

PLANNING COMMITTEE	DATE: 03/04/2017
REPORT OF THE SENIOR PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT SERVICE MANAGER	SIAMBR DAFYDD ORWIG, CAERNARFON

**Number: 4**

**Application Number: C16/1656/11/LL**

**Date Registered: 17/01/2017**

**Application Type: Full - Planning**

**Community: Bangor**

**Ward: Hendre**

**Proposal: Amended application to erect a new building in order to provide 48 living units for students**

**Location: Plot 1, Euston Road, Bangor, LL57 2YP**

**Summary of the Recommendation: TO APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS**

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## 1. Description:

- 1.1 This is a full application to erect a new building in order to provide 48 living units with 57 student bed spaces. The units would provide 45 self-contained studio units and three cluster living units each with four bedrooms and one communal kitchen and lounge. The building also provides a management office, bicycle storage area and laundry which are to be shared between the residents of the building. Externally, the back garden would be landscaped and there would be two bin storage areas and bicycle storage areas in the front along with on-street parking spaces in front (with a 1 hour parking restriction).
- 1.2 The proposal involves erecting a three-storey building adjacent to houses 1-10 on Euston Road which steps down with the Euston Road slope to a four-storey section adjacent to the gable ends of the Ffordd Denman houses. There is a proposal to fix slates on the roof with red ridge tiles and finish the building walls with red bricks and smooth coloured render above, artstone heads and sills and Victorian style entrance doors and surrounds.
- 1.3 The site is located within a residential area in Bangor City and is within the development boundary as shown in the Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan. The site is located on steep land along Euston Road, near the Postal Sorting Office and the railway. The traditional terraced houses of Belmont Street, Clarence Street and Euston Road are located directly above the site and the houses of Ffordd Denman and Trem y Nant are located to the western side of the site. The Railway Institute building has already been demolished and the site has been cleared. The site in its entirety measures approximately 0.13 hectares.
- 1.4 Permission was previously granted via appeal to demolish the former Railway Institute building along with the erection of a three-storey building to create a total of 27 flats with 39 student bed spaces. Subsequently, permission was granted to amend this permission by amending the internal layout of the building to provide 29 units with 47 bed spaces.
- 1.5 The following information was submitted as part of the application:
- Student Management Plan
  - Community and Linguistic Statement
  - Planning, Design and Access Statement
  - Protected Species Report
- 1.6 This application, due to the building's surface area, is defined as a major development. In accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning Order (General Development Procedure) (Wales), a pre-application consultation report was received as part of the application. The report shows that the developer has informed the public and statutory consultees of the proposal prior to submitting a formal planning application. The report includes copies of the responses received which included no objection from Welsh Water and North Wales Police.

## 2. Relevant Policies:

- 2.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and paragraph 2.1.2 of Planning Policy Wales emphasise that planning decisions should be made in

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accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Planning considerations include National Planning Policy and the Unitary Development Plan.

- 2.2 Under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 the Council has a duty not only to carry out sustainable development, but also to take reasonable steps in exercising its functions to meet its sustainable development (or well-being) objectives. This report has been prepared in consideration of the Council's duty and the 'sustainable development principle', as set out in the 2015 Act; in making the recommendation the Council has sought to ensure that present needs are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is considered that there would be no significant or unacceptable impact upon the achievement of well-being objectives as a result of the proposed recommendation.

2.3 **Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan 2009:**

**POLICY A2 – PROTECTING THE SOCIAL, LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL FABRIC OF COMMUNITIES**

Safeguard the social, linguistic or cultural cohesion of communities against significant harm due to the size, scale or location of proposals.

**POLICY B22 - BUILDING DESIGN**

Promote good building design by ensuring that proposals conform to a series of criteria aimed at safeguarding the recognised features and character of the local landscape and environment.

**POLICY B23 - AMENITIES**

Safeguard the amenities of the local neighbourhood by ensuring that proposals conform to a series of criteria aimed at protecting the recognised features and amenities of the local area.

**POLICY B25 - BUILDING MATERIALS**

Safeguard the visual character by ensuring that building materials are of a high standard and are in keeping with the character and appearance of the local area.

