

Committee date	5th September 2018
Application reference	18/00689/FULM
Site address	Halsey House, Rosslyn Road
Proposal	Demolition of existing building (Town and Country Club) and construction of four storey building comprising 39 dwellings (1 and 2 bedroom flats) with 12 car parking spaces, cycle store , bin store and amenity space. All units to be affordable housing.
Applicant	Hightown Housing Association
Agent	Tooley and Foster Partnership
Target decision date	6th September 2018
Statutory publicity	Press advert and site notice published 15th June 2018
Case officer	Paul Baxter paul.baxter@watford.gov.uk
Ward	Central

1. Recommendation

Approve subject to conditions and the completion of a section 106/Unilateral Undertaking, as set out in section 8 of this report.

2. Site and surroundings

2.1 The site is located on the north-eastern side of Rosslyn Road and comprises a 2 storey detached building formerly occupied by the Watford Town and Country Club. This organisation closed down in January 2018 and the building is currently vacant and boarded up. The site is approximately rectangular in shape and has an area of 0.26 hectare. The north-western boundary of the site adjoins The Beeches/Ballinger Court, a residential development comprising 3 storey blocks of flats, and contains a number of preserved and non-preserved trees. The south-eastern and north-eastern boundaries adjoin a service road serving commercial units to the north-east which front The Parade. Beyond the service road to the south-east is the Gade multi-storey car park.

2.2 Further information, including the site plan and drawings, is available in the appendices to the report and on the council's [website](#).

3. Summary of the proposal

3.1 Proposal

To demolish the existing building and erect a 4 storey building, approximately rectangular in footprint, to provide 39 residential flats (7 x 1 bed and 32 x 2

bed) and 12 car parking spaces. All of the proposed units are to be for affordable housing with 23 units for affordable rent and 16 units for shared ownership.

3.2 Conclusion

The revised NPPF (2018) now requires local housing needs assessment to be conducted using the standard methodology and sets out that the Local Planning Authority should apply the weighted test set out in paragraph 11 (d) unless it can demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites. The Council currently cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites and therefore paragraph 11(d) should be applied, which states that permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies of the NPPF taken as a whole.

3.3 The demolition of the existing building will result in the loss of a community facility, however, the Watford Town and Country Club no longer exists as an organisation and the site has been sold to the applicant. The former community use was evidently not viable to continue operating and it is considered highly unlikely any other community organisation would be able to operate the building on a viable basis. Other social and community uses do exist in the locality. It is not therefore considered that the loss of the community use should be given significant weight in the determination of the application.

3.4 The site is in a sustainable and accessible location within the town centre and the redevelopment for residential use is considered acceptable. The proposal will provide 39 housing units, all for affordable housing, a significant benefit to the borough. The scale and design of the building is considered acceptable and appropriate for this site, given the varied nature of existing buildings within the immediate locality. All of the units will provide good quality accommodation for future occupants. The proposal will have no adverse impacts on neighbouring residential properties.

4. Relevant policies

Members should refer to the background papers attached to the agenda. These highlight the policy framework under which this application was determined. Specific policy considerations with regard to this particular application are detailed in section 6 below.

5. Relevant site history/background information

5.1 There is no planning history of relevance to the current application. The existing building was erected in the late 1950s.

6. Main considerations

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

- (a) Principle of land use
- (b) Housing
- (c) Impact on the character and appearance of the area
- (d) Quality of the new accommodation provided
- (e) Impact on amenity of adjoining residential properties
- (f) Access, servicing and parking
- (g) Environmental considerations

6.2 (a) Principle of land use

The demolition of the existing building will result in the loss of a community facility, however, the Watford Town and Country Club no longer exists as an organisation and the site has been sold to the applicant. The former community use was evidently not viable to continue operating and it is considered highly unlikely any other community organisation would be able to operate the building on a viable basis. In their supporting planning statement, the applicant has stated that the site was marketed for sale after the club closed down and of the 23 offers received, only 1 was not for residential use. No offers were forthcoming from community uses. In further mitigation of the loss of the community use, other social and community uses do exist in the locality, the nearest being the West Herts Sports Club in Park Avenue (which has a function room for hire) and the Ex-Servicemen's Social Club at Flanders Court on St Albans Road. In these circumstances, it is not considered that the loss of the community use should be given significant weight in the determination of the application.

