

Application Number and Registration Date	MO/2018/1859 (Detailed) 07-Nov-2018
Applicant	Woodcote Estates Ltd.
Case Officer	Sherelle Munnis
Amendments /amplifications	
Committee Date	3 April 2019
Ward(s)	Leatherhead North
Proposal	Erection of three storey HMO building with basement, comprising 6 No. flats with 40 No. bedrooms, communal living space and associated landscaping and parking.
Site Description	Land r/o Grantham House, 11-15, North Street, Leatherhead, Surrey, KT22 7AX

RECOMMENDATION: Subject to completion of an appropriate legal agreement to ensure that the 40 rooms are to be used as staff accommodation for Beaverbrook, by Friday 26 April 2019 or any such other date as agreed in writing with the Corporate Head of Planning, planning permission granted subject to conditions.

Summary

The site has an area of 0.1 hectares and is located to the rear of Grantham House on North Street, Leatherhead. The site is currently a redundant car park with parking on two levels.

In September 2018 planning permission was granted for a four storey building (three residential floors above a basement car park) to be built out from the rear elevation of Grantham House across the redundant car park. The development would have provided 9 no. apartments made up of 2 x 3 bed units, 3 x 2 bed units and 4 x 1 bed units.

The proposed building subject of this application would provide staff accommodation for the Beaverbrook hotel/spa/golf club/cookery school business on the outskirts of Leatherhead.

The building would occupy a similar but slightly larger footprint to that approved in September 2018 and would be greater in depth. The massing of the building would be stepped away at its south eastern corner where it would be nearest the approved extension to the rear of Stocks House and the flats to the rear of Bridge Street properties. The proposed building would contain 6 no. House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) apartments of 5, 6, 7 and 8 beds (with a total of 40 bedrooms) over three storeys all of which would be accessed by a stairwell and lift. A total of 8 parking spaces would be provided including 4 in the basement for the residents and 4 at ground level for the nearby retail units. Secure cycle spaces would be provided in the basement and a refuse store would be located at ground floor level in the same location as previously approved. The section of the proposed building nearest to Grantham House would be finished in render whilst the remainder of the building would be finished in red brick with contrasting render or stonework framing the window openings. The 2 no. balconies at the rear of the building would have timber screens on their south eastern side to restrict views in that direction.

The principle of residential development has already been established on this site and the future occupants would contribute towards the vitality and viability of the town centre. The accommodation would benefit staff from a local business and would reduce their need to travel longer distances to work. The development would make efficient use of previously development land within central Leatherhead. The site benefits from a highly sustainable location, close to shops, services and public transport. It is considered that the scale, height and form of the development would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the area and that the design of the building would not give rise to any significant harm to the amenity of neighbouring residents. As such, permission is recommended subject to the conditions set out below.

1. Development Plan

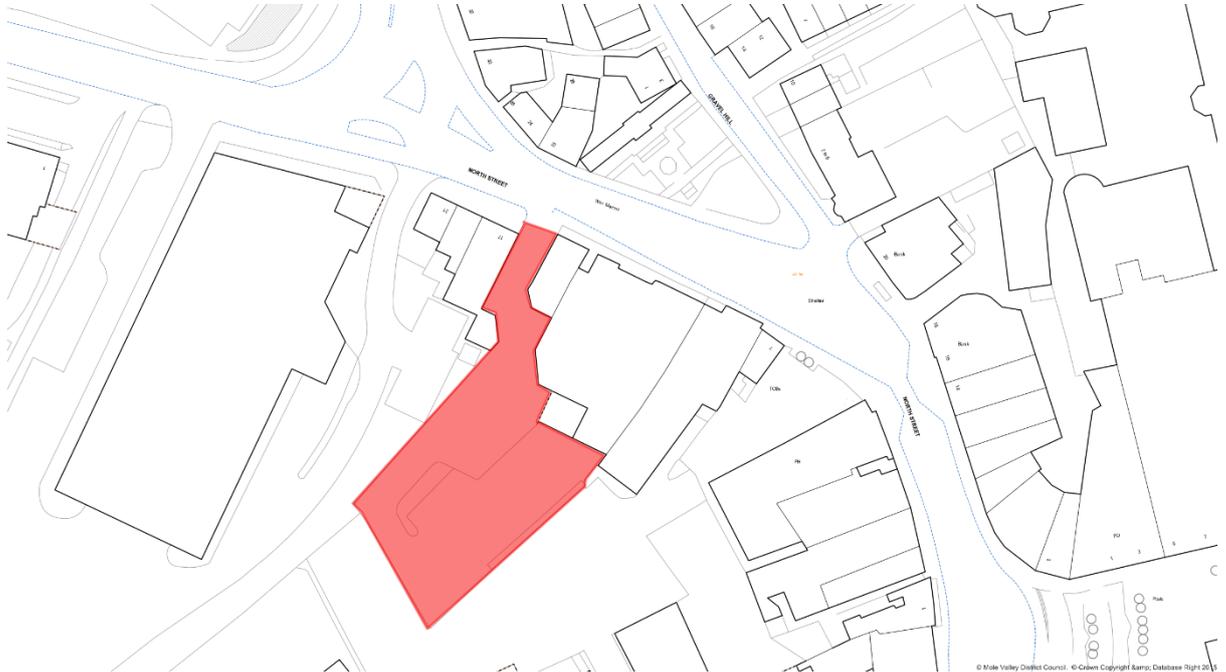
- 1.1. Built up area; North eastern corner of site within Leatherhead Shopping Area and Conservation Area – but building footprint outside both of these zones.

2. Relevant Planning History

MO/18/0738	Erection of four storey building including basement comprising 9 no. residential units with associated landscaping and basement parking	Approved 07/09/18
MO/17/1382	Erection of a detached four storey (including basement) residential building (Use Class C3) comprising 6 no. flats with associated landscaping and basement level car parking	Approved 07/12/17
MO/12/1077	Revision to layout of basement parking and locker (storage) area as an amendment to approved MO/11/0907	Approved 28/09/12
MO/12/1076	Amendment to planning permission MO/11/0907 to change first floor flat E and second floor flat I from one bedroom flats to two bedroom flats	Approved 28/09/12
MO/11/0907	Change of use of upper floors from offices (Use Class B1) to 9 No. residential units (Use Class C3) together with associated external alterations and provision of car parking	Approved 08/09/11

3. Description of Development

- 3.1. The application site is located behind Grantham House and to the south east of the Lidl store and takes access off North Street. The site is currently laid out as a parking area and incorporates a vehicular ramp which provides access to a basement car park beneath Grantham House.



