have proven to be unattractive to prospective tenants, it is not considered that the loss of the site for sheltered accommodation would be sufficient justification for a refusal of permission on these grounds.
- 7.33 Regarding the possibility of increased noise and disturbance, the present use on site is for sheltered housing for the elderly. The level of ambient noise in the vicinity of the site is therefore likely to be noticeably lower than would typically be the case in a residential area.
- 7.34 However, each of the houses on site would have a private garden, and the proposal includes a self-contained rear garden for the flats. Officers consider that the level of disturbance would not be materially different to any other comparable residential use, and would therefore be acceptable in accordance with policy ENV1 of the Local Plan.
- 7.35 Regarding the issue of local infrastructure, Hertford Heath is a Category 1 village. The Local Plan states that development should be directed to such villages as they are best suited to coping with the additional development. No objections have been received from statutory consultees regarding infrastructure deficiencies and, subject to the required s.106 contributions towards some infrastructure improvements, Officers are satisfied that there are no grounds on which to justify a refusal in this respect.

8.0 Conclusion

- 8.1 The previous scheme on this site (Ref: 3/09/1620/FP) was considered by officers to be overly dense and poorly designed, with significant negative impacts on the amenities of neighbouring occupiers and the character of the area. This proposal has undergone extensive revision, with considerably greater attention paid to the character of the local area, and to the impact on neighbouring occupiers.
- 8.2 The residential development of the site is in accordance with the overall planning strategy for Housing in the East Herts Local Plan and would provide a considerable contribution towards the need for affordable family housing in the District, on a site that has fallen vacant and which is not suitable for refurbishment.
- 8.3 Officers have considered the proposal in terms of its impact on the character of the local area and the amenities of local residents, in addition to the saved policies in the Local Plan and national guidance. It is

3/10/0432/FP

considered to be a well-designed scheme that respects the context of the site and provides good quality housing that would all be built to Lifetime Homes standards. With these considerations taken into account, your officers recommend that planning permission be granted for the proposed development, subject to the conditions and the applicant entering into the Section 106 agreement listed above.