**POLICY B27 – LANDSCAPING SCHEMES**

Ensure that permitted proposals incorporate high quality soft/hard landscaping which is appropriate to the site and which takes into consideration a series of factors aimed at avoiding damage to recognised features.

**POLICY C1 - LOCATING NEW DEVELOPMENT**

Land within the development boundaries of towns and villages and the developed form of rural villages will be the main focus for new developments. New buildings, structures and ancillary facilities in the countryside will be refused with the exception of a development that is permitted by another policy of the Plan.

**POLICY C3 - RE-USING PREVIOUSLY DEVELOPED SITES**

Proposals will be approved that prioritise re-using land and buildings previously developed and located within or around development boundaries, provided that the site or the building and the use are suitable.

**POLICY CH3 – NEW HOUSES ON UNALLOCATED SITES WITHIN THE DEVELOPMENT BOUNDARIES OF THE SUB-REGIONAL CENTRE AND URBAN CENTRES**

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Approve the construction of houses on appropriate unallocated sites within the development boundaries of the Sub-regional Centre and the Urban Centres.

**POLICY CH6 – AFFORDABLE HOUSING ON ALL ALLOCATED SITES IN THE PLAN AREA AND ON SITES THAT BECOME AVAILABLE AND ARE UNALLOCATED WITHIN THE DEVELOPMENT BOUNDARIES OF THE SUB-REGIONAL CENTRE AND THE URBAN CENTRES**

Approve proposals for housing developments on sites allocated for housing or on random sites for five or more units within the development boundaries of the sub-regional centre and the urban centres, which provide an appropriate element of affordable housing.

**POLICY CH30 – ACCESS FOR ALL**

Proposals for residential/business/commercial units or buildings/facilities for public use will be refused unless it can be shown that full consideration has been given to the provision of appropriate access for the widest possible range of individuals.

**POLICY CH33 - SAFETY ON ROADS AND STREETS**

Development proposals will be approved provided they can conform to specific criteria relating to the vehicular entrance, the standard of the existing roads network and traffic calming measures.

**POLICY CH36 - PRIVATE CAR PARKING FACILITIES**

Proposals for new developments, extensions to existing developments or change of use will be refused unless off-street parking is provided in accordance with the Council's current parking guidelines, and having given due consideration to the accessibility of public transport, the possibility of walking or cycling from the site and the proximity of the site to a public car park.

**POLICY CH39 - FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION DEVELOPMENTS**

Proposals for specific developments on a further or higher education site will be approved provided that specific criteria can be complied with relating to amenity and highway matters and in terms of the character of the area and the accessibility of the site to various modes of transport.

**POLICY CH43 – PROVISION OF OPEN SPACES OF RECREATIONAL VALUE IN NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT**

Expect that new housing developments of 10 or more dwellings, in areas where the existing open spaces provision cannot meet the needs of the development, provide suitable open spaces of recreational value as an integral part of the development.

**SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE 'HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS AND OPEN SPACES OF RECREATIONAL VALUE'**

**2.4 Gwynedd and Anglesey Joint Local Development Plan. (Composite Version including Matters Arising Changes, January 2017)**

POLICY ISA 1: INFRASTRUCTURE PROVISION

POLICY PCYFF 1: DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA

POLICY PCYFF 2: DESIGN AND PLACE SHAPING

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POLICY PCYFF 3: DESIGN AND LANDSCAPING

STRATEGIC POLICY PS 15: SETTLEMENT STRATEGY

POLICY TAI 6: PURPOSE-BUILT STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

STRATEGIC POLICY PS4: SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT, DEVELOPMENT AND ACCESSIBILITY

POLICY TRA 2: PARKING STANDARDS

POLICY TRA 4: TRANSPORT IMPACT CONTROL

STRATEGIC POLICY PS5: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

POLICY PS6: MITIGATE AND ADAPT TO THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

## 2.5 National Policies:

Planning Policy Wales 2016 (Edition 9)

NCT 12: Design

## 3. Relevant Planning History:

- 3.1 C15/0533/11/LL - Application for the demolition of the existing building and erection of a three-storey building to create 27 flats for students, relocation of pavement and creation of lay-by and parking for 7 vehicles. Approved on appeal 24/05/16

C15/1151/11/HD – Notice of intent to demolish a building. Approved 09/12/15

C16/0781/11/LL - Change condition number 2 (in accordance with the approved plans) of planning permission number APP/Q6810/A/16/314218 to modify the internal layout of the second floor to provide 8 one bedroom units and 2 four bedroom units instead of 8 one bedroom units. Approved 21/09/16

## 4. Consultations:

Community/Town Council: Objection – Over-development of the site. Unsuitable location for such a large development in terms of transportation and facilities.

