

Meeting: Planning and Development Agenda Item:3
Committee

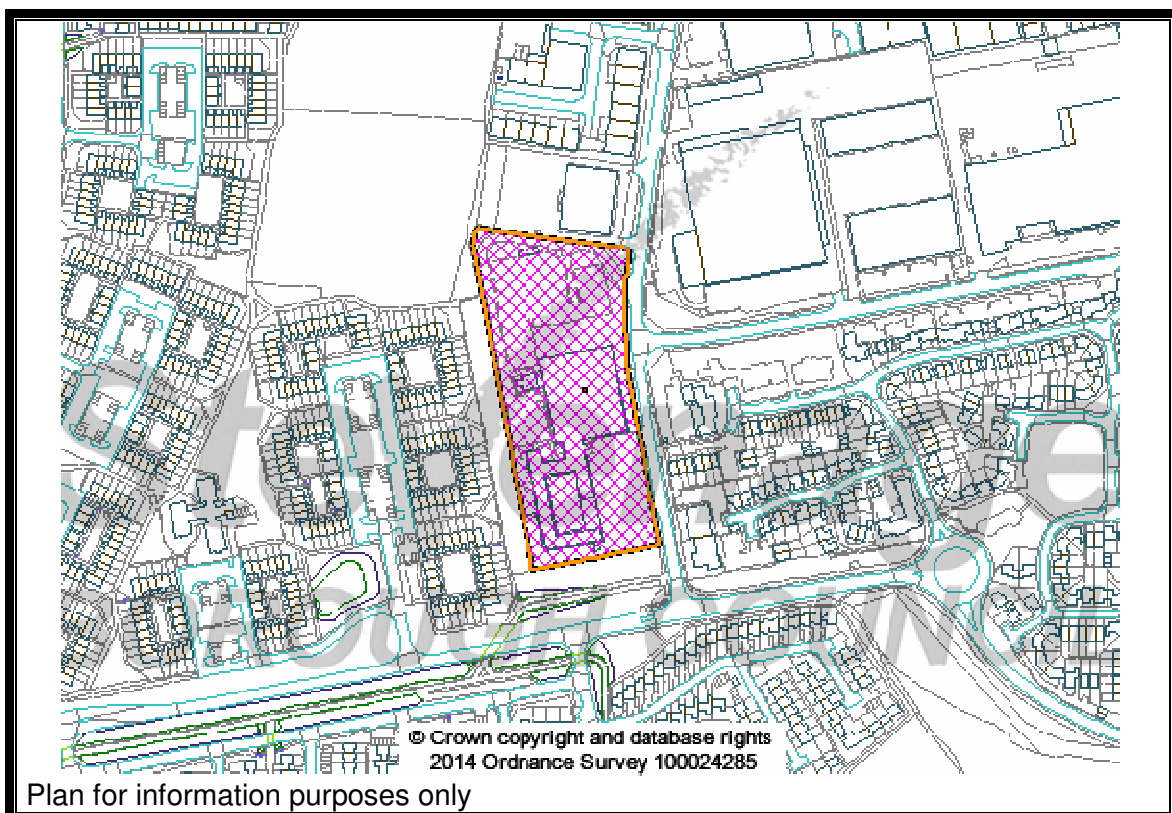
Date: 10 November 2015

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Application No:	15/00253/OPM
Location:	DuPont (UK) Ltd, Wedgwood Way, Stevenage
Proposal:	Outline planning application for the demolition of existing buildings and provision of up to 200 new homes, up to 900m ² of Use Classes A1/A2/A3/D1, provision of residential amenity space and associated access and car parking.
Drawing Nos.:	A-02-011, A-02-012, A-02-013, A-02-014, A-02-015 and A-02-016.
Applicant:	Frontier Estates
Date Valid:	5 May 2015
Recommendation:	GRANT OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION



1. INTRODUCTION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

- 1.1 The application site is the existing DuPont UK Headquarter offices and former training area, which is located in the north east of Stevenage, approximately 2.8km from Stevenage town centre. The site is 1.9 hectares in size and is broadly rectangular in shape. The site is situated in the south western corner of the Pin Green Industrial Estate and is bounded by Wedgwood Way to the east, amenity grassland, a path and cycleway to the south with Martins Way beyond, a tree belt to the west, beyond which are residential properties in Ely Close and industrial and commercial buildings of the industrial estate to the north. To the north west of the application site is Wellfield Wood which is a designated Wildlife Site.
- 1.2 The existing offices are accessed by an in/out arrangement off of Wedgwood Way with a separate access to the car park area to the north of the training centre building. Wedgwood Way serves the Pin Green Industrial Estate and has its junction with Martins Way in close proximity and to the south east of the application site.
- 1.3 The application site comprises the largely vacant DuPont offices, which is a part four storey part five storey brick building, within the southern part of the site. Car parking is situated in front of this, fronting Wedgwood Way. A single storey vacant commercial unit is situated to the north of this office building and connects to it. Finally, a large car park is situated in the northern part of the application site. DuPont have occupied the premises since 1981, accommodating the company's UK headquarter offices and former training area. At present DuPont employ 40 people at the site, with only the ground and third floors being used as offices, whilst the entire basement, first and second floors remain empty. The total gross floorspace of the existing buildings is 9,809sqm.

2. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.1 Planning permission was granted under reference number 2/0070/88 in April 1988 for an extension to the car park to provide an additional 40 car parking spaces.
- 2.2 Planning permission was granted under reference number 05/00200/FP in July 2005 for the refurbishment of buildings including new and replacement plant equipment, with screens on roof; new enclosed staircase to roof; elevational changes; alteration to car park layout; new fuel store and sprinkler tank; new fencing and gates; new hazardous store and other areas for storage and canopy to building.
- 2.3 Prior approval was granted under reference number 14/00553/CPA in November 2014 for the change of use from offices (use class B1 (a)) to 1 no. 3 bed, 38 no. 2 bed, 33 no. 1 bed and 1 no. studio residential units.
- 2.4 There have been a number of other permissions at the site relating to modest ancillary development and the placement of Portakabins at the site.

