

PLANNING AND REGULATORY COMMITTEE

26th January 2021

PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR DETERMINATION

Item 1: 07/20/1084/F

Location: 118 High Street, Waltham Cross, EN8 7BX.

Development: Demolition of the existing building (A1) retail, retaining the front facade and erect a four to five storey new build (C2) hotel consisting of 60no. units and a new build six-storey residential development (C3) consisting of 10no. dwelling units to the rear (Re-submission 07/20/0216/F)

Applicant: Northport Waltham Cross Limited

Agent: Z Group Architects

Date Received: 23/11/2020 **Date of Committee:** 26/01/2021

Expiry Date: 22/02/2021

Officer Contact: Marie Laidler

Ward Councillors: Cllr Bowman, Cllr Norgrove and Cllr Spears.

RECOMMENDED that planning permission be granted subject to the applicant first completing a planning obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) for the terms set out in this report and the conditions set out at the end of the report.

1.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 1.1 Hertfordshire County Council Highways – No objection subject to conditions.
- 1.2 HCC Lead Local Flood Authority – Objection on the basis of inadequate information:
- A full exploration of SuDS hierarchy is required based on the infiltration as stated in the submitted SuDS report; and
 - Clarification of the details regarding the green roof are also required.
- 1.3 Thames Water – No objection, an informative is suggested.
- 1.4 Hertfordshire Constabulary – Supports the application provided that the applicant follows ‘Secured By Design’ principles.

- 1.5 Environmental Health – No comments received at time of writing this report but did not object to previous similar development.
- 1.6 HCC Growth and Infrastructure – No objection, contributions not set out as part of HCC Toolkit.
- 1.7 Waste Management - no objection, subject to compliance with the Council's Waste Supplementary Planning Guidance.

2.0 PUBLICITY

- 2.1 The application was advertised by means of site notices (dated 11 December 2020), a Press Advert in The Mercury on 17 December 2020 and 42 individual neighbouring letters were sent to properties on the High Street and Eleanor Cross Road.

3.0 REPRESENTATIONS

- 3.1 No third party representations.

4.0 RELEVANT LOCAL PLAN POLICIES

- 4.1 The adopted Local Plan is the Broxbourne Local Plan 2018-2033. The following policies are a material consideration in assessing this application:

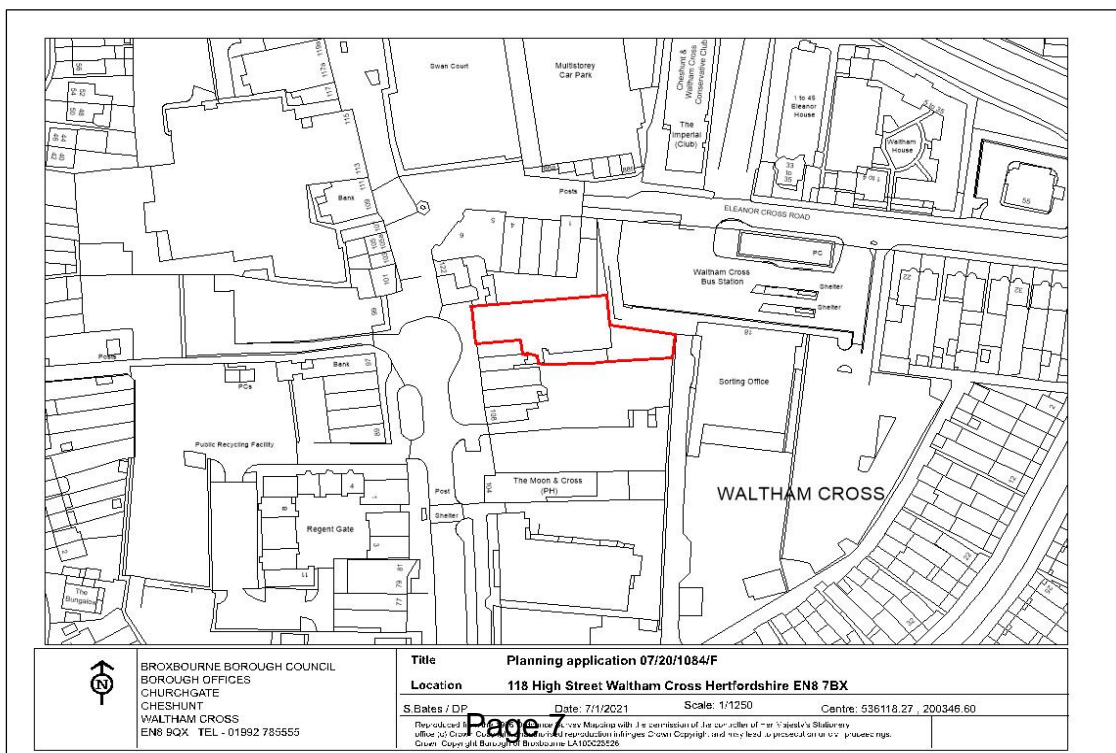
WC1	-	Waltham Cross Town Centre
WC4	-	Waltham Cross Renaissance Area Action Plan
PM1	-	Sustainable Place Making
INF1	-	Infrastructure
INF8	-	Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan
INF11	-	New and Expanded Primary Schools
PO1	-	Planning Obligations
IMP1	-	Delivery of Development
DSC1	-	General Design Principles
DSC3	-	Design Affecting the Public Realm
DSC4	-	Management and Maintenance
DCS5	-	Sustainable Construction
DSC6	-	Designing Out Crime
H1	-	Making Effective Use of Urban Land
H4	-	Housing Mix
RTC2	-	Development within town, district and local centres, neighbourhood centres and shopping parades
W1	-	Improving the Quality of the Environment
W4	-	SuDS
W5	-	Flood Risk
NEB1	-	General Strategy for Biodiversity
NEB3	-	Green Infrastructure
NEB4	-	Landscaping and Biodiversity in New Developments
EQ1	-	Residential and Environmental Quality
EQ2	-	Air Quality
EQ4	-	Noise

- EQ5 - Contaminated Land
- TM1 - Sustainable Transport
- TM2 - Transport and New Developments
- TM3 - Access and Servicing
- TM4 - Electric Charging Points
- TM5 - Parking Guidelines

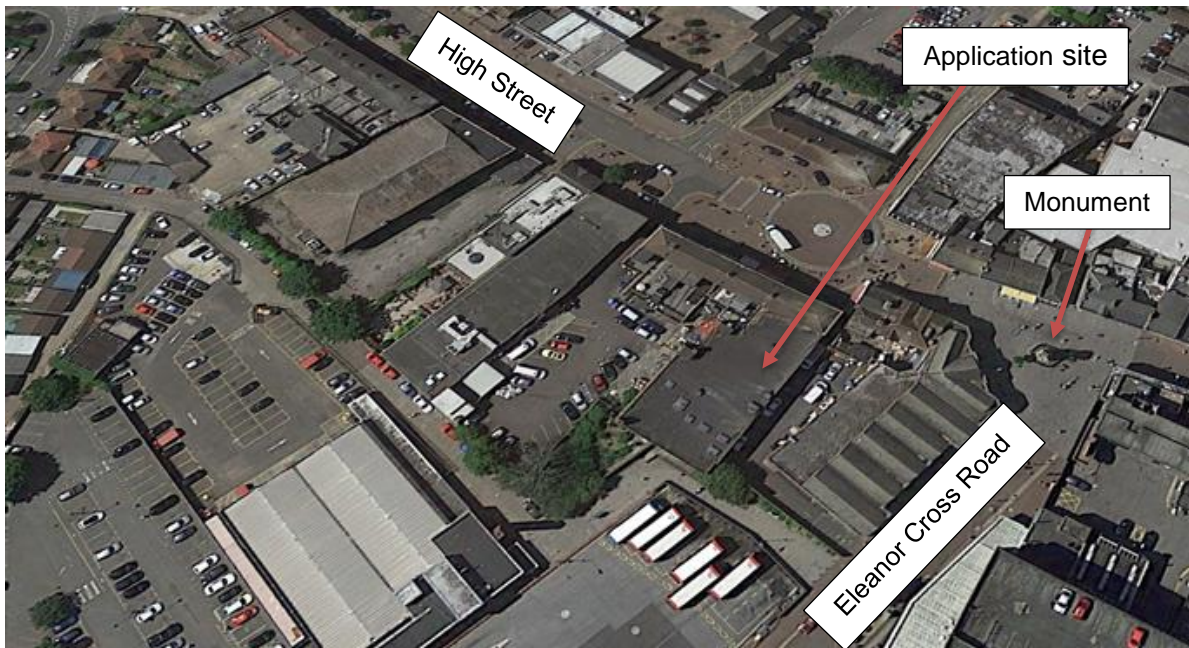
- 4.2 The Borough-wide Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) (August 2004, updated 2013) is relevant to this application as it provides design guidance for all forms of development.
- 4.3 The Borough-Wide Waste Supplementary Planning Guidance (August 2019) provides the details for the provision of refuse and recycling at residential and commercial properties, it is therefore relevant for all forms of development.
- 4.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019 should also be considered as it sets out the Governments planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The local planning policies listed above are generally considered to accord with the policies and principles of the NPPF.
- 4.5 The Technical Housing Standards – nationally described space standards (March 2015) are also relevant.
- 4.6 The Waltham Cross Town Centre Strategy - March 2015 is also a relevant consideration.

