

PART A	
Report of: DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT SECTION HEAD	
Date of committee	29th October 2015
Site address:	Central Meriden Estate, The Gossamers/York Way, Watford
Reference Number :	15/00919/FULM
Description of Development:	Demolition of 10 bungalows, existing shopping parade comprising 10 commercial units and residential accommodation above (9 maisonettes and 2 flats), estate office, MOT service garage and 27 garages plus garages/stores behind the shopping parade. Construction of 133 new dwellings, including a 50 bed extra care scheme, new shops plus associated works to landscape, parking and service access roads.
Applicant	Watford Community Housing Trust
Date Received:	30th June 2015
13 week date (major):	29th September 2015 (extended to 2nd November 2015 by agreement)
Ward:	Meriden

1.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

1.1 The application site has an area of 2.97 hectares and occupies the central area of the Meriden estate, around the key road junctions of York Way, Meriden Way and The Gossamers, and includes the parade of local shops and Alterstart garage. The application site can broadly be divided into 4 areas.

1.2 Bungalows and open space at The Turnstones

This area is bordered by York Way to the south, The Turnstones to the east and north, and The Gossamers to the west. The eastern part comprises 10 bungalows arranged in L-shaped terraces fronting onto The Turnstones and York Way. The central and western parts are grassed open space with hedging and trees along the boundary with York Way and scattered trees. The area contains no other facilities, play equipment or landscaping and appears little used.

1.3 The northern side of The Turnstones is occupied by Teal House, a 4 storey block of flats, with 2 storey semi-detached houses located along the eastern side of the road. To the south, on the opposite side of York Way, are further 2 storey, semi-detached houses. All of these properties are outside the application site.

1.4 Shopping parade and Alterstart garage

This area is very much the 'heart' of the estate, along with the adjoining Badger public house, which does not form part of the application site. The parade of shops comprises a 3 storey building, with commercial uses at ground floor and maisonettes above, and a detached, single storey commercial unit. The parade includes 10 units in all and provides a good range of local convenience shopping and facilities including a foodstore, post office, newsagent, launderette, hairdresser/chiropract, cafe, two takeaways, charity shop and bookmaker. To the front of the parade is a parking area serving the shops. To the rear of the main building is a servicing area for the shops, underused garages and a fenced off area of former garages, now demolished. To the west and north are 2 storey, terraced houses backing onto the site.

1.5 The Alterstart garage occupies a prominent position at the junction of York Way and The Gossamers and provides car MOT, servicing and repair services together with van hire. Behind the garage, and sited at the end of the parade of shops, is an estate office and a community room.

1.6 Green verge at junction of Meriden Way/ York Way and car park to Coldharbour House

This area is sited on the western side of the junction and comprises the car park to Coldharbour House (a 4 storey block of flats) and the extensive green verge between this and the highway in Meriden Way and York Way. It contains a small group of trees and other scattered trees but no other facilities. It is crossed by two paths but otherwise appears little used. Adjoining to the south are terraced bungalows.

1.7 Green verges and garage courts along York Way and adjoining car park

This area comprises the green verges and garage courts located on the southern side of York Way, to the west of the Alterstart garage, and the car park that serves the three 4 storey blocks of flats adjoining. The site includes the open verge adjacent to the Abbey View tower block at the western end of York Way.

2.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

2.1 The proposed development will involve the demolition of all existing buildings within the application site and the erection of 11 new blocks. The breakdown across the site is as follows:

2.2 Bungalows and open space at The Turnstones

Demolition of the existing 10 bungalows.

Erection of the following:

Block A – A terrace of 9, one bedroom bungalows fronting York Way. Parking provision is within on-street parking bays on York Way.

Block B – A terrace of 9 two storey, three bedroom houses fronting onto the open space. Some parking spaces are provided in front of the houses.

Block C1 – A detached, two storey, two bedroom house fronting The Turnstones.

Block C2 – A row of 6 two storey, link-detached, 3 bedroom houses fronting The Turnstones. Each will have a single, on-site parking space.

The proposed dwellings will all have private garden areas and are arranged as a perimeter block around an internal parking court to supplement the parking provision. The open space will be improved with the addition of a children's play area.

2.3 Shopping parade and Alterstart garage

Demolition of the existing 3 storey parade of shops and maisonettes, single storey commercial unit, Alterstart garage, community room and estates office, and lock-up garages.

Erection of the following:

Block D – An irregular Y-shaped block of 2-4 storeys providing 47 one bedroom 'Extra care' flats for the elderly. The block also includes 3 one bedroom 'Extra care' bungalows for the elderly. The block is set around an internal garden courtyard for residents and also includes a residents' lounge/dining area, kitchen and staff facilities. The southern corner of the block incorporates a unit for a hairdresser to serve both the residents and the wider community. Parking spaces to serve the block are provided to the side and rear of the building.

Block E1 – This is attached to the southern end of Block D and incorporates 1, 3 and 4 storey elements. It provides a cafe and community room at ground floor and 9 one and two bedroom flats on the upper floors.

At the southern corner of the site, adjoining the junction with York Way and The Gossamers, a new market square will be formed which is intended as a multi-use space. This provides car parking to serve the shops but can also be used for community events, occasional markets, etc.

2.4 Green verge at junction of Meriden Way/ York Way and car park to Coldharbour House

Erection of the following:

Block E2 – A part 1, 3 and 4 storey fronting York Way providing 6 commercial units at ground floor and 8 one and two bedroom flats on the upper floors.

Block E3 – A part 3, part 4 storey block sited at the corner of York Way and

Meriden Way and attached to the eastern end of Block E2. It provides 2 commercial units at ground floor and 17 one and two bedroom flats above.

The existing car park serving Coldharbour House is to be enlarged and reconfigured to provide parking for the Coldharbour House and Blocks E2 and E3.

- 2.5 Green verges and garage courts along York Way and adjoining car park
Demolition of existing lock-up garages sited at the end of Foxtree House and Maple Court.

Erection of the following:

Block F1 – A 3 storey block attached to the eastern end of Foxtree House, providing 8 one and two bedroom flats.

Block F2 – A 3 storey block attached to the eastern end of Maple Court, providing 8 one and two bedroom flats.

Block G – A part 2, part 3 storey block sited at the junction of Garsmouth Way and York way and fronting York Way. The two storey element comprises 3 two bedroom houses and the 3 storey element 5 two bedroom flats.

Parking provision will be in the form of small parking courts between the blocks and new parking lay-bys on York Way and Garsmouth Way. The existing car park between Maple Court and Foxtree House is to be reconfigured and improved.

- 2.6 The overall scheme can be summarised in the following tables:

Demolition

	Number of bedrooms			Total	Floorspace (sqm)
	1	2	3		
Houses					
Flats		2	9	11	
Sheltered	10			10	
Retail					922
Community					56
Other					104
Total	10	2	9	21	1082

Proposed

	Number of bedrooms			Total	Floorspace (sqm)
	1	2	3		
Houses			15	15	
Flats	15	44		59	
Sheltered	9			9	
Extra care	50			50	
Retail					1060
Community					141
Other					
Total	74	44	15	133	1201

Net changes

	Number of bedrooms			Total	Floorspace (sqm)
	1	2	3		
Houses			+15	+15	
Flats	+15	+42	-9	+46	
Sheltered	-1			-1	
Extra care	+50			+50	
Retail					+138
Community					+85
Other					
Total	+64	+42	+6	+112	+223

3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 There is no planning history of relevance to the current application. The majority of the Meriden Estate (generally north of York Way and west of Meriden way) was developed in the 1950s as a municipal housing estate. The exception to this is the housing occupying the south-eastern part of the estate (to the east of Meriden Way) which was developed as private housing in the 1930s.

4.0 PLANNING POLICIES

Development plan

4.1 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;* and
- (d) the *Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan Review 2002-2016.*

4.2 The *Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31* was adopted in January 2013. The *Core Strategy* policies, together with the “saved policies” of the *Watford District Plan 2000* (adopted December 2003), constitute the “development plan” policies which, together with any relevant policies from the County Council’s *Waste Core Strategy* and the *Minerals Local Plan*, must be afforded considerable weight in decision making on planning applications. The following policies are relevant to this application.

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
SD4	Waste
TLC1	Retail and Commercial Leisure Development
TLC2	Neighbourhood Centres
HS1	Housing Supply and Residential Site Selection
HS2	Housing Mix
HS3	Affordable Housing
T2	Location of New Development
T3	Improving Accessibility
T4	Transport Assessments
INF1	Infrastructure Delivery and Planning Obligations
UD1	Delivering High Quality Design
GI1	Green Infrastructure
GI3	Biodiversity

4.4 **Watford District Plan 2000**

SE7	Waste Storage, Recovery and Recycling in New Development
SE22	Noise
SE23	Light Pollution
SE24	Unstable and Contaminated Land

SE27	Flood Prevention
SE28	Groundwater Quality
SE36	Replacement Trees and Hedgerows
SE37	Protection of Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows
SE39	Tree and Hedgerow Provision in New Development
T10	Cycle Parking Standards
T21	Access and Servicing
T22	Car Parking Standards
T24	Residential Development
H16	Retention of Affordable Housing
S12	Planning Conditions for Use Class A3 Food and Drink
L8	Open Space Provision in Housing Development
L9	Children's Play Space
CS3	Loss of Community Facilities
U24	Shopfronts
U25	Advertisements and Signs

4.5 **Hertfordshire Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document 2011-2026**

1A	Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
2	Waste Prevention and Reduction
12	Sustainable Design, Construction and Demolition

4.6 **Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan Review 2002-2016**

No relevant policies.

4.7 **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.

4.8 *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.

4.9 *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.

4.10 *SPG10 Open Space Provision*

This guidance sets out the standards of open space provision required per thousand population as part of new developments. The guidance was adopted in October 2001 and is a material consideration in the determination of relevant planning applications.

4.11 **National Planning Policy Framework**

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England. The following provisions are relevant to the determination of this application, and must be taken into account as a material planning consideration:

Achieving sustainable development

The presumption in favour of sustainable development

Core planning principles

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
Section 8 Promoting healthy communities
Section 10 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
Decision taking

5.0 CONSULTATIONS

5.1 Neighbour consultations

Letters of notification were sent to 404 properties in the following roads:

Bowmans Green
Butterwick
Gadswell Close
Coldharbour House, Gadswell Close
Foxtree House, Gadswell Close
Peartree Court, Gadswell Close
Abbey View, Garsmouth Way
Maple Court, Garsmouth Way
The Gossamers
Pinetree House, The Gossamers
Harvest Court, Harvest End
Meriden Way
The Phillipers
The Turnstones
Teal House, The Turnstones
Widgeon Way
York Way

5.2 The following is a summary of the representations that have been received:

Number of original notifications:	404
Number of objections:	90
Number in support:	0

Number of representations: 90

One of these is from the Meriden Residents Association and one from Councillor Hastrick.

A large number of issues have been raised by objectors, some very general and some very specific. Not all the objections raised are material planning considerations however. The main planning issues that have been raised are summarised and considered in the table below but are not exhaustive.

Representations	Officer's response
Traffic surveys carried out outside rush hour and not representative of through traffic.	The traffic surveys were undertaken using automatic traffic counters which were in place continuously from 20 April to 3 May 2015.
Bungalows on York Way unacceptable due to traffic and noise.	Two of the existing bungalows are already sited on York Way. There is no reason why this is an unacceptable location for any dwellings.
Overdevelopment of estate. Will destroy community. Loss of green space (75%) and trees. Three and four storey buildings will be overbearing. Will change character of estate for the worst. Loss of open aspect of the area. Not wanted by residents.	The proposal will be a significant intervention in the estate and will dramatically change the appearance of the central area. Open space and trees will be lost to create a higher density central area, as would normally be expected. This area should be the focus for the estate and be a destination in itself which the proposal is considered to successfully achieve.
Wasteful to demolish existing bungalows which are perfectly good. These should be kept. Residents want to stay.	There is no planning reason why these bungalows must be retained. These are matters for the applicant.

