



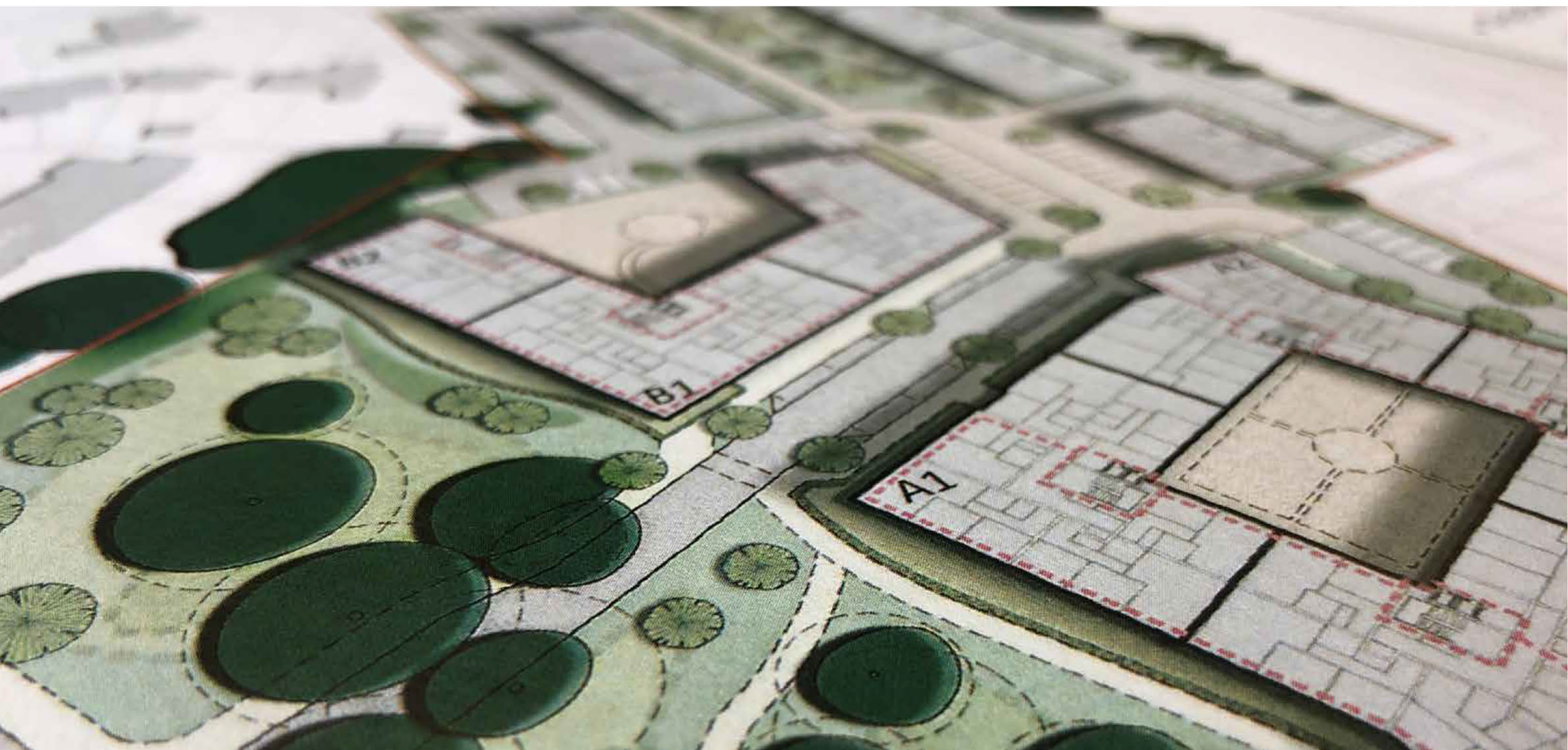
Saunders

Architecture + Urban Design

CAMPUS EAST, WELWYN GARDEN CITY

HERITAGE, TOWNSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT
(HTVIA)

PREPARED BY SAVILLS HERITAGE AND TOWNSCAPE FOR BELLWAY PLC
November 2022



Project

Campus East, Welwyn Garden City

Client

Bellway Homes Limited (North London)

File Origin

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Disclaimer

Assumptions and Limitations

This report is compiled using primary and secondary information derived from a variety of sources, only some of which have been directly examined. The assumption is made that this data, as well as that derived from other secondary sources, is reasonably accurate.