3. THE CURRENT APPLICATION

- 3.1 The current application, which has been submitted in outline form with all matters reserved except for access, seeks the demolition of the existing buildings and provision of up to 200 new homes, up to 900m² of Use Classes A1/A2/A3/D1, provision of residential amenity space, creation of new points of access off Wedgwood Way, creation of a layby along Wedgwood Way, internal access roads, private and public car parking and ancillary works. The application proposes a residential development of up to 200 dwellings at a development density of approximately 105 dwellings per hectare. 255 car parking spaces are proposed which would include a maximum of 10 spaces for the non-residential floorspace use and a minimum area of 1,965m² is proposed for public open space. As the application is in outline form it is seeking to establish the principle of development, although the access to the site boundary is sought for approval at this stage. The application includes a number of parameter plans which would set the parameters for any future reserved matters applications. These include parameters for the demolition, building heights, public realm, vehicle and pedestrian access, ground floor uses and upper floor uses.
- 3.2 The application proposes that residential accommodation would cover the majority of the site in the form of three, four and five storey apartment blocks and three storey terraced houses. It is proposed that the blocks of up to five storey apartments would face on to Wedgwood Way, therefore creating a frontage against this road. The three storey town houses would be located to the west of the site, with the rear gardens facing the tree belt along the site's western boundary. The non-residential floorspace would be located at ground floor level in the south-eastern corner of the site. The applicant has stated that the housing mix will be within the following ranges: one bedroom units 35-45%, two bedroom units 35-45% and three bedroom units 15-25%.
- 3.3 The applicant has stated that each house would have a minimum rear garden depth of 10m and would also have a minimum of 50m² private garden space. Additionally, it is stated that each residential unit would have one cycle parking space. Finally, the applicant has stated that Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 will be targeted and that at least 10% of the scheme's energy would be secured from decentralised and renewable or low-carbon sources.

4. PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS

- 4.1 The application has been publicised by way of letters to adjoining premises, site notices and a press notice. In response to this consultation one letter of objection has been received from Beattie Brothers Transport at Unit 6 Wedgwood Way. This representation is summarised below:
- There are real concerns over two blocks of flats that may overlook the yard. In line with health and safety our three forklifts and a number of trucks have reversing warnings, a loud beeping noise which is fairly constant from early morning, 05.00 hours through till 20.00 hours Monday to Saturday. There are also lorries arriving back to the yard between 01.00 hours and 05.00 hours Monday to Saturday as well as various other vehicles leaving and returning throughout the day and night. From the drawings provided there does not appear to be any fencing, trees or other boundary treatment to

block the view or to deaden the noise which will be an issue as well as the extra traffic caused by residents. Large lorries and people do not mix well.

5. CONSULTATIONS

5.1 Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority

5.1.1 The Transport Statement submitted as part of the planning application and covering highway and traffic issues has been carefully scrutinised to establish the likely impact of the proposal on the road network. It is considered that the total peak generation of traffic would reduce in comparison with the original use of the site. Considering that the development is located adjacent to a local access road, the new traffic generation of vehicles is not considered to have a significant impact on the local highway network. Accordingly, Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority considers that the proposal would not have an unreasonable impact on the safety and operation of the adjoining highways subject to the provision of a financial contribution, conditions and highway informatives to be attached to any planning permission.

5.2 Environment Agency

5.2.1 No objection to the proposals.

5.3 Head of Environmental Health

5.3.1 Raises no objection subject to the imposition of conditions in respect of contamination, hours of working, piling and the control of dust.

5.4 Thames Water

5.4.1 Advise that a condition should be attached to any planning permission relating to a drainage strategy 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.

5.5 Herts Fire and Rescue Service

5.5.1 Confirmation will be required that access for a fire appliance is within 45m of all points within each dwelling. Fire hydrants will need to be provided in accordance with British Standard 9991.

5.6 Hertfordshire County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority

5.6.1 At this outline stage the applicant has provided sufficient detail to demonstrate that there is a feasible drainage scheme that can provide existing green field surface water run-off rates and volumes exploring the most appropriate sustainable drainage methods such as ponds, swales and permeable paving. More details will be required at reserved matters stage and conditions should be attached to the grant of any planning permission.

5.7 Hertfordshire Constabulary

- 5.7.1 Having studied the application there is only one concern regarding the parking provision at the south west aspect of the site which would appear to have reduced natural surveillance. In order to address this I would encourage the architect to ensure that the area is covered by active rooms in the residential blocks.

5.8 Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust

- 5.8.1 The Trust has no objections to this development and concurs with the findings and recommendations of the applicant's ecological report.

5.9 Arboricultural Officer

- 5.9.1 In principle happy with the proposed development as the trees proposed to be removed are not of great value and can be easily compensated for with a well thought out landscaping scheme. However, work to the Council owned tree belt will need to be carried out at the cost of the developer before the development works start.

5.10 East and North Hertfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group

- 5.10.1 Imperative to ensure that steps are taken to mitigate the effect of these additional residents on healthcare provision. The potential cost impact of this development going ahead on local healthcare could be as much as £616,726.

5.11 Hertfordshire County Council in relation to impact on service provision

- 5.11.1 Based on the information provided for a development of up to 200 dwellings, the County Council would seek financial contributions towards nursery education, primary education, library services and fire hydrant provision.

6. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

6.1 Background to the Development Plan

- 6.1.1 In the determination of planning applications development must be in accordance with the statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. For Stevenage the statutory development plan comprises:

- Hertfordshire Waste Development Framework 2012 and Hertfordshire Waste Site Allocations Development Plan Document (adopted 2012 and 2014);
- Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan 2002 – 2016 (adopted 2007); and
- The Stevenage District Plan Second Review 2004.

The former Stevenage Draft Core Strategy and Development Management Policies were withdrawn on 1st February 2012. However, the Site Specific Policies Plan, the Old Town Area Action Plan and the Gunnels Wood Area Action Plan have all been approved locally by the Council's executive as material considerations in the determination of planning applications and continue to be used for Development Management purposes. Additionally, the Council's Interim Planning Policy Statement adopted in April 2012 is a material

consideration in the determination of planning applications registered on or after the 18 April 2012.

- 6.1.2 Where a Development Plan Document has been submitted for examination but no representations have been made in respect of relevant policies, then considerable weight may be attached to those policies because of the strong possibility that they will be adopted. The converse may apply if there have been representations which oppose the policy. However, much will depend on the nature of those representations and whether there are representations in support of particular policies.
- 6.1.3 In considering the policy implications of any development proposal the Local Planning Authority will assess each case on its individual merits, however where there may be a conflict between policies in the existing Development Plan and policies in any emerging Development Plan Document, the adopted Development Plan policies currently continue to have greater weight.