<p>New bungalows are bland boxes with smaller garden areas. Gardens will be overlooked by houses.</p>	<p>The design is simple and contemporary reflecting the overall design approach. The existing bungalows are uninspiring in themselves. The gardens will generally be smaller than the existing ones. The bungalows will be overlooked whereas the existing ones are not due to the new houses but this is not considered unacceptable in principle in an urban environment.</p>
<p>If to be replaced, the new bungalows should be on The Turnstones not York Way.</p>	<p>It would be acceptable for the bungalows to be sited on The Turnstones however, the proposed houses are also acceptable. The siting of the bungalows has been determined by the phasing of the development and the need to relocate existing tenants.</p>
<p>Parking on the estate will be made worse. Parking at shops will be reduced.</p>	<p>Parking is discussed in detail in the report.</p>
<p>Development will generate more traffic through the estate. Increased noise and pollution.</p>	<p>Traffic generation is discussed in detail in the report.</p>
<p>Driveways will be difficult to access on The Turnstones with cars parked on the roads.</p>	<p>This situation currently exists on The Turnstones due to the width of the road.</p>
<p>Increase difficulty of getting doctor's appointments.</p>	<p>The capacity of the local doctor's surgery to take new patients is not strictly a planning consideration. Doctor's surgeries are privately run businesses and it is for the practice to expand to meet demand.</p>
<p>Splitting the shops in two areas dangerous as shared surface will</p>	<p>There is no reason why the shops have to be located on the same site. At present,</p>

<p>be busy with traffic.</p>	<p>residents from the southern and eastern parts of the estate have to cross York Way and The Gossamers to reach the shops.</p>
<p>Two storey houses on The Turnstones will restrict outlook and views. Loss of privacy. Loss of daylight.</p>	<p>It is a normal suburban relationship for houses to face each other across a public highway. The scale of houses proposed (2 storey) and the facing distance between the proposed and existing houses will be more than sufficient to prevent any harmful loss of outlook or privacy.</p>
<p>Design of flats on market square look terrible. Design of care home block [D] is awful and monstrous. Looks like a prison block. Style of buildings do not blend in and will look prominent and ugly.</p>	<p>The design approach for the whole development is deliberately contemporary and does not seek to copy the existing estate buildings, which are uninspiring and of no architectural merit. It is considered the design, with high quality materials, will achieve an aesthetically pleasing and high quality appearance.</p>
<p>Shops may be lost if WCHT do not support moving costs and keep rents low.</p>	<p>This is not strictly a planning matter, however, it is understood the applicant is proposing financial support to assist existing tenants in relocation.</p>
<p>Shared surface junction will result in The Turnstones, Garsmouth Way and Phillipers becoming rat-runs.</p>	<p>Rat-running is an acknowledged issue on the estate. The Gossamers already has speed humps to deter this and slow speeds. There is no way of knowing whether those rat-running through the estate would be deterred from doing so or take alternative routes through the estate as a result of the proposals.</p>
<p>Existing shops should be regenerated.</p>	<p>This is a matter for the applicant. There is no objection in principle to the shops being</p>

	<p>redeveloped to provide modern accommodation and more efficient use of the site.</p>
<p>Shared surfaces don't benefit community. Not wanted by residents. Will be dangerous especially on main route through the estate. Too hazardous for pedestrians.</p>	<p>The final form of any shared surface will be a matter for Herts. County Council as the Highway Authority. They remain an acceptable highway response but may not necessarily be appropriate in this location.</p>
<p>New development could cause flooding issues.</p>	<p>The development incorporates a sustainable surface water drainage scheme which has been approved by Herts. County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority. This ensures flood risk will be reduced as a result of the proposal.</p>
<p>Block G sited next to Abbey View will result in loss of grass and trees, loss of outlook and look out of keeping.</p>	<p>This area of grass and trees will be lost, however, it is not considered this will have a significant adverse impact on the flats in Abbey View.</p>
<p>Parking spaces in front of Block G will be dangerous so close to the junction with Phillipers.</p>	<p>This section of York Way leads to Harvest End which is a no through road so does not carry high levels of traffic. As with all on-street parking or private driveways, care needs to be taken when entering the highway. These spaces are not considered inherently dangerous to use.</p>
<p>Blocks along York Way are overbearing, unsightly and out of keeping with the area.</p>	<p>These blocks have a different design to the existing four storey blocks and will be read as additions to them. They will help to create a greater sense of frontage and enclosure to this section of York Way without being overbearing or incongruous.</p>

Block G will provide small houses with small gardens that will be overlooked by Abbey View.	These houses are intended as smaller family houses but will still have acceptable internal floor areas and layouts. The gardens areas will only experience very limited overlooking, as discussed in the report.
Blocks along York Way will result in loss of outlook and privacy to houses opposite.	Due to the facing distance across York Way of 28m, the new blocks will not give rise to any adverse loss of outlook or privacy.
Smells from new takeaways and their rubbish storage.	Any flues will need to be incorporated into the design of the relevant blocks. Adequate bin storage has been provided.
Estate should be left as it is.	There is no objection in principle to this part of the estate being redeveloped.
Loss of Alterstart garage.	There is no planning objection to the loss of the existing garage.
Block G will result in loss of light and privacy to flats in Abbey View.	It is not considered that there will be any significant loss of light or privacy to the flats in Abbey View.
Inadequate servicing for new shops, especially larger vehicles.	The scale of the units will require only smaller light goods vehicles. A loading bay for larger heavy goods vehicles is proposed on Meriden Way alongside Block E3.
Wrong location for the care home block next to The Badger public house.	Providing the public house operates within its licence, there is no reason why the 'Extra care' (or indeed any dwellings) should not be located next to it.
Loss of outlook, privacy and light to residents in Maple Court and Foxtree House.	The potential impact of blocks F1 and F2 on these existing blocks is discussed in detail in the report.
Lack of parking for Teal House.	The parking provision for Teal House will remain unchanged. The parking survey

	analysis shows that adequate on-street capacity will remain to accommodate casual parking after the development is completed.
Loss of open space at The Turnstones. Nowhere for residents to socialise or children to play.	The existing area of open space will be reduced but an enhanced area with play area will remain.
Loss of views over open space and trees from Teal House and Coldharbour House.	The views from these existing blocks will change but this in itself is not strictly a planning consideration. The flats in these blocks will still retain good levels of outlook.
Promised market square has become a car park.	This area will be used in part for car parking to serve the shops.
New accommodation seems very small.	All of the proposed dwellings will meet or exceed the Council's minimum floor area sizes set out in the Residential Design Guide and are acceptable.
High density development proposed could lead to anti-social behaviour.	There is no reason why higher density development should lead to anti-social behaviour. The greater degree of passive surveillance of the public realm and greater security for rear parking areas should reduce any opportunity for anti-social behaviour.
Installation of chicanes on The Gossamers will encourage rat-running on other roads.	No chicanes are proposed as part of the development. Ultimately, these will be a matter for Herts. County Council as the Highway Authority.
Blocks D, E1 and E2-E3 are too tall and will overshadow existing buildings. Roof elevations not broken up enough.	These blocks are four storey and the same height as the existing four storey blocks sited around this part of the estate. They will not result in any overshadowing of existing

	buildings. The roof forms are varied are include pitched and flat roofs to add interest.
Too many flats proposed.	The majority of properties on the estate are family houses so there is no objection in principle to further flats being provided. Also, 50 of the flats will provide 'Extra care' accommodation for the elderly.
Shops poorly sited and will lose passing trade.	The main block of shops (8) is in Block E2/E3 which directly adjoins the main junction of York Way and The Gossamers. These are busiest roads on the estate and, furthermore, the shops will have must greater visibility down The Gossamers than the existing shops which are set back from the road.

5.3 Statutory publicity

The application was publicised by 12 site notices posted on 10th July 2015 and by advertisement in the Watford Observer published on 10th July 2015. The site notice period expired on 31st July 2015 and the newspaper advertisement period expired on 31st July 2015.

5.4 Technical consultations

The following responses have been received from technical consultees:
No technical consultations were necessary in respect of this application.

Environment Agency

Thank you for consulting us with the above application. We request that the conditions below are added to any planning permission granted.

Condition 1. No development approved by this planning permission (or such other date or stage in development as may be agreed in writing with the Local Planning

Authority), shall take place until a scheme that includes the following components to deal with the risks associated with contamination of the site shall each be submitted to and approved, in writing, by the local planning authority:

1) A preliminary risk assessment which has identified:

- all previous uses
- potential contaminants associated with those uses
- a conceptual model of the site indicating sources, pathways and receptors
- potentially unacceptable risks arising from contamination at the site.

2) A site investigation scheme, based on (1) to provide information for a detailed assessment of the risk to all receptors that may be affected, including those off site.

3) The results of the site investigation and detailed risk assessment referred to in (2) and, based on these, an options appraisal and remediation strategy giving full details of the remediation measures required and how they are to be undertaken.

4) A verification plan providing details of the data that will be collected in order to demonstrate that the works set out in the remediation strategy in (3) are complete and identifying any requirements for longer-term monitoring of pollutant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action.

Any changes to these components require the express written consent of the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall be implemented as approved.

Condition 2. No occupation of any part of the permitted development shall take place until a verification report demonstrating completion of works set out in the approved remediation strategy and the effectiveness of the remediation shall be submitted to and approved, in writing, by the local planning authority. The report shall include results of sampling and monitoring carried out in accordance with the approved verification plan to demonstrate that the site remediation criteria have been met. It shall also include any plan (a "long-term monitoring and maintenance plan") for longer-term monitoring of pollutant linkages, maintenance and

arrangements for contingency action, as identified in the verification plan. The long-term monitoring and maintenance plan shall be implemented as approved.

Condition 3. No development should take place until a long-term monitoring and maintenance plan in respect of contamination including a timetable of monitoring and submission of reports to the Local Planning Authority, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Reports as specified in the approved plan, including details of any necessary contingency action arising from the monitoring, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any necessary contingency measures shall be carried out in accordance with the details in the approved reports. On completion of the monitoring specified in the plan a final report demonstrating that all long-term remediation works have been carried out and confirming that remedial targets have been achieved shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Condition 4. If, during development, contamination not previously identified is found to be present at the site then no further development (unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority) shall be carried out until the developer has submitted a remediation strategy to the local planning authority detailing how this unsuspected contamination shall be dealt with and obtained written approval from the local planning authority. The remediation strategy shall be implemented as approved.

Condition 5. No infiltration of surface water drainage into the ground at this site is permitted other than with the express written consent of the local planning authority, which may be given for those parts of the site where it has been demonstrated that there is no resultant unacceptable risk to controlled waters. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approval details.

Condition 6. Piling or any other foundation designs using penetrative methods shall not be permitted other than with the express written consent of the Local Planning Authority, which may be given for those parts of the site where it has been

demonstrated that there is no resultant unacceptable risk to groundwater. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details

Reasons for conditions 1-6:

To protect highly sensitive groundwater resources. The Preliminary Risk Assessment submitted with this application indicates the presence of polluting substances from the previous uses (former petrol filling station now used as MOT & service centre, electrical substations and garages). The site is located within Source Protection Zone 1, indicating that groundwater beneath the site will reach the public drinking water supply within 50 days and is therefore highly sensitive to pollution.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 109 states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of water pollution. Government policy also states that planning policies and decisions should also ensure that adequate site investigation information, prepared by a competent person, is presented (NPPF, paragraph 121).

Thames Water

Waste Comments:

There are public sewers crossing or close to your development. In order to protect public sewers and to ensure that Thames Water can gain access to those sewers for future repair and maintenance, approval should be sought from Thames Water where the erection of a building or an extension to a building or underpinning work would be over the line of, or would come within 3 metres of, a public sewer.

With the information provided Thames Water, has been unable to determine the waste water infrastructure needs of this application. Should the Local Planning Authority look to approve the application ahead of further information being provided, we request that the following 'Grampian Style' condition be applied:-

"Development shall not commence until a drainage strategy detailing any on and/or off site drainage works, has been submitted to and approved by, the local planning authority in consultation with the sewerage undertaker. No discharge of foul or surface water from the site shall be accepted into the public system until the drainage works referred to in the strategy have been completed".

Reason: The development may lead to sewage flooding; to ensure that sufficient capacity is made available to cope with the new development; and in order to avoid adverse environmental impact upon the community.

No impact piling shall take place until a piling method statement (detailing the depth and type of piling to be undertaken and the methodology by which such piling will be carried out, including measures to prevent and minimise the potential for damage to subsurface sewerage infrastructure, and the programme for the works) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority in consultation with Thames Water. Any piling must be undertaken in accordance with the terms of the approved piling method statement. Reason: The proposed works will be in close proximity to underground sewerage utility infrastructure. Piling has the potential to impact on local underground sewerage utility infrastructure.

We would expect the developer to demonstrate what measures he will undertake to minimise groundwater discharges into the public sewer. Groundwater discharges typically result from construction site dewatering, deep excavations, basement infiltration, borehole installation, testing and site remediation. Any discharge made without a permit is deemed illegal and may result in prosecution under the provisions of the Water Industry Act 1991. Should the Local Planning Authority be minded to approve the planning application, Thames Water would like the following informative attached to the planning permission: "A Groundwater Risk Management Permit from Thames Water will be required for discharging groundwater into a public sewer. Any discharge made without a permit is deemed illegal and may result in prosecution under the provisions of the Water Industry Act 1991. We would expect the developer to demonstrate what measures he will undertake to minimise groundwater discharges into the public sewer.

Supplementary Comments:

In order for Thames Water to determine whether the existing sewer network has sufficient spare capacity to receive the increased flows from the proposed development, details of any proposed foul water discharge rates to every connection point must be included in the drainage strategy. If initial investigations conclude that the existing sewer network is unlikely to be able to support the demand anticipated from this development, it will be necessary for the developer to fund an Impact Study.

Regarding surface water we have no objection to the above planning application.

Hertfordshire County Council (Highway Authority)

The Highway Authority raised objections to the submitted Transport Assessment, requesting further information and clarification regarding various aspects of the data used in the assessment. The applicant's consultant has provided this information and the Highway Authority has responded with final comments. Selected comments are given below.