- 3.2. In September 2018, permission was granted under planning reference MO/2018/0738, for the erection of a four storey building (including basement) comprising 9 no. residential units with associated landscaping and basement parking.
- 3.3. The current application relates to the same site as the September 2018 and proposes a building of a slight larger footprint but of lower height, which steps down in massing towards its south eastern end. However, rather than being divided internally into 9 separate apartments, the current application proposes 6 no. flats with a total of 40 bedrooms to provide staff accommodation for the Beaverbrook hotel/spa/cookery school/golf club business on the outskirts of Leatherhead. The application also seeks permission for associated landscaping, car parking and cycle storage.
- 3.4. The application has been amended since it was first registered to make the following improvements:
- * increase space in the internal layout to square-off the bedrooms and improve communal circulation space in order to provide a better standard of accommodation for the future occupants. This has resulted in an increase in the overall area of the building at ground and first floor level
 - * reduce the massing of the building by stepping back the second floor and parts of the first floor and varying the eaves levels
 - * revisions to the principal elevations to remove large panel glazing units and a proliferation of balconies and privacy screens across the rear elevation
 - * introduction of frosted windows and blind windows on the south eastern elevation to add visual interest in the event that the extension to the rear of Stocks House is not built out
 - * using a combination of brick and render to visually divide the building into two blocks

- 3.5. The proposed elevations are shown below alongside the elevations previously approved under MO/2018/0738.



Figure 1: Proposed elevation facing NW towards side of Lidl foodstore

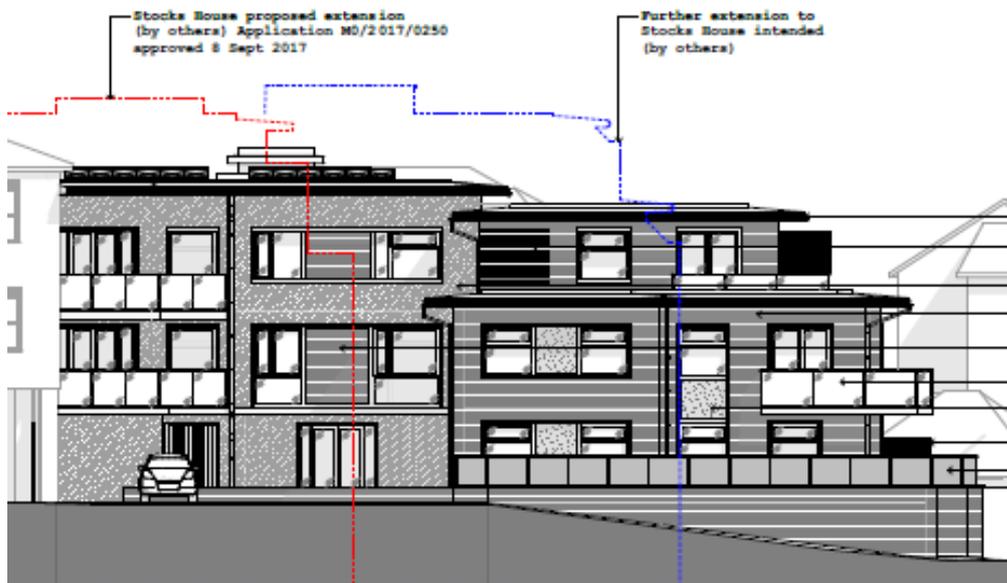


Figure 2: NW elevation as permitted under MO/2018/0738



Figure 3: Proposed elevation facing SW towards car park and Swan House

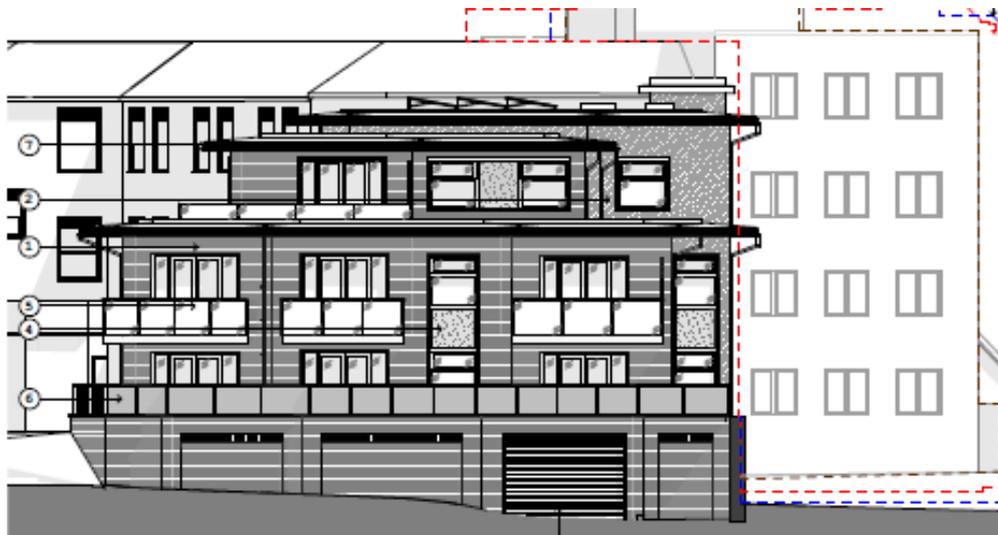


Figure 4: SW elevation as permitted under MO/2018/0738



Figure 5: Elevation facing SE towards location of Stocks House extension and rear of Bridge Street properties