6.2 Central Government Advice

- 6.2.1 In March 2012 the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published and in doing so it replaced many documents including all Planning Policy Guidance Notes and Planning Policy Statements. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. Annex 1 of the NPPF provides guidance on how existing local plan policies which have been prepared prior to the publication of the NPPF should be treated. Paragraph 215 of the NPPF applies which states that only due weight should be afforded to the relevant policies in the adopted local plan according to their degree of consistency with it.
- 6.2.2 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF is itself a material consideration. Given that the advice that the weight to be given to relevant policies in the local plan will depend on their degree of consistency with the NPPF, it will be necessary in the determination of this application to assess the consistency of the relevant local plan policies with the NPPF. The NPPF applies a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 6.2.3 In addition to the NPPF advice in the National Planning Practice Guidance (March 2014) also needs to be taken into account. It states that, where the development plan is absent, silent or the relevant policies are out of date, paragraph 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires the application to be determined in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development unless otherwise specified.

6.3 Adopted District Plan

TW1	Sustainable Development
TW2	Structural Open Space
TW4	New Neighbourhood Centres
TW8	Environmental Safeguards
TW9	Quality in Design
TW11	Planning Requirements
H7	Assessment of Windfall Housing Sites
H8	Density of Residential Development

- H14 Benefits of Affordability
- E2 Employment Areas
- E4 Acceptable Uses in Employment Areas
- T6 Design Standards
- T12 Bus Provision
- T13 Cycleways
- T14 Pedestrians
- T15 Car Parking Strategy
- TR14 New Neighbourhood Centres
- EN9 Archaeology and Development
- EN13 Trees in New Developments
- EN17 Wildlife Sites and Regionally Important Geological Sites
- EN27 Noise Pollution
- EN38 Energy Conservation and Supply
- L15 Outdoor Sports Provision in Residential Developments
- L16 Children's Play Space Provision in Residential Developments
- L17 Informal Open Space Provision in Residential Developments
- L18 Open Space Maintenance

6.4 Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents

Parking Provision Supplementary Planning Document January 2012.

Stevenage Design Guide 2009

6.5 Interim Planning Policy Statement for Stevenage April 2012

- IP01 Sustainable Development Principles
- IP02 Planning Requirements
- IP05 Transport Assessments and Travel Plans
- IP06 Housing Mix
- IP08 Affordable Housing Thresholds
- IP09 Affordable Housing Tenure, Mix and Design
- IP10 Accessible Housing
- IP11 Flood Risk and Drainage
- IP13 Carbon Dioxide Emissions and Energy Performance

7. APPRAISAL

7.1 The main issues for consideration in the determination of this application are its acceptability in land use policy terms; the impact on the character and appearance of the area; the impact on both existing neighbouring amenities and future residential amenity; the effect of the proposals on the highway network and the adequacy of the proposed parking provision.

7.2 Land Use Policy Considerations

7.2.1 The application site is located within the Pin Green employment area as identified by the Stevenage District Plan Second Review 1991-2011. Within this area policies E2 and E4 of the District Plan apply. Policy E2 simply designates the Pin Green employment area and policy E4 sets out the acceptable uses in the employment areas, which does not include

residential use. Given this designation it is clear that the starting point for considering a residential development in this location is that it would be contrary to development plan policy.

- 7.2.2 As the proposal is contrary to development plan policy it needs to be considered if there are significant material considerations that outweigh this policy designation in this instance. Firstly, it is considered that Building 1 on the site (the main office building) has achieved prior approval under reference number 14/00553/CPA to allow the building to be converted to 73 residential units, comprising 1no. 3 bed unit, 38no. 2 bed units and 34no. 1 bed units. This prior approval is still extant and it is worth noting that Central Government has now made this change to the permitted development rights permanent (previously office to residential conversions had to be completed by May 2016). It is therefore considered that there is valid residential fall-back position on the site and additionally that this has established the principle of residential development on at least a part of the application site.
- 7.2.3 Secondly, with the development of housing in Chrysalis Park to the east of the application site, the site is now surrounded on three sides by residential development. The use of this site for residential development is not, therefore, considered to be out of context in this part of Stevenage and effectively continues the pattern of residential development from Ely Close through to Chrysalis Park. On plan the residential development of this site does not look out of place and a full assessment of the impact on the character and appearance of the area is undertaken in section 7.6 of this report.
- 7.2.4 Thirdly, the applicant has undertaken extensive marketing of the offices which has not resulted in any serious interest. The applicant has included information within the application which demonstrates that the offices have been marketed since Spring 2009 through a variety of mediums including a brochure, signage boards, website advertising, agents mailing and occupier mailing. The conclusion of this marketing exercise is that there is no demand for a bespoke office / industrial complex of this age and nature, either in parts or as a single entity, in this location. Since 2009 the letting agents have only completed leasehold transactions either in the town centre or the Gunnels Wood employment area and none have taken place on properties in the Pin Green estate. This evidence suggests that the Pin Green area is not in demand for office space, with the town centre or Gunnels Wood being the preferred location for this use. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) advises that ‘where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for the allocated employment use, applications for alternative uses of land or buildings should be treated on their merits having regard to market signals and the relative need for different land uses to support sustainable local communities.’
- 7.2.5 Finally, the proposal also has to be assessed against the NPPF. In relation to the five year supply of deliverable housing, paragraph 47 of the NPPF states that Local Planning Authorities should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years’ worth of housing against their housing requirements with an additional buffer of 5% (moved forward from later in the plan period) to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. The most up to date housing supply figures indicate that the Council is unable to provide a 5 year supply of deliverable housing. The fact that the Council is unable to meet its requirement to provide a 5 year supply of housing is thus a material consideration in the assessment of this application.
- 7.2.6 The NPPF states at paragraph 49 that “housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development” and that “relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority

cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites.” The issue of the inability to provide a 5 year supply of housing has been considered above and as such consideration needs to be given to the sustainability of the site. The site has good footpath and cycleway links to the rest of Stevenage via the segregated footpath and cycleway that runs directly past the southern boundary of the site on the northern side of Martins Way. Additionally, the site is located approximately 650m to the north-east of The Oval large neighbourhood centre and 900m to the south-east of the Canterbury Way large neighbourhood centre which provide a range of shops and services. The nearest primary school is in close proximity to the site; Martins Wood Primary School is located 250m to the south of the site across Martins Way. The nearest secondary school is the Nobel School which is located approximately 1.2km to the south of the site. The site has ready access to bus stops with a stop on each side of Wedgwood Way right outside the site and other bus stops on Cartwright Road to the east, Ascot Crescent to the south and Sefton Road to the south-east. Given this it is considered that there is fair access to local facilities and good opportunities to access alternative forms of travel to private motorised transport.