Notice is given under article 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 that the Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority does not wish to restrict the grant of permission subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted a Stage 2 Road Safety Audit for the proposed highway improvements and access junctions shall be completed and submitted for approval by Hertfordshire County Council. Reason: In the interests of highway safety.
2. Travel Plan Two months prior to the occupation of the development, details of the proposed Travel Plan for the residential elements of the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Reason: to

promote a sustainable development in accordance with Local Plan policies and highway authority requirements.

3. Delivery and Servicing Management Plan Two months prior to the occupation of any retail unit, details of a Delivery and Servicing Management Plan for the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Reason: to promote a sustainable development in accordance with Local Plan policies and to protect highway safety and the amenity of other users of the public highway and rights of way.

4. Construction Management Plan Construction of the development hereby approved shall not commence until a Construction Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority in consultation with the highway authority. Thereafter the construction of the development shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved Plan. The Construction Traffic Management Plan shall include details of: a) Construction vehicle numbers, type, routing; b) Traffic management requirements; c) Construction and storage compounds (including areas designated for car parking); d) Siting and details of wheel washing facilities; e) Cleaning of site entrances, site tracks and the adjacent public highway; f) Timing of construction activities to avoid school pick up/drop off times; g) Provision of sufficient on-site parking prior to commencement of construction activities; h) Post construction restoration/reinstatement of the working areas and temporary access to the public highway. Reason: In order to protect highway safety and the amenity of other users of the public highway and rights of way.

5. Access details No access shall be brought into use until it has been laid out and constructed in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Reason: In the interests of highway safety and convenience

6. Traffic counts on Phillipers Two months prior to the occupation of the development and then one year after its completion hourly traffic counts shall be taken over a full term-time week at an equivalent time of year and identical locations on Phillipers. The results shall be presented to the Local Planning

Authority for consideration by the highway authority. Reason: that a comparison can be made and the need for further compensatory measures to be installed by the Community Housing Trust under its wider stewardship responsibilities considered.

The initial response of the highway authority (sent on 7/8/15) recommended that permission be refused on the basis of a numbers of shortcomings in the information provided. Additional information was provided on 8 September 2015 in the form of a 134-page Technical Note from the highway consultant and a 12-page Highway Design Proposals Supplementary Information document produced by the urban design/ planning consultant. These documents were specifically written to address the points raised in the earlier highway response.

Impact on the local highway network and transport infrastructure and services

A Transport Assessment (TA) originally submitted was prepared in accordance with the County Council's requirements as set out in section 1 chapter 7 of our highway design guide Roads In Hertfordshire. The Technical Note from the highway consultant addresses the initial concerns of the highway authority.

Trip generation and distribution

Existing uses - According to the TA the existing commercial units and community use will remain largely unchanged and on this basis trips are already on the network and do not need to reassessed. This approach is considered to reasonable to prevent double-counting.

HCC were originally unable to comment on the appropriateness of the existing trip generation as the full TRICS reports including the parameters and sites used were not included. They have now been submitted in appendix A of the Technical Note and are found to be acceptable.

Proposed uses - The TRICS database has been used to estimate the vehicle trip generation associated with the net increase in residential dwellings on the estate. This assessment demonstrates that the proposals are expected to generate daily 286 vehicles and a maximum of 28 vehicles in the peak hours.

HCC were originally unable to comment on the appropriateness of these trip generation predictions as the full TRICS reports including the parameters and sites used were not included. They have now been submitted in appendix A of the Technical Note and are found to be acceptable.

In addition HCC requested that a multi-modal TRICS assessment should have been provided as the development is likely to have an impact on sustainable modes of travel. One such has since been provided at appendix B of the Technical Note and is found to be acceptable.

Impact on Highway Network - I concur with the conclusion that the impact of the development traffic is expected to be minimal and insignificant in relation to the volumes currently using the local network.

Rat Running - The proposals seek to slightly reduce rat running via changing the streetscape and landscape within the centre of the estate and in doing so calming the flow of traffic and mitigating the effects of rat running on residents, especially those on foot.

The potential impact on parallel routes within the estate has not been predicted. In order to ensure that residents of Phillipers, in particular, are not penalised I require that traffic counts are taken on that route prior to work on the proposed development taking place and that they are replicated one year after its completion so that a comparison can be made and the need for further compensatory measures to be installed by the Community Housing Trust under its wider stewardship responsibilities considered.

Parking demand - Parking surveys were undertaken as part of the scheme design in order to establish the existing parking conditions around the site. The parking surveys were undertaken on a London Borough of Lambeth parking survey methodology and this is acceptable.

The TA sets out that the surveys were undertaken on a typical weekday and Saturday. Whilst the weekday surveys are considered representative. It was noted in our first response to WBC that Saturday 2nd May was a bank holiday weekend and is not considered to be typical. Paragraphs 25 to 29 in the Technical Note

address this point and explain that the bank holiday weekend date was compared with that collected on the other weekend and differences identified and allowed for. I am satisfied that the data as presented and analysed is robust.

The highway authority's original response commented that 'whilst it is noted that within the survey area there is spare parking capacity overall, there are also areas with high parking stress or already over-capacity, for example Alma Place, The Meadows, Bowmans Green, Harvest End, The Gossamers, The Turnstones, rear of the Gossamers shops car park. Therefore, further information as to the impact of the development on to these high stress areas is required'. This has subsequently been answered in paragraphs 34 to 35 of the Technical Note. I concur with the responses.

Road Safety - There are no clusters of accidents or black spots or anything to suggest that there is an inherent road safety problem within the study area.

Highway Layout - Concern was expressed by the highway authority in August that no information was originally provided in the TA to suggest that existing access arrangements (i.e. The Gossamers, The Turnstones, Meriden Way, York Way) were to be changed. Paragraphs 39 to 46 in the Technical Note cover this point to my satisfaction by confirming that the outline design as presented complies with the highway authority's guidance (as set out in Roads in Hertfordshire) and industry standard national guidance (Manual for Streets).

Estate Layout - The proposals comprise improvements to the streetscape and landscape in the centre of the Meriden estate. The proposals include a shared surface at the heart of the estate connecting the new market square to the village green. The shared surface would take the form of a raised table at the junction of York Way with Meriden Way and The Gossamers. The width of the carriageway will be reduced to 5.5m and pedestrians protected by the creation of footways delineated by 20mm high kerbs with designated crossing points. Speeds would be lowered by reductions in the road width and kerb radii at junctions and bringing building frontages forward all in accordance with Manual for Streets. I am satisfied that this combination of features would effectively and safely balance the needs of all users by providing an additional deterrent to through traffic while not causing bus

passengers discomfort, creating a safer and more legible pedestrian environment and not penalising users of National Cycle Route 6 which follows Meriden Way and The Gossamers on its way between Watford and St Albans.

The design of the Market Square shown in concept in the application submission shows two-way flow at the proposed links to the road network on York Way and The Gossamers. There is concern in the community that this might cause unnecessary conflict with pedestrians and that a one-way system might be safer. This idea should be worked through at implementation stage in conjunction with a safety audit of the whole shared surface and Market Square.

The details of these measures will be agreed with the highway authority and constructed under a Section 278 agreement to ensure they comply with the appropriate standards. Areas to be adopted will require a Section 38 agreement with the highway authority. Surface finishes and street furniture to be employed on areas for adoption would have to be agreed. Where they are to a higher standards than those normally employed the additional costs of maintenance and replacement would be covered by commuted sums be negotiated as part of the adoption agreement.

Parking Layout - The TA sets out that all new parking spaces under the development would be laid out to industry-standard dimensions and layout. End-on parking bays will be 2.4m wide by 4.8m long with 6m aisle widths. All parallel parking spaces will be 6m in length and 2m in width. All forecourts within the development have been tested and are found to be adequately accessible. Computer-generated vehicle swept path plots have been provided in appendix F of the Technical Note and satisfactorily demonstrate this.

The parking areas to the rear of Blocks A to E3 will be secured via security barrier. The detail of the barrier is to be finalised but the barrier will be set 5m back from the carriageway. These details will be required to be submitted to HCC for approval.

Delivery and Servicing - The majority of deliveries will be associated with the commercial element of the development that is located in Blocks E2 and E3. A

servicing area to the rear of the block has been provided. It has been assumed that the largest vehicle that will deliver to the retail stores will be a 7.5 tonne box van.

The café is located in Block E1 and deliveries to it would take place at the kerb on York Way. It is anticipated that there would be only a small demand for these deliveries.

Retail unit 7 in Block E3 would be sited on the west side of the junction of Meriden Way and York Way. Deliveries by large rigid chassis or articulated lorries would be to the lay-by outside it on Meriden Way. This is described and illustrated on page 9 of 12-page Highway Design Proposals Supplementary Information document produced by the urban design/ planning consultant. Since the carriageway width is to be narrowed it is essential that this lay-by is deep enough to take such vehicles without obstructing the carriageway so that should two buses pass next to it they would not be obstructed.

Given that there are a number of different retail units deliveries would need to be managed. Therefore, a Delivery and Servicing Management Plan should be secured via condition to ensure deliveries are managed.

The TA sets out that the largest vehicle associated with the estate would be a refuse vehicle and that there are four new areas where the refuse vehicle will need to manoeuvre, which are new mews road, the rear of Blocks D/E1, the rear of Blocks E2/E3 and the rear of Blocks A/B/C1/C2. With regards to the Blocks further information regarding the distances that waste will be carried by residents to the waste store is required this distance should be provided in accordance with Manual for Streets. Also, it appears that the refuse vehicles are required to enter via the barrier into the parking areas to service the development. Confirmation that the borough council's refuse operator would enter these locations was required in our earlier response and is confirmed by meeting notes and swept path diagrams provided in appendix G of the Technical Note.

Swept path assessments were provided as part of the TA for a refuse vehicle, fire tender, box van and panel van. The swept paths demonstrate that a box van, panel van and fire tender can manoeuvre safely.

Construction - No information has been provided with regards to construction. Therefore a Construction Management Plan will be required, should permission be granted, to ensure construction vehicles would not have a detrimental impact on safety and amenity in the vicinity of the site and a condition will be required to provide adequate parking for construction vehicles on-site to prevent the vehicles using the existing facility from parking on the surrounding network during construction.

Travel Plan - A draft Travel Plan was provided with the application. The highway authority's Travel Plan officer commented as follows:

Measures. The proposals involve an increase in residential including extra care dwellings, and replacement of existing community and retail uses. Given that these are replacement and relatively small scale, I accept the focus on resident travel. The public realm improvements and provision of cycle parking etc. should help to improve active/sustainable travel opportunities for visitors as well as residents. Opportunities to promote active and sustainable modes in public and community spaces should be looked into (notice boards etc.).

Management. I would like a little more clarity on likely management arrangements for the travel plan, including the TPC and how WCHT and any other organisations relating to the extra care dwellings and community centre will be involved. Consideration also needed to how residents themselves can be involved.

A full Travel Plan provided in coordination with HCC safe and sustainable journeys team should be secured via a S106 agreement.

Hertfordshire County Council (Waste and Minerals)

Have requested a Site waste management Plan to ensure the reduction of demolition and construction waste produced on the site and the sustainable management of waste within the county.

Hertfordshire County Council (Development Services)

I refer to the above mentioned application and am writing in respect of planning obligations sought by the County Council towards fire hydrants to minimise the impact of development on Hertfordshire County Council Services for the local community. Based on the information provided to date for the demolition of existing properties and erection of 133 new dwellings we would seek the provision of fire hydrant(s), as set out within HCC's Planning Obligations Toolkit. We reserve the right to seek Community Infrastructure Levy contributions towards the provision of infrastructure as outlined in your R123 List through the appropriate channels.

All dwellings must be adequately served by fire hydrants in the event of fire. The County Council as the Statutory Fire Authority has a duty to ensure fire fighting facilities are provided on new developments. HCC therefore seek the provision of hydrants required to serve the proposed buildings by the developer through standard clauses set out in a Section 106 legal agreement or unilateral undertaking.

Buildings fitted with fire mains must have a suitable hydrant provided and sited within 18m of the hard-standing facility provided for the fire service pumping appliance. The requirements for fire hydrant provision are set out with the Toolkit at paragraph 12.33 and 12.34 (page 22). In practice, the need for hydrants is determined at the time the water services for the development are planned in detail and the layout of the development is known, which is usually after planning permission is granted. If, at the water scheme design stage, adequate hydrants are already available no extra hydrants will be needed.

