

Business warning as estate on industrial site gets go-ahead

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# Factory to make way for 150 new homes

By Richard Wyatt

A West Bromwich factory is set to be transformed into a new housing estate after proposals to build new apartments were given the green light.

Nearly 150 new homes could now be built on the site of the former WH Keys Ltd factory in Church Lane, Hateley Heath. The company went into receivership last year but plans were soon drawn up to transform the site into a residential area. Planning bosses agreed with the proposals in principle earlier this year but the land in question was not designated for housing.

A final decision had to be deferred, and councillors have since voted on the decision and unanimously backed the development and granted outline planning permission.

Hateley Heath ward councillor Terry Williams said he was happy to see that the plans could now progress but stressed the need to keep business in the area.

He said: "It is always sad to see industrial areas disappear but this is part of the changing face of Hateley Heath.

"There is a high demand for residential development in the area, and this will help meet those demands."

He added: "However, we need to make sure we encourage existing businesses in the area to stay as well as continuing to attract more.

## Layout

"The message must be that we need jobs and homes together."

Proposals for the site indicate the development of 148 apartments on the 3.1 hectares north of Church Lane.

Earlier this year, the council's planning committee heard from residents who had no objection to the homes being built on the site, but were worried about the layout of the development.

One resident wrote to the council expressing concerns that the length of a proposed access road meant that it could be used as a race track.

No objections were received by Severn Trent or the Environment Agency.

However, West Midlands Police had some fears that anti-social behaviour could be possible within parts of the development.

Solihull-based Mar City Development is behind the scheme.