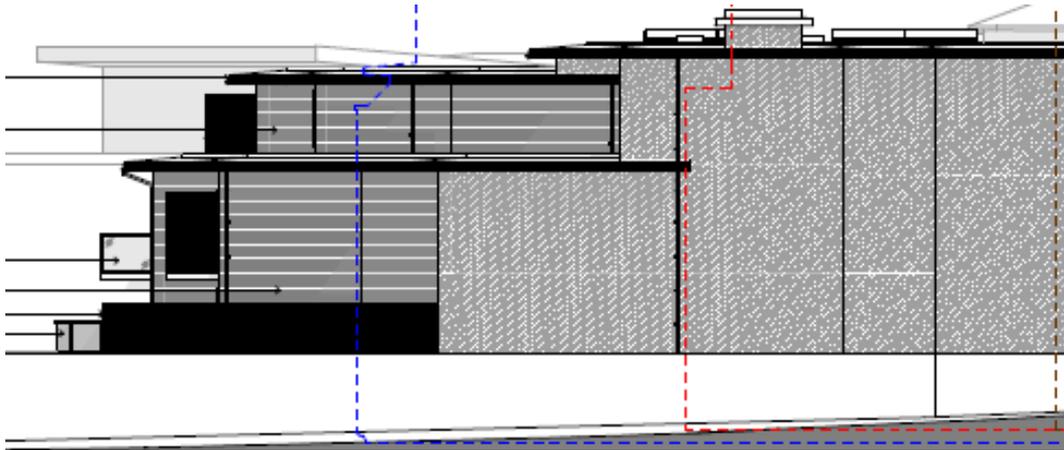


Figure 6: SE elevation as permitted under MO/2018/0738

4. Consultations

- 4.1. **SCC Highways:** The County Highway Authority has assessed the application on safety, capacity and policy grounds and raises no highway safety objection. Conditions recommended.
- 4.2. **Environmental Health:** - No concerns regarding noise as the site is not located in any area of any particular noise source. With regard to contamination, the site had an historic use as a works. Therefore the model contamination condition should be applied. In terms of external lighting, we would not consider there to be a particular issue regarding lighting for a residential building. The minimum permitted sleeping room size for a single adult is 6.51 square metres. This minimum standard is now a legal requirement since October 2018 in HMOs. All of the rooms exceed this standard so no concerns are raised. Further to this, there is no 'legal' requirement for 'communal' living space within a HMO, but, we would always encourage HMO landlords to include some form of communal living space and this application does so. The applicants will need to apply for 6 separate HMO licences - one for each flat, depending on the ownership/occupancy arrangements going forward. No objections raised to the proposed development.
- 4.3. **Strategic Housing Manager:** The scheme will bring people into Leatherhead to live, shop and spend money. This proposal is a good example of an employer solving its own housing issues. The Affordable Housing SPD states that affordable housing isn't required for staff accommodation - para 3.13 last sentence states *'The policy will not however, apply to residential accommodation, which is to be used as incidental to the main dwelling, or to staff/student accommodation'*. As such, we cannot require affordable housing and MVDC would not want affordable units of this type. Planning conditions or a legal agreement will be required to ensure that the accommodation is to be kept as staff housing.
- 4.4. **Transform Leatherhead:** The site is within Leatherhead Town Centre and the proposals are considered within the context of the Transform Leatherhead Masterplan 2016. The Master Plan sets out nine Strategic Objectives. The key objective of relevance is to *'Provide high quality living within the town centre'*. Opportunities for new residential development are to *'respond to the need for additional housing in the district in a sustainable location and potentially underpin the viability of further town centre development.'* The site is on the border of the Retail and Riverside Quarters and the Master Plan confirms that *'Residential uses could also be beneficial in promoting high quality town centre living and supporting local businesses.'* This is a

pro-active solution by a local employer to provide housing for their staff, and Transform Leatherhead will benefit from the 40 proposed new residents who will support the town centre businesses. The proposed HMO scheme needs to be of sufficient quality so that it meets the Master Plan Objective of providing high quality living within the town centre, and must not compromise the attractiveness of the area. The quality of the accommodation needs to be sustainable for the long-term, beyond the proposed occupation, should the employer's housing requirements change. To achieve this, the layout of the accommodation should be designed to accommodate future conversion to apartments suitable for high quality town centre living. This will ensure that the site provides high quality housing for town centre living and will support the vitality of the expanded and transformed town centre in the long-term.

- 4.5. Historic Environment Officer: This application is very similar to the previous applications (MO/2017/01840, MO/2017/1382 and MO/2018/0738) which were granted. Due to the existing setting of this site which contains several buildings of the similar mass and height, it is considered that the work associated with this application would preserve the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 4.6. Environment Agency: No comments to make on this planning application as it falls outside the Environment Agency's remit as a statutory consultee.
- 4.7. Archaeology: This application is similar in its potential archaeological impacts to those of previous applications MO/2017/184, MO/2017/1382 and MO/2018/738. My comments made in respect of those applications remain wholly relevant in respect of this application, namely:

The applicant has (*previously*) submitted an Archaeological Desk Based Assessment, produced by their archaeological consultant CgMS, in support of their application. The report provides suitable information on which the archaeological potential of the site can be assessed, together with the potential impacts of the development on any Heritage Assets of archaeological significance that may be present.

The report indicates that although the development is located within an Area of High Archaeological Potential designated around the historic core of Leatherhead, the site has been subject to significant ground disturbance from the early 20th century through to the present day. Previously, in the early 20th century, various building impacts on the site. The most recent development incorporates a sunken level car park and access ramp.

Having visited the site, I can confirm that these developments, together with their service provision, have had a significant impact on the ground levels within the proposed development area and as a consequence, it is very unlikely that any Heritage Assets of archaeological significance will remain *in situ*. As such, I recommend that there is no requirement for any further archaeological consideration in respect of this application.

- 4.8. Environmental Contracts Manager (ECM): The Council's Environmental Contracts Manager contacted a neighbouring Authority that regularly deals with applications for HMOs of this size and was advised that the refuse store as shown on the original drawings should be increased in size to enable it to accommodate 4 x 1100 refuse and 4 x 1100 recycling bins. The plans were amended in accordance with this advice. The location of the refuse store is the same as previously permitted under MO/2018/0738 and is acceptable for access by refuse lorries provided the road is kept clear of cars.

- 4.9. Sustainability Advisor: No objections.
- 4.10. Thames Water: The proposed development is located within 15m of an underground waste water asset. Informative recommended.

5. Representations

- 5.1. 1 letter of support received and 10 letters of objection from 8 different addresses together with an objection from the Leatherhead Residents Association raising the following summarised comments:

5.2. Leatherhead Residents Association (commenting on the plans as originally submitted)

The proposed extension to Grantham House would make this building the largest in Leatherhead and would be out of scale with other buildings in the town. The massing of the previously approved scheme gradually stepped down in height towards Swan House. The proposed development would close the gaps between individual buildings and would not maintain the level of openness that the previously approved building did. This would be particularly apparent when the building is viewed from North Street and Bull Hill. The proposed development would have a significant negative impact on the surrounding buildings and would create a cramped and overdeveloped site in the town centre, providing housing at a density normally associated with London rather than a small market town in the Green Belt. The number of individual balconies proposed would draw attention to the hostel style accommodation and would not be in keeping with the neighbouring flats. The balconies could be used to store household items to the detriment of the amenity of neighbours. The small club room in the basement would not be an attractive place for future residents to use. The refuse store seems inadequate in size and access for refuse lorries is insufficient. The provision of 4 parking spaces is insufficient for the number of rooms proposed. Provision of a work shuttle bus service does not necessarily mean that employees will not have their own car. What will happen if and when the building is no longer required by Beaverbrook? The layout shows two flats with 8 rooms each and one flat with 7 rooms with only one kitchen serving each flat. This is below the standards for student accommodation. What would happen if an employee's partner moved in too? The total number of residents could end up being double that which it is designed for. The floor layout would be difficult to convert into a more conventional arrangement if the hostel business fails. If the units were smaller, they could be converted to 2-3 bed flats. Is there another local company with similar numbers of staff who would want this type of accommodation if Beaverbrook pull out? If the rooms were let individually on the open market, problems of maintenance of communal areas, parking and noise etc would be likely to arise. Where would the shuttle bus pick up and drop off their staff? Any collections and drop offs during anti-social hours would harm the amenity of neighbours.