Transportation Unit: No objection - I make the same observations as previously, namely that the road restrictions shown on the plan should not be included, on any permission granted, as measures like these are issues to be consulted and agreed upon, under highway acts rather than the planning process.

The proposal shows an intention to install a tactile surface finish on parts of the footway in front of the site - it is assumed that the design proposed on this footway does not

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comply with the guidance on the use of tactile paving and therefore it is recommended that this element should be removed from the design. Re-curb and re-surfacing the footway would offer a more appropriate improvement rather than installing unnecessary tactile paving.

I recommend standard conditions / notes regarding restoring the footway across the existing vehicular access, applying for a Section 184 licence to adapt the finish of the footway in front of the site, and to restrict vehicle ownership whilst the residents are on site:

Note regarding no cars whilst residing in the development (to be included as part of the management plan).

NOTE: The footway must be restored in accordance with the "Council's Requirements" (copies of this document is available for road design and estate developments from the Planning and Transportation Department), before commencing the permitted use.

NOTE: The applicant is instructed to write to the Street Works Manager to receive permission under Section 171/184 of the Highways Act, 1980, to undertake any work within the road/pavement/green verge which is required to construct the access. You can also contact the Gwynedd Street Works Unit on 01766 771000 for the relevant forms.

NOTE: The Highways Agency will not be responsible for any surface water from the road that enters the property as a result of the development.

Welsh Water: Not received.

Public Consultation: A notice was posted on the site and nearby residents were notified. The advertising period has expired and correspondence was received objecting on the following grounds:

- Enough student accommodation in Bangor already.
- Causing parking problems in addition to the problems that already exist in the area.
- Too many units in a quiet residential area.
- Noise
- Causing rubbish and recycling problems.
- Questioning where students will park.
- Placing more pressure on the Council and emergency services.
- Loss of parking spaces for local people on Euston Road.

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## 5. Assessment of the material planning considerations:

### The principle of the development

- 5.1 The site is within the development boundary of the City. This site has not been designated for any specific use and it falls outside the designations of Town Centre, Main Shopping Area and Conservation Area. The site is previously developed land.
- 5.2 There is no specific policy in the UDP which deals with a development of this type and the UDP's housing policies (policies CH3 and CH6 specifically) or policy CH39 (Further and Higher Education Developments) that refer to developments on higher education sites, are not entirely relevant. However, the proposal complies with the requirements of policy C1 and C3 that relate to new developments and the re-use of previously used sites.
- 5.3 The merits of this application must be considered against the relevant planning history, namely that planning permission has already been granted to redevelop the site by erecting a new three-storey building to provide student accommodation with 29 units (47 bed spaces). The proposal in question involves 48 units (57 bed spaces), therefore, it is an increase of ten bed spaces.
- 5.4 Consequently, there is a need to weigh up material considerations when determining whether or not the principle of the proposed development is acceptable in this particular location.
- 5.5 Looking at the latest available student figures, namely the 2015/2016 figures, it is noted that the University has 9,311 full-time students. Information by Bangor University for 2015/16 states that 700 students have term-time addresses in North Wales outside Bangor (including 201 in the rest of Gwynedd and 22 in Anglesey). However, it must be noted that this data set did not include information for approximately a quarter of all the University's students. This would mean that the number living in North Wales, outside Bangor, could be greater than the figure of 700.
- 5.6 The University has 2,943 purpose-built bed-spaces, which includes the recent development at the St. Mary's site (602). In the private sector there are approximately 802 built accommodation units, and 49 are currently being built (137, High Street, Bangor). 164 additional units have received planning permission but are yet to be built (including three permissions through recent appeals - the Three Crowns site for 15 units, the former Railway Institute site for 29 units [47 bed spaces] and the Lôn Pobty site for 18 units and the Varsity site for 15 units), and the planning inspector is currently considering the 145 units on the Former Post Office site. Including this application, this gives a total of 1,201 private units that are either available, have received planning permission or are under consideration.
- 5.7 The Joint Planning Policy Unit is currently updating the information from 2013 on houses in multiple occupation with data from 2016, but there are problems with plotting the information on maps, which means that it is not yet available. The available information has been collected from the Council's Housing Department and Tax Department in September 2013, and these figures are based on the number of houses within different parts of Bangor that have been registered by the Housing Department as an HMO and those that do not pay Council tax. These figures do not

