

Part A	
Report of: <b>Development Management Section Head</b>	
Site address:	<b>The Dell The Harebreaks WD24 6NF</b>
Reference Number:	<b>16/00117/FUL</b>
Description of Development:	<b>Temporary (5 year) site with storage containers, portable cabins to be used for storage, collection point and office space for refurbishment of WCHT housing stock (kitchens, bathrooms, roofs, windows)</b>
Applicant:	<b>Watford Housing Trust</b>
Date received:	<b>28.01.2016</b>
13 week date (major):	<b>30.06.2016</b>
Ward:	<b>Leggatts</b>

## 1.0 Site and Surroundings



1.1 The application site comprises a rectangular plot of land sited within a primarily residential area and is known locally as The Dell. Its area is approximately 0.86Ha. The Dell is owned by Watford Community Housing Trust (WCHT) and is not maintained or managed by the Council. As a local greenspace, it is, in part, surrounded by two-storey houses some of which are managed by WCHT whilst others are in private ownership. The Harebreaks Road bounds the site to the west while Dell Side, an access road, forms the southeast boundary. A scout hut bounds the site to the north. Several mature deciduous trees are also evident, although these are not the subject of a Tree Preservation Order

1.2 The site is not in a conservation area nor does it affect the setting of a listed building.



## 2.0 Proposed Development

2.1 Temporary (5 year) site with storage containers, portable cabins to be used for storage, collection point and office space for refurbishment of WCHT housing stock (kitchens, bathrooms, roofs, windows).

## 3.1 Relevant Planning History

No recent or relevant planning history

## 4.0 Planning Policies

### 4.1 National Planning Policy Framework

Section 1 Building a strong, competitive economy

Section 4 Promoting sustainable transport

Section 6 Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes

Section 7 Requiring good design

### 4.2 Hertfordshire Waste Core Strategy 2011-2026

1 Strategy for the Provision of Waste Management Facilities

1A Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

2 Waste Prevention and Reduction

12 Sustainable Design, Construction and Demolition

### 4.3 Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31

WBC1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development

SS1 Spatial Strategy

- SD1 Sustainable Design
- SD2 Water and Wastewater
- SD3 Climate Change
- HS1 Housing Supply
- T2 Location of New Development
- T3 Improving Accessibility
- T5 Providing New Infrastructure
- UD1 Delivering High Quality Design

#### 4.4 Watford District Plan 2000

- SE7 Waste Storage, Recovery and Recycling in New Development
- SE22 Noise
- T21 Access and Servicing
- T22 Car Parking Standards

#### 4.5 Supplementary Planning Documents

The following Supplementary Planning Documents are relevant to the determination of this application, and must be taken into account as a material planning consideration.

#### 4.6 Residential Design Guide

The Residential Design Guide was adopted in July 2014. It provides a robust set of design principles to assist in the creation and preservation of high quality residential environments in the Borough which will apply to proposals ranging from new individual dwellings to large-scale, mixed-use, town centre redevelopment schemes. The guide is a material consideration in the determination of relevant planning applications.

#### 4.7 Watford Character of Area Study

The Watford Character of Area Study was adopted in December 2011. It is a spatial study of the Borough based on broad historical character types. The study sets out the characteristics of each individual character area in the Borough, including green spaces. It is capable of constituting a material consideration in the determination of relevant planning applications.

### 5.0 **Neighbour consultations**

#### 5.1 Letters were sent to surrounding residences. Ten objections were received.

The points raised through the public consultation are summarised and considered in the table below.

NB Several points are repeated in a number of the letters. Each point is addressed *once* in the table below.

Representations	Officer's response
<p>The proposal is an industrial unit and not a storage unit as described and is therefore out of place in a residential area.</p>	<p>The proposal is not for an industrial unit, but as a construction compound providing a centralised location for the storage and collection of goods and the provision of staff welfare facilities in a single location associated with renovation and improvement works in the area. Furthermore, the planning authority requested and received revised plans depicting a significantly reduced site in terms of area when compared to the original proposal. After several revisions the case officer is satisfied the compound would represent an appropriately sized storage area commensurate to the scale of the renovation and improvement project that WCHT intend to undertake.</p>
<p>The proposal would cause “traffic chaos” as evidenced by the current situation at the neighbouring scout hut where employees stop traffic on the Harebreaks Road to allow delivery vehicles to turn.</p>	<p>The scout hut is a separate development to that proposed here. The Hertfordshire County Highway Authority was consulted and amendments have been made such that the Highways Authority has raised no objection to the proposals.</p>
<p>Security concerns as there is already anti-social behaviour evident at the site.</p>	<p>Security measures including CCTV will be installed for the duration of the permission thereby enhancing safety and security at the compound.</p>
<p>Potential loss of property values.</p>	<p>Property prices are not a planning concern and cannot be considered over the course of an application.</p>
<p>There are several alternative sites in the Borough that would have been more suitable.</p>	<p>Several sites were considered prior to The Dell and all were discounted due to lack of suitability and availability.</p>
<p>Loss of amenity to residents.</p>	<p>The case officer accepts that the proposal would result in the partial loss of amenity enjoyed by residents surrounding The Dell. However, circa 80% of the site would remain to be</p>