5.0 LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION OF SITE

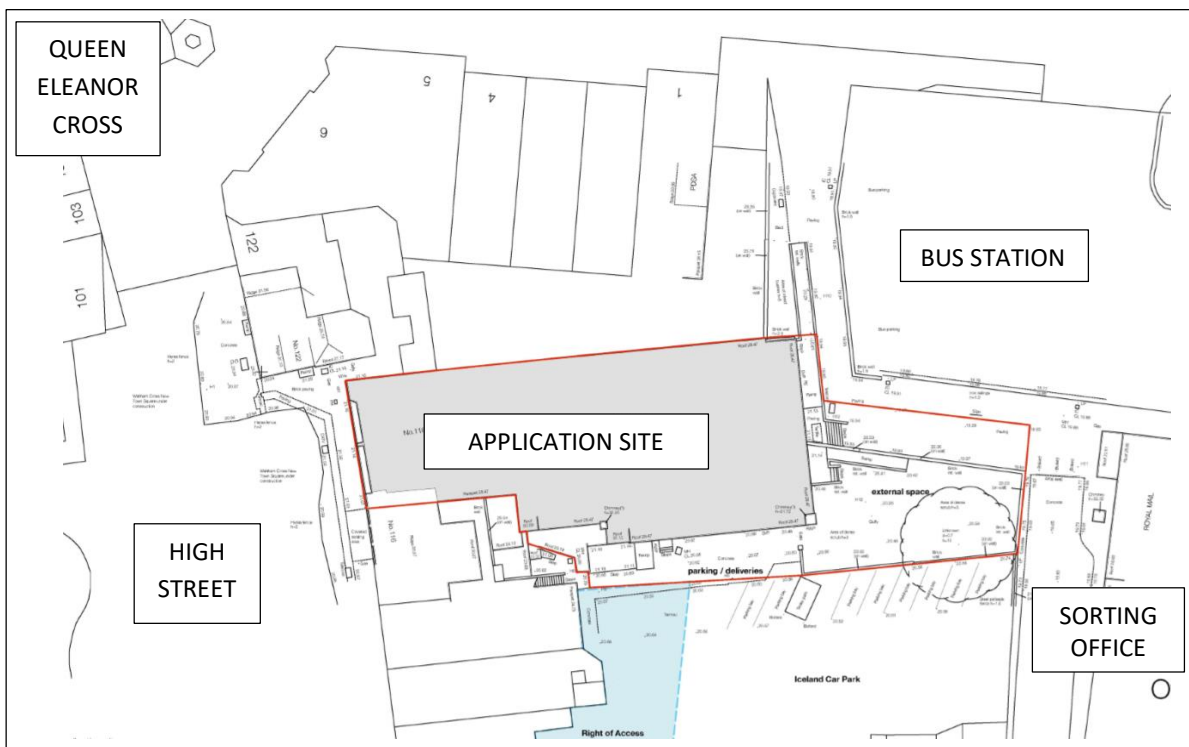
- 5.1 The application site is located within the town centre of Waltham Cross, immediately adjoining the new Queen Eleanor Town Square. The site forms part of the primary retail area of Waltham Cross and is bound by the properties along Eleanor Cross Road to the north, the High Street to the west, commercial properties and retail frontages to the south and the bus station and post office sorting office to the east.



5.2 The site has a total area of 1,280m². The existing buildings have gross internal floorspace of approximately 1,618m².



Site layout



5.3 The principle activity on site is the retail element on the ground floor. The upper floor areas provide ancillary storage.



- 5.4 The existing building is three storey with generous ceiling heights, it has a tiled hipped roof with a parapet to the main façade. The building construction is generally brickwork, the fenestration is regular and uniform to the frontage with stone pediment and moulded surrounds to two of the vertical lines of windows. The fenestration is generally of small Georgian panes in timber, single glazed sash windows and white painted.
- 5.5 The retail frontage comprises a large banner advertising fascia panel above large horizontal glazed shop windows. There is a small stall riser/upstand together with vertical white tiled columns which help break up the shop elevation.
- 5.6 The whole of the ground floor houses a Poundland store. This forms part of a larger retail frontage which runs up to Iceland, at which point the rear vehicular access is obtained.





5.7 The access through to the rear service yard is narrow and has poor visibility splays, however there are a protective fences for pedestrians to either side of the access point as it opens out onto the High Street. These afford drivers improved visibility when exiting the service access.



- 5.8 Entering into the site there are a number of properties with pedestrian access immediately abutting the rear service access, the rear accesses front directly on to the vehicular route that leads to the rear of the Poundland store. The rear service yard is defined by brickwork boundary walls and fencing.





- 5.9 At present there are approximately 10 parking spaces, albeit that the actual surfaced area is much larger, allowing for informal parking as well as turning when all the defined bays are occupied.
- 5.10 Within the application site boundary is an area to the east which is somewhat overgrown, with shrubs and bushes which are of no significant merit, being poor species and mostly self-seeded. The existing trees will be removed as part of a landscaping scheme for the site.



