DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Anne McDonald.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
18/00095/FP	Two storey side, rear and side extensions to facilitate Change of Use to 21 bedsits to sleep 42 people (Amended description).	Brookside Great North Road Hinxworth Baldock Hertfordshire SG7 5EX

Submitted Plan Nos

CHQ.1715018-01 CHQ.1715018-02 CHQ.1715018-03 CHQ.1715018-04 CHQ.1715018-05 CHQ.1715018-06

1.0 Policies

LP6	Rural Areas Beyond the Green Belt
LP57	Residential Guidelines and Standards
LP55	Car Parking Standards
SECT6	Delivering Wide Choice High Quality Home
SECT7	Requiring Good Design
XCGB1	Rural Areas Beyond the Green Belt
XD2	Hse Extns,Replacement Dwells,Outbuilding
LP55	Car Parking Standards
SECT1	Building a Strong, Competitive Economy
XD1	Sustainable Design
XT2	Parking

2.0 **Site History**

2.1 There is no recorded planning history in Uniform for this site.

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 The site notice was posted on 07/02/18 and expired on 28/02/18. No neighbour representations have been received at the time of writing.

3.2 Hinxworth Parish Council – no objection.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

4.1.1 Brookside is a large, two storey detached Victorian house positioned just off the south bound A1 duel carriageway. It is next to the Redwing Lodge hotel. There is a small driveway straight off the A1, with no pulling in / out slip road. There is a driveway and parking for four to five cars in the frontage. The house has a large single storey garage extension to the side and a large canopy area to the rear. The garden for the house then extends off to the south-east. The garden is mainly laid to lawn with mature trees forming a fairly dense screen both with the A1 at the front and at the rear. It adjoins the hotel site on the side and rear boundary. There are photos in Anite.

4.2 **Proposal**

4.2.1 Large scale extensions to wrap around three sides to the property, both sides and the rear with the conversion of the building into a 21 bedroom bed-sit house of multiple occupation. Each bedroom shows two beds and a basin. There are then three kitchens, three lounges, eight showers rooms (containing a loo, sink and shower) and one utility room. There are no other separate w.c. facilities. The block plan shows that a section of the trees on the boundary with Redwing Lodge is to be removed, and a new driveway link formed through from the car park at Redwing Lodge.

4.2.2 Excluding the single storey canopy extension to the building (which are to be demolished) the original house has a footprint of 10.3m wide by 8.1m deep plus a single storey ground floor extension of 5.5m by 5.8m forming a kitchen and utility room. The proposed building is 21.6m wide by 19.7m deep.

4.2.3 A DAS has been submitted with the application. This describes the location of the building, its ownership and that it is to be used as an HMO.

4.3 **Key Issues**

Principle

4.3.1 As the site is situated in the rural area beyond the Green Belt it is Saved Policy 6 that is applicable. This states that development is only acceptable if:

- It is necessary for the needs of agriculture or forestry;
- It would meet an identified rural housing need;
- It is a single dwelling on a small plot within the built core or the settlement and will not result in the outward expansion of the settlement;
- It involves the change of the rural economy.

4.3.2 The DAS sets out that the proposed HMO is to meet a local housing need in accordance with Policy 29 of the Local Plan. However, no further evidence is provided supporting this claim. No information is provided regarding who they think will live in the HMO, is it for the homeless / temporary accommodation on this basis, students, migrant workers or young professionals? Nor has any information been provided regarding local housing needs and how this facility would help. In my view this claim is

unsupported and I do not consider that this claim is in accordance with the criteria of Saved Policy 6.

4.3.3 Due to the location of the building and the size of the extensions, I do not consider that the proposal complies with any other category of Saved Policy 6.

Design

4.3.4 I consider the proposed size and scale of the extension to be disproportionately large and unsympathetic to the original building of Brookside and therefore unacceptable on this basis. I also consider the form to be contrived, which is a sign that the building is overlarge. In particular the creation of the internal light well is a sign of this and the lounge and bedsit this would serve would have an unpleasant aspect as a result of this. Furthermore, the large sections of flat or 'crown' roof is also an indication that the bulk of the footprint has become overlarge and boxy.

Parking

4.3.5 The plans show 42 beds to be provided and there is parking in the frontage of the building for 4 – 5 cars and a driveway access from Redwings Hotel car park. The hotel has 40 bedrooms and sufficient parking for bedrooms and staff. The DAS sets out that overspill parking can be accommodated within the hotel car park. However, it should be noted that whilst the hotel is in the same ownership as the application site, the hotel and its car park are outside of the red line application site. Therefore, the use of the hotel car park for overspill parking cannot be controlled or taken as part of the application site.

4.3.6 The Council's car parking standards do not have a category for this type of proposal. The closest is for student halls of residence, which requires 1 space per 2 staff and 1 space per 6 students. Given the location of this building straight off the A1, with no facilities within walking distance I consider that one space per room is more realistic. However, given each room has two beds, then maybe it should be one space per bed? If the lower figure of 1 space per room is taken as a fairer average, this would require 21 spaces, with an overspill of at least 16 spaces in the hotel car park being used. This in turn is likely to adversely affect the operations of the hotel it customers for the hotel are unable to park. No information has been provided on the occupation levels of the hotel and the use of its car park and if there is any space capacity in it for overspill parking from this application.