Hertfordshire County Council (Lead Local Flood Authority)

Objected to the original application on the grounds that no surface water drainage assessment had been submitted. The applicant then commissioned a study and provided additional information which was submitted to the LLFA who commented as follows:

I can confirm that following a letter from Conisbee Engineers received on the 10 September and drawing C103 carried out by Conisbee Engineers, we are now in a position to remove our objection on flood risk grounds. We would like to

acknowledge that the proposed drainage scheme will provide a betterment in relation to flood risk and water quality by reducing the discharge rates from the site and the implementation of various SuDS features. We therefore recommend the following condition to the LPA should planning permission be granted:

Condition:

The development permitted by this planning permission shall be carried out in accordance with the approved Flood Risk Assessment carried out by Conisbee Engineers dated 24 August 2015, Revision 1.2 reference 150340/TG, drawing C103 and response letter to the LLFA received on the 10 September and the following mitigation measures detailed within the FRA:

- i) Limiting the surface water run-off generated by the 1 in 100 year + 30% for climate change critical storm so that it will not exceed the run-off from the undeveloped site and not increase the risk of flooding off-site.
- ii) Restricting the surface water run-off rates to each discharge point into the existing sewer network in accordance with Table 6.1 within the FRA.
- iii) Implement a range of SuDS measures in accordance with the FRA including permeable paving, swales, rain gardens and tanks.

The mitigation measures shall be fully implemented prior to occupation and subsequently in accordance with the timing / phasing arrangements embodied within the scheme, or within any other period as may subsequently be agreed, in writing, by the local planning authority.

Hertfordshire County Council (Ecology)

Thank you for consulting Herts Ecology on the above, for which we have the following comments:

1. We have no ecological information on the proposals site, although there would be some local interest at the site level associated with in the trees and open

grassland present within the site. Apart from the smaller verges, the two larger Public Open Spaces provide a significant element to the middle of the site.

2. These spaces are considered poorly defined; in as much as there is no fencing or signage, this is true, but the contrast between the built environment and open grassland and trees would appear rather emphatic to me.

3 They are described (dismissed) as '*essentially left over spaces between the roads and houses, without lighting, benches or planting*'. Whilst this may be true, their environmental functionality serves to provide what we would now consider to be Green Infrastructure – and without formal structures, contributes a semblance of environmental character and potential to the local area, even though they appear as typical amenity spaces at present. Sometimes, such resources don't need to be planned.

4. The spaces '*could be rationalised and designed to be better utilised as public open spaces by local people*'. This may be true; but public and environmental enhancements are eminently possible *now* without reducing the extent of the resource, and may involve simply a change in mowing regime and perhaps some reseeded to improve habitat and amenity value and interest. Such an approach rather contrasts with the proposals which will reduce this resource.

5. Whilst the proposed Village Green approach is welcomed, the development will significantly reduce the existing open space in this location. Furthermore, although the secure garden will be new, the open area at York Way / Meriden Way will be lost. Whilst I acknowledge its location and function will create a clear central focus, the claims suggested for biodiversity and edible gardening lack credibility at this stage, at least without any further details. The area will be further impacted by the proposed play area (LEAP) and associated infrastructure along its eastern edge, leaving the *actual* open Village Green perhaps only a third of the size of the existing open grassland area. The associated planting will be formal which may also reduce the beneficial impact of the proposed habitats, which could otherwise have an

informal character. This can only serve to compromise the wider environmental benefits of the redesigned area.

6. The walled garden provides a good opportunity for engagement with food growing; however I trust the fruit trees will not be the varieties modelled in the D&A Statement... Opportunities for a similar approach to providing edible plants could also be considered elsewhere if appropriate.

7. In relation to landscape ecology, the relative isolation of this area, lack of obvious green corridors and reduction in open space is likely to reduce opportunities for wildlife such as birds, bats and bugs by removing habitat. The value of the new open space areas will therefore be dependent upon significant habitat enhancements that will be needed in order to achieve genuine benefit.

8. Whilst providing artificial nesting opportunities for wildlife, without suitable habitats the ability of wildlife to thrive in any given area will be limited. In this respect I acknowledge the potential new contribution of green roofs as suggested, and the need for suitable planting regimes to benefit pollinators.

9. The nearest main ecological resources are associated with the M1 road corridor to the east the open spaces of Meriden Park to the south and the adjacent railway corridor to the west. Consequently any opportunity to enhance links with these areas should be sought. Retention of existing mature trees is important to provide locally significant habitat, stepping stones and ecological continuity.

10. Water retention through SUDS and associated planting regimes will be beneficial. Additional hedging should be with locally native species to increase pollination, feeding resources and local corridors.

11. Management of grassed areas can be critical to enhancing ecology, although areas of longer grass are often considered to be unsightly by residents. In this respect the character and purpose of the local landscaping needs to be properly considered and promoted from the outset.

12. I am not aware of any other ecological issues associated with these proposals for which I have any significant concerns. However, if existing Green Infrastructure is to be considerably reduced, any ecological compensation *and* enhancement consistent with NPPF will need to be carefully detailed within an application to demonstrate how this is going to be achieved both in respect of capital works and subsequent management.

Crime Prevention Design Advisor

Comments:

1. Rear Parking area behind Care Home: I am pleased to see that this is shown as being gated with access control, and the DAS on page 62 confirms this.

2. Rear parking area behind new shops south side of Market Square:

I am not sure if this area was to be gated or not, with access control to protect residential parking? A line is shown on plans, but no detail.

3. Rear parking area behind bungalows, terraced housing and link detached homes off Turnstones:

a) Can I confirm this is secured and gated with electrically operated access controlled gates? The DAS says it is on page 42 & 62 and about this area being secured, but the plans do not appear to show this? If planning permission is granted is as per the plans?

b) Because of the rear parking, residents who have allocated parking in this area will be using a rear garden gate to access their vehicle in the rear parking court area. A padbolt fitted to the inside of the gate is not suitable to lock the gate from either side. I would suggest something similar to a Cays Lock, so the rear gate can be locked and unlocked from either side. Reason is that most domestic burglaries occur from the rear.

4. Shops:

I am pleased there will be no colonnade for youths to gather under outside the shops? Looking at the elevation plans, it is unclear if the design will create informal seating by creating a ledge on the outside lower part of the shop windows. If such a ledge is created, this could be sloped to deter youths informally sitting on this.

5. Public Art in Market Square:

Page 58 of the DAS shows a fountain in the Market Square. Public Art, when a water feature can be problematic, and have these problems been allowed for? Such problems are: youths putting washing up liquid in the water to make it bubble, or in high wind, water spray wetting walk areas and roadways and making them slippery.

6. Secured by Design part 2 physical security:

To alleviate any concerns regarding security for the proposed dwelling and care home development, I would look for the development to be built to the physical security of Secured by Design part 2, which is the police approved minimum security standard. This would involve:

- a) All exterior doors to have been tested to BS PAS 24:2012 or STS 202 BR2
- b) All individual flat front entrance doors to BS Pas 24:2012 (internal specification).
- c) Ground level (easily accessible) exterior windows to BS Pas 24:2012. All glazing in the exterior doors, and ground floor (easily accessible) windows next to doors to include laminated glass as one of the panes of glass.
- d) Access control for flats should be to the SBD standard (ie: 4 to 10, audible – more than 10 flats there should also be audible and visual access control) at the pedestrian entrances to the block. Such access control must NOT have a Tradesman's Button fitted as this assists offenders to gain entry during the day to break into the flats.

These standards are entry level security and meet the Secured by Design part 2 physical security standard. Building to the physical security of Secured by Design, which is the police approved minimum security standard, will reduce the potential

for burglary by 50% to 75%. I would encourage the applicants to seek Secured by Design certification to this standard when it is built.

Planning Policy

Have no objections to the proposed development.

Environmental Health

No comments received.

Housing

No comments received.

Arboricultural Officer

Whilst a significant number of trees are shown to be removed there is significant replacement planting proposed. However regarding the latter I do have some concerns regarding the locations and space available in some areas based on the indicative masterplan (Outerspace drawing L-100). One difference between the Arboricultural reports and the submitted plan is that an Oak T14 is now retained which will have a positive effect upon the street scene. This apart providing all the tree protection measures as shown on the draft tree protection plan (C11962-04-01) are adhered to the losses should be restricted to those indicated. Standard landscaping and tree protection detail conditions should be attached to any consent granted.

6.0 APPRAISAL

6.1 Main issues

The main issues to be considered in the determination of this application are:

- (a) The principle of redevelopment
- (b) Housing provision
- (c) Impact on the character and appearance of the area
- (d) Quality of accommodation for future residents

- (e) Impact on the amenities of existing residents
- (f) Traffic impacts and servicing
- (g) Car and cycle parking provision
- (h) Retail and employment implications
- (i) Sustainability and flood risk
- (j) Open space and landscaping

6.2 (a) The principle of redevelopment

The Meriden estate exhibits a number of features typical of housing estates of its era, including high rise tower blocks (Abbey View and Munden View) and low rise, low density housing set within areas of open space. Although this gives the estate a relatively spacious and 'green' feel, the open spaces are generally underused grassed areas and wide verges that serve little other purpose. The main area of open space serving the estate lies along the southern boundary of the estate where the community centre, inclusive children's play area and Sports Legacy Zone are located. Consequently, the open spaces within the estate have no other facilities and are generally of relatively poor quality, comprising mown grass and scattered trees.

The application site is physically, socially and economically at the heart of the estate. It provides a well used local shopping parade, a local pub, a community room and bus stops providing good services to the town centre. However, in terms of urban design it is very poor. The most prominent corner within the estate is occupied by the Alterstart garage and van hire business. The shopping parade is set back from the road with car parking in front of it and is looking tired and of its age. The community room is sited behind the garage. The key road junction is dominated by two areas of open space which are little used. Arrival at the centre of the estate is underwhelming and disappointing when it should be vibrant and exciting. The applicant has identified opportunities to make better use of the land available in this important location.

The applicant's vision for this area is to transform and improve it to create a new, vibrant, high quality centre for the estate with modern shops, new high quality

housing for all ages and high quality open spaces in the form of a 'village green' and market square. The new buildings will provide good street enclosure with active frontages and passive surveillance of the public realm. The roads and junctions will be re-paved to provide a better environment for pedestrians and cyclists. Overall, the proposal will create the scale, form and activity expected for the centre of the estate as well as providing significant new housing for all ages.

6.3 (b) Housing provision

The proposal will provide a total of 133 new, high quality dwellings with a net increase of 112 dwellings, as set out in paragraph 2.6 above. These will include one and two bedroom flats and two and three bedroom houses for general needs, one bedroom bungalows for the elderly and a significant new 'Extra care' facility for the elderly comprising 50 flats and bungalows. This will enhance the range and quality of accommodation on the estate and help meet a range of differing housing needs for all sectors of the community, in accordance with Policy HS2 of the Core Strategy.

Saved Policy H16 of the Watford District Local Plan 2000 seeks to ensure development does not result in the loss of affordable housing. In this case, 21 existing dwellings will be lost. Policy HS3 of the Core Strategy seeks a provision of 35% affordable dwellings in all new development of 10 or more dwellings. Based on the provision of 133 dwellings, this equates to 47 units. However, it is the applicant's intention, as a registered housing provider, to provide at least 89 dwellings (67%) as affordable housing with an aspiration, based upon the final viability of the scheme, to provide all of the dwellings as affordable housing. The proposal will therefore provide a net increase of 68-112 affordable dwellings, which complies with Policy H16 and significantly exceeds the requirements of Policy HS3.

Policy HS3 also sets out the desired tenure split for new affordable housing as 20% social rented, 65% affordable rented and 15% intermediate/shared ownership. The minimum requirement would therefore be 9 social rented, 31 affordable rented and 7 intermediate/shared ownership. The applicants proposed tenure split is to provide 9 social rented dwellings and 80 affordable rented dwellings. The remaining 44

dwellings will be provided as either affordable rent, shared ownership or market rent. The applicant's aspiration is that all these 44 dwellings be provided as affordable rent.

All existing tenants have been consulted by the applicant who is working with them to ensure that those who wish to relocate to one of the new dwellings or elsewhere on the estate has the opportunity to do so. The construction programme is to be phased to ensure that, wherever possible, tenants will be able to move from their existing dwelling to a new dwelling in a single move without the need to go into temporary accommodation.

6.4 (c) Impact on the character and appearance of the area

The Meriden estate comprises a range of dwelling types including single storey bungalows, two storey houses, 4 storey blocks of flats and the two 17 storey tower blocks. With the exception of the tower blocks, the proposal incorporates these different building typologies. Within and surrounding the application site there is a juxtaposition of bungalows, 2 storey houses and 4 storey blocks of flats that characterise the central part of the estate. The siting of the 4 storey blocks helps to acknowledge the importance of this central area within the estate where higher density development, close to the shopping parade and bus stops would be expected. The proposal builds on this existing character to create a higher density heart to the estate. It is also appropriate that the new 'Extra care' accommodation is located adjacent to the new shopping parade and bus stops.

The different heights of the buildings have been used following good urban design principles, to define the new areas of public space, act as 'gateways' to the central area and act as end points to longer views. In this way, the central area becomes much more clearly defined and has a sense of 'arrival' rather than 'passing through' as with the existing layout. The new public realm is clearly defined by Block E2/E3 on York Way to the south, Blocks D/E1 on The Gossamers framing the market square to the west and Block B framing the open space to the east. Views along all the approach roads are terminated by the new buildings which also act as gateway buildings on York Way from the west (Block E1) and east (Block E2), Meriden Way

from the south (Blocks E2/E3) and The Gossamers from the north (Block D).