	<p>used as it is presently. On balance, the area would still be available as an amenity space to residents albeit over a reduced area. Informal games, walking, running and other recreational activities would continue over the permission period. As the permission is temporary the open space would be returned in full before the end of the temporary period.</p>
<p>Concerns over loss of parking to existing residents.</p>	<p>The Highway Authority has assessed the revised plans and parking arrangements and raised no objection. Officers are satisfied that adequate parking is provided within the site.</p>
<p>Health &amp; safety concerns arising from additional traffic movement.</p>	<p>The Highway Authority has assessed the proposals and raised no objections or highways safety concerns.</p>
<p>Site is a residential area and not an industrial one.</p>	<p>The proposal is not for an industrial use, but as a construction compound. Such facilities are not uncommon in residential areas where building works or refurbishment projects are being undertaken. The proposed compound has been reduced in size through negotiation, and traffic concerns have been addressed. The proposal is necessary for WCHT to continue to provide quality social and affordable housing within the Borough. As such a temporary storage use is appropriate at the Dell; an area that will directly benefit from the improvement programme.</p>
<p>Compound would be an eyesore.</p>	<p>The proposal is temporary and WCHT have engaged with local representatives to mitigate the impact of the proposal. A materials condition concerning the final appearance of the boundary</p>

	treatment has been added to the decision notice.
The proposal would mean that the green would be unavailable to residents for five years.	The proposal would only cover circa 20% of the green area and is sited to minimise impacts on recreational activity at the site. The remaining 80% of the site would remain to be used as it is presently.

## 6.0 Statutory publicity

The proposal was publicised in Watford Observer and letters were sent to neighbours.

## 7.0 Technical consultations

### 7.1 Hertfordshire County Council (Highway Authority)

Notice is given under article 16 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010 that the Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority does not wish to restrict the grant of permission subject to conditions. (See recommendation. The conditions are standard for this type and scale of application.)

### 7.2 Environmental Health (EH)

No objections subject to the implementation of conditions recommended by the Highway Authority.

## 8.0 Appraisal

8.1 In accordance with s.38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Development Plan for Watford comprises:

- (a) Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31
- (b) the continuing "saved" policies of the Watford District Plan 2000
- (c) the Hertfordshire Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document 2011-2026
- (d) the Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan Review 2002-2016.

### 8.2 Main issues

The main issues for consideration in the determination of this application are:

- (a) Principle of the Development
- (b) Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area
- (c) Amenity
- (d) Traffic, highways and parking impacts.

### 8.3 Principle of Development and Proposed Uses

The site is intended to be a storage compound in association with WCHT's housing stock improvement project as scheduled for implementation over the next five years. As such, the proposed use is ancillary to improvement works to take place around the estate and in similar Trust properties throughout the Borough and is acceptable in this location subject to criteria such as siting, visual impact and impact on the amenity of neighbours.

Furthermore, contrary to residents' stated concerns, no industrial activity of any kind is proposed and the plot would be restored to its original condition post completion of the improvement works.

### 8.4 Scale, Design and Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

In response to objections from residents, the case officer requested amended plans showing a reduced footprint for the storage compound when compared to that originally submitted. Because of this re-siting and reduction in size, the compound would now cover circa 20% of the total green area and is sited adjacent to the scout hut site at least 50m away from neighbours. The siting is relatively discreet and appropriate in terms of visual impact as the open and undeveloped 'feel' of the greenspace would remain. Furthermore, the Trust continues to work with local schools to give pupils an opportunity to design the perimeter of the compound, the final appearance of which is to be decided in cooperation with them. Additionally, all associated parking would be contained within the compound, reducing visual spillover in terms of inappropriately parked vehicles beyond the site's perimeters.

The case officer therefore considers the renegotiated compound appropriate in terms of appearance, and acceptable for the five-year period of the improvement works. At the end of the permission, the Trust would restore the site to its original state.

### 8.5 Impact on Neighbour Amenity

Several neighbours are understandably concerned regarding potential loss of amenity space over the five-year term of the plan and made these concerns clear via the consultation process. Several objections focused on the seeming loss of the entire greenspace for the five-year period. To reiterate, circa 20% of the existing greenspace would not be available for recreational activities over the period. That leaves 80% of the Dell remaining for informal activities such as football, walking jogging and ball games all of which would continue as they do presently. While there would be an impact on resident amenity, as the recreational area would be reduced in size, it is considered that the compact area of the compound means that neighbours would not experience significant change in terms of access and continued use of the Dell as a local amenity.