6.3 (b) Housing

The site falls within the designated town centre although has no specific land use designation. Rosslyn Road comprises various residential uses including residential flats and houses and care homes. The site is in a sustainable and accessible location close to a wide range of services and facilities and public transport. The site is brown field land, is not at risk of flooding and has no biodiversity, landscape or cultural heritage significance. Therefore, the proposal is consistent with Policy HS1 of the Core Strategy. The proposal would contribute towards meeting the Borough's housing target, which should be afforded considerable weight in consideration of the application.

- 6.3.1 Paragraph 117 of the revised NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Furthermore, paragraph 68 highlights that small and medium sites (less than 1 hectare) can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, and are often built-out quickly. In this case, it is considered that the proposed development, consisting of 39 flats on a small site, would make optimal use of the site close to passenger transport facilities and provide an acceptable standard of amenity for future occupants. Furthermore, it is considered that the proposed development would maintain the character and appearance of the area as discussed in the report.
- 6.3.2 The proposed housing mix comprises 7 x 1 bed and 32 x 2 bed flats (of which 3 are for 3 person and 29 for 4 person occupancy). Given the town centre location of the site and the fact that 32 of the flats will be suitable for family occupation (families with 1 or 2 children), the lack of any 3 bed units is not considered to be critical in this case. The introduction of 3 bed units would reduce the overall number of units in the development and would impact on the viability of the scheme and the applicant's ability to incorporate all affordable housing and to maximise the number of rented units. As such, the proposed mix is considered to be acceptable in this case.
- 6.3.3 Policy HS3 of the Core Strategy seeks a 35% provision of affordable housing on all schemes of 10 or more units. This would equate to 14 units for the proposed scheme. The proposal is 100% affordable housing and complies with policy in this respect. The policy also gives a breakdown of the unit tenures sought which is 65% affordable rent, 20% social rent and 15% shared ownership. Based upon a 35% provision, this would equate to 9 affordable rent, 3 social rent and 2 shared ownership units. The proposed tenure mix is 59% affordable rent and 41% shared ownership. In the current housing market in Watford, shared ownership tenures are generally not considered affordable as they do not meet the urgent housing needs of the borough. However, even discounting these units, the 23 affordable rent units still give an increase of 11 rented units over the number that would be achieved if only a policy compliant 35% provision were to be provided. Given that the majority of the units are larger 2 bed family units, it is considered that these additional 11 units for affordable rent more than compensate for the lack of a small number of social rented units. The proposed affordable housing mix is therefore considered to be acceptable.

- 6.4 (c) Impact on the character and appearance of the area
- Paragraph 124 of the revised NPPF states that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Paragraph 127 states, among other things, that planning decisions should ensure that developments are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate landscaping; they should be sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities); and development should optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development and support local facilities and transport networks.
- 6.4.1 Rosslyn Road is predominantly residential in nature, characterised by 2 and 3 storey buildings, but does include a wide range of building styles. To the north-west the site adjoins The Beeches/Ballinger Court development which comprises 3 no. 3 storey blocks built in the 1980s-1990s. Opposite the site is Crakers Mead, a 3 storey block built in the 1960s and 2 recently built 3 storey blocks of flats at nos. 14 and 16 (only just nearing completion). No.14 is built in a traditional style but no.16 is contemporary in style. The only building not in keeping with this character is the Gade multi-storey car park, a large concrete structure with 5 levels of car parking set at right-angles to the road, which is sited to the south-east of the site.
- 6.4.2 In this context, the proposed 4 storey block is considered appropriate and acceptable in its scale and massing. It makes the transition between the 3 storey flats of The Beeches and the larger structure of the Gade car park without appearing visually dominant within the streetscene. The building is set back from the road frontage by 19m and the proposal retains the preserved and non-preserved trees along the north-western boundary, the former of which are located towards the site frontage and make an important contribution to the streetscene.
- 6.4.3 The design of the building is relatively simple and unremarkable incorporating brickwork for the elevations and a very shallow metal pitched roof. The windows are arranged formally to give regularity and rhythm to the elevations with recessed brick panels and patterned brickwork adding texture and interest. The building has been designed to incorporate ground floor entrances for the ground floor flats to add further interest and activity to the elevations.

