

Committee date	Wednesday, 5 February 2020
Application reference	19/01412/VAR – Clarendon House, 33 Bridle Path
Site address	
Proposal	Variation of Condition 2 (approved drawings) of planning permission 18/00409/FULM for the demolition of existing office building and erection of a mixed-use building of part 4, part 9 and part 14 storeys comprising 41 no. residential apartments and 1,800sqm of office space (Class B1a), with associated infrastructure including landscaping and basement car parking. Revised building configuration and elevations.
Applicant	Clarendon House Watford Limited
Agent	Urban Town Planning Limited
Type of Application	Variation of Condition (s.73)
Reason for committee Item	Major development
Target decision date	3 rd March 2020
Statutory publicity	Public advertisement and site notice
Case officer	Paul Baxter, paul.baxter@watford.gov.uk
Ward	Central

1. Recommendation

Approve subject to conditions as set out in section 8 of this report.

2. Site and surroundings

- 2.1 The application site has an area of 0.11 hectare and is irregular in shape, sited at the northern end of Bridle Path. It has an east-west orientation with a frontage to Bridle Path at both ends due to the U-shaped layout of Bridle Path. The northern boundary of the site abuts the footpath linking St Albans Road to the west with Watford Junction Station to the east. The site was formerly occupied by a 3 storey office building erected in the 1980s but this has recently been demolished. The basement car park was accessed from the eastern spur of Bridle Path.
- 2.2 The immediate area of Bridle Path contains a variety of different commercial buildings. Immediately to the south of the site is the 8 storey Holiday Inn Express hotel. Adjoining this site, planning permission was recently granted in November 2016 for the erection of a new part 5, part 8, part 9 storey hotel. Beyond this site to the south is the 2 storey Shire House office building. On the southern side of Bridle Path, are the 2/3 storey office buildings fronting

Station Road. Most of these are former detached and semi-detached residential properties that have been converted to office use over many years. To the west are the two, 4/5 storey Egale House office buildings which front St Albans Road. Finally, to the east is Benskin House occupied by The Flag public house. This is a listed building comprising the 3 storey original hotel building facing Watford Junction Station and the 2 storey former stables range fronting Station Road and extending along the eastern side of Bridle Path.

2.3 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

Variation of Condition 2 (approved drawings) of planning permission 18/00409/FULM for the demolition of the existing office building and erection of a mixed-use building of part 4, part 9 and part 14 storeys comprising 41 no. residential apartments and 1,800sqm of office space (Class B1a), with associated infrastructure including landscaping and basement car parking. Revised building configuration and elevations.

3.2 The main changes to the approved building are:

- i) Increase in the footprint of the building extending closer to the site boundaries. This has partly arisen through a more accurate site survey but has also incorporated narrow strips of land around the approved building.
- ii) Deletion of the small 4 storey building extension which has proven unfeasible to build. This floorspace has been incorporated into the main building.
- iii) Reconfiguration of the internal floorspace of the office and the flats to provide improved and more efficient layouts.
- iv) Amended fenestration to building elevations.

3.3 Conclusion

The proposed removal of the 4 storey extension building, the slight increase in the building footprint and the rationalisation of the floorspace of both the offices and the flats will give an improved and more efficient building. The proposed amendments to the building elevations will enhance the appearance of the building and continue to provide a high quality development of this irregular site.

4. Relevant policies

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

5. Relevant site history/background information

5.1 The following planning history is relevant to this application:

14/01324/FULM – Demolition of existing office building, filling of underground car park and development of residential tower of 15 and 8 storeys incorporating 75 residential apartments and ground floor commercial unit with customer parking. Application withdrawn May 2016.

16/01245/FULM - Demolition of the existing office building and erection of a mixed-use building of 4, 9 and 14 storeys incorporating 1,800m of office floorspace (Class B1a) and 41 residential flats. Planning permission granted 21st April 2017.

18/00409/FULM - Demolition of existing office building and erection of a mixed-use building of part 4, part 9 and part 14 storeys comprising 41 no. residential apartments and 1,800sqm of office space (Class B1a), with associated infrastructure including landscaping and basement car parking. Planning permission granted 18th October 2018.