Officer comment – During the course of the planning application, amended plans were submitted showing a gradual stepping-down in height of the building towards the rear. The amended plans removed the vast majority of balconies and privacy screens across the rear elevation and show only two balconies and one ground floor roof terrace remaining at the south eastern corner of the building, all of which would serve communal living rooms. The small room in the basement that was originally identified as a resident's club room has now been amended to a store room. The refuse store has been increased in size to accommodate 4 X 1100 refuse and 4 X 1100 recycling bins - the necessary amount of bins for a 40 bed development of this nature. Access for refuse lorries is the same as previously approved. In terms of parking provision, this is a town centre site which is easily accessed by public transport and within a short walk of the town's shops and services. SCC parking standards allow for zero parking

in town centre locations. The agent have advised that if a situation arises where Beaverbrook no longer require the property for their staff, the applicant would market the premises for a single user. The applicant already manages several other single unit properties across multiple LPA's. The management plan (which would form part of the HMO licence) would limit occupancy to one person per bedroom. On-going management of the premises is not within the remit of planning. The terms of the scope to convert the building to self-contained apartments at a future date, the internal partitions are mostly non load-bearing and so could be easily removed and the layout reconfigured to enable conversion to apartments. Other companies and organisation's in the area who require accommodation and who may be interested in this type of accommodation are: NHS Epsom-RAC Woodcoteside. There is space for the shuttle bus to park and turn around within the site – a plan has been submitted to demonstrate this. Shift patterns are likely to allow one drop off after 10.30pm and would be unlikely to cause significant harm to the amenity of neighbouring residents.

5.3. 1 letter in Support

- * Longshot Cherkley Court Ltd wish to take on a long lease of the property for the purposes of staff accommodation
- * Their existing staff are spread over the districts of Mole Valley, Reigate and Banstead and Epsom and Ewell
- * Longshot employ over 200 staff and are due to expand their staffing numbers further with the opening of the spa facility
- * they currently operate a shuttle bus service between the Beaverbrook, the railway stations and staff accommodation.
- * the majority of their staff live in Epsom
- * the proposed development would have the benefit of bringing all of Beaverbrook's staff into MVDC and would consolidate their tenancy within Mole Valley
- * it would reduce the travel movements of the company's shuttle bus
- * would reduce the need to staff to commute longer distances
- * would bring staff close to local amenities and public transport services

5.4. 10 Letters of Objection

- * the developer has not approached the residents of Grantham House or the leaseholders to advise them of this or any of the previous applications
- * the proposal is for a hostel in an existing residential area
- * nature of accommodation and design of building out of character with the area
- * excessive density – the proposed building would accommodate more than twice the number of residents in Grantham House
- * transient accommodation
- * could become a ghetto for undesirable people including drug dealers
- * personal security issues due to residents of Grantham House having to stop in basement car park of proposed building to raise steel security gate to their own car park
- * high risk of noisy / antisocial behaviour of future occupants
- * insufficient parking provision
- * overdevelopment & overcrowding
- * noise disturbance associated with future residents entering and leaving the building
- * large number of balconies would worsen noise levels
- * highway safety risk associated with construction vehicles and increase in number of vehicles entering and leaving the site via North Street following occupation
- * where will Grantham House residents park during the build programme?
- * residents would generate large volumes of waste and refuse store could attract vermin
- * bin store not easily accessible by refuse lorries
- * future residents would be transient, low paid workers with no particular regard for

their or their neighbours environment, bringing little to the local economy

- * proposed rooms are too small
- * 40 residents could become 80 with friends and visitors using the accommodation too
- * shuttle bus services will still be required and will worsen congestion on surrounding roads
- * development will reduce the value of neighbouring properties
- * loss of view
- * loss of privacy
- * loss of daylight to first floor flat in neighbouring building
- * Additional strain on drainage system associated with proposed development and approved extension to Stocks House
- * on-going Brexit negotiations mean there is uncertainty as to whether or not Beaverbrook will be able to recruit from the EU
- * future residents will not use local shops and facilities
- * who will monitor the occupancy of the building?
- * Beaverbrook should provide accommodation on their staff on their own site
- * * recent consultations from Transform Leatherhead have not identified a need for HMOs on the area

6. Main Planning Policies

6.1. Government Guidance

NPPF (Feb 2019)

Section 2 - Achieving Sustainable Development

Section 5 – Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes

Section 7 – Ensuring the Vitality of Town Centres

Section 9 – Promoting Sustainable Transport

Section 11 – Making Efficient Use of Land

Section 12 – Achieving Well Designed Places

Section 14 – Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding & Coastal Change

Section 16 – Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

6.2. Mole Valley Core Strategy

CS1 – Where Development Will be Directed – A Spatial Strategy

CS2 – Housing Provision and Location

CS3 – Balancing Housing Provision

CS14 – Townscape, Urban Design and the Historic Environment

CS18 – Transport Options and Accessibility

CS19 – Sustainable Construction, Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation

CS20 – Flood Risk Management

6.3. Mole Valley Local Plan

ENV22 – General Development Control Criteria

ENV23 – Respect for Setting

ENV24 – Density of Development and Space About Buildings

ENV25 – Landscape Design of New Developments

ENV29 – Planning and Crime Prevention

ENV39 – Development in Conservation Areas

ENV49 – Areas of High Archaeological Potential

ENV69 – Contaminated Land

MOV2 – The Movement Implications of Development

MOV5 – Parking Standards

- 6.4. Other Documents
Built up Areas Character Appraisal for Leatherhead

7. Main Planning Issues

- 7.1. The main planning issues for consideration are whether:

- * the development of HMO accommodation is acceptable in principle
- * the scale, height, massing and design of the proposed building would cause any significant harm to the character and appearance of the area including the setting of the nearby Conservation Area
- * the proposed development would give rise to any significant harm to the amenity of neighbours
- * would make adequate provision for access and car parking