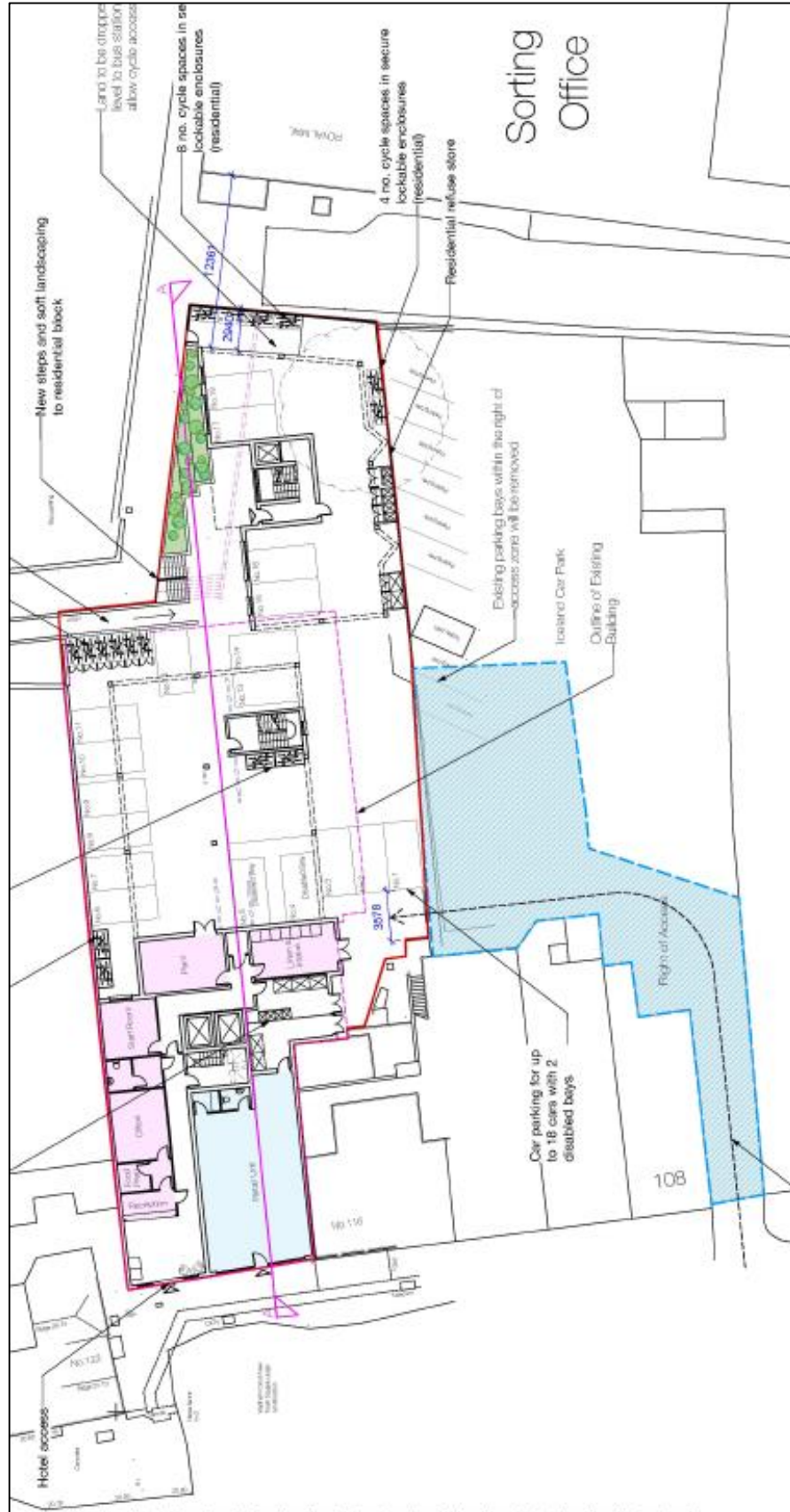


- 5.11 The above image shows the rear of the existing property with a roller shutter door/pedestrian ramp and stairs which give access to the rear of the property from the bus station and Eleanor Cross road.
- 5.12 Waltham Cross has strong public transport connections into London, Hertfordshire, and Essex and this has helped maintain its importance as a town centre.
- 5.13 More generally, there is a good range of retail outlets in the town centre as well as a number of renowned retailers including Fishpools Furniture Store, a mix of independent and chain shops, banks and other town centre services. There is also a range of restaurants, cafes and bars including the Pavilions Shopping Centre, which houses a range of high street brands, such as Boots, WH Smith Sainsbury's and Argos.

6.0 PROPOSAL

- 6.1 This application is a resubmission of a previous scheme presented to the Planning & Regulatory Committee on 8 September 2020 that sought full planning consent for a mixed-use development comprising a 70 bedroom hotel and an apartment block of 14 dwellings. Members resolved to refuse the application contrary to officer recommendation as the proposal was considered to be an overdevelopment of the site; the design was out of keeping with the area; and the parking was insufficient. This revised submission reduces the scheme to a 60 bedroom hotel and an apartment block of 10 dwellings following the demolition of the extensions to the rear.
- 6.2 The site would have three structural elements. The front aspect facing the High Street would contain the hotel retaining its façade and would include an additional storey in a new pitched roof with four dormer windows to create a four storey building. The central hotel element would be a new structure rising to five storeys and the eastern extent would be a residential block rising to six

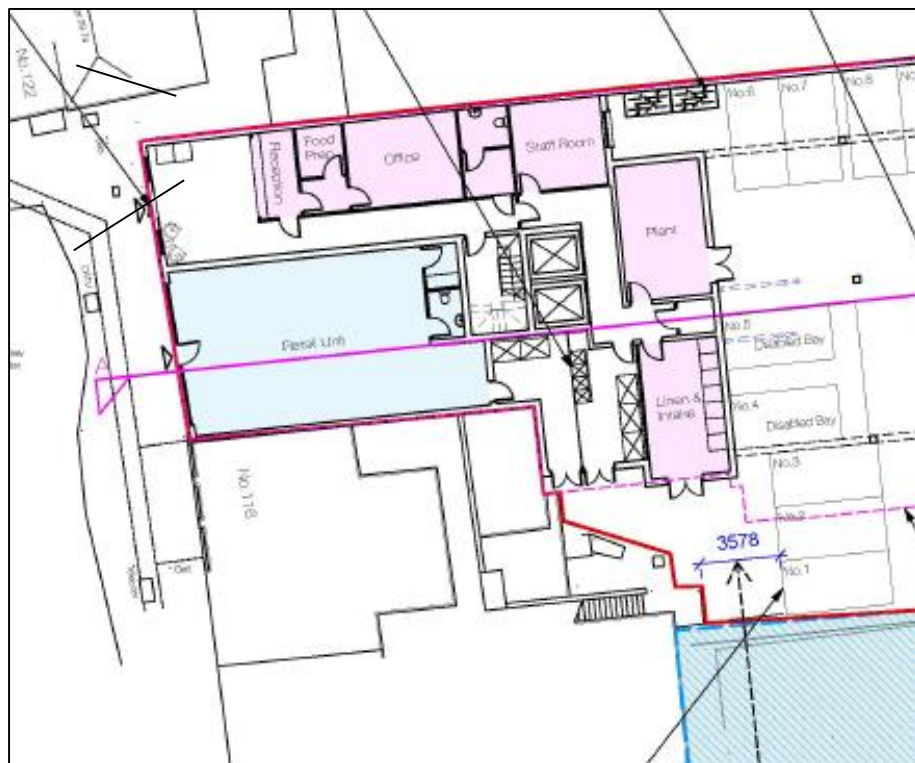
storeys. A service area, stairwell and lift access and undercroft car parking area would be located to the ground floor.



Site plan

Hotel Development

- 6.3 The main front section of the Poundland building is to be converted to form 16 bedrooms of hotel accommodation over 4 floors and the replacement 5 storey rear extension will provide for a further 44 bedrooms.
- 6.4 The ground floor commercial element is to be split into two parts. A commercial area of 94m² (proposed to be for shops or restaurant and café falling within the new Use Class E (Commercial, Business and Service)) and the remaining area for hotel use with a front access directly on to Queen Eleanor Square. The commercial and hotel uses would have separate entrances fronting onto Queen Eleanor Square and separate service entrances to the rear as shown below.



Hotel & Commercial Premise Ground Floor Plan Layout

- 6.5 Above the ground floor commercial and hotel entrance is to be a further three storeys, including the pitched roof extension with four flat roofed dormers set back from the existing front parapet. The first and second floors would each contain 6 bedrooms and the third floor would contain 4 bedrooms in the roof space.