- 7.2.7 With regard to passenger transport specifically the Highway Authority has requested a financial contribution towards improving the existing bus stop in Cartwright Road to meet accessibility requirements for passenger transport services in the local area. Additionally, a residential travel plan has also been requested to provide a continuing commitment to using alternative forms of transport to the private car. With the provision of an improved bus stop and a residential travel plan, the proposal is considered to have suitable opportunities to access alternative forms of travel, which would complement the access to existing facilities and add weight to the sustainability of the site.
- 7.2.8 The fact that the site is considered to be in a sustainable location, would constitute a sustainable form of development and that the Council is unable to provide a 5 year supply of deliverable housing sites are strong material considerations that significantly weigh in favour of the application.
- 7.2.9 Given that the Council cannot demonstrate a 5 year supply of deliverable housing sites, the valid fall-back position of the residential conversion of the existing offices, the lack of interest in the building following the marketing exercise and that the residential development of the site would not be out of context in this location, it is considered that these are strong material considerations that outweigh the employment area protection of the site through policies E2 and E4 of the Local Plan in this instance and subject to the proposal's compliance with the Council's housing policies.

7.3 Compliance with the Council's Housing Policies

- 7.3.1 As set out above, as the site is within a defined Employment Area in the Local Plan and is not designated for housing, the application site is considered to be a 'windfall' site where policy H7 (Assessment of Windfall Residential Sites) of the Local Plan applies. Policy H7 sets out a number of criteria against which proposals for residential development on sites not allocated for housing in the Local Plan should be assessed against.
- 7.3.2 Firstly, the application site is on previously developed land. The site is currently occupied by two main buildings, hardstandings, car parks and small ancillary buildings and thus accords with the definition of previously developed land set out in Annex 2 of the NPPF. The NPPF states that previously developed land is land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. The NPPF also advises that a key objective is that Local Planning

Authorities should continue to make effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed. Further, as a previously developed site, the proposal would not result in the loss of any structural open space. The existing site is well contained and the proposal would ensure that the tree belt to the west and the area of amenity grassland to the south of the site are both retained. Structural open space would remain unaffected and therefore there would be no conflict with policy TW2 of the Local Plan.

- 7.3.3 Criterion (c) of policy H7 states that there should be no detrimental effect on the environment and the surrounding or adjoining properties. This issue will be assessed in detail in the following sections considering the impact on the character and appearance of the area and the impact on neighbouring amenity.
- 7.3.4 Finally, policy H7 also requires that there is access to local facilities and that residential proposals include opportunities to access alternative forms of travel to private motorised transport. As shown in paragraph 7.2.6 above the site has fair access to local facilities and services and also good access to the public transport network and both the pedestrian and cycle networks. The site has been demonstrated to be in a sustainable location and as such would comply with criteria (d) and (e) of policy H7 of the Local Plan.
- 7.3.5 The proposal is therefore considered to accord with all the criteria of policy H7 of the Local Plan, with the exception of criterion (c) which will be assessed in later sections of this report.
- 7.3.6 Policy H8 of the District Plan relates to the density of residential development and states that 'in general, the net density of new housing should be within the range of 30-50 dwellings per hectare and that higher densities (50-65+ dwellings per hectare) will be encouraged in developments in the town centre, at neighbourhood centres and other locations well served by passenger transport.' The proposal is seeking a maximum of 200 units on a site of 1.9 hectares which would provide a density of approximately 105 dwellings per hectare. This high density is primarily a result of the number of apartments proposed. It is not considered that the predominant apartment approach to development would be out of context in this location and would relate to the flatted blocks and apartments that have recently been completed at Chrysalis Park, immediately to the east of the application site. More importantly, the indicative drawings demonstrate that a high quality environment can be created utilising this form of development, which can be controlled through the use of conditions and the reserved matters submissions. In this context, this density of development is considered to be acceptable.

7.4 Interim Planning Policy

- 7.4.1 As demonstrated above, the proposal is in accordance with policy H7 of the Local Plan, however, it is also important to consider the interim planning policy position.
- 7.4.2 Policy IP06 'Housing Mix' of the IPPS requires an appropriate mix of market and affordable homes. Whilst the indicative scheme indicates a mix of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom apartments and houses, this is only indicative at this stage and the appropriateness of the housing mix can be considered at the reserved matters stage should the application be successful. Notwithstanding this, the Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2008 suggests that there is a greater need of one and two bed properties and the application would be in accordance with this as it would provide a greater number of smaller one and two bed units (indicatively 78 one bed units, 78 two bed units and 39 three bed units).

Affordable Housing and Developer Contributions

- 7.4.3 Policy IP08 of the IPPS requires that on sites of 25 dwellings or more, 40% will be required to be affordable, which would equate to 80 units of this 200 unit development. Paragraph 173 of the NPPF states that “pursuing sustainable development requires careful attention to viability and costs in plan-making and decision-taking”. It continues to state “to ensure viability, the costs of any requirements likely to be applied to development, such as requirements for affordable housing, standards, infrastructure contributions or other requirements should, when taking account of the normal cost of development and mitigation, provide competitive returns to a willing land owner and willing developer to enable the development to be deliverable.” In essence the viability of a scheme can be a material consideration in the determination of a planning application.
- 7.4.4 In this instance the applicant has provided a detailed financial viability assessment which demonstrates that the development proposal is unable to provide the policy compliant position of 40% affordable housing. This appraisal has been independently assessed by the Council’s own viability consultant who has concurred with this view. Through discussion and negotiation a position of the applicant providing 20% affordable housing has been reached. This is considered to be a fair and reasonable approach, in accordance with the NPPF, and would provide 40 affordable units on site. The applicant has confirmed a willingness to enter into a s106 legal agreement to provide this level of affordable housing on the site.
- 7.4.5 In addition to affordable housing, financial contributions are also required in accordance with the Hertfordshire County Council tool kit and contributions to Stevenage Borough Council for commuted payments towards the improvement of nearby outdoor sports facilities. The applicant has agreed to pay the necessary developer contributions that have been calculated on the basis of the indicative proposal of 195 units for the services provided by Hertfordshire County Council and Stevenage Borough Council. As this application is for outline planning permission and the size of the proposed units is not for consideration at this stage, a formula for payments depending on the size of units will be included in the s106 legal agreement and which will allow for any changes from the indicative 195 unit scheme.
- 7.4.6 However, the applicant has not agreed to the full contribution request from the East and North Hertfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group. In a letter dated 21st May 2015 the East and North Hertfordshire CCG requested a contribution of £616,726 to mitigate the impact of the development on local healthcare. No justification for this level of contribution has been provided in the context of paragraph 204 of the NPPF and the Community Infrastructure Levy regulations preclude the use of pooled contributions for generic health purposes. The nearest GP to the site is the Canterbury Way Surgery which is located approximately an 11 minute walk from the site. The list size of the surgery is higher than the NHS recommended figure of 1,800 patients per GP and suggests that there is no capacity in this surgery for new patients. On this basis the applicant has offered to provide a financial contribution towards additional capacity at this or other specified local surgeries which new residents at this development may be likely to use.
- 7.4.7 The residential population of the development is expected to be around 400 which would generate a requirement of 0.25 of a GP. Based on the NHS model, a single GP requires the equivalent of 165m² of accommodation, which therefore generates a requirement of approximately 40m² for the maximum number of residents generated by the proposal. The applicant has therefore offered a contribution of £65,000 which is considered to be