The design and appearance of the new buildings does not seek to copy or reflect the existing buildings which are varied in appearance and not of any particular architectural or aesthetic merit. The design approach is contemporary and simple and is described by the architects as 'a family of masonry gabled typologies' with the key 4 storey buildings incorporating green, flat roofs to highlight their importance within the urban form. The variation in scale, window openings, balconies and roof forms avoids a bland and monolithic appearance and creates interest and variation in a simple and uncluttered way.

The principal materials to be used are two types of buff coloured facing brick, fibre cement roof tiles, aluminium windows, timber composite doors, timber cladding and limited use of metal cladding. This limited palette of materials will help to integrate the buildings as a coherent development, complimenting each other rather than competing against each other.

Although the design and appearance of the new buildings will differ from the existing buildings on the estate, those defining the new central area will be seen and read as a coherent group forming a new coherent centre to the estate and adding a vibrancy and focus to the area. The proposal will deliver the scale and form of development one would expect to see in the centre of the estate whilst using a complimentary suite of building typologies and high quality materials that will compliment the existing development. Along the western part of York Way, Blocks F1, F2 and G will form a new building line and active frontage where currently blank end walls to the existing flats and small groups of garages provide a very poor streetscape.

Overall, the proposal is considered to significantly enhance the character and appearance of this area and fully accords with Policy UD1 of the Core Strategy, which seeks high quality design that respects and enhances the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

6.6 (d) Quality of accommodation for future residents

The Residential Design Guide sets out the minimum standards the Council will expect for new residential development and guidelines for the assessment of privacy, outlook and natural light to ensure future residents experience a high level of amenity. All of the proposed flats, bungalows and houses within the scheme will meet or exceed the minimum floorarea standards in the RDG and have good internal layouts. This is acceptable. With regard to privacy, outlook, natural light and amenity space, each block will be considered separately.

1) Block A

Each of the bungalows will be dual aspect, facing York Way to the front and a private garden area to the rear. The front elevations will be set back 2m from the edge of the highway behind small front gardens, which will ensure acceptable privacy for a front elevation. The rear elevations and gardens will generally have acceptable levels of privacy. The only direct overlooking will occur to the garden area of the western most bungalow which will be overlooked by the rear bedroom window of the adjacent house in Block B. This can be mitigated sufficiently by increasing the side boundary fence to the garden area from 2m to 2.5m. All of the bungalows will have good outlook and levels of natural light to the front and rear. Each bungalow will have a private garden area of 40m², which is below the minimum requirement of 50m² for a one bedroom dwelling in the RDG.

2) Block B

Each house will be dual aspect, facing the 'village green' open space to the front and a private garden area to the rear. All of the houses will have good levels of privacy, outlook and natural light. Each house will have a private garden area of 52m², which is below the minimum requirement of 65m² for a 3 bedroom dwelling in the RDG.

3) Block C1

This house has a dual aspect, facing The Turnstones to the front and a private garden area to the rear. The front elevation will be set back 1.5m from the highway with a kitchen window overlooking the public realm. This will ensure an acceptable

level of privacy. The rear garden area will experience direct overlooking from the first floor bedroom window of the adjacent house in Block B. This can be mitigated sufficiently by increasing the side boundary fence to the garden area from 2m to 2.5m. The house will have good outlook and levels of natural light to the front and rear. The house will have a garden area of 40m², which is below the minimum requirement of 50m² for a 2 bedroom dwelling.

4) Block C2

Each of the houses is dual aspect, facing The Turnstones to the front and a private garden area to the rear. The front elevations are set back 5m from the edge of the highway behind a front garden area and parking space. This will ensure good levels of privacy to the front. The rear elevations and garden areas are not overlooked. All of the houses will have good outlook and levels of natural light to the front and rear. Each house will have a private garden area of 50m², which is below the minimum requirement of 65m² for a 3 bedroom dwelling in the RDG.

All the case of all of the dwellings in Blocks A, B, C1 and C2, the garden areas are below the minimum requirement set out in the RDG. However, given that all of the dwellings exceed the minimum internal floorarea requirements, all have good levels of amenity, and adequate car parking is being provided (see paragraph 6.9), it is considered that the shortfalls in garden sizes are not sufficient to merit a refusal of the scheme.

5) Block D

This block comprises the 50 'Extra care' units. The main building contains 47 flats the majority of which are single aspect, facing either The Gossamers (15 flats) or the internal courtyard garden (24 flats). Seven of the flats on the upper floors will overlook the new market square and one the dining garden area. Also included are 3 bungalows which are dual aspect but with the main living rooms and bedrooms facing the courtyard garden. The ground floor flats facing The Gossamers will be set back 5m from the edge of the highway behind a landscaped linear garden, ensuring good levels of privacy. All of the proposed flats and bungalows will have good levels of privacy, outlook and natural light.

The residents will have access to two private garden areas, the internal courtyard garden and a smaller dining garden adjoining the communal lounge and dining area. Both of these garden areas will be landscaped to a high quality and will be laid out with paths, seating, raised beds and other features suitable for the intended residents.

6) Block E1

All of the flats on the upper floors will be either single or dual aspect and all will have their principle outlook over the market square. All will have good levels of privacy, outlook and natural light. These flats will have no private communal amenity area, although this is not unusual for flats above commercial premises, but each will have a small private balcony.

7) Blocks E2 and E3

All of the flats on the upper floors will be either single or dual aspect and all will have their principle outlook either over York Way towards the market square or over the rear parking court.. All will have good levels of privacy, outlook and natural light. These flats will have no private communal amenity area, although this is not unusual for flats above commercial premises, but each will have a small private balcony. In some cases, privacy screens will be required to the projecting balconies in order to maintain the privacy of these. These have been included by the applicant and are acceptable.

8) Block F1

These flats will have dual aspect with 5 of the flats having their principle aspect overlooking York Way. All of these flats will have good outlook, privacy and natural light. The remaining 3 flats will have their principle aspect facing between the existing 4 storey blocks of Coldharbour House and Foxtree House towards the existing play areas. Their outlook and natural light will consequently be more compromised, particularly to the single, second bedroom. These flats will have acceptable levels of privacy. These flats will have no communal amenity space. Overall, it is considered these flats will still provide acceptable levels of amenity and

would not merit a refusal of the scheme.

9) Block F2

These flats will have dual aspect with 5 of the flats having their principle aspect overlooking York Way. All of these flats will have good outlook, privacy and natural light. The remaining 3 flats will have their principle aspect facing through the space between the existing 4 storey blocks of Foxtree House and Maple Court, towards the existing courtyard car park. These flats have been redesigned to improve their privacy, outlook and natural light in relation to the existing Foxtree House and are acceptable. These flats will have no communal amenity space.

10) Block G

The flats in the 3 storey block will be dual or triple aspect, overlooking York Way, Garsmouth Way and the visitors parking area at the front of Abbey View. The front elevation to York Way is set back 3.5m from the public footway behind a front garden area. They will all have good levels of outlook, privacy and natural light. The 2 storey houses are also dual aspect at ground floor but single aspect at first floor, with their front elevation facing York Way. As with the flats, they are set back 3.5m from the public footpath. Although the rear elevation and garden areas are overlooked by the flats in Abbey View, any loss of privacy is mitigated through the nature of the windows in Abbey View (to kitchens only), the siting of only landing and bathroom windows at first floor level in the houses, and boundary fencing to the garden areas. Each will have a private garden area of 30m², which is less than the minimum requirement of 50m² in the RDG. Overall, these houses will have acceptable levels of outlook, privacy and natural light.

6.7 (e) Impact on the amenities of existing residents

The Residential Design Guide also sets out guidelines for the assessment of the potential impact of new development on the amenities currently enjoyed by existing residential occupiers.

1) Blocks A, B, C1 and C2

This part of the site comprises the existing bungalows and open space at The

Turnstones. The northern part of The Turnstones is dominated by the 4 storey block of Teal House. The eastern side of The Turnstones and the southern side of York Way by 2 storey houses. The new bungalows in Block A will face the 2 storey houses across York Way at a distance of 19m and the 2 storey houses in Block C2 will face the houses across The Turnstones at a distance of 20m. These are perfectly normal and acceptable facing distances within an urban environment and will result in no adverse impacts on the amenities of the existing dwellings and their occupiers.

The house in Block C1 and the flank elevation of the northernmost house in Block B will face the existing Teal House across The Turnstones at a distance of 19m. Again, this relationship will have no adverse impact on the amenities of Teal House.

2) Blocks D and E1

These multi-storey blocks of 2-4 storeys will replace the existing 3 storey parade of shops and single storey Alterstart garage. The eastern wing of Block D faces the end elevation of Teal House and the front elevation of Pinetree House (also 4 storeys) across The Gossamers (at a minimum distance of 50m). There is a significant treed and landscaped area to the front of Pinetree House including a residents parking area. Block D will have no adverse impacts on the amenities of these blocks.

To the north of Block D is the Badger public house and 2 storey houses in Bowmans Green. The 3 storey flank elevation of the eastern wing of Block D will face the flank elevation of the Badger public house at a distance of 11-18m. This relationship will have no adverse impact on the public house. The houses in Bowmans Green have 20m deep gardens and their rear elevations will be sited approximately 36m from the single storey bungalows in Block D and the 2 storey flank elevation of the western wing. Block D will, therefore, have no adverse impact on these houses.

To the west of Block D are 2 storey houses in Bowmans Green. These houses

have 19m deep gardens and their rear elevations are sited 29-42m from the 2 storey western wing of Block D. As such, Block D will have no adverse impacts on the amenities of these houses.

Block E1 is part 3 storey, part 4 storey. The 3 storey element faces towards the rear garden area of the house at 154, York Way and is sited parallel to this property. The distance between Block E1 and the side garden boundary of no.154 is 25m. This distance is sufficient to ensure no adverse overlooking or loss of privacy to this property.

3) Blocks E2 and E3

These blocks, which read as a single building, are located on the open space between Coldharbour House and York Way. This block varies in height from single storey at its western end (under the high voltage electricity cables), stepping up to 3 storeys and finally to 4 storeys at its eastern corner facing the junction of Meriden Way and York Way. The southern wing then steps back down to 3 storeys. The single storey element is sited between 18-25m from the eastern elevation of Coldharbour House and will have no adverse impact on the amenities of these flats. The 3 storey element is located a minimum of 30m from Coldharbour House and exceeds the minimum guideline distance of 27.5m in the RDG. This is sufficient to ensure the block will have no adverse impact on the amenities of the flats in Coldharbour House.

The 3 storey element forming the southern wing (Block E3) is sited immediately to the north of and in front of the single storey bungalow at 10 Meriden Way. The western corner of this wing closest to the bungalow is cut back at first and second floor level to provide balconies to the flats. The bungalow is dual aspect with a wide frontage (10.5m) and a narrow depth (4.5m) with a large private garden to the rear. The scale and siting of Block E3 will result in some loss of outlook and natural light to the front of this bungalow, however, this room will have a dual aspect to the rear as well which will help to mitigate this impact. As Block E3 is sited to the north, it will have no impact on direct sunlight. The proposed balconies at the western corner of the building will give rise to overlooking and a loss of privacy to the front

windows of the bungalow. This can be adequately mitigated by the installation of privacy screens, which have been included in the scheme. This is acceptable.

4) Blocks F1, F2 and G

Block F1 is sited between the flank elevations of the existing 4 storey blocks of Coldharbour House and Foxtree House. The flats in these blocks are all dual aspect. Its projection beyond the rear elevation of Coldharbour House will result in some limited loss of outlook and natural light to the rear windows of the flats at the western end of the block, but this impact is not considered significant. Block F1 will also have a limited projection beyond the rear elevation of Foxtree House, but this will have no significant adverse impact.

Block F2 is sited adjoining the flank elevation of the 4 storey block Maple Court and partially in front of the rear elevation of Foxtree House. The flats in these blocks are also dual aspect. Block F2 will have no adverse impacts on the flats in Maple Court. In the case of Foxtree House, the Block F2 has the potential to give rise to a more significant loss of outlook, privacy and natural light to the rear facing windows. In order to mitigate this, Block F2 has been redesigned to increase the distance with Foxtree Court to a maximum of 17m and 13m at its closest point. The spacing between the existing blocks, albeit they are off-set against each other, is 19m. The main windows in the rear flats in Block F2 have also been redesigned to mitigate overlooking of Foxtree House.

The British Research Establishment's (BRE) guide 'Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight', gives rules of thumb for assessing the potential impact of new development on natural light to existing properties. The 25° rule for assessing the impact on daylight can be applied to the windows in Foxtree House. This rule also provides a useful guide to the impact on outlook although this is not its intended purpose. When considering the main element of Block F2 sited 17m from Foxtree House, the block does not breach a 25° line in the vertical plane taken from any of the ground floor windows in Foxtree House. This indicates that there will be no significant loss of natural light to these windows or those on the upper floors. Where the block is at its closest point of 13m the 25° line will be breached for the

ground floor windows only, indicating that some loss of daylight will occur. However, as this part of the block is only 4.5m wide, the loss of light will not be significant. The upper floor windows will comply. On this assessment, there will be no significant loss of light to the flats in Foxtree House. Furthermore, given this situation and the fact that all of the flats in Foxtree Court are dual aspect, it is considered that there will also be no significant loss of outlook to these flats.