Principle of HMO accommodation

- 7.2. The principle of a residential use on this site has already been established by the previous planning permissions MO/2017/1382 and MO/2018/0738 for 6 and 9 apartments respectively and is in line with the advice set out in the NPPF and Core Strategy policies CS1 and CS2.
- 7.3. The main difference between the previous permissions and the current proposal is that the current application seeks to provide staff accommodation for a local employer rather than self-contained apartments. The accommodation would be spread across 6 flats and the residents of each flat would share facilities such as bathrooms, kitchen and lounge rooms.
- 7.4. HMOs for up to six people fall within use class C4, whereas those for more than six people are sui generis. The development is therefore for a mix of C4 and sui generis use.
- 7.5. Based on the definition of a 'dwelling', one could take the view that the development would be counted as six shared dwellings and so the proposal would result in a theoretical loss of three units when compared with the permitted scheme for nine self-contained flats. However, the proposal would provide accommodation for up to 40 individuals and in this case it is reasonable to suggest that the provision remains valuable.
- 7.6. Local Plan policy HSG1, resists the loss of residential accommodation, but doesn't specifically refer to the loss of 'dwelling units'. It is important to consider that the proposal would provide accommodation for a relatively greater number of people when compared with the permitted scheme and would support a local business. In addition, the increased number of residents would use the shops and services in Leatherhead and, in turn, benefit the vitality and viability of the town centre. This is in line with the advice in the NPPF which recognises that residential development can play an important role in ensuring the vitality of town centres and should therefore be encouraged on appropriate sites.
- 7.7. MVDCs Transform Leatherhead team has commented that *'This is a pro-active solution by a local employer to provide housing for their staff, and Transform Leatherhead will benefit from the 40 proposed new residents who will support the town*

centre businesses.' They stress the importance of providing good quality accommodation in the town and for the long term. The amended plans have improved the internal living space for the future residents and the building would be capable of being converted to self-contained apartments if no longer required as HMOs.

- 7.8. The application site benefits from a sustainable location on previously developed land within central Leatherhead and would result in the provision of staff accommodation for a local business. Whilst the proposal involves 6 flats as opposed to the previous permission for 9 flats, it nevertheless would offer shared accommodation for a relatively larger number of residents and so could be argued to make the more efficient use of the land in line with the advice set out in Section 11 of the NPPF. As such, the principle of providing staff accommodation on this town centre site which has previously been granted planning permission for self-contained apartments is therefore considered to be acceptable in planning policy grounds.

Character and Appearance of the Area

- 7.9. Section 12 of the NPPF is concerned with the design of new development. Paragraph 127 advises that new development should add to the overall quality of an area and be visually attractive and sympathetic to the local character including the surrounding built environment while not discouraging appropriate innovation or change.
- 7.10. Core Strategy policy CS14 seeks to ensure that new development respects and enhances the character of the area in which it is proposed. These policy aims are reflected in Local Plan policies ENV22, ENV23 and ENV24. Policy ENV39 of the Local Plan is concerned with development in or adjacent to Conservation Areas and requires new development to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area. This policy also seeks to safeguard significant views into and out of the Conservation Area.
- 7.11. The site is located in the Railway Corridor character area as defined in the Built Up Areas Character Appraisal for Leatherhead. This area is recognised for having contrasting character and a spread of mixed uses. Although centrally positioned in functional terms, it is regarded as being visually separate from the main retail/historic centre of Leatherhead.
- 7.12. The previously approved scheme on the site also involved providing three residential floors above a basement parking area with a building of similar design and massing which gradually stepped down in height towards its south western end. The roof of the proposed building would be no higher than the eaves of Grantham House.
- 7.13. Whilst the current application also steps down in height in a southerly direction, it is relatively greater in depth than the previously permitted building. For example, at 2nd floor level, the building would be 1.6m deeper than previously approved and at ground and first floor level, would be in the order of 3.5m deeper. This increase in floor area has come about in response to officer concerns regarding the need to improve the quality of the living space within the building in order to provide a reasonable standard of accommodation for the future residents. The increase in the length of the building is considered to be acceptable when assessed against the previously permitted schemes and in relation to the neighbouring buildings.
- 7.14. The building line is staggered at its south eastern corner and across the south western elevation (facing towards Swan House) and the north western elevation (facing towards the Lidl foodstore). The second floor accommodation would be set back to reduce the overall massing of the building. The scale and design takes account of the permitted extension to the rear of Stocks House.

7.15. A bird's eye view of the proposed development from the West is shown below:



Figure 7: Birds Eye View of proposed development

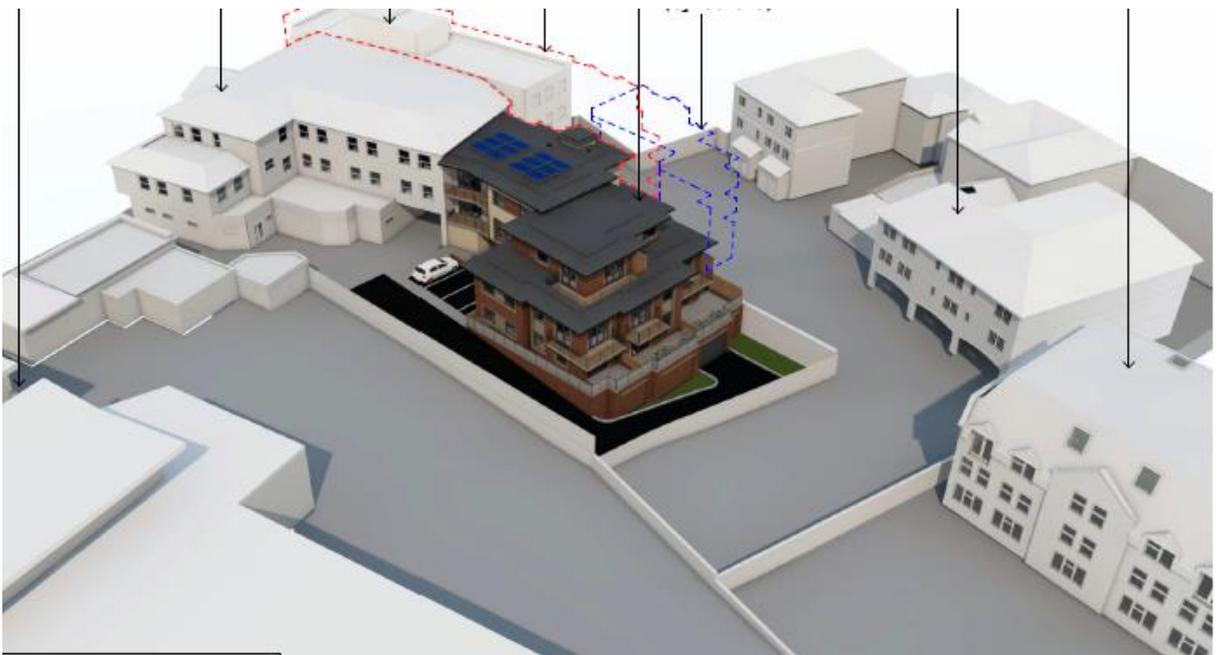


Figure 8: Birds Eye View as previously permitted under MO/2018/0738

7.16. The application is accompanied by a series of perspective views looking towards the proposed building from various locations. These views together with the drawings submitted in support of the application have been assessed by the Council's Historic Environment Officer who has commented as follows:

'This application is very similar to the previous applications (MO/2017/1382 and MO/2018/0738) which were granted. Due to the existing setting of this site which contains several buildings of the similar mass and height, it is considered that the work associated with this application would preserve the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area.'