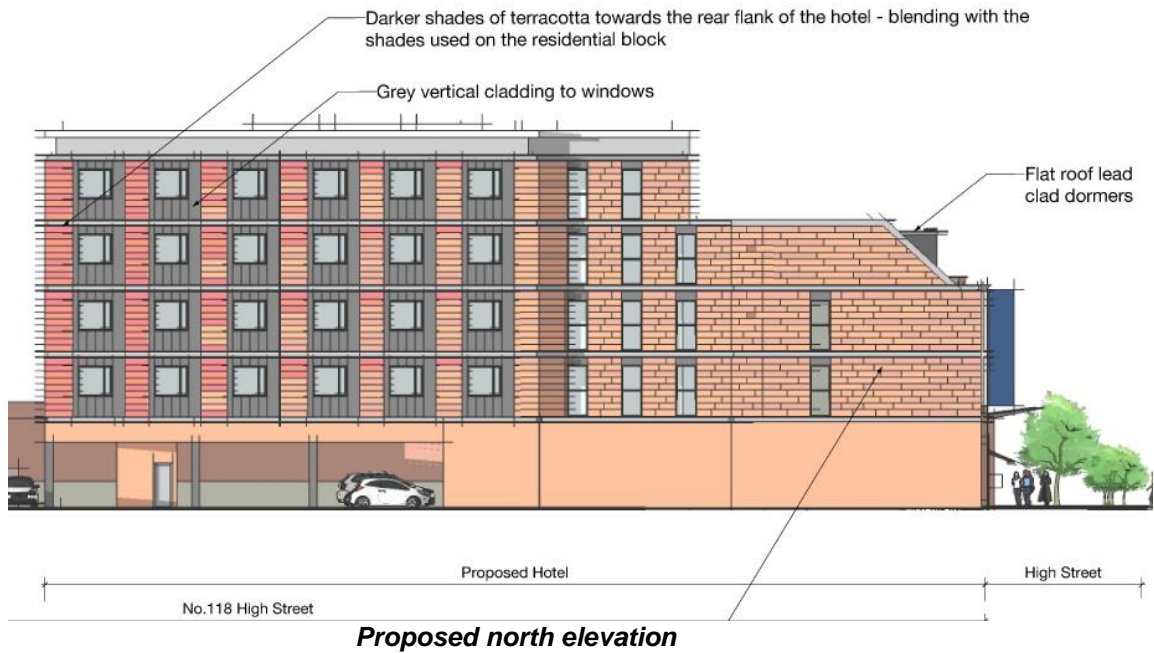


Proposed elevation on to Queen Eleanor Square

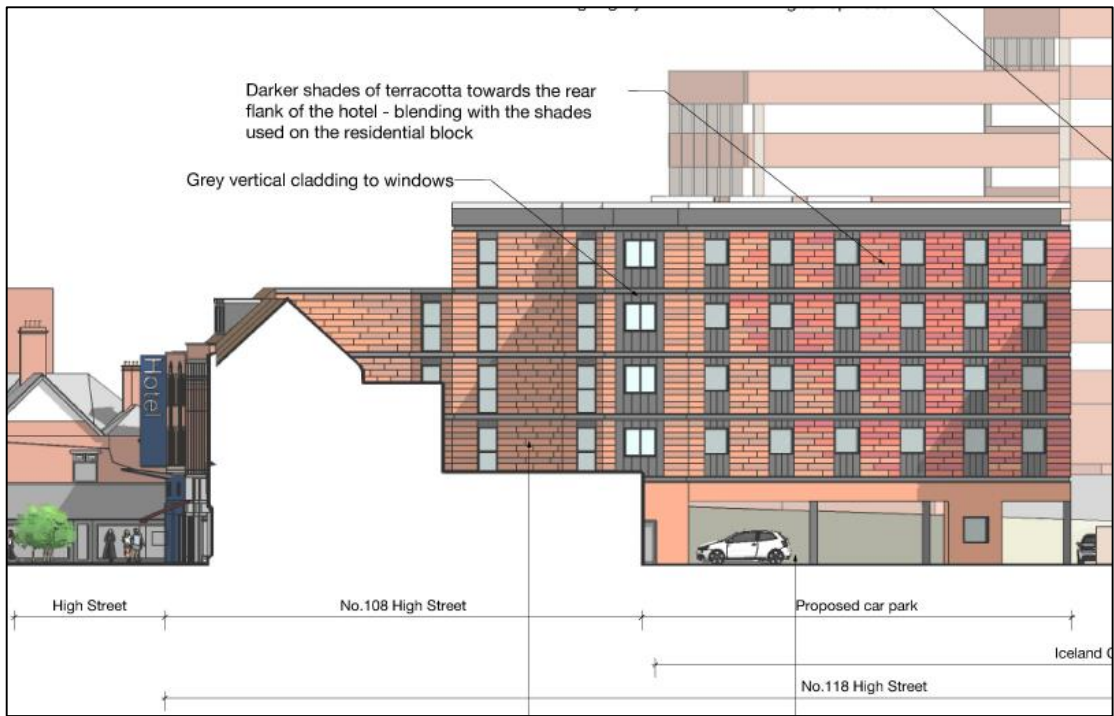
- 6.6 The façade is to be sympathetically restored as shown above to provide for a new shop front and a new separate entrance to the hotel.
- 6.7 The main elevation is to retain the fenestration and the existing brickwork. The overall design of the hotel building behind the front pitched facade is generally a flat roofed structure built over 4 / 5 floors.



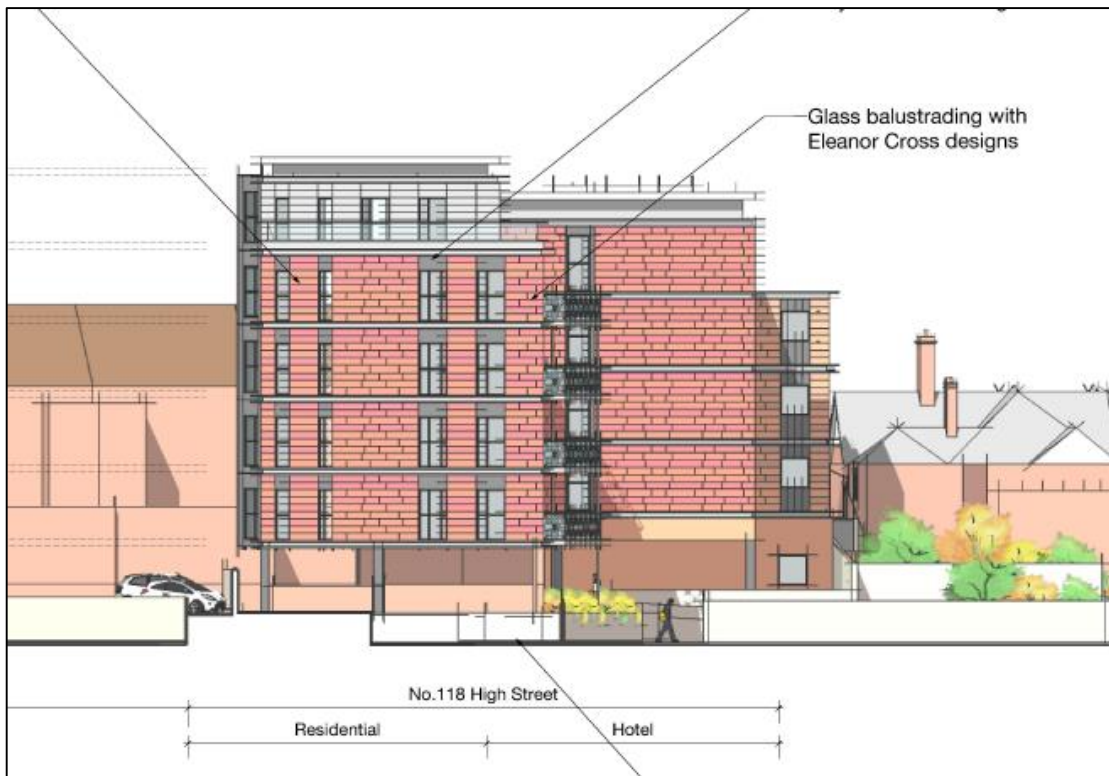
Hotel First Floor Plan



6.8 The building is to be constructed of terracotta tiles and grey vertical cladding to all but the Eleanor Square elevation which is to be retained. The images below illustrate the remaining elevations. There are no balconies to any of the proposed hotel rooms.



Proposed south elevation



Proposed east elevation

6.9 The proposed residential block, is to be constructed in similar materials to the proposed hotel as shown below.



6.10 The hotel and the residential buildings are architecturally similar, both utilising vertical and horizontal panels, vertical grey aluminium window surrounds and grey aluminium trims between floors.