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refer specifically to the numbers of students living in private houses or houses in multiple occupation therefore, it is only an indication from the available information.

- 5.8 This information shows that there are 1,012 houses in Bangor that are either in multiple occupation or do not pay Council tax. Since there is a total of 6,597 houses in Bangor, this is equivalent to 15.3% of the housing stock.
- 5.9 The information also shows that 83 houses in the Hendre ward (where the application is located) are either houses in multiple occupation or do not pay Council Tax. Since there is a total of 647 houses in the Hendre ward, this is equivalent to 12.8% of the ward's housing stock.
- 5.10 It therefore appears that the student accommodation currently on offer is a mix of purpose-built student accommodation (2,943 university units and 1,201 private units available/approved/under consideration), houses in multiple occupation (an estimate of 1,012 houses), and private houses or home addresses in the rest of North Wales (700).
- 5.11 It also appears that there is a shift in the type of accommodation that students are seeking, and that there is an increased demand for purpose-built accommodation. It also appears that houses in multiple occupation will continue to be popular among students in the areas that are most convenient for the University.
- 5.12 It is acknowledged that some people are concerned about the number of purpose-built private accommodation that has been built in the Bangor area, and there is a suggestion that a number of the available rooms are empty. It appears that the demand for the different types of accommodation changes from year to year, especially when comparing different times within the same year (e.g. the beginning and end of the academic year). But, from the above figures, it appears that only a comparatively low percentage of the total provision available is supplied by this type of unit at present, and therefore it is not considered that it would be reasonable to refuse the proposal on the grounds of a lack of need for this type of accommodation, bearing in mind that this proposal only provides an additional ten bed spaces on top of the extant permission.
- 5.13 Providing more purpose-built, formally managed, student accommodation with quality facilities could possibly lead to a more positive impact on the local housing market as houses which are currently in multiple occupation could be released and changed into use by local households in need of such houses (e.g. small units, one-bedroom flats etc.). In order to ensure a satisfactory arrangement for letting the units and to establish a contact point for any amenities problems in future, and to ensure use of the units in accordance with the proposal (i.e. students), it is considered that including a condition to agree on a site management plan would be reasonable. This would include details of issues such as behaviour management policy, parking control and dealing with complaints.
- 5.14 Considering the above discussion it was considered that the principle of the development was acceptable under the policies of the current Unitary Development Plan.
- 5.15 Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the adopted development plan, unless other material planning considerations state otherwise. The current 'Development Plan' is the Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan (2001-2016) and the Joint Local Development Plan for Gwynedd and Anglesey (JLDP) will



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replace the UDP as the 'development plan' once it is adopted. It is hoped that the Joint LDP will be adopted during July 2017.

