

<b>Committee date</b>	Wednesday, 4 <sup>th</sup> March 2020
<b>Application reference</b> <b>Site address</b>	19/01450/FULM 26 - 28 Station Road Watford
<b>Proposal</b>	Demolition of the existing building and construction of a mixed use seven storey block comprising 1040 sq.m of commercial space and 9 residential units.
<b>Applicant</b>	Neil Marshall
<b>Agent</b>	Wakelin Associates Ltd
<b>Type of Application</b>	Major Planning Permission
<b>Reason for committee Item</b>	Major Planning Permission
<b>Target decision date</b>	18.03.2020
<b>Statutory publicity</b>	Paper Advertisement and Site Notice
<b>Case officer</b>	Alice Reade, <a href="mailto:alice.reamde@watford.gov.uk">alice.reamde@watford.gov.uk</a>
<b>Ward</b>	Central

## 1. Recommendation

**Approve** subject to conditions and S106 Heads of Terms as set out in section 8 of this report.

## 2. Site and surroundings

- 2.1 The site is located on the northern side of Station Road on the junction with St Albans Road. The site currently contains a pair of two storey buildings with loft accommodation and dormers. The premises provide commercial floor space comprising 100sqm of financial and professional services (Use Class A2) and 269sqm of general office space (Use Class B1(a)). The site contains parking at the rear and has vehicular access from St Albans Road which is shared with the adjacent properties along Station Road.
- 2.2 The site is located in the Town Centre Special Policy Area (SPA) of the Core Strategy and within an allocated employment area (E7a) in the Watford District Plan 2000. There are parking restrictions, including a Residential Controlled Parking Zone along the roads within the vicinity of the site. The site is not within a conservation area and there are no listed or locally listed buildings within or adjoining the site.

## 3 Summary of the proposal

### 3.1 Proposal

- 3.2 To demolish the existing buildings on the site and erect a mixed-use, multi-

storey development comprising:

- i) Multi storey building of up to 7 storeys
- ii) A ground floor financial and professional services premises (Use Class A2) of 139m<sup>2</sup>
- iii) Office space (Use Class B1(a)) of 901m<sup>2</sup> over 4 floors
- iv) 9 residential flats (6 x 2 bed units and 3 x 3 bed units)
- v) Car parking for 6 cars (for commercial premises)
- vi) Associated bin and bicycle storage

### **3.3 Conclusion**

- 3.4 The 7 storey height and proposed design of the building will create a successful corner building on the site. The building has a strong core on the corner and steps back and down on each side to allow it to relate comfortably to adjacent buildings.
- 3.5 The proposed mixed used development would provide a notable increase in quality and quantity of office floor space with a proportionate uplift of 235% which will support the office and employment function of this designated employment area. The proposed replacement A2 unit at ground floor retains an active frontage to the building and again improves the quality and size of the commercial offer. The residential dwellings above would be of suitable amenity and would not undermine the office use or commercial nature of the employment area.
- 3.6 The development offers a high quality, well designed and successful mixed used scheme that will make efficient use of this 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 *07/00249/COU Change of use from B1 to A2*. Conditional Planning permission granted.

*14/00032/FUL Proposed alterations to roof to form new gable end and front and rear dormer projections, conversion for first floor offices and new roof space into 2 new flats. Refused Planning Permission and dismissed at appeal.*

*18/00711/PREAPP Pre-application enquiry for demolition of existing commercial buildings, new build scheme mixed use. Summary of advice:*

- No objection to the loss of the existing buildings
- Commercial led mix used development is acceptable in this employment area
- Scale was appropriate
- Some detail/design suggestions made

*19/00750/FUL Demolition of the existing building and construction of a mixed use four storey block comprising 434 sqm of Commercial space and 9 residential units and associated parking.*

Application Withdrawn. Officer provided advice that the development was not optimising the potential of the site, it was not providing a strong building to mark the corner and the development was not providing a sufficient uplift in office space to support the proposed residential units within the employment area.