6.4.4 Overall, the building will provide a more prominent and active elevation to Rosslyn Road and will make a strong and positive contribution to the streetscene, complementing the character and appearance of the locality.

6.5 (d) Quality of the new accommodation provided

All of the proposed flats exceed the nationally described space standard and all have a good internal layout. The majority of the flats will have good levels of outlook, natural light and privacy. For some of the flats it is acknowledged that a lower level of amenity will be experienced. For the flats facing the north-western boundary, natural light levels will be lower due to the presence of trees along the boundary but these trees will give a more verdant outlook to the flats. For the flats facing south-east towards the car park, the quality of the view will be impacted by the uninspiring concrete structure although the more objective level of outlook will be less affected due to the distance between the proposed windows and the car park (varying from 24.4-28.3m). Overall, it is considered the proposal will provide a good quality of accommodation for future occupiers in this town centre site.

6.6 (e) Impact on amenity of adjoining residential properties

The nearest residential properties are located at The Beeches to the north-east and the flats under construction opposite the site at 16, Rosslyn Road. In many cases, the distance between the existing windows of flats in The Beeches and the windows of the proposed flats exceed the minimum distance of 27.5m set out in the Residential Design Guide. Where this distance is not met, principally the front part of the proposed building, any loss of outlook or privacy is mitigated successfully by the retained trees and the use of angled windows. Overall, it is not considered that the proposal will have any significant adverse impact on the amenities of the occupiers in The Beeches.

6.6.1 In respect of the flats opposite the site at 16, Rosslyn Road, the facing distance between this development and the proposed development is 26.4-27.0m, across the landscaped frontage and Rosslyn Road itself. As such, the proposal will have no impact on these flats.

6.7 (f) Access, servicing and parking

The existing site has 2 vehicle crossovers/accesses from Rosslyn Road. The proposal will utilise the southern access with the northern access being closed. The access will serve 12 parking spaces sited along the south-eastern boundary. This level of provision equates to 0.3 space per flat which is significantly below the maximum standard of 1 space per flat in the Watford District Plan. However, given the highly sustainable location of the site with good access to public transport, this is acceptable. As the site falls within a controlled parking zone, the development will need to be excluded from the

zone in order to prevent future occupiers being entitled to resident permits. This will ensure the development does not exacerbate existing on-street parking congestion on the surrounding roads. This can be secured via a section 106 undertaking.

6.7.1 The submitted transport assessment shows that predicted traffic movements in the morning and evening peak periods are low, at 10 vehicle movements and 5 vehicle movements respectively. The impact on the highway network will therefore be negligible.

6.7.2 The building incorporates 2 secure cycle stores with a capacity for 40 cycles, which is acceptable and in accordance with the District Plan standards. Two bin stores are located adjacent to the access to allow collection from Rosslyn Road. Service and delivery vehicles will also be able to reverse into the site. This is an acceptable arrangement in this case. Rosslyn Road links Rickmansworth Road and Upton Road and carries relatively little traffic most of the time. Apart from the residential properties, it principally serves the Gade car park.

6.8 (g) Environmental considerations

Six individual trees (2 preserved and 4 non-preserved) and a small group of trees are sited along the north-western boundary and are to be retained. A tree protection plan has been submitted as part of the arboricultural impact assessment to secure the retention of these trees during construction.

6.8.1 A surface water drainage scheme has been submitted with the application. This incorporates underground attenuation tanks with a regulated outflow to the main sewer of 5 litres per second. This is acceptable.

7. Consultation responses received

7.1 Statutory consultees and other organisations

Name of Statutory Consultee / Other Organisation	Comment	Officer Response
Hertfordshire County Council (Lead Local Flood Authority)	No objection subject to conditions to secure the submitted surface water drainage scheme.	Noted.
Hertfordshire County Council (Highway Authority)	No objections subject to suggested conditions.	Noted.

Thames Water	No objections.	Noted.
Crime Prevention Design Service	I am content that security and crime prevention issues have been addressed for this application and the development will be built to the Police minimum security standard, Secured by Design.	Noted.