- 5.16 When dealing with any planning application, the first consideration at all times should be the statutory test i.e. it is necessary to determine planning applications in accordance with the development plan, unless other material considerations state otherwise. The Joint LDP is now a material planning consideration for the purposes of development control - see paragraph 3.1.3 Planning Policy Wales that states: *"Material considerations could include current circumstances, policies in an emerging development plan and planning policies of the Welsh Government. All applications should be considered in relation to up-to-date policies ..."*.
- 5.17 Although many policies have been discussed in detail during the Gwynedd and Anglesey Joint Local Development Plan Hearings, we will not know for certain what the contents of the Plan will be until the Inspector submits his binding report.
- 5.18 Paragraph 2.14.1 of Planning Policy Wales states: *"...thus in considering what weight to give to the specific policies in an emerging LDP that apply to a particular proposal, local planning authorities will need to consider carefully the underlying evidence and background to the policies. National planning policy can also be a material consideration in these circumstances."*
- 5.19 In this case, the LDP Policies listed in 2.4 above are material and on the whole are consistent with the policies of the Unitary Development Plan. However, there is some inconsistency between the UDP's policy assessment above and Policy TAI 6 of the Joint Local Development Plan and this inconsistency is discussed below.
- 5.20 Policy TAI 6 of the JLDP: Purpose-built Student Accommodation states that proposals for new purpose-built student accommodation in suitable locations will be approved as long as the proposal meets with a series of criteria. The applicant has responded to the needs of policy TAI 6 and an assessment has been included in the Planning, Design and Access Statement. The statement acknowledges the need for student accommodation (that is in keeping with the above assessment) and the applicant has consulted with the University. Although the University did not make any observations, confirmation was received from the university that there was a need for family units and that this development would respond to that by offering units with double bedrooms.
- 5.21 In its entirety, it is not considered that the proposal is contrary to the policies of the emerging Local Development Plan or the adopted development plan and it is therefore considered that the principle of the proposal is acceptable and the impact of the development will be discussed further in this report.

### **Open Spaces**

- 5.22 In accordance with the requirements of the Supplementary Planning Guidance 'Housing Developments and Open Spaces of Recreational Value', there will usually be a need to provide an element of an open play area for Youths and Adults associated with this proposal. In this case, the open play area cannot be provided within the site, however, it is currently reasonable to expect that student accommodation is able to depend upon the University's play provision and its relevant clubs and also that use is made of playing lands and facilities that are already available locally. For this reason, it is considered that the proposal conforms with the requirements of policy CH43 of the UDP and the Supplementary Planning Guidance

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‘Housing Developments and Open Spaces of Recreational Value’ and there is no need to contribute towards additional provision.

### **Linguistic Matters**

- 5.23 Policy A2 of the UDP safeguards the social, linguistic or cultural coherence of communities against significant harm due to the size, scale or location of proposals. Due to the nature of the proposal for permanent living units, a Linguistic and Community Statement was submitted with the proposal.
- 5.24 The Joint Planning Policy Unit has confirmed that the scale of the development would be unlikely to lead to a substantial growth in the population that could have a detrimental impact on the Welsh language. Bangor has a high population, especially in terms of student population. As a result the size of the development and the subsequent growth in population is unlikely to have a significant impact on the Welsh Language. In addition, this proposal does not mean any change in the City’s population as students already exist and the availability of purpose built student living units is likely to release private housing on the open market and therefore to local residents.
- 5.25 Therefore, on the whole it is considered that the nature of Bangor, in terms of the size of the population, linguistic pattern, the variety of services and facilities available there mean that the development should not have a detrimental impact on the Welsh language. Therefore it is considered that the proposal is in accordance with policy A2 of the UDP and the SPG – Planning and the Welsh Language as well as TAN 20: Planning and the Welsh Language.

### **General and residential amenities**

- 5.26 As mentioned above, the site is located within the Bangor City development boundary and is on a slope on Euston Road. Residential dwellings are located above and across the road to the site, and the Sorting Office Railway Station and oil storage depot are close by.
- 5.27 Policy B23 of the Unitary Development Plan safeguards the amenities of the local neighbourhood and private amenities by ensuring that proposals must conform to a series of criteria aimed at safeguarding recognised features. Policies B22 and B25 are also relevant and involve design, materials and protecting visual amenities.
- 5.28 In order to provide more units, the design and size of the building has changed since the previous permissions. This proposal involves extending the length of the building 6.5m towards the southern boundary of the site and also add a fourth floor to the southern section. The plans show a comparison between the current permission and the proposed design in order to facilitate an assessment of the proposal’s impact. The plans will also show the land levels and height of nearby houses to convey how the proposed building will be located on the site and on the land, and how it will compare with the surrounding houses.
- 5.29 The building will continue to step down along the Euston Road slope and in accordance with the existing permission. The height of the ridge is lower than those houses that are located opposite (number 1-10 Euston Road) and the height of the ridge is in keeping with houses that are directly adjacent (11 and 12 Euston Road). The design and materials are in keeping with the previous permissions and are in keeping with the traditional design of houses in this area, and it looks like a

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residential development of a terrace/flats in terms of its size, form and design. It is considered that the size, design, location and height of the proposal is in keeping with the area and residential dwellings that exist here.