reasonable in this instance. Alternatively, a health centre could be provided in one of the units on the application site.

- 7.4.8 As well as being in accordance with the Council's housing policies, the proposal is also therefore considered to be in accordance with interim planning policy position and would contribute to the Council's five-year supply of housing.

7.5 Retail / Mixed Use Element

- 7.5.1 The application proposals include a maximum of 900m² of use classes A1/A2/A3/D1 on the ground floor of Plot B as detailed on the parameter plans. It is stated that no single unit would exceed 380m² gross internal area. Whilst these units would predominantly support the residential units proposed and the immediate surroundings, it is also important to consider this element of the application specifically.
- 7.5.2 Firstly, it is considered that the mixed use/retail element proposed would accord with Policy TW4 of the Local Plan which states that major new residential developments should provide a neighbourhood centre or enhance existing provision at an appropriate scale to the community they serve. It has been shown above in paragraph 7.2.6 that the nearest shops and services are in The Oval and Canterbury Way large neighbourhood centres which are 650m to the south west and 900m to the north west respectively and the nearest supermarkets are the Sainsbury's store at Magpie Crescent which is approximately 2.5 miles from the application site or at Coreys Mill or the town centre. Given this it is considered that there is an absence of retail provision in this part of the Borough and as such retail in this position would provide a valuable amenity for new residents and the local area and would provide a 'top up' shopping role.
- 7.5.3 Paragraph 24 of the NPPF advises that local planning authorities should require applications for main town centre uses to be located in town centres, then in edge of centre locations and only if suitable sites are not available should out of centre sites be considered. The applicant has undertaken a sequential test exercise considering The Glebe, Chells Manor, Mobbsbury Way, Canterbury Way and The Oval neighbourhood centres. It has been concluded that notwithstanding that none of these centres are capable of selling from the application site directly and would not meet the localised need, none of these centres could accommodate the retail development proposed. These centres are generally surrounded by associated residential development and there are no large enough vacant sites adjacent to them that would not result in the loss of the associated car parks. Additionally, vacancies within the centres are low and the vacant shop units would not be large enough to accommodate the proposed food store. The results of this sequential assessment are accepted and therefore it is considered that the proposal passes the sequential test.
- 7.5.4 The mixed use/retail element of the proposals would complement, rather than compete, with existing provision and would provide a valuable amenity for new residents and the local area. This element is considered to accord with development plan policy, demonstrates good place-making principles and would assist in increasing the sustainability of the proposal. This element of the proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable.

7.6 Impact upon the Character and Appearance of the Area

- 7.6.1 The application proposes the redevelopment of the DuPont site for residential and related purposes, including open space and retail provision on a part of the ground floor (Plot B).

The indicative layout indicates a range of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom apartments and a minimum of 15 homes comprising town houses on the western boundary of the site. The parameter plans provided show development that would be in the range of two to five storeys across the site with the highest buildings being on the southern and northern boundaries of the site and lower, more intermit scales to the interior.

- 7.6.2 Although the site is relatively self-contained, reflecting its current use, it is set within a wider residential context in the north east of Stevenage. Although the site is within the Pin Green Employment Area, the site is now surrounded on three sides by residential development, comprising the traditional new town housing in Ely Close and Ascot Crescent to the west and south respectively and by the modern residential development in Chrysalis Park to the east. It is only the northern and north eastern boundary of the site that are now adjacent to the commercial and industrial development of the employment area. Within this wider area residential development in this location is not considered to be out of context.
- 7.6.3 There are predominantly two main buildings on the site at present that range in height. Building 1 (the office building) is five storeys in height at its maximum height and forms a gateway building into the industrial estate. Building 2 (the former training building for the Academy) is a part single storey, part two storey building. Around the site there are also a range of heights of buildings from the traditional two storey new town housing in Ely Close and Ascot Crescent, predominantly two storey buildings in the industrial estate but then three and four storey flatted blocks in Chrysalis Park to the east as well as two storey housing. Given the relatively self-contained nature of the site and the range of height in buildings within and in close proximity to the site, it is considered that apartment buildings of up to five storeys in height (with a maximum height of 17.5m) would not have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the area. The parameter plans provided with the application show that the highest building would be in the south eastern corner of the site and again this could provide a prominent, landmark building at the junction of Wedgwood Way and Martins Way, to replace the existing gateway building. The indicative plans provided in the application demonstrate that a high quality residential environment could be created in this location that would have an acceptable impact on the character and appearance of the area. Residential development and the associated open space and landscaping is considered to have an acceptable impact on the character and appearance of the area, which would be in accordance with the first part of criterion (c) of policy H7 and would also integrate with the urban fabric of the town, complying with policy TW9 'Quality in Design' of the Local Plan.

7.7 Impact upon Neighbouring Amenities

- 7.7.1 The application site is relatively self-contained and is separated from the existing residential properties in Ely Close by the mature tree belt on the western boundary and from the new residential development in Chrysalis Park by Wedgwood Way. However, the impact of the proposal on all neighbouring uses needs to be considered.
- 7.7.2 Firstly, the indicative layout shows that the new housing (rather than apartments) would be constructed in close proximity to the western boundary. This would then result in a back to back relationship with the existing properties in Ely Close. The application documents state that the proposed houses would have minimum rear garden sizes of 50m² and minimum rear garden depths of 10m. As well as according with the standards set out in the Stevenage Design Guide, this would ensure that there would be a back to back distance of approximately 36m with the existing dwellings in Ely Close. This distance would be in excess of the 35m minimum separation distance set out in the Stevenage Design Guide

between existing and new dwellings over two storeys and combined with the existing tree belt would be sufficient to ensure that there would be no undue loss of privacy for the occupiers of properties in Ely Close.