- 7.17. The applicants have considered the appearance of the south-eastern elevation of the proposed building and in particular how this long elevation would be seen in the context of the neighbouring buildings in the event that the extension to the rear of Stocks House is not built out. The elevation is finished in a combination of render and brickwork and is staggered towards its southern end to reduce its massing. It incorporates a series of blind windows as well as a number of obscure glazed windows serving communal lounge/kitchens all of which would add interest to this long flank elevation.
- 7.18. In summary, it is considered that the scale, form, design and external materials would not cause any significant harm to the character and appearance of the area or to the setting of the adjacent Conservation Area in line with the aims of the NPPF and with Core Strategy policy CS14 and Local Plan policies ENV22, ENV23, ENV24 and ENV39.

Amenity of Neighbours and Future Residents

- 7.19. Policy ENV22 of the Local Plan seeks to ensure that development does not significantly harm the amenities of neighbours by way of overlooking, overshadowing or overpowering effect, noise, traffic or other adverse environmental impact.
- 7.20. The nearest neighbours are located at Grantham House and the residential blocks to the rear of Bridge Street.
- 7.21. Grantham House has no window openings across its rear elevation but has balconies on its north-western elevation alongside the site access. The proposed building has been designed in a similar way to the previously permitted scheme, with the principal elevations facing north-west towards Lidl and south west towards Swan House and beyond. The drawings demonstrate that the proposed building would not result in overlooking of the balconies on the side of Grantham House.
- 7.22. The new building would be elevated in relation to the properties in Swan House, Thorncroft and the flats at the rear of the former Harringtons Bakery site. Separation distances from the proposed building and these properties range from 16.3m from Thorncroft to 21.9m from Swan House. These separation distances, although shorter than those associated with the previously permitted scheme, are considered to be acceptable in the context of the built up area and would avoid any harm significant being caused to the amenities of the occupants of both buildings by way of overlooking, loss of privacy or intervisibility. The ground floor terrace and the two balconies at the south eastern corner of the building would be screened from neighbouring properties to the east by full-height timber panelling.
- 7.23. Local residents have expressed concern regarding the density of the development and the potential for the proposed use to result in anti-social behaviour and noise disturbance. Noise matters associated with a residential use would not fall within the remit of the planning system and do not therefore represent a material planning consideration for this development.
- 7.24. The outlook from the neighbouring flats in Thorncroft, Swan House and those to the south east of the site would undoubtedly change as a result of the development but

that was also the case with the previously permitted schemes. The drawings show that the development would be sited to the north of the majority of the Bridge Street properties, and north east of Swan House, and that levels of daylight enjoyed by those neighbouring properties would not be compromised.

- 7.25. Paragraph 123 of the NPPF (2018) states *'Where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs, it is especially important that planning policies and decisions avoid homes being built at low densities, and ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site. Sub paragraph 3 of this policy states: 'Local Planning Authorities should refuse applications which they consider fail to make efficient use of land, taking into account the policies in this Framework. In this context, when considering applications for housing, authorities should take a flexible approach in applying policies or guidance relating to daylight and sunlight, where they would otherwise inhibit making efficient use of a site (as long as the resulting scheme would provide acceptable living standards).'*
- 7.26. Policy ENV22 of the Local Plan sets out the general development control criteria against which applications will be assessed. Sub paragraph 7 of this policy seeks to ensure that new developments provide a satisfactory living environment for their future occupants.
- 7.27. When the application was first submitted, officers raised concerns regarding the limited size and the poor configuration of the bedrooms and the limited size of communal rooms. Concerns were also raised regarding the size of the refuse storage area for a development of 40 residents. This was despite the Environmental Health Department confirming that the room sizes as submitted exceeded the required standards for HMOs.
- 7.28. The applicants responded to officer concerns by re-configuring the internal floorspace and squaring-off a number of the bedrooms to make them more practical and slightly larger in size. The images below give an impression of a typical bedroom and a communal room.



Figure 9: Typical bedroom



Figure 10: Communal lounge/dining room

- 7.29. Whilst the individual room sizes and the communal lounge/kitchen and bathroom spaces continue to be relatively small, officers are mindful that they exceed the required size standards for HMOs as advised by the Council's Environmental Health Department.
- 7.30. Amended plans were submitted showing an increase in the size of the refuse store serving the development and the Council's Environmental Contracts Manager has confirmed her agreement to the drawings. Officers therefore take a view that 'on balance', the living environment for the future occupants of the flats would be satisfactory and the proposal would not therefore conflict with the aims of Local Plan policy ENV22 sub paragraph 7.
- 7.31. In summary, the application is supported by a range of information which demonstrates that the relationship between the proposed building and the surrounding properties would be acceptable in planning terms. Officers are satisfied that the scheme has been designed to take account of the neighbouring properties and that the amenity of neighbours would not be significantly compromised as a result. The quality of the living accommodation is, on balance, considered to be satisfactory. It is therefore considered that the proposed development would not conflict with the aims of Local Plan policy ENV22.

Access and Parking

- 7.32. Vehicular access to the site would be taken via the existing access to North Street as was permitted under the previous scheme. The County Highway Authority has not raised any objection to the use of this access.
- 7.33. Local Plan policy MOV2 seeks to ensure that new development makes appropriate provision for off-street vehicular parking, servicing and vehicular access and egress and movement within development sites as well as for pedestrians and cyclists. Policy MOV5 requires development proposals to make appropriate provision for the parking of cars whilst policy MOV15 encourages new developments to provide for the needs of cyclists including the provision of secure cycle parking facilities.
- 7.34. In terms of the number of vehicle parking spaces, the previous scheme included 12 spaces in the basement for the residents of the 9 apartments.