- 5.30 As there are no changes to the northern section of the building, it is not considered that this proposal would have a greater impact on the amenities of Euston Road houses than the existing permission. This southern section extends to the boundary of the site and therefore the impact would be different to the houses on Ffordd Denman. Nevertheless, it is not considered that the impact would be harmful as it is the gable ends of the houses that face the site, the site and the houses are separated by the public road and also the main accesses to the site will continue in the same location as the extant permission.
- 5.31 It must be acknowledged that there will be more movements back and forth from the site resulting from the additional numbers. Despite this, it is not considered that an additional ten individuals would change the situation substantially or cause substantial impact on the amenities of nearby residents in terms of noise and disturbance. A student management plan was received as part of the application in order to show management of the students and to ensure that the development would not have a detrimental impact on its surrounding area. It is considered reasonable to impose conditions that the building is managed in accordance with the submitted plans.
- 5.32 The plans also show two bin storage areas on the site, and a surrounding fence. The access to residents of the site to the bin storage area is located within the site and then highway-facing double gates need to be opened to facilitate the process of emptying the bins. With these arrangements, it is not considered that the bins would have a harmful impact on the general and visual amenities of the area.
- 5.33 Although the concern raised by objectors is acknowledged, it is not considered that this plan is an over-development of the site and it would not have a substantial detrimental impact on residential amenities. Based on the above, it is considered that the proposal is in compliance with the requirements of policy B22, B23 and B25 of the UDP.
- 5.34 The submitted plans refer to soft landscaping but no specific details have been submitted. However, it can be ensured that a sufficient landscaping plan is provided for the site by imposing appropriate conditions on any planning permission granted. By ensuring that the work is carried out to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority, it is considered that the proposal is in accordance with Policy B27 of the UDP.

### **Transport and Access Matters**

- 5.35 A number of objections have been received regarding the lack of parking provision associated with this proposal along with the existing problems in the area. Despite this, the Transportation Unit has no objection to the proposal. The plans show two bicycle storage areas within the development. The site is within a reasonable walking and cycling distance of a number of facilities such as the university's buildings, shops and railway station and is within 100m of a bus station. It is considered that the site is in an accessible location and is therefore suitable for this type of development. It is considered reasonable that the Student Management Plan is amended to manage cars in order to ensure that students will not bring cars with them when they reside in the building. The Transportation Unit has also requested adaptations to the hard surface

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finishes on the pavement; however, it is considered that this can be ensured by means of landscaping conditions and finishes. Therefore, based on the above, it is considered that the proposal complies with the requirements of policies CH30, CH33 and CH36 of the UDP.

## 6. Conclusions:

- 6.1 This site is located within the development boundaries of the city of Bangor as defined in the GUDP. Full planning permission has already been granted for 29 units with 47 bed spaces. This planning permission is extant which means that work on the approved development could commence at any time within a specified period. It is not believed that this proposal which seeks to extend the size of the building and provide ten bed spaces is unacceptable compared with what has previously been approved and it would not be substantially more detrimental.
- 6.2 In light of the above, and having given full consideration to all relevant planning matters including letters of objection and the submitted observations, it is considered that this proposal is acceptable and that it complies with the requirements of local and national policies and guidance.

## 7. Recommendation:

- 7.1 To approve
- Conditions:
1. Time
  2. In accordance with the plans.
  3. Submit detailed plans of the bin storage area and bicycle storage areas and for these to be completed before the building is occupied.
  4. Parking facilities in accordance with the plans
  5. External materials.
  6. Slates.
  7. Landscaping (soft and hard).
  8. Land drainage plans to be agreed.
  9. Amended Student Management Plan to refer to the management of vehicles.

Transportation Notes.