

PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE

MEETING MONDAY 6th JANUARY 2025

Full details of planning applications can be viewed through East Herts Council's website:
<https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/planning-building/object-comment-or-view-planning-application-or-decision>

<u>LPA Reference</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>PROPOSAL</u>	<u>WARD</u>
3/24/2274/FUL	Pomarium Ware Park	Insertion of two windows and painting of external joinery	Bengeo GB NPA

Major Application 3/24/2147/VAR Land East of Marshgate Drive (HERT2)

Committee is asked to consider the draft response prepared for Hertford Town Council's by GovResources Ltd as the Councils Planning Advisor:

Planning Application 3/24/2147/VAR at Land East of Marshgate Drive (HERT2)

Introduction

- 1.1. This application is a Section 73 (S73) application which is to vary Condition 53 of planning application 3/23/2034/VAR. Condition 53 requires the scheme to be in accordance the listed approved plans in the original consent won at appeal. Application 3/23/2034/VAR application increased the number of homes from 375 to 380 homes. Changes proposed do not relate to the Southern Parcel of land which comprise town houses and an outline commercial area.
- 1.2. The S73 application is to:
 - Increase the number of homes by a further 65 (in new pitched roof spaces) and a 1 home as a result of relocating the gym – the housing mix variation is a 31% increase in 1 bed units and a 11% increase in 2 bed units.
 - Amendments to parking layouts and landscaping

Increase in Unit Numbers and Planning Policy

- 1.3. The Planning Policy for the site HERT2 allocated the site for a mixed use development to provide 200 homes. If this application were to be approved the number of homes would reach 441, more than doubling the initial site allocation assessment. The application is justified by the applicant as making

a valuable contribution to East Herts housing land supply which is currently, below slightly below the statutory 5-year supply.

Implications of Increase in Unit Numbers on Traffic

- 1.4. The applicants Planning Statement considers that as there has been a negative growth in traffic on the local highway network since the scheme was granted consent at appeal (pre-covid) the baseline traffic flows are now reduced and the small number of additional trips generated will not alter the conclusions of the original traffic impact assessment.
- 1.5. On this basis, there will be an increased number of trips from and to the occupied development. The Town Council considers that any additional trip generation would be unacceptable. It's original traffic objection focussed on the continued effective operation of the employment area on Mead Lane and Dicker Mill. These industrial and business premises are both an asset for residents, providing an important amenity and valuable as an employment resource. Any further congestion on the access route to the development passing the access to Dicker Mill at Mill Road/Mead Lane would not be acceptable.

Sustainable Travel

- 1.6. The total number of car parking spaces has increased to 313 maintaining the 0.75 parking spaces per apartment requirement. 10% of parking spaces will have EV charging points and charging points could be installed in a further 10% of spaces if required. This would represent a very small increase in the availability/potential availability of EV charging points.
- 1.7. Part of the pre-application process included meeting with Hertfordshire County Council where further information on the promotion of sustainable travel was requested. A Local Active Travel Infrastructure Audit submitted with the S73 application.
- 1.8. A Draft Residential Travel Plan has been submitted with the application. This shows an Action plan identifying 9 actions 2 of which are duplicates. The Action Plan includes a nominated Travel Plan Coordinator to oversee the implementation of the sustainable travel measures. These measures comprise a proposed package of walking, cycling, car club and public transport improvements. This is a draft document and subject to further discussion with the LPA and Highway Authorities.
- 1.9. Confirmation of improvements to the path along the river, with a 3m wide shared cycle/pedestrian path will be a positive improvement for sustainable travel as well as the recreational use of the path.
- 1.10. If indeed a car club is set up and managed successfully, and it appears that two possible operators have expressed willingness to operator on the site,

this could potentially be a benefit for Hertford if that service would then be extended to cover more of the town.

- 1.11. Despite the design of the scheme including provision for a bus route, there is no agreement with an operator to run busses through the site.
- 1.12. The Town Council concludes that methods of encouraging sustainable travel are still being discussed. The increase in the number of residential units is not balanced by the proposals presented in this planning application.

Sustainability

- 1.13. The Planning Statement says (para 6.11) the CO2 savings exceed Building Regulations requirements. However, there is no attempt to improve this variation of the design of the residential blocks, to integrate domestic solar generation, despite the amendment including pitched roofs on all blocks.

Townscape, Landscape and Biodiversity

- 1.14. The inclusion of pitched roofs across the residential blocks will increase the massing of the development, particularly in views from the riverside. Visually the pitching of the roofs provides no improvement to the aesthetics of the design.
- 1.15. Landscaping has been improved on the connections to the river along pedestrian paths between the residential blocks. However, this appears to be a minimal improvement with large areas of 'green' coloured paving and the use of artificial grass. Native hedging (2m high) and low native hedging (1.2m high) are unidentifiable on the Illustrative Landscape Masterplan.
- 1.16. The Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) calculation has been increased to 59.8% net gain through improved soft landscaping across the site. However, only 6 swift bricks, 2 sparrow terraces and 2 bat boxes are to be installed. Such a small enhancement on a development of this size is inconceivable. Provision for swifts should comprise integrated swift bricks requiring no maintenance, as identified in the Design & Access Statement illustrations and not swift boxes as described in the text. The Hertford Swift Group could advise how best to improve this provision.
- 1.17. Unfortunately, the Ecological Assessment which is referred to in the Sustainability Assessment is not available to view in the application documents provided on the planning portal.

Conclusion

- 1.18. There will be an increased number of vehicular trips to and from the site passing the entrance to Dicker Mill and using the same access as the employment land on Mead Lane.

- 1.19. The small increase in the number of parking spaces is not of concern. However, the equivalent small number of increased EV charging points and potential EV charging points does not solve the problem that most car owners occupying the site will not have the option of owning an electric vehicle.
- 1.20. The Draft Residential Travel Plan and Action Plan is inconclusive and requires further work to establish the likely benefits. This does not provide any assurances that sustainable travel will be encouraged.
- 1.21. Despite design changes to the residential blocks, no part of the scheme includes domestic solar power generation. Furthermore, the inclusion of pitched roofs to the residential blocks is overall a negative design feature.
- 1.22. Landscaping improvements are minimal, and the Ecological Assessment is not provided to support the BNG improvements.
- 1.23. The Town Council conclude that townscape, landscape and biodiversity improvements are minimal and do not help to balance the increase to 441 residential units proposed in this development.
- 1.24. There is no justification for the additional 66 homes proposed and the application should be refused.

Other Planning applications (for information only)

Committee will not be commenting on these applications unless: at least three residents, in separate households, or the representatives of three business, approach local ward Councillors or ward Councillors express concern over an individual application.

3/24/2065/PNHH	72 Cowper Crescent	Demolition of existing single storey rear extension. Alteration to fenestration and front door. Erection of single storey rear extension. Depth 6m, height 3m and eaves 3m	Bengeo TPO NPA
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