In respect of privacy, the main living room window is sited on the corner of the block facing in between the existing buildings towards the courtyard parking area, thereby minimising any opportunity for overlooking. The main bedroom window faces York Way.

Block G is sited on the wide grass verge between the 17 storey tower block Abbey View and York Way, adjacent to the northern end elevation of the block. The 3 storey flats at the eastern end will overlook the front parking area of Abbey View and will have no adverse impact on the flats in the block. The 2 storey houses at the western end have their rear elevations facing Abbey View but have only ground floor windows. The nearest windows in Abbey View are to kitchens only. As such, Block G will have no adverse impacts on the flats in Abbey View.

6.8 (f) Traffic impacts and servicing

A full transport assessment has been submitted with the application. This has been informed by the following surveys:

- Traffic surveys carried out using automatic traffic counters placed on 5 roads (Meriden Way, York Way, The Gossamers, Phillipers and Westlea Avenue). These were in place from 20th April to 3rd May 2015.
- Queuing surveys undertaken with video cameras at the junction of Meriden Way and Westlea Avenue and at the Garston Lane railway bridge. These were undertaken on Tuesday 28th April 2015.
- A survey to identify 'rat-running' through the estate utilising automatic number plate recognition cameras. These cameras were placed at the junction of Westlea Avenue and the A41 at the southern entrance to the

estate and at the junction of Garston Lane with the A412 at the northern entrance to the estate on 28th April 2015.

1) Traffic generation

The traffic surveys show that the highest vehicle flows are on Meriden Way and The Gossamers, as would be expected, being the main north-south roads through the estate. These figures also show a ‘tidal flow’ of traffic related to the morning and evening peak periods.

The Gossamers	Average weekly traffic flow		
	North bound	South bound	Total
0000-2400	4272	3686	7958
0800-0900	243	516	760
1700-1800	515	242	758
Meriden Way			
0000-2400	4996	3577	8573
0800-0900	215	209	424
1700-1800	595	239	833

The predicted traffic flows for the proposed development have also been calculated based upon the net increase in residential dwellings and the loss of the Alterstart garage (predicted to generate 28 vehicle movements per day). This gives a predicted increase of 258 vehicle trips with 23 in the morning peak and 24 in the evening peak. These increases are all considered to be low having regard to the existing traffic flows on The Gossamers and Meriden Way and, consequently, are not considered to have any significant impact on the local highway network.

The Gossamers	Predicted Trip Generation		
	Existing Totals	Net change	% increase
0000-2400	7958	258	3.2
0800-0900	760	23	3.0
1700-1800	758	26	3.4
Meriden Way			
0000-2400	8573	258	3.0
0800-0900	424	23	5.4
1700-1800	833	26	3.1

2) Queuing surveys

The queue data show maximum queue lengths at the Meriden Way/Westlea Avenue junction of 11-13 vehicles between 0715-0800 and 10 vehicles at 0845-0900. Queues are much lower in the evening peak. At the Garston Lane railway bridge, the maximum queue eastbound is 12-13 vehicles between 0830-0900 and 22 vehicles westbound between 1600-1615. In the evening period (1600-1900), queue lengths generally are between 10-16 vehicles.

When the predicted peak period traffic increases are distributed between these two junctions, based upon the 'tidal flow' of vehicles through the estate, the increase in vehicles at these junctions varies between 3-9 vehicles per hour, or one vehicle every 7-20 minutes. This level of additional vehicles using these junctions is not considered to have a significant impact on the existing queue lengths.

3) Rat-running

The level of rat-running through the estate was established by defining a 'rat-running' trip through the estate as a vehicle passing through both the Westlea Avenue/A41 junction and the Garston Lane/St Albans Road junction within a period of 15 minutes. This survey established that rat-running occurs through the estate throughout the day with the highest number of vehicles being 38-40% northbound in the morning peak (0700-0900), 47-48% northbound in the evening peak (1700-

1900) and 55-69% southbound in the morning peak (0700-0900).

The proposed development itself will not increase rat-running through the estate as, by definition, rat-running occurs from vehicles with their origin and destination outside the estate. The proposed environmental improvements around the Meriden Way/York Way/The Gossamers junction will help discourage some rat-running although this cannot be quantified.

6.9 (g) Car and cycle parking provision

Parking provision for the original estate was based around the provision of lock-up garages in small courts, larger open parking courts and on-street parking. In more recent years, the lock-up garages have proved to be under utilised due to the greater size of modern vehicles, especially family cars. Works to improve parking within the estate have included the demolition of garages to provide open parking courts and the provision of small on-street parking bays.

1) Car parking demand

In order to assess the current demand for car parking within the central part of the estate and ensure adequate provision within the proposed development to meet this existing demand and the predicted demand from the new dwellings, a series of parking surveys were undertaken on the estate. Although the surveys were originally intended to focus on the roads within and immediately adjoining the application site, following public consultation, the survey area was widened. Consequently, the survey area included 17 roads and extended from Harvest End in the west to Butterwick in the east, and from Westlea Avenue in the south to the central part of The Gossamers in the north.

The methodology used is the widely regarded and industry standard developed by the London Borough of Lambeth. This is the same methodology used by the applicant for other developments within the Borough, including Boundary Way and Lincoln Court. Within the survey area, both on-street and off-street parking capacity was calculated. The on-street capacity was calculated by counting end-on parking bays and assessing the parallel, kerbside space that could be legally and safely

used.

The results of the survey identified 533 safe and legal on-street spaces and 300 off-street spaces. In order to assess the current demand for parking spaces, a series of parking beat surveys were undertaken, two on a typical weekday at 5pm, 7pm, 9pm and 12 midnight and two on a typical Saturday at 10am, 12pm, 2pm and 4pm. These surveys were then used to calculate average figures for a typical weekday and Saturday. These are summarised in the table below:

Weekday average

Time	Kerbside Parking		
	Cars parked	Free spaces	% Stress
17.00	237	282	46%
19.00	282	238	54%
21.00	323	197	62%
00.00	334	185	64%

It can be seen from this table that the maximum demand was recorded at midnight, which is normally regarded as the time of maximum demand when most residents are likely to be at home. However, the parking stress figure of an average 64% is moderate and certainly not high, with 185 kerbside spaces on average available within the study area. Only 4 roads had a high parking stress of over 85% (Alma Place, Bowmans Green, Harvest End and The Meadows).

Weekday average

Time	Off-Street Parking		
	Cars parked	Free spaces	% Stress
17.00	176	114	61%
19.00	169	121	58%
21.00	169	120	58%
00.00	169	120	58%

This table shows that the maximum demand for off-street spaces was at 17.00

hours with the demand at other times, including midnight, only moderate at 58%. This left 120 off-street spaces on average available for use. Only Munden View and Foxtree House had a parking stress of over 85% (Munden View was at 100%).

Saturday average

Time	Kerbside Parking		
	Cars parked	Free spaces	% Stress
10.00	269	250	52%
12.00	265	255	51%
14.00	277	243	53%
16.00	300	219	58%

This table shows that average parking stress was moderate and did not exceed 58%, with an average of 219 kerbside spaces available. With the exception of Alma Place (which only has 5 on-street spaces) no other road exceeded 85% parking stress.

Saturday average

Time	Off-Street Parking		
	Cars parked	Free spaces	% Stress
10.00	165	127	57%
12.00	162	127	56%
14.00	168	124	58%
16.00	173	119	59%

This table shows that the demand for off-street spaces on a Saturday was very similar to that for kerbside parking, at an average of 59%. This left an average of 119 spaces available. The only areas to exceed a parking stress of 85% were the parking areas to the front and rear of the shopping parade. In the front (public) parking area, a maximum of 25 cars were parked where only 23 spaces exist, indicating a maximum demand slightly in excess (2 cars) of the number of spaces available.

2) Car parking provision - residential

The site is located within Parking Zone 4, as set out in the Watford District Plan 2000. The maximum standards for residential dwellings is as follows:

Dwelling size (bedrooms)	Maximum parking standard (spaces)
1 bedroom	1.25
2 bedrooms	1.5
3 bedrooms	2.25
4+ bedrooms	3
Retirement dwellings	1.0
Sheltered dwellings (with warden)	0.5

For non-residential development, the maximum standard is 75-100% of the maximum. Based upon the number and size of proposed dwellings and non-residential floorspace, the maximum parking provision for each block/area can be calculated.

Block	Maximum	Proposed			
		On-site	Court/bay	On-street	Total
A	9			9	9
B	20.25		10	9	19
C1	1.5		1		1
C2	13.5	6	3		9
Total	44.25	6	14	18	38

Block	Maximum	Proposed			
		On-site	Court/bay	On-street	Total
D	25	25			25
E1	12.25	12			12
Total	37.25	37			37

Block	Maximum	Proposed
--------------	----------------	-----------------

		On-site	Court/bay	On-street	Total
E2 + E3	36.5	20	13		33
Coldharbour House	18 (existing demand)	18			18
Total	54.5	38	13		52

Block	Maximum	Proposed			
		On-site	Court/bay	On-street	Total
F1	11.25		7	3	10
F2	12		11	1	12
G	12		12		12
Foxtree House	16 (existing demand)	16			16
Total	51.25	16	30	4	50

Based on this analysis, the maximum number of new spaces required to serve the 133 new dwellings (excluding the existing demand for Coldharbour House and Foxtree Court) is 153.25 spaces. Within the application site, 142 spaces are provided either on-site, within parking courts or bays, or on-street. If the 'Extra care' flats are excluded (these are considered specialist accommodation and, in any event, have full dedicated on-site provision), the total number of general needs dwellings and retirement dwellings is 83 with a maximum provision of 128.25 spaces and an actual provision within the application site of 117 spaces (91.2%) for these dwellings.

In order to assess the adequacy of this provision, the parking survey also reviewed the existing car ownership within the Meriden Ward (Super Output Area Middle Layer) as a whole based on the 2011 Census data. The breakdown of actual car ownership is:

Car ownership	Count	%
----------------------	--------------	----------

No cars in household	773	23.9
1 car in household	1396	43.2
2 cars in household	790	24.5
3 cars in household	187	5.8
4 or more cars in household	83	2.6

If the ward level breakdown is applied to the 83 general needs and retirement dwellings, the predicted car ownership is 99 cars.

Car ownership	%	83 dwellings	Total cars
0	23.9	20	0
1	43.2	36	36
2	24.5	20	40
3	5.8	5	15
4	2.6	2	8
Total	100	83	99

On the basis of this analysis, the provision of 117 spaces for the 83 general needs and retirement dwellings is considered an adequate and acceptable level of provision, being 91.2% of the maximum standard and an excess of 18 spaces over the predicted level of car ownership.

3) Loss of garages

The proposal will result in the loss of 27 lock-up garages on York Way from the sites of Blocks F1 and F2. These garages (as with others on the estate) are largely defunct for garaging cars due to their small size. Of the 27, 14 are vacant and 13 rented out. Of these, 1 is used for storage (Meriden Residents Association), 4 rented to residents within the immediate area of the application site, 2 rented to residents within the wider estate, 3 to residents not within the estate and 3 to persons of unknown address. On this basis, only 4 of the garages could potentially be being used for the garaging of cars of residents within the immediate area of the application site. These 4 cars would therefore be displaced onto the surrounding

roads. Given the low to moderate levels of parking stress observed on the roads within the application area (York Way has a stress of only 36%), these 4 additional cars will not have a significant effect on parking stress in the area.

4) Car parking provision – non-residential

The existing parade of shops has 18 marked bays in front of it for customer use. The maximum recorded number of cars in this car park from the parking surveys was 25. The proposed provision for the new shops comprises 20 spaces within the new 'market square', 5 spaces within a parking bay adjoining Block E1 (a net increase of 2 spaces), and 6 new spaces on Meriden Way adjacent to Block E3. This is a new provision of 28 spaces, which exceeds the existing provision (18 spaces) and the maximum recorded number of cars (25). This level of provision is considered acceptable.

5) Cycle parking provision

The Council's requirement for cycle parking is 1 secure cycle space per dwelling. Each of the bungalows and houses in Blocks A, B, C1, C2 and G will be provided with garden sheds in their garden areas sufficient for 1 or 2 cycles. The flats in Blocks E1, F1, F2 and G will have access to secure communal cycle stores within the blocks sufficient for 1 cycle per flat. The flats in Blocks E2 and E3 will have secure external cycle stores within the rear parking area. The 'Extra care' units in Block D have no cycle provision but do have secure storage facilities for mobility scooters, which is considered to be an appropriate provision for this specialist residential use.

Short term cycle parking hoops are also provided for the shop units.

6.10 (h) Retail and employment implications

The existing parade of shops comprises 10 units and a floorspace of 922m². These include a range of local convenience services, as set out in paragraph 1.4. The application proposal will replace these 10 units with 11 new units, 9 within Block E2/E3, 1 within block D and 1 within Block E1, with a total floorspace of 1060m². It is intended that all existing lessees will be offered one of the new units of an

equivalent size. The new units within Block E2/E3 are to be constructed before the existing parade of shops is demolished to enable continuity of use. As such, there will be no loss of existing services.