View of proposed development from the bus station and Eleanor Cross Road



- 6.11 The internal layout for the hotel includes for double shower rooms, standard family rooms and accessible rooms, all of which are easily accessed and have adequate means of escape. The stairwell at the rear of the hotel that leads into the carpark is an emergency escape access only. The typical internal layout for the floors of the hotel are indicated below.



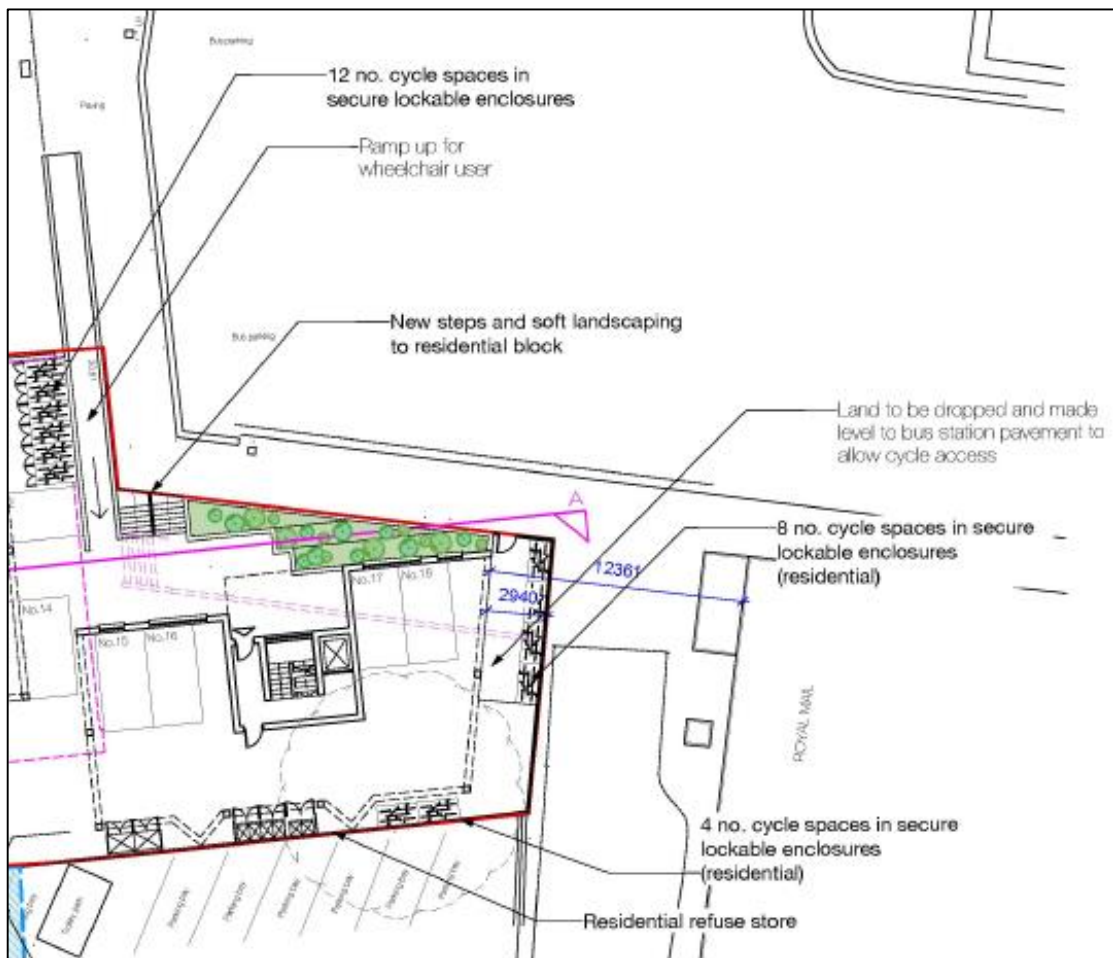
Typical Internal Room Layouts for the Hotel

- 6.12 The hotel is a completely separate use from the residential element to the eastern rear extent of the site. Cycle storage, comprising 12 lockable cycle storage racks, is located immediately to the rear of the hotel building running along the side of the pedestrian ramp which also provides for wheelchair access. Two further cycle storage locations are provided within the undercroft car park towards the northern boundary and adjacent to the central stairwell containing 4 racks each. Bin storage areas for the retail and hotel uses are located at the rear service entrances that are to be separated by a mesh screen.
- 6.13 The development would provide 18 car parking spaces within the undercroft car park, these include 2 disabled parking bays.

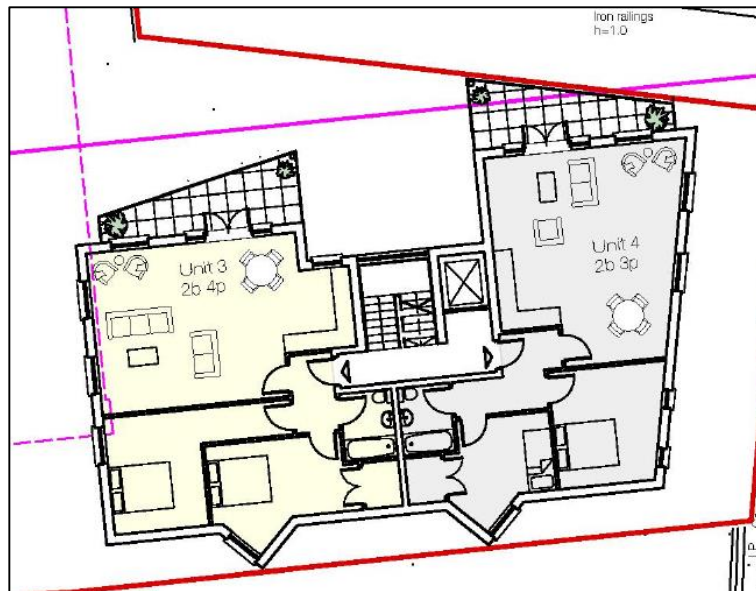
Residential element

- 6.14 The apartment block is a six-storey building comprising of 10no dwellings to the rear/eastern boundary of the site fronting onto the Iceland car park and the bus station/sorting office. The residential units will comprise of 1no one-bedroom apartment and 9no two-bedroom apartments. As stated above, car parking is provided within the undercroft area. Twelve cycle parking spaces are to be provided for the scheme. Eight of which are located along the eastern boundary whereby the land would be dropped and made level to the bus station pavement for the cycle access and a further 4 spaces along the southern boundary.

6.15 The external layout for the apartment block is shown below. The cycle storage is to be secure and located to the south and east of the building. The refuse storage area is to the southern boundary of the site beneath the residential block and accessed via the car parking area. There is to be a landscaped area immediately to the front (north) of the residential building. The ground floor is for parking and each of the upper floors will have two dwellings per floor with each apartment having 10sq metres of private amenity area, in the form of a balcony. Each dwelling will have an open plan living and dining area with separate bedrooms and bathroom.