## 8.6 Transportation, access and parking

The Highway Authority initially recommended refusal for the compound based on a lack of information, but as a result of further negotiations WCHT has provided additional information regarding anticipated arrangements for the operation of the site.

Deliveries are to be scheduled, so far as possible, to ensure that they are at off-peak times for highway capacity and the compound has been designed to ensure that no vehicles using the site will need to impact on the road.

It is anticipated that there will be daily movements to the site of one to five small transit vans. There will also be two deliveries per week from a 12 ton box van and a skip lorry will replace a skip at the site once per week.

In addition 15 parking spaces have been provided, 5 for staff at the site and 10 for visitors. This is considered adequate for the needs of the site and it is not considered likely that nuisance parking from WCHT employees or its contractors would occur in the form of parking offsite and in places usually occupied by residents.

In order to further mitigate residents' concerns regarding potential loss of parking, the applicant has offered to increase the number of parking spaces on 'Dell Side' despite the fact that all projected generated parking would take place within the proposed compound. This demonstrates the Trust's willingness to closely consult with residents and thereby mitigate the impacts that lead to neighbour objections.

## 8.7 Other Considerations

It should be noted that the provision of a centralised compound located within the area of WCHT's housing stock improvement project has the potential to provide a number of benefits.

Having a single compound should enable better and more comprehensive management of the project resulting in more efficient use of materials, reduced waste and improved management of recycling.

The provision of the compound should also enable better management and distribution of materials within the project area, serving to reduce the number, length and overall volume of vehicular trips associated with the project.

Overall, the provision of such a facility will ensure better waste management and improve the sustainability of the construction project overall. This would be



beneficial in terms of ensuring the project is undertaken in a sustainable manner and meets the objectives of the Hertfordshire Waste Core Strategy.

## **9.0 Recommendation**

That conditional temporary planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

### Conditions

1. Within five years of the date on the decision notice the use hereby approved shall cease and the land shall be restored in full to its previous condition.

Reason: To ensure that the temporary permission shall cease within the time period and that the open space is restored protecting the long term provision of recreational land and local amenity.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings:-

- Site location plan
- Keepmoat site compound.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. Prior to commencement of the use hereby permitted details of the boundary treatment shall be submitted to the planning authority for approval in writing. Thereafter the boundary treatment shall be installed and maintained in accordance with the approved details for the duration of the temporary use hereby approved.

Reason: In the interest of the visual amenity on the site over the period of this temporary permission.

4. Prior to first use the new parking areas hereby approved shall be surfaced in tarmacadam or similar durable bound material and arrangements shall be made for surface water from the site to be intercepted and disposed of separately so that it does not discharge onto the public highway.

Reason: To avoid the carriage of extraneous surface water from the site into the highway so as to safeguard the interest of highway safety.

5. Prior to the commencement of development details of access /egress road serving the site shall be submitted and approved in writing by the highway

authority. This should include details of separate access/egress arrangements. Thereafter the access/egress road shall be installed and maintained in accordance with the approved details for the duration of the temporary use hereby approved.

Reason: To ensure that the highway works are to the highway authority's current standards.

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#### Human Rights Implications

The Local Planning Authority is justified in interfering with the applicant's Human Rights in order to alleviate any adverse effect on adjoining properties and their occupiers and on general public amenity. With regard to any infringement of third party Human Rights, these are not considered to be of such a nature and degree as to override the Human Rights of the applicant and therefore warrant refusal of planning permission.

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#### Informatives

1. In dealing with this application, Watford Borough Council has considered the proposal in a positive and proactive manner having regard to the policies of the development plan as well as paragraphs 186 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework and other material considerations, and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010, as amended. The Council also gave pre-application advice on the proposal prior to the submission of the application and undertook discussions with the applicant's agent during the application process.
2. Best practical means shall be taken at all times to ensure that all vehicles leaving the development site during construction of the development are in a condition such as not to emit dust or deposit mud, slurry or other debris in the highway.
3. The applicant is advised that storage of materials associated with the development should take place within the site and not extend into the public highway without authorization from the highway authority, Hertfordshire County Council. [www.herts.org/services/transtreets/highways](http://www.herts.org/services/transtreets/highways) or phone 0300 1234047 to arrange.
4. The applicant is advised that they may need to enter into a S278 legal agreement under the Highway Act to construct the access road from Montgomery Avenue, which is a public highway. The completion of a S278 agreement may take up to 14 weeks.

5. You are advised of the need to comply with the provisions of The Control of Pollution Act 1974 Part IV, The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, The Clean Air Act 1993 and The Environmental Protection Act 1990.
6. In order to minimise the impact of noise and general construction, work should be restricted to the following hours:
  - Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm
  - Saturdays 8am to 1pm
  - Noisy work is prohibited on Sundays and bank holidays.

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