- 7.7.3 Secondly, given the separation distance of approximately 70m to the closest properties in Ascot Crescent to the south of the site and across Martins Way, it is considered that there would be a sufficient separation distance to these properties to avoid any loss of privacy from the proposed development. It is recognised that there are both flatted units and houses in Chrysalis Park to the east of the site and across Wedgwood Way. The indicative scheme shows that the apartments in the south eastern corner of the application site would front Wedgwood Way which would result in a front to back relationship with the apartments in Chrysalis Park and a front to side relationship with the nearest housing. Whilst there are no front to back or front to side separation distances set out in the Stevenage Design Guide, the proposed development would still need to ensure that it would result in no loss of privacy to these apartments or the rear garden areas of the houses. The separation distance of approximately 25m and the suitable configuration of the internal layout of the proposed apartments would be sufficient to ensure that the proposal would not lead to an undue loss of privacy to either the occupiers of the flats or nearest houses in Chrysalis Park. The internal layout and window positioning of the proposed apartments can be suitably controlled at the reserved matters stage when the detailed design would be assessed.
- 7.7.4 Finally, the relationship of the proposal with the existing industrial estate needs to be considered. The application site is only separated from Unit 6 Wedgwood Way by a narrow footpath and it is noted that the occupier of Unit 6 has expressed concern due to the proximity of the proposed residential units to the operational use of the yard. It is stated that loading and unloading of vehicles occur in the open in the yard in close proximity of the application site and that the three forklift trucks and a number of the trucks have reversing warnings which could conflict with the residential use of the application site. This concern is recognised, however, it is considered that the residential apartments could be configured in such a way as to avoid habitable rooms in the rear elevation and that suitable boundary treatment and acoustic screening could be proposed to avoid this potential conflict with the daily operations of Unit 6 Wedgwood Way. It is noted that a similar relationship between the apartments immediately to the south of Cartwright Road and opposite the Allied Bakeries site has been accepted with these apartments designed to avoid habitable rooms in their northern elevation facing the bakery site. Again the internal configuration of the apartments, window positions and suitable boundary treatment can be controlled at the detailed design stage. Similarly, the same consideration needs to be given to the proposed apartments in the north eastern corner of the application site and the Albany House site to the east.
- 7.7.5 As the proposal is considered to have an acceptable impact on neighbouring residential amenity, the scheme also accords with the final part of criterion (c) of policy H7 which requires that residential proposals do not have a detrimental effect on the surrounding or adjoining properties.
- 7.7.6 In considering a residential scheme of this nature it is also important to ensure that living conditions for any future occupiers are appropriate. Whilst the layout is only indicative at this stage, the site appears able to accommodate the amount of development proposed, with sufficient privacy distances, garden sizes, amenity areas and depths of garden to ensure suitable living conditions for any future occupiers. Some form of acoustic barrier may be needed on the northern boundary of the site but this issue can be considered in depth at the reserved matters stage when the layout would be assessed in detail.

7.8 Impact on the Highway Network

- 7.8.1 The Transport Statement submitted as part of the planning application and covering highway and traffic issues has been carefully scrutinised by Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority to establish the likely impact of the proposal on the road network. It is considered that the total peak generation of traffic would reduce in comparison with the original use of the site. Considering that the development is located adjacent to a local access road, the new traffic generation of vehicles is not considered to have a significant impact on the local highway network. Accordingly, Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority considers that the proposal would not have an unreasonable impact on the safety and operation of the adjoining highways subject to the provision of a financial contribution, conditions and highway informatives to be attached to any planning permission.
- 7.8.2 The financial contribution of £16,000 towards sustainable transport provision would be targeted towards improving the existing bus stop in Cartwright Road that would assist in meeting accessibility requirements for passenger transport services in the local area.

7.9 Car Parking

- 7.9.1 The application states that 255 car parking spaces would be provided, including a maximum of 10 spaces for the non-residential use. The indicative mix of dwellings included in the application documents shows that there would be 78 one bed units, 78 two bed units and 39 three bed units. In this un-zoned location this mix would require a total of 273 spaces in accordance with the Council's Parking Provision Supplementary Planning Document. Whilst there is a shortfall of 28 car parking spaces, the application site is located immediately adjacent to a residential accessibility zone 3. Accessibility zone 3 locations are defined as an area within 400m to a local shop and primary school and with good passenger transport links. It is considered that with the local centre proposed as part of the application that the site would take on the characteristics of a zone 3 location as the residential units would have access to a local shop, be within 400m of a primary school (Martins Wood Primary School is approximately 250m to the south of the site) and have good access to passenger transport links. In a zone 3 location residential car parking provision can be in the range of 75-100% of the usual car parking standard. At 90% of the usual standard, the proposal would be within this accepted range.
- 7.9.2 Additionally, the indicative layout demonstrates that further parking could be accommodated if necessary, including provision for visitor spaces on the internal access roads. Further, the mix of dwellings is not set at this outline stage and there is considered to be flexibility in the mix of dwellings that can come forward at the detailed design stage. At this later stage, it would be appropriate to ensure that sufficient parking is provided on the development site. Finally, Wedgwood Way is subject to double yellow lines and this would ensure that parking from this development would not be able to overspill on to the public highway.

7.10 Other Considerations

Ecology and Protected Species

- 7.10.1 In relation to protected species, the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT) has stated that they have no objections to the development and concur with the findings and recommendations of the applicant's ecological report. The ecological report states that there should be no increased light spillage on to areas of woodland to protect foraging and commuting bats and accordingly an external lighting condition is included in section 9.1 of this report. The ecological report also advises that the site is unlikely to support Great Crested newts, dormice or badgers and accordingly no further surveys are recommended. Finally, it is recommended that vegetation removal is only undertaken outside the nesting season to avoid the destruction of active nests and the buildings on site can be removed during the nesting period as long as a suitably experienced ecologist can confirm that no active nests are present.

Open Space Provision

- 7.10.2 In relation to open space provision, policy L16 of the Local Plan requires residential development to provide children's play space at a minimum ratio of 0.8 hectares per 1,000 population. Additionally, policy L17 of the Local Plan requires residential development of between 15 and 200 dwellings to provide informal open space of at least 0.2 hectares. The proposal provides for a minimum open space envelope of 0.2 hectares and is thus in accordance with policy L17. Additionally, the applicant has stated that the development will incorporate children's play space provision to meet the minimum standards, the approval of which will be sought through the detailed design within any subsequent reserved matters submission. A condition has been included to ensure the provision of the necessary amount of children's play space and with such a condition the proposal is considered to accord with both policies L16 and L17 of the Local Plan.