Residential site layout



A typical apartment layout

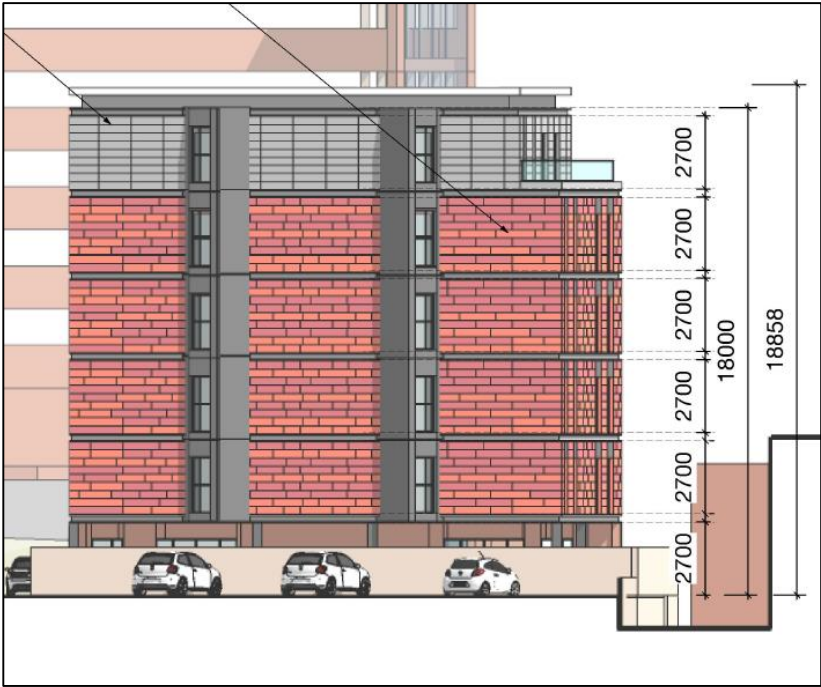
Apartment accommodation and floor areas

Ground Floor			
Undercroft Car Park			
First Floor			
Unit 1	2 BED – 4 PERSON	FLAT	79SQ METRES
Unit 2	2 BED – 3 PERSON	FLAT	76SQ METRES
Second Floor			
Unit 3	2 BED – 4 PERSON	FLAT	79SQ METRES
Unit 4	2 BED – 3 PERSON	FLAT	76SQ METRES
Third Floor			
Unit 5	2 BED – 4 PERSON	FLAT	79SQ METRES
Unit 6	2 BED – 3 PERSON	FLAT	76SQ METRES
Fourth Floor			
Unit 7	2 BED – 4 PERSON	FLAT	79SQ METRES
Unit 8	2 BED – 3 PERSON	FLAT	76SQ METRES
Fifth Floor			
Unit 9	2 BED – 3 PERSON	FLAT	68SQ METRES
Unit 10	1 BED – 2 PERSON	FLAT	50SQ METRES

6.16 The apartments have dual aspect. The main living rooms face the bus station and the west facing bedrooms face onto the rear service yard, while the east facing bedrooms face towards the sorting office. The south facing bedroom windows are oriel windows which are orientated to avoid direct overlooking of the service yard.



Residential Block - North Elevation



Residential Block - South Elevation



Residential Block – West Elevation

6.17 All the apartments are accessed off a central stairwell which has lifts and staircase access. The main entrance to the residential block is accessed from the rear path off Eleanor Cross Road adjacent to the bus station. There is a level change of approximately 1m, therefore an existing ramp would be retained and new steps provided to allow pedestrian access. The communal entrance door to the residential block is to be provided with a glass canopy. Soft landscaping would be provided along the frontage facing the bus station.

6.18 The application is accompanied by a number of supporting documents as follows:

- Design and Access Statement
- Planning Statement
- Sustainable Drainage Report
- Transport Statement
- Noise Report
- Air Quality Assessment

7.0 RELEVANT HISTORY

7.1 As stated above, an application was submitted in March 2020, reference 07/20/0216/F, for the demolition of the existing building (A1) retail, retaining the front facade and erection of a four to five storey new build (C2) hotel consisting of 70no. units and a new build seven-storey residential development (C3) consisting of 14no. dwelling units to the rear. Members resolved to refuse the application at the Planning and Regulatory Committee on 8th September 2020 for the following reasons:

1. *The proposal would result in overdevelopment of the site as demonstrated through insufficient provision of car parking and external amenity space. As such the development would be contrary to policies DCS1 and TM5 of the Broxbourne Local Plan 2018-2033.*
2. *The design of the proposed development, particularly with regard to the design of the upper floor fronting the High Street, would be out of keeping with the host building and wider street scene, by reason of its form and proposed external finish. As such the development would be contrary to policy DCS1 of the Broxbourne Local Plan 2018-2033.*
3. *The proposal would provide insufficient on-site parking spaces to meet the needs of the development, resulting in demand for existing off-street parking provision which could prejudice the delivery of the Council's ambitions for future redevelopment of Waltham Cross as set out in policies WC2 and WC4 of the Broxbourne Local Plan. Accordingly the proposal would be contrary to Policy TM5 and in advance of the establishment of a comprehensive masterplan or area action plan, also contrary to policy DCS7 of the Broxbourne Local Plan 2018-2033.*

7.2 An application pertaining to a Lawful Development Certificate was submitted in August 2019, 07/19/0743/LDP, which was for a change of use from A1 (retail) to C3 (residential) to create two apartments above the shop. This was approved in December 2019.

8.0 APPRAISAL

8.1 The main issues to consider in the assessment of this proposal are as follows:

- Principle of development
- Design, layout and appearance;
- Impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties;
- Highways/Parking;
- Flood risk and drainage;
- Refuse and recycling;
- Planning Obligations.

Principle of Development

8.2 The Broxbourne Local Plan reflects the 2015 Waltham Cross Town Centre Strategy and its agenda for the regeneration of the town centre over the next 5 – 10 years. The Strategy aims to regenerate Waltham Cross in accordance with Local Plan Policy RTC2, which supports development within town, district and local centres, neighbourhood centres and shopping parades.

Policy WC1: Waltham Cross Town Centre states that the Council will support proposals which accord with the following town centre priorities:

1. A vibrant town centre throughout the daytime and evening;
2. Redevelopment of the northern High Street;
3. Public realm improvements;
4. Additional homes in and around the town centre; and
5. Conserving and where possible enhancing the historic environment.

8.3 It has been a longstanding ambition to bring a hotel into the town centre. That hotel would provide jobs for local residents, will be occupied by visitors who would spend within the town centre and the wider local economy and would bring much needed evening activity into the town centre.

8.4 This proposed development also provides a number of new homes. The principle of residential developments within town centres is strongly supported by national and local planning policies. As with the hotel, a new residential community will boost the local economy throughout the day, as well as providing much needed new homes in a sustainable location.

8.5 **The proposed development consequently accords with Policy WC1.**

8.6 Policy WC4: Waltham Cross Renaissance Area Action Plan states that the Council will work with Transport for London and Network Rail to produce an Area Action Plan (AAP) to regenerate the eastern side of Waltham Cross in support of the business case for Crossrail 2. The area to be covered by the AAP would incorporate the application site. Furthermore, Policy H1: Making Effective Use of Urban Land also refers to the AAP stating that the Council will optimise potential for housing delivery especially within the broad area of the Waltham Cross AAP provided that this will not impede the delivery of a strategic approach to development, in particular around transport hubs.

8.7 A key question for members is whether this development is so fundamental to the future of the town centre that it should not be supported in advance of the proposed AAP.

8.8 National planning guidance provides that prematurity is unlikely to justify a refusal of planning permission other than where it is clear that the adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. There is a list of circumstances that may legitimise such an approach, including that the development proposed is so substantial or its cumulative effect would be so significant that to grant planning permission would undermine the plan making process.

8.9 Whilst this would be a significant development for the town centre, it is not considered that prematurity would be an appropriate reason for resisting this application. Subject to the more detailed matters discussed elsewhere within this report, including parking, this development would deliver substantial benefits to the town centre. It is not considered that those benefits should be set aside pending significant progress on the Area Action Plan.

- 8.10 **Taking cognisance of the above it is considered by officers that the principle of this application is in full accordance with the new Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.**

Design, Layout and Appearance

- 8.11 Local Plan Policies DSC1, DSC2, DSC3 and H1, together with the Council's SPG seek to ensure that new development proposals respond appropriately to the established character of the area through high quality design, appropriate densities and accessibility. As this development overlooks the new Eleanor Square and the bus station, it is particularly important that its design makes a positive contribution to those public areas. In response to the first reason for refusal of the previous scheme regarding over-development of the site, the applicant has reduced the number of hotel rooms by 10 and removed 4 residential units. As a result, this has reduced the height of the residential block from 7 to 6 storeys and reduced the pressure on the site concerning parking and amenity which are considered further later in this report.
- 8.12 The previous scheme presented to Members was of a contemporary design, which would utilise modern materials for the new build but retain the original façade allowing for continuity in the street scene, as shown below. The design formed the second reason for refusal as it was considered out of keeping with the host building and the wider street scene.