## **6 Main considerations**

6.1 The main issues to be considered in the determination of these applications are:

- a) Principle of the proposed uses
- b) Scale and design
- c) Quality of residential accommodation
- d) Impacts on surrounding properties
- e) Transport, access and servicing
- f) Car and cycle parking
- g) Environmental considerations
- h) S106 Contributions and CIL

### 6.2 (a) Principle of the proposed uses

The site is within the wider Town Centre SPA in the Core Strategy and within an allocated employment area (E7a) in the Watford District Plan 2000. In accordance with saved policy E1, office uses (B1(a)) are sought in the Clarendon Road employment area. The development proposes a loss of outdated office floor space, to be replaced with modern, high quality office floorspace (Use Class B1(a) ) within flexible units. This represents an increase in quality but also a significant uplift of 235% in office floorspace. This is welcomed to meet identified economic needs and would add to the vitality

and viability of the employment area and increase the economic status of the town.

- 6.3 Within the SPA, in accordance with policy EMP2 of the Core Strategy, a mix of employment uses and other uses compatible with existing employment uses as appropriate will be accommodated, with a focus on Class B1(a) office use in the Clarendon Road employment area. However, the mixed used approach for the site allows for the most efficient use of this brownfield site, in this highly sustainable location, to provide much needed homes as well as meet the economic development objectives of the SPA. Providing good quality housing is emphasised within the NPPF and meeting housing needs is also a priority within the Core Strategy.
- 6.4 Policy HS1 of the Core Strategy lists the criteria that will be taken into account in assessing the suitability of windfall sites for residential use. In this case, the site is brownfield land, is within the town centre, is not at risk of flooding and has excellent access to public transport and a wide range of services. The proposed residential provision would be subservient to, and would not undermine the use, viability or quality of the office accommodation. It is further noted that the corner adjoins the more mixed use context of St Albans Road.
- 6.5 The development provides a suitable mix of 2 and 3 bed units, compliant with policy HS2 of the Core Strategy. The residential provision is therefore supported within this mixed use development.
- 6.6 The proposed ground floor commercial unit would provide financial and professional services to visiting members of the public and, whilst falling within Use Class A2 and not Use Class B1a) (offices), it would contribute positively to the economic and employment objectives of the area. Furthermore, given the prominent ground floor location on the corner the proposed use provides an active frontage which addresses the street and also responds to the retail frontage of St Albans Road. Therefore, on balance, the proposed use is supported.
- 6.7 In summary, the mix of uses would be appropriate for this location, the uses would not conflict with one another and a mixed used development is supported to facilitate an efficient and well designed use of the site. Similar mixed use approaches are seen in developments approved at Gresham House, Hannay House, 37-39 Clarendon Road and 50 Clarendon Road.
- 6.8 (b) Scale and design  
This area of the town, close to Watford Junction Station and close to

amenities, is considered as a central and highly sustainable location which is suitable for higher density development and taller buildings.

- 6.9 The proposed development includes a main element of 7 storeys in height. This height and the design of the angled column corner of this building will successfully mark the corner of St Albans Road and Station Road. The scale and height will respond well to planned and future developments at the other corners addressing St Albans Road at the junction.
- 6.10 To either side of the corner core of the building, the building steps back and steps down to each side. This allows the building to relate comfortably to the adjacent building on St Albans Road and the adjacent 2 storey building at No.24 Station Road. The relationship of the building to adjacent sites would also not prejudice potential future development.
- 6.11 The design of the building is contemporary and subject to high quality materials, will present as an attractive and high quality addition to the town.
- 6.12 The development provides significant improvements to the active frontage of the site, particularly onto St Albans Road. The ground floor includes the active frontage of the A2 unit. The office upper floors of the building will successfully address both frontages. The office and A2 entrance on Station Road will relate and reinforcing the commercial nature of the surrounding area. The residential use on the St Albans Road side would be legible and relate to the more mixed nature of St Albans Road. The residential uses at upper floor level would be discrete with recessed balconies ensuring that the residential use would not undermine or detract from the office nature of the employment area.
- 6.13 The access, layout and facilities for the various users and occupiers of the building has been successfully designed to create a high quality environment design for all users.
- 6.14 (c) Quality of residential accommodation  
The proposal will provide 9 residential flats comprising 6 x 2 bed flats and 3 x 3 bed flats. The mix of these dwellings in the building with the commercial and office uses has been successfully arranged and would not create an adverse environment for the residential dwellings.
- 6.15 All homes will comply with the minimum floorspace of the nationally described space standards. All homes will have good levels of outlook, natural light and privacy. Three dwellings within the development are single aspect to the west however this is not unduly detrimental owing to the site constraints.