7.2 Internal Consultees

Name of Internal Consultee	Comment	Officer Response
Arboricultural Officer	There will most likely be some pruning required to Sycamore (T3 of TPO 123) referred to as T1 in the arboricultural impact assessment, which may require cutting back and lifting. I have no objections to these minor works. I have no objections to the proposals as they show no loss of trees or major impact on the root protection areas of the retained trees.	Noted. Appropriate conditions can be used to secure the tree protection measures and details of new planting.
Housing	Although the application offers no social rented units we are satisfied that the gain from the site being 100% affordable housing rather than just 35%, in particular the 14 additional affordable rented units above policy requirements, is sufficient to offset the loss of 3 social rented units. The Housing Service	Noted.

	therefore supports the application.	
Waste and recycling	Bin provision and placement of bin store is in line with guidance.	Noted.
Planning Policy	No response received.	

7.3 Representations received from interested parties

Only 1 letter was received, requesting a copy of the decision notice.

8. Recommendation

That, pursuant to a planning obligation under s.106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 having been completed to secure the following Heads of Terms, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions listed below:

Section 106 Heads of Terms

- i) To secure 39 flats as affordable housing comprising 23 flats (7 x 1 bed and 16 x 2 bed) for affordable rent and 16 flats (16 x 2 bed) for low cost home ownership.
- ii) To secure a financial payment to the Council of £2,000 towards the variation of the Borough of Watford (Watford Central Area and West Watford Area) (Controlled Parking Zones) (Consolidation) Order 2010 to exclude the site from the controlled parking zone, thereby preventing residents' parking permits being issued to this site.

Conditions

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

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

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

5149-TFP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-2007/SO/P01
5149-TFP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-2003/SO/P010

5149-TFP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-2009/SO/P07
5149-TFP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-2008/SO/P08
5149-TFP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-2006/SO/P010
5149-TFP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-2010/SO/P09
5149-TFP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-2011/SO/P08

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

3. No demolition or construction works shall commence until the tree protection measures detailed in Section 4 and the Draft Tree Constraints Plan of the Arboricultural Impact Assessment by Middlemarch Environmental (Report No. RT-MME-127193-02, dated April 2018) have been implemented in full, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These measures shall be retained at all times during demolition and construction works.

Reason: In order to protect the retained trees from damage during demolition and construction works and ensure their long term retention.

4. No construction works above damp proof course level shall commence until details of the materials to be used for all the external finishes of the building, including walls, roofs, doors, windows, fascias and balustrades, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out only 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.

5. No construction works above damp proof course level shall commence until detailed drawings of the window and door reveals and brick detailing to the external walls, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out only in accordance with the approved details.

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.

6. The development permitted by this planning permission shall be carried out in accordance with the approved surface water drainage assessment carried out by Thomasons Ltd (reference C12600, dated May 2018):
 1. Limiting the surface water run-off generated by the critical storm events so that it will not exceed the surface water run-off rate of 5 l/s during the 1 in 100 year event plus 40% of climate change event.
 2. Providing storage to ensure no increase in surface water run-off volumes for all rainfall events up to and including the 1 in 100 year + climate change event providing a minimum of 115 m³ (or such storage volume agreed with the LLFA) of total storage volume in four underground tanks.
 3. Discharge of surface water from the private drain into the Thames Water surface water sewer network.

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 prevent flooding by ensuring the satisfactory disposal and storage of surface water from the site and to reduce the risk of flooding to the proposed development and future occupants.

7. No construction works above damp course level shall commence until a detailed surface water drainage scheme for the site, based on the approved surface water drainage strategy and sustainable drainage principles, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The drainage strategy should demonstrate the surface water run-off generated up to and including 1 in 100 year + climate change critical storm will not exceed the run-off from the undeveloped site following the corresponding rainfall event. The scheme shall subsequently be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the development is completed.

The scheme should include:

1. Detailed modelling for the proposed drainage strategy to include the modelling for the 1 in 1 year event, the 1 in 30 year event and the 1

in 100 year rainfall event including 40% for climate change allowance.

2. Detailed engineered drawings of the proposed SuDS features including cross section drawings, their size, volume, depth and any inlet and outlet features including any connecting pipe runs.
3. Final detailed management plan to include arrangements for adoption and any other arrangements to secure the operation of the scheme throughout its lifetime.