4.3.7 As insufficient information has been provided on who the bedsits are targeted for, this results in insufficient information being provided for parking. Are all the beds likely to be occupied every night? Do those staying there book by the night or month or year? Is it envisaged that most staying there will not have their own car or would be, for example, migrant workers who would be likely to be picked up and dropped off daily by mini-bus? Is there an age limit on who would stage there, i.e. is everyone who will stay there be or driving age or is it envisaged that children would also be staying there?

4.3.8 Based on the information provided, there is insufficient parking proposed for 21 bedsit / 42 beds of the building.

Other issues

4.3.9 The building is positioned on the edge of the A1 with no facilities within walking distance. I note that there is a BP garage roughly opposite on the north side carriageway and Baldock Services are only a mile or so to the south. However, neither

of these facilities are within walking distance as there are no footpaths. Whilst it is illegal to walk down a motorway, this section of the A1 is duel carriageway rather than motorway, although at 70 miles per hour and with no footpaths or lighting, walking along here would be very dangerous, if not strictly illegal. Again, if occupiers of the building decided to 'pop' to the BP garage shop opposite, this would be very dangerous as they would have to cross both duel carriage ways and climb over the central reservation barrier. I therefore have to conclude that this has to be strongly discouraged and it therefore has to be concluded that there are no facilities within walking distance of this site. There are also no stopping bus routes along the A1 and it therefore has to be concluded that the site is in unsustainable location, where a 21 bedsit sleeping 42 people should not be encouraged.

4.3.10 I note that there is a hotel next door. However, this type / location of hotel appeals to those breaking a long journey or needing to stop somewhere overnight for work, so facilities other than the hotel are not needed. Whereas the bedsit could become someone's long term home. Therefore, accessibility to a shop and other functions do become relevant. On this basis this is an unacceptable unsustainable location for this type of development.

4.3.11 I note from the DAS that it is stated that due to the location of the building it is not attractive to a single family and that this is the only possible use. I do not consider that enough evidence has been provided to support this claim.

4.3.12 I have no objection to a link from the hotel car parking for drivers, as the driveway for Brookside straight off the A1 is very dangerous as there is no pull in / out slip road. The hotel as wider and safer exit. However, as the hotel and its car park are outside of the red line application site, the part of the works to form the new driveway into the application site are outside of the application site. Therefore, in the event that this application were to be recommended for approval, a separate application for the hotel site with these works proposed would need to be submitted. Furthermore, the works to close the existing driveway entrance have also not been detailed in the application.

4.3.13 The plans do not show any area for waste or recycling storage. Given the number of occupants this is likely to be sizeable. In the event that this application were to be recommended for approval, this would need to be shown to ensure that it would not block the parking area or appear unacceptably slightly in the frontage of the building.

4.4 **Conclusion**

4.4.1 This application is proposing unacceptably large disproportionate extensions to the original building that is harmful to the setting and context of the building. The proposed use of 21 bedsits sleeping 42, is an unacceptable use in this unsustainable location. The application does not meet a local defined housing need, nor does it provide for sufficient parking. The application is considered to fail to comply with Saved Policy 6 of the Local Plan and with provisions of the NPPF and is recommended for refusal on this basis.

5.0 **Recommendation**

5.1 That planning permission be REFUSED for the following reasons:

1. The application does not set out how the proposed use would meet an identified local

housing need and no supporting evidence has been provided to justify this proposal. The application is therefore considered to be contrary to Saved Policy 6 of the North Hertfordshire District Local Plan 1996, as it is proposing large scale extensions in the rural area beyond the Green Belt, that would be disproportionate and harmful to the context of the original building Brookside and site. As a result the application is considered to be of poor design and in accordance with paragraph 64 of the NPPF, is being recommended for refusal on this basis.

2. The site is in an unsustainable location with no facilities within walking distance and is not a location where new residential accommodation for up to 42 people should be encouraged. The application is therefore considered to be contrary to the aims and aspirations of paragraph 14 of the NPPF.

3. The application does not adequately demonstrate who would live in the building or the car parking needs that would arise. Given the location of the building where all trips out will have to be by car / vehicle, the provision of five spaces in the frontage of Brookside is not considered to be sufficient car parking for 21 bedsits sleeping up to 42 people. The application is therefore considered to fail to comply with Saved Policy 55 of the North Hertfordshire District Local Plan 1996 and with emerging Policy T2 of the Proposed Submission Local Plan 2011 - 2031.

Proactive Statement:

Planning permission has been refused for this proposal for the clear reasons set out in this decision notice. The Council has not acted proactively through positive engagement with the applicant as in the Council's view the proposal is unacceptable in principle and the fundamental objections cannot be overcome through dialogue. Since no solutions can be found the Council has complied with the requirements of the Framework (paragraphs 186 and 187) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Signed  Simon Ellis Determining Officer	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Date: 13 March 2018	