This permission is subject to a s.106 unilateral undertaking dated 18th October 2018 to secure the following planning obligations:

- i) To secure a financial contribution of £368,000 towards the provision of affordable housing in the Borough of Watford;
- 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 allocated to this site.

18/01570/DISCON – Details submitted pursuant to Condition 7 (Detailed surface water drainage system) of planning permission ref. 18/00409/FUL. Approved 11th January 2019.

19/00159/DISCON - Details submitted for Condition 3 (Noise mitigation), Condition 4 (Materials), Condition 5 (Wall section/window detail) and Condition 8 (Piling Method Statement) pursuant to planning permission ref. 18/00409/FULM. Pending consideration.

6. Main considerations

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

- (a) Principle of uses and office provision
- (b) Scale and design
- (c) Quality of residential accommodation

All other aspects of the approved scheme, including affordable housing provision, impacts on surrounding properties, transport, parking and servicing arrangements and environmental considerations remain unchanged.

6.2 (a) Principle of uses and office provision

The principle of a mixed-use scheme providing office floorspace and residential units was considered acceptable previously based upon the level of office floorspace provided. The approved scheme comprised 1,800m² of office floorspace, an increase of 846m² over the existing (now demolished) building, with 41 residential flats. The amended scheme incorporates 1,824m² of office floorspace and retains the approved 41 flats. Due to the office floorspace being all within the main building, rather than being split between the main building and the extension building, and with a more efficient internal layout, the quality and usability of the office floorspace has also been improved. The mix of uses therefore remains acceptable.

6.3 (b) Scale and design

The site is located within Character Area 30B in the Watford Character of Area Study. This area is of mixed character but dominated by large scale commercial buildings of 4 -9 storeys high. Adjoining the site is the 8 storey Holiday Inn Express. To the west, fronting St Albans Road, are the two 4 storey Egale office buildings. A short distance to the east is the 9 storey Iveco House building above Watford Junction Station. The site is also within the Clarendon Road/Station Road employment area, close to Watford Junction Station, where tall buildings are considered acceptable in principle.

6.4 The scale of the building remains unchanged and the same design principles have been retained from the previous approval. As approved, the building is to have buff brick as the main facing material and demonstrates a strong base (the 4 storeys of office), a well-articulated middle (8 storeys) and a clearly

defined top (the top 2 storeys displaying a different fenestration and treatment). The building also steps back from east to west to add further definition to these elements of the building whilst at the same time reducing the bulk of the building. The deletion of the 4 storey extension building gives the building a more compact and legible form. The design changes to the main building are in relation to the corner treatment at the northern corner of the building and the fenestration to the elevations. The corner treatment now incorporates triangular projecting balconies serving the flats with a projecting roof feature at the top of the building. The fenestration to the elevations has been rationalised to reflect the revised internal flat layouts but also to give a greater proportion of brickwork to the elevations. Overall, it is considered that this gives a more pleasing aesthetic to the building and, in particular, significantly improves the southern elevation through the deletion of the previously proposed external walkway and the introduction of more windows. In approving the previous application, the Committee considered the scale and design of the building to be acceptable and appropriate in this location and a high quality addition to the locality. It is considered that this remains the case for the amended scheme.

6.5 (b) Quality of residential accommodation

The proposed residential accommodation remains unchanged from the previous approval, providing a mix of 16 x 1 bedroom, 21 x 2 bedroom, 3 x 2 bedroom duplex and 1 x 3 bedroom duplex units. All meet the minimum floorspace standards set out in the nationally described space standard and all will have access to an external balcony or terrace. The small communal roof garden at 9th floor level is also retained.

6.6 The site is located adjacent to the West Coast Mainline railway. Passenger and freight trains using the railway throughout the day and night have been identified as a significant source of noise to the proposed flats. In order to mitigate the impacts of this noise and to achieve good internal noise levels in accordance with BS 8233 (2014), noise attenuation measures will need to be incorporated comprising acoustic double glazing and acoustic trickle vents. Furthermore, in order to enable rapid ventilation to take place without the need to open windows, mechanical ventilation should also be provided. These measures can be secured by condition.