Reason: To prevent the increased risk of flooding, both on and off site.

8. No construction works above damp proof course level shall commence until a scheme for active and passive electric charging points for on-site vehicles has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The electric charging infrastructure and charging points shall be installed in accordance with the approved scheme prior to the first occupation of the development.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed development achieves high levels of sustainability in accordance with Policies SD1 and SD3 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31 and paragraph 110 of the National Planning Policy Framework revised July 2018.

9. No part of the development shall be occupied until full details of a hard and soft landscaping scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the approved hard landscaping has been laid out in accordance with the approved details. The approved soft landscaping shall be carried out not later than the first available planting and seeding season after completion 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.

10. No part of the development shall be occupied until the refuse and recycling stores and cycle stores to serve the dwellings, as shown on the approved drawings, have been constructed and made available for use.

These facilities shall be retained as approved at all times and shall be used for no other purpose.

Reason: To ensure that adequate facilities exist for residents of the proposed development, in accordance with Policies SE7 and T10 of the Watford District Plan 2000.

11. No part of the development shall be occupied until the existing vehicle crossover at the northern end of the Rosslyn Road frontage has been removed and the footpath has been reinstated.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and convenience, in accordance with saved Policy T21 of the Watford District Plan 2000.

12. No dwelling shall be occupied in the respective blocks until details of a communal terrestrial television aerial(s) and satellite dish(es) for the block have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

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

13. For the avoidance of doubt, no communications development permitted by Classes A, B or C of Part 16 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) shall be undertaken on any of the buildings hereby approved.

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

Informatives

1. You are advised of the need to comply with the provisions of The Control of Pollution Act 1974, The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, The Clean Air Act 1993 and The Environmental Protection Act 1990.

In order to minimise impact of noise, any works associated with the development which are audible at the site boundary should be restricted to the following hours:

- Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm

- Saturdays 8am to 1pm
- Noisy work is prohibited on Sundays and bank holidays

Instructions should be given to ensure that vehicles and plant entering and leaving the site comply with the stated hours of work.

Further details for both the applicant and those potentially affected by construction noise can be found on the Council's website at:

https://www.watford.gov.uk/info/20010/your_environment/188/neighbor_complaints_%E2%80%93_construction_noise .

2. This development may be considered a chargeable development for the purposes of the Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010 (as amended). The charge is non-negotiable and is calculated at the time planning permission is granted. The charge is based on the net increase of gross internal floor area of the proposed development.

A person or party must assume liability to pay the levy using the assumption of liability form 1 which should be sent to the CIL Officer, Regeneration and Development, Watford Borough Council, Town Hall, Watford, WD17 3EX or via email (semeta.bloomfield@watford.gov.uk).

If nobody assumes liability to pay the levy this will default to the land owner. A Liability Notice will be issued in due course. Failure to adhere to the Regulations and commencing work without notifying the Council could forfeit any rights you have to appeal or pay in instalments and may also incur fines/surcharges.

3. This planning permission is accompanied by a unilateral undertaking under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to secure 24 flats as affordable housing, the exclusion of the development from the local controlled parking zone, the necessary fire hydrants to serve the development, a monitoring fee for the Travel Plan and a parking space for a car club vehicle.
4. All new developments granted planning permission and to be constructed require naming or numbering under the Public Health Act 1925. You must contact Watford Borough Council Street Naming and Numbering department as early as possible prior to commencement on streetnamenumbers@watford.gov.uk or 01923 278458. A numbering notification will be issued by the council, following which Royal Mail will assign a postcode which will make up the official address. It is also the

responsibility of the developer to inform Street Naming and Numbering when properties are ready for occupancy.

5. 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 entered into extensive pre-application discussions with the applicant.
6. All works required to be undertaken on the highway network will require an Agreement with the Highway Authority. Before commencing the development the applicant shall contact HCC Highways Development Management, County Hall, Pegs Lane, Hertford, SG13 8DN to obtain their permission and requirements. This is to ensure any work undertaken in the highway is constructed in accordance with the Highway Authority's specification and by a contractor who is authorised to work in the public highway.