- 7.35. The current application proposes 4 residents parking spaces in the basement and 48 cycle parking spaces for the 6 flats with a total of 40 bedrooms. The applicants advise that future residents of the development would be lower paid members of staff of Beaverbrook, the majority of whom do not own a car and currently depend upon public transport and a shuttle bus service to get to their place of work.
- 7.36. SCC parking standards allow for zero parking provision of accessible town centre sites such as this. Given the central location of this site and the nature of the accommodation and the fact that the employer would operate a shuttle bus service to and from the residents' place of work, it is considered that the relatively low level of parking provision is, in this instance, acceptable. The cycle parking provision accords with policy MOV15.
- 7.37. The application is supported by a drawing showing that the staff mini bus could enter and leave the site in forward gear.
- 7.38. The County Highway Authority does not raise any highway safety concerns regarding the proposed development and recommends suitable conditions.

Other Issues

- 7.39. The applicants have submitted a Sustainable Energy Statement setting out the measures that will be taken to ensure compliance with Core Strategy policy CS19 'Sustainable Construction, Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation'. As part of this, they are proposing the installation of a number of solar pv panels on the roof of the building. The panels would be placed at an angle of 10 degrees and would allow optimum energy generation with a shallow pitch to minimise their visual impact. The dimensions of the panels would be such that the height of the raised end above roof level would be no greater than 25cm. Given that the panels would be set back from the edge of the roof, it is considered that they would not cause any significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. The Council's Sustainability Advisor is satisfied with the applicant's proposals and confirms that they meet the requirements of policy CS19.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 7.40. The Localism Act 2011 amended the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to state that Authorities should also take into account 'any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application'.
- 7.41. 'Local finance considerations' include 'sums that a relevant Authority has received, or will or could receive, in payment of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)'.
- 7.42. Policy CS17 of the Core Strategy states that development should make provision for new infrastructure where necessary. However, CIL has now been introduced, which places a mandatory charge on new residential developments to be used to fund infrastructure projects within the District. The Council has produced the following list of infrastructure types that will be funded through CIL receipts (known as the Council's Regulation 123 List) and includes infrastructure referred to by local residents in their consultation responses to this development proposal -

- * Transport schemes other than site specific access improvements
- * Education
- * Primary Health Care
- * Leisure and Recreation
- * Community Facilities

- * Flood Defence and Mitigation
- * Waste Collection and Recycling Facilities

7.43. At the time of writing this report, and based on the information submitted with the application, this proposal would attract a Community Infrastructure Levy of £269,883.04. However, this figure could change as further information is obtained and/or surcharges become payable. Additionally, as the present time it is unknown whether the proposal would be exempt from all or part of this levy as a result of any future applications for exemptions.

Conclusion

7.44. The site benefits from a highly sustainable location in central Leatherhead and is within easy reach of shops, services and public transport. The principle of redeveloping the site for residential purposes has already been established by the previous permissions MO/2017/1382 and MO/2018/0738.

7.45. The current application proposes HMO accommodation in the form of 6 flats with a total of 40 bedrooms for staff of a local business. This compares with the most recent permission for 9 self-contained flats permitted under MO/2018/0738. Whilst the current application would result in a net reduction in 3 'flats', the proposal would provide accommodation for a relatively greater number of residents and would support a local business whilst contributing towards the vitality and viability of Leatherhead town centre. It is therefore considered to be acceptable in principle.

7.46. The applicants have responded to officer concerns regarding the cramped nature of the internal floor plans, as well as the massing of the building, the number of balconies, the size of the refuse store, and the appearance of the main elevations. All of these issues have been addressed in a way which is now considered to be acceptable in the context of the area and in line with current planning policy.

7.47. The application is supported with drawings showing the relationship between the proposed building and neighbouring residential properties. Separation distances between facing windows are considered to be acceptable as is the height of the proposed building in relation to those around it. It is considered that the proposed development would not give rise to any material harm to the amenity of neighbouring residents.

7.48. No highway safety objections are raised.

7.49. Paragraph 118(c) of the NPPF states that planning decisions should give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs. Taking all of the above planning issues into consideration and on the basis that the development would result in more efficient use of the site without causing any significant harm to the character of the area or the amenity of neighbours, it is recommended that planning permission be granted.

8. Recommendation

Subject to completion of an appropriate legal agreement to ensure that the 40 rooms are to be used as staff accommodation for Beaverbrook, by Friday 26 April 2019 or any such other date as agreed in writing with the Corporate Head of Planning, planning permission granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51(1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby approved shall not be first occupied unless and until space has been laid out within the site in accordance with the approved plans for vehicles to be parked, and for vehicles to turn so that they may enter and leave the site in forward gear. Thereafter the parking and turning areas shall be retained and maintained for their designated purposes.

Reason: In order that the development should not prejudice highway safety nor cause inconvenience to other highway users and to meet the objectives of the NPPF (2012) and to satisfy policy MOV2 of the Mole Valley Local Plan 2000.

3. No development shall commence until a Construction Transport Management Plan, to include details of:
 - (a) parking for vehicles of site personnel, operatives and visitors
 - (b) loading and unloading of plant and materials
 - (c) storage of plant and materials
 - (d) on-site turning for construction vehicleshas been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Only the approved details shall be implemented during the construction of the development.

Reason: In order that the development should not prejudice highway safety nor cause inconvenience to other highway users and to meet the objectives of the NPPF (2012), and to satisfy policy MOV2 of the Mole Valley Local Plan 2000.

4. The development hereby approved shall not be first occupied unless and until the following facilities have been provided in accordance with the approved plans for:
 - (a) The secure parking of bicycles within the development site, and thereafter the said approved facilities shall be provided, retained and maintained to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In recognition of Section 4 "Promoting Sustainable Transport" in the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 and to satisfy policy MOV15 of the Mole Valley Local Plan 2000.

5. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied unless and until at least 20% of the available parking spaces are provided with a fast charge socket (current minimum requirement: 7kw Mode 3 with Type 2 connector - 230 v AC 32 amp single phase dedicated supply) in accordance with a scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In recognition of Section 9 'Promoting Sustainable Transport' in the National Planning Policy Framework 2018.

6. At least 28 days before the development hereby permitted commences on the site, a soil survey shall be undertaken and the results provided to the planning authority. The survey shall be taken at such points and to such depth as the planning authority may stipulate and shall be in accordance with the standards of the Environment Agency's Model Procedures for the Management of Contamination (CLR11) and if required laboratory results shall be provided as numeric values in an electronic formatted excel spread sheet. Before development commences a scheme for decontamination shall be agreed in writing with the planning authority and the scheme as approved shall be

implemented before any part of the development hereby permitted is occupied.

Reasons: To protect future occupiers of the development from the possible presence of ground contamination arising in connection with the previous industrial and commercial use in accordance with the NPPF.