Previous scheme (ref. 07/20/0216/F) – view from Eleanor Square



View of current proposed development from Eleanor Square

8.13 The applicant has proposed the retention of the façade and supporting structure for the building as previously submitted. This will assist in the integration of the new development into the existing street scene. However, as seen in the artist impressions above, the main design alteration is the roof structure incorporating an additional storey. The contemporary approach previously proposed has been amended to present a pitched roof with gabled end incorporating four dormer windows. Whilst the roof would extend marginally taller than the rest of this parade, it is considered an improved design, with a traditional appearance that complements the existing buildings fronting the High Street and therefore appropriate to the wider surroundings. The new build elements behind the High Street frontage would retain the contemporary flat roofed design presented in the previous submission. It is considered that these structures, being taller and set back from the High Street are appropriate within the wider surroundings, particularly given the heights of the multi storey car park to the north at eight storeys and Eleanor House to the north east at six storeys high. The materials used at the High Street frontage would follow through to these modern elements to the rear appropriately integrating them within the site. The public façades onto the bus station are well designed, articulated and finished with a scale and massing appropriate to the location.



Massing image in the context of the wider built form

- 8.14 The materials of construction are to include terracotta coloured rain screen cladding. These would be lighter towards the High Street frontage to appear more sympathetically with the red brick on the existing building. It is intended to introduce a series of shades of terracotta for the cladding becoming more vibrant towards the residential block to add more visual interest to the site with grey metal work being a theme to link the buildings and illustrate the floor lines for each of the buildings. The roof tiles used in the pitch fronting the High Street are proposed to match existing and the dormers are to be lead clad.
- 8.15 The grey metal features will add interest and a level of visual relief to the bulk of the building and serve a valuable purpose in informing how the built form is perceived within this urban environment. The darker grey areas surrounding the glazing for the buildings will help to reduce the impact of the larger areas of fenestration, that form significant sections of the built form of the hotel and the residential block. The glass balconies to the residential block also serve to add further interest to the overall image of the proposed buildings and are proposed to incorporate a decorative design referencing the Eleanor Cross. The glazed elements are important in the contribution they make in breaking up the massing and bulk of the buildings. The fifth floor of the residential block would be finished in light grey horizontal cladding that will be set back from the floors below to lighten the highest section of the development.
- 8.16 It is the view of officers that the overall increase in height of the buildings is not harmful to the appearance of the town centre. To the contrary, the taller hotel and apartment blocks will add a significant presence to the area of the town centre around the bus station. The introduction of this contemporary design will add to the townscape quality for the area and improve the overall image of the Waltham Cross town centre.

- 8.17 **Overall, it is considered that the proposed design, massing and appearance of the buildings and their layout are appropriate within this location and that will make a significant visual contribution to the town centre.**

Amenity and Impact on Neighbours

- 8.18 The Council does not have guidance on internal hotel layouts but what is proposed is a standard arrangement of a reception and office with stairwell and lift access at ground floor and hotel rooms in the floors above served by central corridors bedrooms to either side. A linen room exists at each floor. The arrangement is considered to be acceptable.
- 8.19 The internal room sizes within the apartment block are in accordance with local and national space standards. There is no communal outdoor space but each of the apartments has a generous external terrace. These terraces do create a relationship with the bus station with regards to noise and potential air quality issues which are discussed further below but on balance it is considered that they are a significant benefit to future residents. Given that this is a highly accessible town centre site, the level of amenity provision is considered to be acceptable.
- 8.20 There are very few adjoining residential properties that would be affected by this development. There are residential units above 108 – 110 High Street, which have their access from Iceland carpark and their rear elevations facing over the car park. The proposed hotel windows will overlook the car park but will not have a significant detrimental impact on those dwellings. The residential block does have windows that face back towards these properties but these are beyond the recommended guideline distance of 30 metres and the relationship is considered to be acceptable. Being east of the existing apartments, the proposed residential block will not overshadow the existing residents. Oriel windows in the residential block are to be positioned to the south elevation, to avoid any conflict with potential future surrounding development.
- 8.21 **The levels of amenity for future and existing residents from this development are considered to be acceptable.**

Noise impact

- 8.22 The application is supported by a Noise Assessment Report by Hawkins Environmental, dated 18th November 2020. The assessment compares monitored noise levels as outlined within BS 8233: 2014 (Guidance on sound insulation and noise reduction for buildings). The application site incorporates a residential block which overlooks the Royal Mail Waltham Cross Delivery Office in addition to being situated adjacent to the bus station and accordingly the existing noise levels are unusually high – it has therefore been carefully considered whether or not this is a suitable location for the siting of sensitive receptors, such as residents.

- 8.23 It has been demonstrated that acceptable noise levels may be achieved inside the flats through the use of suitable double glazing and ventilation. In contrast, the noise levels anticipated on the proposed balconies would exceed the 55dB limit identified in the British Standard by 6dB. However, the standard does acknowledge that *“these guideline values are not achievable in all circumstances and in some areas, “such as city centres or urban areas adjoining the strategic transport network, a compromise between elevated noise levels and other factors, such as the convenience of living in these locations or making efficient use of land resources to ensure development needs can be met, might be warranted. In such a situation, development should be designed to achieve the lowest practicable levels in these external amenity spaces, but should not be prohibited.”* In considering this advice, the acoustic design of the proposed buildings are considered satisfactory in the context of their surroundings. Whilst the Council’s Environmental Health team have not provided a consultation response to date, these details have not changed from the previous submission that were considered acceptable.
- 8.24 **Having regard to the urban nature of the site and the efforts undertaken to minimise noise to the lowest achievable levels, it is considered that the potential noise impact would be satisfactorily mitigated.**

Highways and Parking

- 8.25 Vehicular access to the development will be via the existing lane off the High Street into the Iceland car park. Eighteen car parking spaces are proposed to be provided in an undercroft car park at ground floor level below the new hotel and residential blocks to the rear of the site. The access into the service area is narrow with limited visibility, however this is the existing means of accessing this space and represents a workable solution for the development, with vehicles able to manoeuvre in and out of the yard in a forward gear. The Highway Authority confirm that whilst the access is not ideal, accident data over the past 5 years show no obvious problems at this location. In addition, the vehicle trips associated with this proposal have been assessed and it is considered, in consultation with the Highway Authority, that increased trips routing through to the rear access road are likely to be minimal. Turning space for service vehicles is adequate and demonstrated through submission of tracking diagrams, however the Highway Authority has recommended a condition for submission of a Parking, Delivery, Servicing and Emergency Vehicle Management Plan to ensure that service vehicles do not exceed the 10.1m length that has been tracked. Overall, the vehicular access arrangements are considered to be acceptable.
- 8.26 In response to the third reason for refusal of the previous submission, this proposal would provide 18 car parking spaces, the previous proposal contained 7 spaces. The right of access into the undercroft parking would result in one existing space being removed. The submission sets out that 10 car parking spaces will be provided for the residential apartments, allowing one per apartment. Of the remaining 8 car parking spaces, 6 will be allocated to hotel staff and for visiting contractors servicing the site and 2 spaces would be for the commercial premises. The allocated spaces for the hotel and commercial premises would each include one disabled bay. Whilst, the parking

arrangement appears tight in places, the applicant has provided tracking diagrams demonstrating that manoeuvring in and out of the parking bays is achievable.