Impact on Trees

- 7.10.3 With regard to the impact on trees, some trees within the site would need to be removed. However, the Council's Arboricultural Officer has stated that these are not of great value and can be easily compensated for with a well thought out landscaping scheme that would be provided at reserved matters stage. It is stated that some works to the tree belt on the western boundary of the site may be required to ensure that there is no conflict with the proposed private gardens of the houses. These works would need to be carried out at the cost of the applicant before works start on site. With the completion of these works and the necessary replacement planting that can be provided through a landscaping scheme at the reserved matters stage, it is considered that the impact on trees is acceptable.

Flood Risk Assessment

- 7.10.4 The application site is situated within a Flood Zone 1 which has a low probability of flooding and accordingly the Environment Agency has no objection to the proposals. Additionally, Hertfordshire County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) has confirmed that the applicant has provided sufficient detail to demonstrate that there is a feasible drainage scheme that can equate to the existing green field surface water run-off rates and volumes by using the most appropriate sustainable drainage methods such as ponds, swales and permeable paving. Accordingly, the LLFA raise no objection on flood risk grounds subject to conditions which are included in section 9.1 of this report.

Relocation of the Existing Occupier

7.10.5 DuPont has occupied its premises at Wedgwood Way since 1981. The site accommodates the company's UK headquarter offices in what is known as Building 1, as well as the former training area for the DuPont Performance Coating Academy in Building 2, which is now vacant. DuPont currently employs approximately 40 people at the Wedgwood Way site within Building 1 and a further 70 people not based on site (sales, homeworkers etc.). DuPont has stated that Building 1 is now outdated in terms of its size and configuration and also is severely underused. Only the ground and third floors are used as offices, with the basement, first and second floors remaining empty. The company now wish to relocate to new, smaller and better quality offices at King's Court in Stevenage and it is welcomed that this company wish to retain their headquarters within Stevenage.

8. CONCLUSIONS

8.1 It is considered that whilst the application site is designated is an employment area, there are significant material considerations in this instance that outweigh the policy position of protecting this site for employment use. These factors comprise the valid fall-back position of the residential conversion of the existing office building, the lack of success of marketing the site for employment use, the residential use of the site not appearing out of context given the predominantly surrounding residential uses and the current lack of a five year housing land supply.

8.2 Additionally, the retail / mixed use element of the proposal is considered to be acceptable and would complement the residential use of the site, the proposal would have an acceptable impact on the character and appearance of the area and the proposal would not harm the amenity of neighbouring land users. Further, the proposed scheme would not adversely affect the operation or safety of the local highway network and would provide a sufficient level of car parking. Finally, issues relating to wildlife, surface water drainage, trees, open space provision, affordable housing and developer contributions can be satisfactorily addressed through the use of conditions or a s106 legal agreement. Accordingly, it is recommended that outline planning permission be granted.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 That outline planning permission be granted subject to the applicant having first entered into and completed a s106 legal agreement to secure / provide financial contributions towards:-

- The provision of 20% affordable housing;
- Primary education, nursery education and library services to serve the development;
- The provision of fire hydrants;
- Sustainable transport provision and the cost of evaluating and assessing the Travel Plan;
- Health care provision;

- The improvement of outdoor sports provision;
- The provision of on-site equipped play area.

The detail of which would be delegated to the Head of Planning and Engineering in liaison with the Head of Legal Services and subject to the following conditions:-

1. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in general accordance with the following approved plans: A-02-011, A-02-012, A-02-013, A-02-014, A-02-015 and A-02-016.

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

2. Approval of the details of the layout, scale, appearance and the landscaping of the site (hereinafter called "the reserved matters") shall be obtained from the Local Planning Authority, prior to the commencement of any part of the development.

REASON: - To comply with the requirements of Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

3. Application for approval of the reserved matters shall be made to the Local Planning Authority before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

REASON: - To comply with the requirements of Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

4. The development hereby permitted shall be begun either before the expiration of five years from the date of this permission, or before the expiration of two years from the date of approval of the last of the reserved matters to be approved, whichever is the later.

REASON: - To comply with the requirements of Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

5. If, during the course of development, any contamination is found or suspected, works shall cease and the Local Planning Authority shall be informed immediately. The Local Planning Authority may request the nature and extent of any contamination to be investigated in order that a suitable remediation strategy can be proposed. The development shall not continue until any required remediation as agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority has been undertaken, and the Local Planning Authority has confirmed it has been undertaken to its satisfaction.

(a) Where remediation of contamination on the site is required, completion of the remediation detailed in the method statement shall be carried out, and a report that provides verification that the required works have been carried out shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the development is occupied.

(b) In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified, it must be reported in writing within 14 days to the Local Planning Authority and once the Local Planning Authority has identified the part of the site affected by the unexpected contamination development must be halted on that part of the site.

(c) An assessment must be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of part (b) above, and where remediation is necessary a remediation scheme, together with a timetable for its implementation, must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

(d) The measures in the approved remediation scheme must then be implemented in accordance with the approved timetable. Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme a validation report must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: - To prevent harm to human health and pollution of the water environment.

6. No development shall commence until a Code of Construction Practice has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority. This shall include measures during the construction process to minimise the amount of dust generated, minimise the impact of any piling necessary, minimise the amount of noise generated, identify the hours of operation, specify construction traffic haul routes, identify vehicle numbers, the management of junctions to and crossings of the public highway and other public rights of way. The approved Code of Construction Practice shall be implemented in full for the full duration of the construction activity relating to this permission at this site.

REASON: - To prevent harm to human health, to minimise the impact of construction vehicles and to maintain the amenity of the local area.

7. The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the proposed accesses have been constructed, the existing access has been closed and the existing footway/verge has been reinstated to the current specification of Hertfordshire County Council and to the Local Planning Authority's satisfaction.

REASON: - In order to protect highway safety and the amenity of other users of the public highway.

8. No development shall commence until a Travel Plan, with the object of reducing residents travelling to the development by private car and the sustainable use of the retail / mixed use units, has been submitted to and approved in writing by Local Planning Authority. The Travel Plan shall be implemented in accordance with the approved scheme on the occupation of the first dwelling unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: - To promote sustainable transport measures for residents, staff and customers.

9. The gradient of the main accesses from Wedgwood Way shall not be steeper than 1 in 20 for the first 15m measured from the edge of the carriageway.