Employment is provided within the 10 retail units, the Alterstart garage and within the applicant's estates department (maintenance and cleaning). As a result of the re-provision of the 10 retail units, there should be no loss of employment. The garage currently employs circa. 6 people. This facility will be lost as part of the scheme and the applicant has been unable to find a suitable alternative site within the Meriden estate. It is therefore anticipated that this facility will relocate elsewhere in Watford. The applicant is providing assistance in this process.

6.11 (i) Sustainability and flood risk

It is the applicant's aspiration to achieve Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes, however, this Code has now been abolished by the Government, so a formal code level assessment is longer possible. The applicant is therefore investigating the possibility of the development being a pilot scheme for the British Research Establishment's (BRE) new Home Quality Mark. Notwithstanding this, the development has been designed to meet the criteria of Level 4. The buildings have been designed with a 'fabric first' approach with enhanced insulation and air-tightness to reduce energy use. Solar photovoltaic panels have also been incorporated into the roofs of Blocks A, B, C2, D, E2 and E3 and extensive green roofs have been incorporated into Blocks D, E1, E2 and E3.

With regard to minimising flood risk from surface water run-off, the applicant's surface water drainage scheme has been approved by Herts. County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA). This incorporates various attenuation measures including rain gardens, swales, permeable paving, green and blue roofs and attenuation tanks that will result in a betterment in run-off rates and water quality.

6.12 (j) Open space and landscaping

The landscape strategy for the development forms an integral part of the proposals.

The use of high quality hard and soft landscaping is designed to enhance the public realm, help to create a sense of arrival at the centre of the estate and encourage the use of new open space. The proposals incorporate 2 new open spaces, the market square and the village green, sited opposite each other across the junction of The Gossamers and York Way. The market square will be paved in high quality paving and will incorporate rain gardens and trees. It will provide a multi-use space that will be used generally to provide car parking for the shops and outdoor seating areas but can also be used for community events and markets. The village green will be a grassed open space with new tree and hedge planting and will incorporate a linear children's play area.

The highway adjoining these spaces will be resurfaced to provide a more pedestrian friendly environment with a more flush surface and contrasting tarmac surfacing, entered via speed ramps to slow down traffic. This will give greater priority to pedestrians and allow easier interaction between the new buildings and open spaces.

The planting strategy utilises both native and non-native species to provide colour and interest throughout the seasons, with the species selected appropriate to the different areas of the site. The hard landscaping scheme will incorporate the use of block paving to the market square and parking areas, flag paving, wide flush kerbs, high quality asphalt with chippings to the roads and resin bonded gravel to footpaths. High quality seating and lighting will be used throughout the different spaces.

The proposals will result in the loss of open space and trees within this part of the estate of approximately 0.4 hectare. However, the estate as a whole is well served with open space. The main area is located along the southern boundary of the estate off Garsmouth Way and Meriden Way and amounts to approximately 3.12 hectares. Overall, it is considered that the benefits of the proposal outweigh the loss of open space from the application site.

7.0 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY AND PLANNING OBLIGATION

7.1 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The Council introduced the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) with effect from 1 April 2015. The CIL charge covers a wide range of infrastructure as set out in the Council's Regulation 123 list, including highways and transport improvements, education provision, youth facilities, childcare facilities, children's play space, adult care services, open space and sports facilities. CIL is chargeable on the relevant net additional floorspace created by the development. The charge is non-negotiable and is calculated at the time that planning permission is granted.

The CIL charges applicable to the proposed development are:

Watford Charging Schedule

Type of Development	CIL Rate
Residential	£120 per sqm
Specialist accommodations for the elderly and/or disabled including Sheltered and Retirement Housing and Nursing homes, Residential Care Homes and Extra Care Accommodation. (This does not include registered, not for profit care homes')(within Use Class C2 and C3).	£120 per sqm
Retail (Class A1 – A5)	£120 per sqm
Other uses	£0 per sqm

The charge is based on the net increase of the gross internal floor area of the proposed development. Exemptions can be sought for charities, social housing and self-build housing. If any of these exemptions is applied for and granted, the CIL liability can be reduced. In the case of this application, all of the residential and specialist accommodation is intended to be affordable and will therefore attract no

CIL charge providing the social housing exemption is correctly applied for. With regard to the retail uses, the CIL charge will only be applied to the net increase in floorarea, with the existing floorspace to be demolished being deducted from the proposed floorspace.

In accordance with s.70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by s.143 of the Localism Act 2011, a local planning authority, in determining a planning application, must have regard to any local finance consideration, so far as material to the application. A local finance consideration is defined as including a CIL charge that the relevant authority has received, or will or could receive. Potential CIL liability can therefore be a material consideration and can be taken into account in the determination of the application.

7.2 **S.106 planning obligation**

The Council introduced the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) with effect from 01 April 2015. On and from this date, s.106 planning obligations can only be used to secure affordable housing provision and other site specific requirements, such as the removal of entitlement to parking permits in Controlled Parking Zones and the provision of fire hydrants.

Unilateral undertaking for affordable housing and fire hydrants

The proposed development is one where affordable housing should be provided, in accordance with saved Policy H16 of the Watford District Plan 2000 and Policy HS3 of the Watford Local Plan Part 1 Core Strategy 2006-31. It is also the applicant's intention to provide all of the proposed residential units as affordable accommodation, in excess of the policy requirements.

In addition, the proposed development is one where Hertfordshire County Council, in pursuance of its duty as the statutory Fire Authority to ensure fire fighting facilities are provided on new developments and that all dwellings are adequately served by fire hydrants in the event of fire, seeks the provision of hydrants required to serve the proposed buildings by means of a planning obligation. The requirements for fire hydrant provision are set out within the County Council's

Planning Obligations Toolkit document (2008) at paragraphs 12.33 and 12.34 (page 22). In practice, the need for hydrants is determined at the time the water services for the development are planned in detail and the layout of the development is known, which is usually after planning permission is granted. If, at the water scheme design stage, adequate hydrants are already available no extra hydrants will be needed.

Under Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010, where a decision is made which results in planning permission being granted for development, a planning obligation may only constitute a reason for granting planning permission for that development if the obligation is:

- necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- directly related to the development; and
- fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

The provision of affordable housing is directly related to the proposed development, and is fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to that development. It is also necessary to make the development acceptable in accordance with the Council's planning policies.

As the County Council's requirement for the provision of fire hydrants accords with the provisions of the *Planning Obligations Toolkit*, this obligation is also directly related to the proposed development and is fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to that development. It is also necessary to make the development acceptable in accordance with the County Council's statutory duty as the Fire Authority.

Accordingly, the provision of affordable housing and the County Council's requirement for fire hydrants meet the tests in Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010, and, consequently, these planning obligations can be taken into account as material planning considerations in the determination of the application. Both the Council's approach to seeking affordable housing

provision and the County Council's approach to seeking the provision of fire hydrants by means of planning obligations are also fully in accordance with the advice set out in paragraphs 203 to 205 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The affordable housing requirement in this case, in accordance with Policy HS3, is 47 dwellings. However, it is the applicant's intention to provide all 133 dwellings as affordable housing.

8.0 CONCLUSION

8.1 The proposal will be a significant intervention into the urban fabric of the central area of the Meriden estate. The applicant's vision is to create a new, vibrant heart at the centre of the estate and make it a destination to visit rather than a place that people just pass through. They have taken a restrained but contemporary approach to the design of the buildings which reflect the scale of existing buildings in this part of the estate. The layout of the proposals apply good urban design principles to create an environment that has a clearly defined, high quality and safe public realm with secure private parking and garden areas for residents.

8.2 The proposal provides a significant increase in dwellings which cater for a range of different housing needs within the estate and with a significant majority of units being affordable. The quality of the new accommodation is good with adequate car parking provision. The proposal respects the amenities of existing residents and ensures the existing on-street parking situation is more than sufficient to cater for existing demand. The existing traffic conditions within the estate are acknowledged but the additional traffic generated by the proposals will not be significant and will not generate any additional rat-running through the estate.

8.2 Overall, it is considered that the proposals will achieve a successful and high quality regeneration of this part of the estate and the benefits of the proposals will significantly outweigh the loss of open space and the local garage that are necessary to facilitate the development.

9.0 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 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.
-

10.0 RECOMMENDATION

- (A)** That planning permission be granted, subject to the completion of a planning obligation under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) as set out below, and subject to the following conditions:

Section 106 Heads of Terms

- i) To secure the provision of fire hydrants as required by the County Council in accordance with Policy H10 of the Watford District Plan 2000.
- ii) To secure a minimum of 89 dwellings as affordable housing comprising 9 social rented and 80 affordable rented units. The remaining 44 dwellings to be provided as social rented, affordable rented or private rented units.

Conditions

1. The development to which this permission relates shall be begun within a period of 3 years commencing on the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development shall only be constructed in accordance with the following approved drawings, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority:

101_PL_011A, 002B, 003D, 004A, 005A, 006B, 007A, 008A, 009A, 010A, 011A, 012A, 013B, 014A, 015B, 016B, 017B, 018B, 019B, 020A, 021A, 022A, 025C, 026C, 027E, 028E, 029D, 030C, 031D, 032B, 033B, 034B, 035C, 036C, 037A, 038A, 039B, 040B.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt as to what has been permitted.

3. Construction of the development hereby permitted shall not take place before 8am or after 6pm Mondays to Fridays, or at any time on Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities and quiet enjoyment of neighbouring properties during the time that the development is being constructed, pursuant to Policy SE22 of the Watford District Plan 2000.

4. No development shall commence until the scheme has been registered with the Considerate Constructors Scheme and a certificate of registration has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority. The construction shall be carried out in accordance with the requirements of this scheme.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of neighbouring properties and prevent obstruction of the adjoining highway during the time that the development is being constructed.

5. No development shall commence until a Development Phasing Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This Plan shall include for each phase a site plan delineating the following works to be undertaken in that phase:

- i) the dwellings to be constructed;
- ii) the parking spaces to be constructed;
- iii) the improvement works to be undertaken within the highway;
- iv) the footpath improvement works to be undertaken.

No dwelling shall be occupied in any given phase until all works within that phase and each preceding phase have been completed in full, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the development is undertaken in a way that minimises the impact on existing residents and that each phase of the development has adequate parking and servicing facilities.

6. No development shall commence within any phase as approved in the Development Phasing Plan until an Environmental Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority for that phase. This Plan shall include details of contractors' parking, arrangements for the delivery and storage of materials, any temporary access/egress points to adjoining highways, measures to mitigate noise and dust, and wheel washing facilities. The Plan as approved shall be implemented throughout the demolition/construction period for each phase.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities and quiet enjoyment of neighbouring properties and prevent obstruction of the adjoining highway during the time that the development is being constructed, pursuant to Policies T4 and SE22 of the Watford District Plan 2000.

7. No development shall commence within any phase as approved in the Development Phasing Plan until a Site Waste Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority for that phase. This Plan shall include demolition and construction works within each phase. The

Plan as approved shall be implemented throughout the demolition/construction period for each phase.

Reason: To minimise the waste generated by the development and ensure the sustainable re-use and management of waste within the county.

8. No development shall commence within any phase until fencing of a style, height and in a position to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority shall have been erected to protect all trees which are to be retained. No materials, vehicles, fuel or any other items shall be stored or buildings erected or works carried out inside this fencing and no changes in ground level shall be made within the spread of any tree or shrubs (including hedges) without the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To safeguard the health and vitality of the existing trees which represent an important visual amenity during the period of construction works in accordance with Policies SE37 and SE39 of the Watford District Plan 2000.

9. No construction works shall commence until full details and samples of the materials to be used for the external surfaces of the buildings (including walls, roofs, windows, doors, balconies and solar panels) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall only be implemented in accordance with the approved materials.

Reason: In the interests of the visual appearance of the site and the character and appearance of the area, in accordance with Policy UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.

10. No construction works shall commence until details of a lighting scheme for the development have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall be installed as approved prior to the first occupation of each phase of the development to which it relates.

Reason: To meet the needs for safety and security for users of the site and to ensure no adverse impacts on the adjoining public highways or adjoining properties, in accordance with Policy SE23 of the Watford District Plan 2000.

11. No removal of trees, scrub or hedges shall be carried out on the site between 1st March and 31st August in any year unless a suitably qualified ecologist has previously searched the trees, scrub or hedges and certified in writing to the Local Planning Authority that such works of removal may proceed.

Reason: In order to avoid harm to nesting birds which are protected.

12. No development approved by this planning permission (or such other date or stage in development as may be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority), shall take place until a scheme that includes the following components to deal with the risks associated with contamination of the site shall each be submitted to and approved, in writing, by the local planning authority:

- 1) A preliminary risk assessment which has identified:

- all previous uses
- potential contaminants associated with those uses
- a conceptual model of the site indicating sources, pathways and receptors
- potentially unacceptable risks arising from contamination at the site.