7. Before development commences a scheme detailing how the water supply will be made safe for residential occupiers shall be agreed with the LPA. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the LPA then as a minimum a new barrier pipe must be installed from the main water supply located in the highway in accordance with the specification provided and the same material must also be used to replace or by-pass the existing rising main under the premises. Prior to occupation the work shall be verified by letter from the installing contractor detailing compliance with the agreed scheme.

Reason: To protect the drinking water from potentially contaminated land in accordance with Mole Valley Local Plan policy ENV69.

8. Before any above ground works commence, details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be 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 harmonises with its surroundings in accordance with Mole Valley Local Plan policy ENV22 and policy CS14 of the Mole Valley Core Strategy.

9. Before any above ground works commence, details of the hard surfacing to be used within the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall indicate either porous materials or the provision of a direct run-off from the hard surface to a permeable or porous area. All hard surfacing shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details, completed prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted and thereafter, permanently retained as such.

Reason: To preserve the visual amenity of the area and prevent the increased risk of flooding, in accordance with Mole Valley Local Plan policy ENV25 and policies CS14 and CS20 of the Mole Valley Core Strategy.

10. Prior to any above ground works commencing, details of all external joinery shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority including materials, method of opening and large scale drawings showing sections through mullions, transoms and glazing bars. Windows and door openings should have a reveal to be agreed. The development shall thereafter be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason To ensure that the development is in keeping with the character of the locality in accordance with Mole Valley Local Plan policy ENV22 and policy CS14 of the Mole Valley Core Strategy.

11. No development shall take place until details of the existing ground levels of the site, the proposed finished levels of the ground, the ground floor slab level of each building, and the finished levels of any access road and driveway showing their relationship with the existing levels of the immediately adjoining land and buildings, have been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be

carried out in accordance with the approved levels.

Reason: The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that it is fundamental to the development permitted to address this issue before development commences and that without this safeguard planning permission should not be granted and to protect the amenities and privacy of adjoining properties in accordance with Mole Valley Local Plan policy ENV22.

12. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, surface water drainage details shall be submitted for the approval in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such details shall include an assessment of the potential for the disposal of surface water by means of a sustainable drainage system in accordance with the principles set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

The assessment shall provide information of the design storm period and intensity (typically a 1 in 100 year storm of 30 minutes duration with an allowance for climate change), the method employed to delay and control the surface water discharged from the site and the means to prevent pollution of the receiving groundwater and/or surface water. Where applicable, the details shall include infiltration tests, calculations and controlled discharge rates. If the development is to discharge water into the ground in any form, then a full BRE Digest 365 infiltration test (or falling head test for deep bore soakaways) will have to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of any works on site. The suitability of infiltration methods should be verified (i.e. possible contaminated ground).

The approved drainage scheme shall be implemented prior to the first occupation of the development.

Reason: The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that it is fundamental to the development permitted to address this issue before development commences and that without this safeguard planning permission should not be granted and, in the interests of sustainable development, in accordance with the advice contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and policy CS20 of the Mole Valley Core Strategy.

13. Before any above ground works commence, full details of all proposed extract flues, ventilation systems and meter boxes shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall thereafter be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason To preserve the visual amenity of the area in accordance with Mole Valley Local Plan policy ENV22 and policy CS14 of the Mole Valley Core Strategy.

14. Before any above ground works commence, a trial panel of brickwork shall be completed for inspection and agreement in writing by a representative of the Local Planning Authority. The trial panel shall include proposed brick bond, mortar mix and pointing detail. Thereafter, the development shall be completed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To preserve the visual amenity of the area in accordance with Mole Valley Local Plan policy ENV22 and policy CS14 of the Mole Valley Core Strategy.

15. Prior to any above ground works commencing, details to reduce the carbon emissions of the predicted energy use of the development hereby permitted by at least 10% through

the on-site installation and implementation of decentralised and renewable or low-carbon energy sources shall be submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority and be implemented prior to the first occupation of the development. Details shall include the precise position and size of the solar pv panels on the roof of the building. The panels shall be no higher above roof level than 25cm at their highest point in line with the email from the applicant dated 13th August 2018.

Reason: The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that it is fundamental to the development permitted to address this issue before development commences and that without this safeguard planning permission should not be granted, and to optimise renewable energy and its conservation, in accordance with policy CS19 of the Mole Valley Core Strategy.

16. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out and completed in all respects strictly in accordance with the submitted documents and plan number(s) 371/101/A 'Proposed Site Key and Block Plan', 371/102/A 'Sight Line Site Plan', 371/201/B 'Basement Floor Plan', 371/202/B 'Ground Floor Plan', 371/203/B 'First Floor Plan', 371/204/B 'Second Floor Plan', 371/205/A 'Roof Plan', 371/207/A 'Comparative Overlay Plan & Elevations', 371/301/A 'Proposed Elevations' contained within the application and no variations shall take place.

Reason: To accord with the terms of the submitted application and to ensure minimal impact on local amenity and the environment in accordance with Mole Valley Core Strategy policy CS14 and Mole Valley Local Plan policy ENV22.

17. Prior to the occupation of the development hereby permitted, details of a traffic light system to control vehicles using the ramp to the basement car park shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved traffic light system shall be installed and be fully operational prior to the occupation of the development.

Reason: To ensure safe access to and from the basement car park in line with the requirements of Local Plan policy MOV2.

Informatives

1. The applicant's attention is drawn to the advice set out in the letter from Thames Water dated 29th November 2018.
2. Notwithstanding any permission granted under the Planning Acts, no signs, devices or other apparatus may be erected within the limits of the highway without the express approval of the Highway Authority. It is not the policy of the Highway Authority to approve the erection of signs or other devices of a non-statutory nature within the limits of the highway.
3. The developer is reminded that it is an offence to allow materials to be carried from the site and deposited on or damage the highway from uncleaned wheels or badly loaded vehicles. The Highway Authority will seek, wherever possible, to recover any expenses incurred in clearing, cleaning or repairing highway surfaces and prosecutes persistent offenders. (Highways Act 1980 Sections 131, 148, 149).
4. Section 59 of the Highways Act permits the Highway Authority to charge developers for damage caused by excessive weight and movements of vehicles to and from a site. The Highway Authority will pass on the cost of any excess repairs compared to normal maintenance costs to the applicant/organisation responsible for the damage.

5. Piling or any other foundation designs using penetrative methods shall not be permitted.

Reason: To protect controlled waters, including groundwater and to comply with the National Planning Policy Framework.

6. The applicant's attention is drawn to the need to provide off-site parking for the residents and retailers of Grantham House during the construction phase.