REASON: - To ensure a vehicle is approximately level before being driven off and on to the highway.

10. No development shall commence until a Construction Method Statement 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 Statement. The Construction Method Statement shall address the following matters:

- Off-site highway works in order to provide temporary access throughout the construction period; work shall be completed prior to the commencement of development and reinstated as required;
- Construction and storage compounds (including areas designated for car parking);
- Siting and details of wheel washing facilities;
- Cable trenches within the public highway that affect traffic movement of existing residents;
- Foundation works that affect traffic movement of existing residents;
- Cleaning of site entrances, site tracks and the adjacent public highways;
- Disposal of surplus materials.

REASON: - To minimise the impact of construction vehicles and to maintain the amenity of the local area.

11. Prior to the commencement of the highway works as identified on the 'in principle' site plan drawing number 151696/A/02 RevA, a site layout drawing shall be submitted to the Highway Authority with details showing the junction layout, layby plans and a swept path analysis to demonstrate that a waste collection vehicle in current use can be accommodated safely within the carriageway; the details shall be in accordance with Manual for Streets with the ultimate design being technically approved by the Highway Authority prior to commencement on site.

REASON: - To ensure that the development does not adversely affect the safety and operation of the highway network.

12. No removal of trees, scrub or hedges, shall be carried out on site between the 1st March and 31st August inclusive in any year, unless searched beforehand by a suitably qualified ornithologist.

REASON: - Nesting birds are protected from disturbance under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

13. No development, including any site clearance or demolition works, shall commence until the trees to be retained on the site have been protected by fencing or other means of enclosure in accordance with a detailed scheme submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such protection as may be agreed shall be inspected and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of the work and maintained until the conclusion of all site and building operations.

REASON: - To ensure that the retained trees are not damaged or otherwise adversely affected during site operations.

14. Within the areas to be fenced off in accordance with condition 13, there shall be no alteration to the ground level and they shall be kept clear of vehicles, materials, surplus soil, temporary buildings, plant and machinery.

REASON: - To ensure that the retained trees are not damaged or otherwise adversely affected during site operations.

15. No development shall commence until a scheme of external lighting has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The external lighting shall be installed prior to the first occupation of any residential dwelling.

REASON: - To ensure that any external lighting does not adversely affect foraging and commuting bats.

16. No development shall commence until a scheme to provide suitable bird boxes has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved boxes shall be installed prior to the first occupation of any residential dwelling.

REASON: - To increase opportunities for wildlife in new developments.

17. This permission is for a development of no more than 200 dwellings with a height no greater than 5 storeys.

REASON: - To ensure that the development does not adversely affect the safety and operation of the adjoining highway network and to ensure an acceptable impact on the character and appearance of the area.

18. The construction of the children's play space shall not commence until the exact location and detail of the play space have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The play space shall be constructed prior to the occupation of neighbouring plots adjacent to the play space.

REASON: - To ensure the provision of quality play spaces in the development.

19. The development permitted by this planning permission shall be carried out in accordance with the approved Flood Risk Assessment, the letter by Sanjay Chaturvedy dated July 15th 2015; the email by Helen Rodger dated August 27th 2015 and drawing reference NTS/2519/100 (including the documents provided after it to remove the objection) carried out by BWB Consulting reference NTS 2519/FRA/Rev 2 dated April 2015 and the following mitigation measures detailed within the Flood Risk Assessment:

1. Limiting the surface water run-off generated by the critical storm event so that it will not exceed 5 l/s unless otherwise agreed in writing with Thames Water.
2. Implementing appropriate SuDS measures giving priority to above ground measures such as permeable pavements, ponds and swales, as stated in the email by Helen Rodger dated August 27th 2015 and shown in the drawing NTS/2519/100.
3. Providing attenuation 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.
4. Discharge surface water to 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 the increased risk of flooding, to improve and protect water quality, to ensure the satisfactory storage of water within the site and also to improve habitat and amenity.

20. No development shall take place until a surface water drainage scheme for the site, based on sustainable drainage principles and an assessment of the hydrological and hydro geological context of the development, 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 the 1 in 100 year + climate change critical storm will not exceed the run-off from the existing 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 shall also include:

- Details of how the scheme shall be maintained and managed after completion;
- Details of the proposed drainage scheme providing a final detailed drainage plan showing the location of any proposed SuDS, pipe runs and any areas of proposed informal flooding;
- Detailed assessment of the existing surface water flood risk as shown on the Environment Agency National surface water flood maps, ensuring the development layout does not place any proposed properties at risk from surface water flooding;
- Implementation of above ground storage measures as outlined within the Flood Risk Assessment approved as part of the outline planning application;
- Detailed engineering details of the design of the proposed SuDS features;
- Detailed surface water calculations for all rainfall events up to and including the 1 in 100 year + climate change even

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

21. Notwithstanding the details shown in this application the treatment of all boundaries including details of any walls, fences, gates or other means of enclosure shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development, including providing for the retention of the existing landscaping on the boundaries of the application site. The approved boundary treatments shall be completed before any of the dwellings are occupied.

REASON: - To ensure a satisfactory standard of development in the interests of amenity.

22. No development shall take place until a schedule and samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the buildings hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: - To ensure the development has an acceptable appearance.

23. No demolition or construction work relating to this permission shall be carried out on any Sunday, Public or Bank Holiday nor at any other time, except between the hours of 0800 and 1800 on Mondays to Fridays and between the hours of 0900 and 1300 on Saturdays.

REASON: - To safeguard the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring properties.

24. No development shall commence until a drainage strategy detailing any on and/or off site drainage works has been submitted to and approved in writing 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: - 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.

Pro-active Statement

Planning permission has been granted for this proposal. The Council acted pro-actively through early engagement with the applicant at the pre-application stage which led to improvements to the scheme. The Council has therefore acted pro-actively in line with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 186 and 187) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment No. 2) Order 2012.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

1. The application file, forms, plans and supporting documents having the reference number relating to this item.
2. Letters received containing representations referred to in this report.
3. Responses to consultations with statutory undertakers and other interested parties referred to in this report.
4. Stevenage District Plan Second Review 1991-2011.
5. Stevenage Borough Council Supplementary Planning Guidance – Parking Provision adopted January 2012 and the Stevenage Design Guide adopted October 2009.
6. Central Government advice contained in the National Planning Policy Framework March 2012 and National Planning Policy Guidance March 2014.
7. Interim Planning Policy Statement – April 2012.