- 2) A site investigation scheme, based on (1) to provide information for a detailed assessment of the risk to all receptors that may be affected, including those off site.

- 3) The results of the site investigation and detailed risk assessment referred to in (2) and, based on these, an options appraisal and remediation strategy giving full details of the remediation measures required and how they are to be undertaken.

- 4) A verification plan providing details of the data that will be collected in order to demonstrate that the works set out in the remediation strategy in (3) are complete

and identifying any requirements for longer-term monitoring of pollutant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action.

Any changes to these components require the express written consent of the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall be implemented as approved.

Reason: To protect highly sensitive groundwater resources. The Preliminary Risk Assessment submitted with this application indicates the presence of polluting substances from the previous uses (former petrol filling station now used as MOT & service centre, electrical substations and garages). The site is located within Source Protection Zone 1, indicating that groundwater beneath the site will reach the public drinking water supply within 50 days and is therefore highly sensitive to pollution.

13. No occupation of any part of the permitted development shall take place until a verification report demonstrating completion of works set out in the approved remediation strategy and the effectiveness of the remediation shall be submitted to and approved, in writing, by the local planning authority. The report shall include results of sampling and monitoring carried out in accordance with the approved verification plan to demonstrate that the site remediation criteria have been met. It shall also include any plan (a "long-term monitoring and maintenance plan") for longer-term monitoring of pollutant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action, as identified in the verification plan. The long-term monitoring and maintenance plan shall be implemented as approved.

Reason: To protect highly sensitive groundwater resources. The Preliminary Risk Assessment submitted with this application indicates the presence of polluting substances from the previous uses (former petrol filling station now used as MOT & service centre, electrical substations and garages). The site is located within Source Protection Zone 1, indicating that groundwater beneath the site will reach the public drinking water supply within 50 days and is therefore highly sensitive to pollution.

14. No development should take place until a long-term monitoring and maintenance plan in respect of contamination including a timetable of monitoring and submission of reports to the Local Planning Authority, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Reports as specified in the approved plan, including details of any necessary contingency action arising from the monitoring, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any necessary contingency measures shall be carried out in accordance with the details in the approved reports. On completion of the monitoring specified in the plan a final report demonstrating that all long-term remediation works have been carried out and confirming that remedial targets have been achieved shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect highly sensitive groundwater resources. The Preliminary Risk Assessment submitted with this application indicates the presence of polluting substances from the previous uses (former petrol filling station now used as MOT & service centre, electrical substations and garages). The site is located within Source Protection Zone 1, indicating that groundwater beneath the site will reach the public drinking water supply within 50 days and is therefore highly sensitive to pollution.

15. If, during development, contamination not previously identified is found to be present at the site then no further development (unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority) shall be carried out until the developer has submitted a remediation strategy to the local planning authority detailing how this unsuspected contamination shall be dealt with and obtained written approval from the local planning authority. The remediation strategy shall be implemented as approved.

Reason: To protect highly sensitive groundwater resources. The Preliminary Risk Assessment submitted with this application indicates the presence of polluting substances from the previous uses (former petrol filling station now used as MOT & service centre, electrical substations and garages). The site is located within Source Protection Zone 1, indicating that groundwater beneath the site will reach

the public drinking water supply within 50 days and is therefore highly sensitive to pollution.

16. No infiltration of surface water drainage into the ground at this site is permitted other than with the express written consent of the local planning authority, which may be given for those parts of the site where it has been demonstrated that there is no resultant unacceptable risk to controlled waters. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approval details.

Reason: To protect highly sensitive groundwater resources. The Preliminary Risk Assessment submitted with this application indicates the presence of polluting substances from the previous uses (former petrol filling station now used as MOT & service centre, electrical substations and garages). The site is located within Source Protection Zone 1, indicating that groundwater beneath the site will reach the public drinking water supply within 50 days and is therefore highly sensitive to pollution.

17. Piling or any other foundation designs using penetrative methods shall not be permitted other than with the express written consent of the Local Planning Authority, which may be given for those parts of the site where it has been demonstrated that there is no resultant unacceptable risk to groundwater. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To protect highly sensitive groundwater resources. The Preliminary Risk Assessment submitted with this application indicates the presence of polluting substances from the previous uses (former petrol filling station now used as MOT & service centre, electrical substations and garages). The site is located within Source Protection Zone 1, indicating that groundwater beneath the site will reach the public drinking water supply within 50 days and is therefore highly sensitive to pollution.

18. No development shall commence until a drainage strategy, detailing any on and/or off site drainage works, has been submitted to and approved by, the Local Planning

Authority. The proposed foul water discharge rates to every connection point must be included in the drainage strategy. If initial investigations conclude that the existing sewer network is unlikely to be able to support the demand anticipated from this development, an Impact Study must be undertaken to inform the drainage strategy. No discharge of foul or surface water from the site shall be accepted into the public system until all works referred to in the approved drainage strategy have been completed in full.

Reason: The development may lead to sewage flooding; to ensure that sufficient capacity is made available to cope with the new development; and in order to avoid adverse environmental impact upon the community.

19. No impact piling shall take place within the site until a piling method statement (detailing the depth and type of piling to be undertaken and the methodology by which such piling will be carried out, including measures to prevent and minimise the potential for damage to subsurface sewerage infrastructure, and the programme for the works) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any piling must be undertaken in accordance with the terms of the approved piling method statement.

Reason: The proposed works will be in close proximity to underground sewerage utility infrastructure. Piling has the potential to impact on local underground sewerage utility infrastructure.

20. No development shall commence until a Stage 2 Road Safety Audit for the proposed highway improvements and access junctions has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall only be constructed in accordance with the approved works.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

21. No demolition or construction works shall not commence until a Construction Traffic Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local

Planning Authority. Thereafter the construction of the development shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved Plan. The Construction Traffic Management Plan shall include details of:

- a) Construction vehicle numbers, type, routing;
- b) Traffic management requirements;
- c) Construction and storage compounds (including areas designated for car parking);
- d) Siting and details of wheel washing facilities;
- e) Cleaning of site entrances, site tracks and the adjacent public highway;
- f) Timing of construction activities to avoid school pick up/drop off times;
- g) Provision of sufficient on-site parking prior to commencement of construction activities;
- h) Post construction restoration/reinstatement of the working areas and temporary access to the public highway.

Reason: In order to protect highway safety and the amenity of other users of the public highway and rights of way.

22. The development permitted by this planning permission shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved Flood Risk Assessment carried out by Conisbee Engineers dated 24 August 2015 (Revision 1.2, reference 150340/TG), drawing no.C103 and the response letter to the LLFA received on the 10 September 2015 and the following mitigation measures detailed within the FRA:

- i) Limiting the surface water run-off generated by the 1 in 100 year + 30% for climate change critical storm so that it will not exceed the run-off from the undeveloped site and not increase the risk of flooding off-site.

- ii) Restricting the surface water run-off rates to each discharge point into the existing sewer network in accordance with Table 6.1 within the FRA.
- iii) Implement a range of SuDS measures in accordance with the FRA including permeable paving, swales, rain gardens and tanks.

The mitigation measures shall be fully implemented prior to occupation and subsequently in accordance with the timing / phasing arrangements embodied within the scheme, or within any other period as may subsequently be agreed, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To provide a betterment to flood risk by reducing the overall surface water run-off rates from the new development and ensuring the satisfactory disposal of surface water from the site, in accordance with Policy SE30 of the Watford District Plan 2000.

23. No individual dwelling in any given block of houses or flats, as identified on the approved drawings, shall be occupied until a detailed soft landscaping scheme for all the land within and adjoining the respective part of the site, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This shall include the retention of existing trees and hedging where possible and measures to enhance the ecological biodiversity of the site. The approved landscaping scheme shall be carried out not later than the first available planting and seeding season after completion of the respective block forming part of the development. Any trees or plants whether new or existing which within a period of five years die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, or in accordance with details approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the visual appearance of the site and the wider area, in accordance with Policy UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.

24. No individual dwelling in any given block of houses or flats, as identified on the approved drawings, shall be occupied until a detailed hard landscaping scheme for all the land within and adjoining the respective part of the site, including details of all site boundary treatments and internal plot boundaries, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and the works have been carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the visual appearance of the site and the wider area, in accordance with Policy UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.

25. No individual dwelling in any given block of houses or flats, as identified on the approved drawings, shall be occupied until the respective refuse and recycling facilities and cycle storage facilities to serve the dwellings, as shown on the approved drawings, have been constructed. These facilities shall be retained as approved at all times.

Reason: In the interests of the visual appearance of the site and to ensure that adequate facilities exist for residents of the proposed development, in accordance with Policy SE7 of the Watford District Plan 2000.

26. No individual dwelling in any given block of houses or flats, as identified on the approved drawings, shall be occupied until the respective vehicle parking accommodation, as shown on the approved Development Phasing Plan has been provided and made available for use. This parking accommodation shall be permanently retained and shall not be used for any other purpose than the parking of vehicles of occupants of the development or visitors to the site.

Reason: To ensure that the development makes adequate provision for the parking of vehicles of the future occupiers of the development and their visitors in the interests of highway safety and to accord with Policies T22 and T24 of the Watford District Plan 2000.

27. Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 3 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, no development permitted under Schedule 2, Part 1, Classes A, B, C, D, E, F of the Order shall be carried out to the houses hereby approved without the prior written permission of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to ensure that any such developments are carried out in a manner which will not be harmful to the character and appearance of the proposed development and will not prove detrimental to the amenities of adjoining occupiers in accordance with Policy UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.

28. At least four months prior to the first occupation of the development, details of the proposed Travel Plan for the residential elements of the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To promote a sustainable development in accordance with Local Plan policies and highway authority requirements.

29. At least four months prior to the occupation of any commercial unit, details of a Delivery and Servicing Management Plan for the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This shall include details of the size of delivery vehicles, the locations for parking delivery vehicles and the times during which deliveries shall take place.

Reason: To protect highway safety and the amenity of other users of the public highway and rights of way and to protect the amenities of neighbouring residential properties.

30. No access shall be brought into use until it has been laid out and constructed in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and convenience.

31. No plant or equipment associated with the commercial uses in Blocks E1, E2 and E3 or the communal kitchen in Block D shall be sited on the external elevations of the buildings unless details of the plant or equipment has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include size, appearance, siting and technical specifications relating to noise and odour control as appropriate.

Reason: In the interests of the appearance of the buildings and the amenities of adjoining residential properties.

32. The commercial units within the development shall only be used for the following uses within the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended), unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority:
- a) The unit labelled as 'hairdresser' in Block D shall only be used for purposes within Class A1 (Shops).
 - b) The unit labelled as 'café' in Block E1 shall only be used as a café within Class A3 (Restaurants and cafes) or for purposes within Class A1 (Shops).
 - c) Units 1-8 in Block E2 shall only be used for purposes within Class A1 (Shops) with the exception of one unit which may be used as a launderette (Sui generis), one unit which may be used for purposes within Class A2 (Financial and professional offices) and two units which may be used for purposes within Class A5 (Hot food takeaways).
 - d) Unit 9 in Block E3 shall only be used for purposes within Class A1 (Shops).

Reason: To ensure an acceptable range of uses to serve the local community.

33. No commercial unit within Blocks E1, E2 and E3 shall be open to the public before 0700 hours or after 2200 hours on any day.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of neighbouring residential properties.

Informatives

1. This planning permission is accompanied by a unilateral undertaking under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to secure the provision of a minimum of 89 affordable housing units and the necessary fire hydrants to serve the development.
 2. 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.
 3. Before commencing the development the applicant shall contact Hertfordshire County Council Highways (0300 123 4047) to obtain i) their permission/requirements regarding access for vehicles involved in the demolition of the existing building; ii) a condition survey of any adjacent highways which may be affected by construction vehicles together with an agreement with the highway authority that the developer will bear all costs in reinstating any damage to the highway.
 4. A Groundwater Risk Management Permit from Thames Water will be required for discharging groundwater into a public sewer. Any discharge made without a permit is deemed illegal and may result in prosecution under the provisions of the Water Industry Act 1991. We would expect the developer to demonstrate what measures he will undertake to minimise groundwater discharges into the public sewer.
-

Drawing numbers

101_PL_011A, 002B, 003D, 004A, 005A, 006B, 007A, 008A, 009A, 010A, 011A, 012A, 013B, 014A, 015B, 016B, 017B, 018B, 019B, 020A, 021A, 022A, 025C, 026C, 027E, 028E, 029D, 030C, 031D, 032B, 033B, 034B, 035C, 036C, 037A, 038A, 039B, 040B.

(B) In the event that an acceptable planning obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 has not been completed by 30th October 2015 in respect of the Heads of Terms set out above, the Development Management Section Head be authorised to refuse planning permission for the application for the following reasons:

1. The proposal fails to make provision for affordable housing on-site and as such is contrary to Policy HS3 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.
 2. The proposal fails to make provision for fire hydrants to serve the development and as such is contrary to Policy INF1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31 and saved Policy H10 of the Watford District Plan 2000.
-

Case Officer: Paul Baxter
Email: paul.baxter@watford.gov.uk
Tel: 01923 278284