- 6.16 All of the dwellings will have access to a private balcony (5-6sqm) or private roof terrace area (varying from 20-45sqm). The development would not provide additional amenity areas for occupiers. On balance, the provision of amenity space is considered acceptable given the site constraints and town centre location.
- 6.17 The application is accompanied by a noise assessment. This identifies that the dwellings may be subject to adverse noise impact and recommends appropriate mitigation measures. This would be secured by condition.
- 6.18 (d) Impacts on surrounding properties  
The adjacent property to the east, No24, includes flats within the upper floors. The development is angled away from the rear windows of No24 to maintain a 45 degree line on plan to these windows. The development would therefore not create a harmful loss of light or outlook to these windows. The upper floor windows of the east side of the proposed building, which serve residential corridors or are secondary windows, are shown as non-aspect and would be conditioned as such to prevent overlooking to the side neighbour.
- 6.19 There are no other nearby dwellings that would potentially be impacted upon by the proposed development.
- 6.20 (e) Transport, access and servicing  
The site is located in a highly accessible and sustainable location within a short walk of Watford Junction Station and the bus interchange. The location is highly suited for new development in accordance with policy T2 Location of New Development of the Core Strategy.
- 6.21 The site retains the existing access for vehicles and refuse collection and this is unchanged from the existing situation. As demonstrated in the transport assessment and confirmed by the Highways Authority, the development creates no adverse highway impact.
- 6.22 (f) Car and cycle parking  
The existing site includes informal parking area for approximately 6 cars. The proposed development will replace this parking in the rear area with 6 parking spaces for the commercial premises. This is within the maximum standards for the development at this site as set by Appendix 2 of the Watford District Plan.
- 6.23 Given the highly accessible and sustainable location of the site the car-free residential units are supported. A s106 agreement will restrict future occupiers from entitlement to park in the surrounding Controlled Parking

Zone.

6.24 The development provides appropriate cycle parking for residents and users of the commercial space in accordance with policy T10 of the Watford District Plan.

6.25 (g) Environmental considerations

6.26 i) *Surface water drainage*

The Lead Flood Authority (HCC) have no objection to the development.

6.27 ii) *Trees and landscaping*

The development includes some landscaping outside of the site boundary and on highway land. This therefore requires relevant highway consent and although welcomed, this cannot be secured by the planning permission.

6.28 (h) S106 Contributions and CIL

The development provides less than 10 dwellings meaning that no affordable housing is required. A S106 agreement is however required for the exemption of residents to park in the controlled parking areas of the surrounding roads.

6.29 The development is within a Special Policy Area and is exempted from Watford's adopted Community Infrastructure Levy.

## 7 Consultation responses received

### 7.1 Statutory consultees and other organisations

<b>Name of Statutory Consultee / Other Organisation</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Officer Response</b>
HCC Lead Local Flood Authority	No objection subject to conditions.	Noted and conditions added.
HCC Local Highway Authority	No objections. A condition for a Construction management plan is requested. The trees shown on St Albans Road are on highway and would require HCC consent.	Noted. The construction management plan requested is not appropriate in planning terms for this circumstance. The highway matters and potential impacts are secured by Highway and Environmental Health

		legislation. Use of a planning condition would unnecessarily duplicate this.
HCC waste and minerals	No response received	Relevant waste matters considered as part of the application.

## 7.2 Internal Consultees

Name of Internal Consultee	Comment	Officer Response
Planning Policy WBC	No response received.	No policy issue foreseen
Waste & Recycling Team, WBC	Bin store needs to accommodate: 1 x 1100 litre for residential 1 x 1100 litre for recycling 2 x 140 for food waste  Recommendation made for residential and commercial bin storage to be separated. Also further detail of access from St Albans Road requested.	Appropriate bin storage is provided. Amended plans were submitted to include a separation to the bin storage. Further information regarding access from St Albans Road was also provided.
Environmental Health WBC	Awaiting response	
Economic development officer, WBC	No comments	Noted

## 7.3 Interested parties

Letters were sent to 30 properties in the surrounding area. One response was received. The main comments are summarised below, the full letters are available to view online:

Comments	Officer response
The development is out of character, the existing buildings should be retained and that objections to the development opposite at No99 St Albans Road, are relevant.	Noted however the design of the development is appropriate as discussed in the report.