7. Consultation responses received

7.1 Statutory consultees and other organisations

None required.

7.2 Internal Consultees

None required.

7.3 Interested parties

No representations have been received in response to the statutory publicity.

8. Recommendation

That planning permission be granted subject to the completion of a deed of variation to secure the planning obligations contained in the s.106 unilateral undertaking dated 5th June 2018 and the conditions listed below:

Conditions

1. The development to which this permission relates shall be begun before 18th October 2021.

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 and planning permission ref. 18/00409/FULM.

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

(PL)-E-001_01; (PL)-E002_01; (PL)-E-003_01; (PL)-E-004_01
(PL)-P-OB0_01; (PL)-P-OG0_01; (PL)-P-001_01; (03)-P-002_01;
(PL)-P-003_01; (PL)-P-004_01; (PL)-P-005_01; (PL)-P-006_01
(PL)-S-001_01

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

3. No construction works shall commence until a detailed noise mitigation scheme for the proposed flats (to include acoustic glazing, acoustic trickle vents and mechanical purge ventilation), to protect the future occupiers from noise from rail traffic on the adjacent railway line and the plant and equipment associated with the adjacent Holiday Inn Express and Egale office building, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall achieve the internal noise levels for individual rooms as set out in British Standard 8233: 2014.

Reason: To ensure an acceptable living environment is achieved for the future occupiers of the development.

4. No construction works shall commence until full details and samples of the materials to be used for the external surfaces of the building (including walls, roofs, windows, doors and balconies) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

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 shall commence until details of the window reveals for the office glazing and the windows to the flats 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.

6. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved surface water drainage assessment carried out by JMP (ref. NW91602-FRA-01 dated July 2016) and the Technical Note (Ref. EWR001) by Elliottwood dated 5th December 2018 (approved under ref. 18/01570/DISCON), unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

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 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. 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.

8. If, during development, contamination not previously identified is found to be present at the site then no further development shall be carried out until the developer has submitted to, and obtained written approval from, the Local Planning Authority for a remediation strategy detailing how this unsuspected contamination is to be dealt with. All works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the health of the future occupiers of the site and to prevent pollution of controlled waters (the site is within Source Protection Zone 2), in accordance with Policies SE24 and SE28 of the Watford District Plan 2000.

9. No part of the development shall be occupied until the refuse and recycling store to serve the development, as shown on the approved drawings, has been constructed and made available for use. This facility shall be retained as approved at all times.

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.

10. No part of the development shall be occupied until a detailed soft landscaping scheme for all the land within the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved landscaping scheme shall be carried out not later than the first available planting and seeding season after completion of 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.

11. No part of the development shall be occupied until a detailed hard landscaping scheme for all the land within the site, including details of all site boundary treatments, 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.

12. No part of the development shall be occupied until details for the secure and weatherproof storage of 58 cycles (41 for residents of the flats and 17 for occupiers of the office floorspace) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and the facilities have been provided as approved. These facilities shall be retained at all times.

Reason: To encourage residents and occupiers to travel by cycle and provide sustainable travel alternatives, in accordance with saved Policy T10 of the Watford District Plan 2000 and Policy T3 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.

13. The office floorspace shall not be occupied until a detailed Travel Plan, based upon the Hertfordshire County Council document 'Hertfordshire Green Travel Plan Guidance', has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning.

Reason: To ensure that the development offers a wide range of travel choices to reduce the impact of travel and transport on the environment, in accordance with Policy T3 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.

14. No dwelling shall be occupied until details of a communal terrestrial television aerial(s) and satellite dish(es) 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.

15. For the avoidance of doubt, no communications development permitted by Class B or Class C of Part 16 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 shall be undertaken on the building.

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.

16. No plant or equipment shall be sited on the external elevations of the building unless details of the plant or equipment have 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.

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

Informatives

1. IN907 - Positive-proactive statement – GRANT
2. IN914 - Section 106
3. IN910 - Building Regulations
4. IN912 - Hours of Construction
5. IN913 - Community Infrastructure Levy Liability
6. IN909 - Street Naming and Numbering
7. IN915 - Highway Works - HCC agreement required