- 8.27 Given the constraints of the site, parking is restricted to the number of spaces set out above beneath the buildings. The proposal would fall short of the Council's Parking Guidelines, which for the hotel seeks one space per hotel room and a total of 21.5 spaces for the residential block. Where practicable, officers seek 1:1 provision for town centre apartment developments. Therefore the development would meet that aim. With regards to the hotel, it is not unusual for town/city centre hotels to rely on local public parking for hotel guests. That would be the position with this proposal. Waltham Cross, however, is exceptionally accessible for public transport, having two railway stations and a main bus terminus next door to the site. Shops and services are also immediately accessible. At all but the very busiest times, there is substantial capacity within the Waltham Cross town centre public car parks, particularly overnight, which would be the main demand for overnight stays for hotel guests. Overall, officers consider that the wider benefits of a town centre hotel considerably outweigh the dis-benefits of that hotel not having sufficient dedicated parking spaces and that a lack of parking should not constitute a reason for refusing this planning application.
- 8.28 Vehicle drop offs would not be possible directly outside the hotel as the new square is not accessible by motor vehicles. It is likely that drops offs would take place at on street parking bays along the High Street to the south of the site but within walking distance.
- 8.29 A proposed condition is included at the end of this report requiring electric vehicle charging points for the car parking spaces and the applicant is amenable to this requirement.
- 8.30 Cycle parking is located at various points within the undercroft car park and within secure lockable enclosures that would meet the Council's Parking Guidelines.
- 8.31 Pedestrian access to the hotel would be from the front of the building onto High Street/Eleanor Cross Square. There is also an access stairwell to the rear of the site from the carpark. Pedestrian access to the apartments would be from a pedestrian ramp and steps which front the bus station and Eleanor Cross Road.
- 8.32 The proposal is supported by a Transport Statement and Travel Plan which outlines the aims to minimise car use and promote sustainable travel options in relation to the hotel. Whilst the Transport Plan is accepted, the Highway Authority has recommended a condition to revise the Statement to fully comply with their new Travel Plan guidance published in 2019 which sets out more ideas for possible measures and stronger methodology of identifying objectives, targets and monitoring of the Travel Plan. The condition is included at the end of this report.

- 8.33 **Overall, it is considered that the access and parking arrangements are commensurate with this highly accessible town centre location. It is considered that this application is in accordance with Local Plan policies TM1 Sustainable Transport, TM2 Transport and New Development, TM3 Access and Servicing, TM4 Electric Vehicle Charging Points and TM5 Parking Guidelines.**

Air Quality and Public Health

- 8.34 The application is accompanied by an Air Quality Assessment dated 17th November 2020. The site is located within close proximity of Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) 4, which is within 50 metres of the site and the AQMA 1 which is further south. However the impacts of this development on those existing areas of air quality issue will be minimal.
- 8.35 Of greater significance in the consideration of this application has been the implications of air quality upon the future residents of the development given its proximity to both the AQMA and, specifically, the relationship between the residential block and the bus station. The Air Quality Assessment report sets out that no residents of the proposed development will be exposed to exceedances of the main pollutants that relate to traffic emissions which are nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and fine particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}). Where there is exposure to pollutants, the concentrations would be below the air quality objectives prescribed by the Air Quality (England) Regulations 2000 and the 2002 amended Regulations. Therefore, it is proposed that no mitigation measures for air quality are required within this development.
- 8.36 In any case, the ventilation system being imposed for the noise mitigation measures set out above, will ensure that windows are not required to be open for ventilation. This approach was considered acceptable in the previous submission as it would also aid cleaner air within the flats and any potential pollutants would be filtered out.
- 8.37 **In conclusion there are no significant detrimental issues with the air quality at this site.**

Crime Prevention

- 8.38 Hertfordshire Constabulary has been consulted in respect of the development's impact in relation to crime prevention. They have responded to say that they support the application provided that an informative is added advising the applicant to contact the Police Crime Prevention Design Service in order to seek 'Secured by Design' accreditation. Of particular relevance, cited by the Constabulary, is ensuring the security of the undercroft hotel entrance, however the applicant states that this access is an emergency escape route only.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 8.39 The site is located within Flood Zone 1 which is at the lowest risk from flooding. The applicant has provided a Sustainable Drainage Report which has identified that drainage could occur through use of permeable paving (underlain by geocellular storage crates), rainwater harvesting butts and green roof. Hertfordshire County Council, in its capacity as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), has objected to the application on the basis of lack of clarity for the details of the green roof and that further possibilities to infiltrate within the site should be explored. However, it is considered by planning officers that details of a comprehensive drainage strategy may be secured by planning condition, for agreement prior to the commencement of any works on site. In this context, the objection of the LLFA is not considered to justify withholding planning permission.
- 8.40 **Subject to the imposition of planning conditions, it is considered that the proposed development would accord with the requirements of policy W4 and W5 of the Local Plan.**

Refuse and Recycling

- 8.41 Provision will be made for the storage of the hotel refuse within the site and this is proposed to be controlled through imposition of a planning condition. A further planning condition will require the applicant to demonstrate that they have either a bespoke agreement with the Council waste collection services or with a private contractor to ensure the collection of refuse and recycling from the site.
- 8.42 Refuse for the apartments will be stored to the west side of the building with access directly from the Iceland car park.

Ecology and Biodiversity

- 8.43 The application site is previously developed and located within an existing Town Centre. Whilst there would be limited impact on existing ecology, opportunity for enhancement through the development would be limited. However, some landscaping of the site is proposed as indicated on the submitted plans along with a green roof and in the context of the location of the site and the nature of the development proposed, this is considered appropriate.

Affordable Housing and Planning Obligations

- 8.44 Policy H2 of the Local Plan seeks 40% affordable housing on developments of more than 10 dwellings. This proposal would not trigger the requirement to seek affordable housing.
- 8.45 Should the Committee support the proposals it is recommended that the grant of planning permission be subject to the completion of a planning obligation. It is considered that the following contributions would be necessary, reasonable and related in scale and kind to the development proposed:

- £125,349 towards local community projects and infrastructure; and
- £25,000 for local park improvements.

9.0 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 This planning application for a mixed hotel and residential development represents a sustainable and regenerative proposal that would considerably enhance Waltham Cross Town Centre. The development would bring investment, life and vitality to the town centre, particularly in the evenings. It is considered to be in accordance the visions and strategies of the new Local Plan and of the Waltham Cross Town Centre Strategy.
- 9.2 The development is of an appropriate scale and layout, is well designed and provides integration between the bus station and the High Street. Both the hotel and apartments will provide attractive internal environments for visitors and residents. Potential concerns regarding noise nuisance for the apartment residents can be satisfactorily mitigated and the air quality measured at the site is not assessed to expose significant levels of harmful pollutants to any future residents.
- 9.3 Vehicular access is adequate. Whilst parking is constrained, this development is, in accordance with policy, seeking to emphasise sustainable travel choices, in particular walking and public transport for visitors and residents. In this highly accessible, central location, that is considered to be the right approach.
- 9.4 This application is recommended for approval.

- 10.0 RECOMMENDED that planning permission be granted subject to the completion of a Section 106 agreement and the conditions set out below.**

Conditions

- 1. Time Limit**
- 2. Development in accordance with approved plans**
- 3. External Materials (including windows and balconies)**
- 4. Surface Materials**
- 5. Construction Environmental Management Plan (to include phasing, access, construction routing/movements, highways works, hours of work, deliveries, storage of materials, site facilities, contractor parking arrangements, site security, public highway user safety and signage, hoardings, measure to limit dust and dirt, construction waste management, and details of consultation with local businesses/occupants)**
- 6. Landscaping details**
- 7. Landscaping retention**
- 8. SUDS details to be approved and implemented on site**
- 9. Parking provision and allocation**
- 10. Installation of EV charging points prior to occupation**
- 11. On-site vehicular areas to be accessible, surfaced and marked out**
- 12. A revised Travel Plan Statement to be submitted prior to commencement**

- 13. Additional cycle parking details prior to occupation**
- 14. Refuse storage to be provided**
- 15. Refuse collection arrangements to be agreed and implemented**
- 16. In perpetuity Management Plans for:**
 - the flats communal areas;
 - parking;
 - delivery, servicing & emergency vehicle access arrangements and how these are operated;
 - SUDS; and
 - mechanical ventilation systems.