## 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 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 3 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:-

STR/19/PL/2/LP01 – Location Plan

STR/19/PL/2/L01 – Site Plan

STR/19/PL/2/L 10 Rev A – Proposed ground floor

STR/19/PL/2/L11 – First and second floor plan

STR/19/PL/2/L12 – Third and Fourth floor plan

STR/19/PL/2/L13 – Fifth and sixth floor plan

STR/19/PL/2/L14 – Roof plan

STR/19/PL/2/L20 – Front elevation

STR/19/PL/2/L21 – Side 1 elevation

STR/19/PL/2/L22 – Rear and Side 2 elevation

STR/19/PL/2/L23 – Rear and Side 2 elevation

STR/19/PL/2/L30 - Visuals

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

3. The development permitted by this planning permission shall be carried out in accordance with the approved surface water drainage assessment carried out by jnpgroup, reference S10681 R002 Rev B, dated June 2019.the following mitigation measures detailed within the FRA:

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 2.5 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 26.7 m<sup>3</sup> (or such storage volume agreed with the LLFA) of total storage volume in permeable paved area.

3. Discharge of surface water from the private drain into the Thames 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.

To reduce the risk of flooding to the proposed development and future occupants.

4. No development shall take place until a detailed surface water drainage scheme for the site based on the approved 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.

1. Final detailed drainage plan including the location and provided volume of all SuDS features, pipe runs and discharge points. If areas are to be designated for informal flooding these should also be shown on a detailed site plan.

2. Exploration of the potential to include additional permeable paving within the site.

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.

5. No 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. The applicant is advised to contact Thames Water Developer Services on 0800 009 3921 to discuss the details of the piling method statement.

6. No external facing materials shall be installed on the building until full details and samples of all the materials to be used for the external surfaces of the building have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Details shall include the reveals for windows and doors of the development.

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

7. No part of the development shall be occupied until detailed hard and soft landscaping scheme for the site, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved soft 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.

8. No dwelling within the development shall be occupied until the bin and bicycle storage for the residential dwellings has been installed in accordance with approved drawing STR/19/PL/2/L 10 Rev A. These facilities shall be retained at all times.

Reason: To ensure that adequate facilities exist for the future occupiers of the dwellings, in accordance with saved Policies T10 and SE7 of the Watford District Plan 2000, Policy UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31 and the Residential Design Guide 2016.

9. No part of the commercial premises shall be occupied until the bin and bicycle storage facilities for the commercial users has been installed in accordance with approved drawing STR/19/PL/2/L 10 Rev A. These facilities shall be retained at all times.

Reason: To provide sustainable travel alternatives for employees and visitors, in accordance with saved Policy T10 of the Watford District Plan 2000 and Policy T3 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31, and to ensure adequate waste storage in accordance with saved Policy SE7 of the Watford District Plan 2000.

10. 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.

11. All residential units shall include the noise mitigation measures detailed in section 4.2 of the 'Acoustic Design Statement' dated DLW/7236/A dated 13<sup>th</sup> December 2019 prepared by AIRO Ltd.

Reason: To ensure residential occupiers do not experience noise disturbance.

12. The ground floor premises shown on STR/19/PL/2/L 10 Rev A shall be used only for financial and professional services within Use Class A2 and for no other purpose.

Reason: To accord with the employment designation of the land and the details of the submitted application.

13. The office floorspace of the first, second, third and fourth floors, as shown on STR/19/PL/2/L11 and STR/19/PL/2/L12 shall be used only as office use within use class B1(a) of the schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended).

Reason: To accord with the employment designation of the land and the details of the submitted application.

14. The upper floor windows in the east and north east side elevations shall be installed and retained with obscure-glazing, and shall be non-opening other than in parts of the windows which are more than 1.7 metres above the floor of the room in which the window is installed.

Reason: To prevent overlooking and consequent loss of privacy to neighbouring premises pursuant to Policy UD1 (Delivering High Quality Design) of the Watford Local Plan (Core Strategy) 2006-2031 and the Residential Design Guide (2016).