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Savills Heritage and Townscape (hereafter 'the consultants') have been appointed by Bellway Homes Limited (North London) (hereafter 'the applicant') to provide heritage and visual impact advice and to prepare this Heritage, Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (HTVIA) report for the redevelopment (hereafter 'the proposed development') of Campus East, Welwyn Garden City, AL8 (hereafter 'the site', figure 1.1).
- 1.2 The consultants have collaborated with Saunders Architecture (hereafter 'the architects') by providing design feedback and assessing the potential townscape and visual effects of the proposed development during the design process and prior to the production of the Accurate Visual Representations (AVRs, also known as verified views) included in this report.
- 1.3 This HTVIA should be read alongside the Design and Access Statement and plans prepared by the architects, as well as the planning statement report prepared by Savills.
- 1.4 The aim of this HTVIA is to assess the likely effects of the proposed development on the visual amenity within the local and wider townscape surrounding the site. It also provides an illustration of the likely visual effects of the proposed development on the setting of nearby designated and non-designated heritage assets.
- 1.5 The process of selecting candidate viewpoints for visual assessment was carried out in consultation with Conversation Officers at the Place Service and with reference to the local guidance on views, as presented in WGC 2120 Heritage and Townscape Assessment (Bridges Associates Architects LLP on behalf of Corporate Property Department of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, August 2020) and Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area Appraisal

(Hatfield Borough Council, September 2008). The local planning authority were consulted to ensure that any strategic and local townscape views of importance to Welwyn Garden City were included in this study.

- 1.6 As a result of this, a set of **4** townscape views were selected by the consultants to assess the potential effects of the proposed development on visual amenity. Assessments will be based on AVRs produced by visualisation specialists Rockhunter, and will provide both quantitative and qualitative evidence of the likely visual effects of the proposed development.
- 1.7 This report includes Savills methodology for assessment in section 2.0, a brief history of the site in section 3.0 and a short description of the site and its surroundings in section 4.0. This is followed by a description of the proposed development and a brief assessment of its design quality in section 5.0 and by an assessment of the effects on nearby heritage assets in section 6.0. The townscape and visual impact assessment is presented in section 7.0, followed by the conclusions in section 8.0. Rockhunter's methodology for the production of AVRs is included in Appendix 1.



Figure 1.1: Aerial view of the site. Approximate site boundary highlighted in red.

2. Methodology

Introduction		Policy and guidance		Mitigation through design and consultation		
2.1	This section sets out the assessment methodology developed by Savills Heritage and Townscape used in this Heritage and Visual Impact Assessment (HTVIA). This methodology is used to establish the likely effects of the proposed development on the nearby heritage assets and on the surrounding townscape by assessing the effects on the visual amenity of people experiencing it through townscape views. The topics covered in this section include: policy and guidance informing the assessment; mitigation of effects through design and consultation; effects on heritage assets and their significance; effects on the townscape and visual receptors; assumptions and limitations; and authorship.	2.4	<p>The assessment methodology set out in this section has been informed by policy and guidance at a national, regional and local level with regards to heritage, urban design, townscape and visual impact, as listed below. As planning policy and guidance is publicly accessible information, this HTVIA does not replicate its content. For a full assessment against policy and guidance the reader should refer to the Planning Statement submitted by Savills as part of this application.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, <i>Guidance for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA)</i> Third Edition (2013);• Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG), National Planning Policy Framework, published July 2021;• Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG), <i>Planning Practice Guidance</i>, on-line Resource, (2016, last updated in October 2019);• Historic England, <i>Advice Note 2 – Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment</i> (March 2015);• Historic England, <i>Advice Note 3 (2nd Ed.) – The Setting of Heritage Assets</i> (December 2017);• Historic England, <i>Advice Note 4 – Tall Buildings</i> (March 2022);• Advice Note 12 - Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets (2019); and• Historic England’s Listed Buildings Register.	<u>Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council’s planning policy and guidance:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, Draft Local Plan Proposed Submission, August 2016 including Policy SP9 – Place making and high quality design, and Policy SADM 15 – Heritage;• Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, 2005 including Policy R22 - Development in Conservation Areas; Policy R23 - Demolition of Buildings in Conservation Areas; Policy R24 - Character Appraisals and Enhancements; Policy D1 - Quality of Design; Policy D2: Character and Context; Policy D3 - Continuity and Enclosure; Policy D4 - Quality of the Public Realm; Policy D5 - Design For Movement; Policy D6 – Legibility. <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Evidence Base:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conservation Area Statements including: Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area Appraisal (September 2007).• Statutory listed buildings in Welwyn Garden City• Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of special historic interest in England• Heritage at Risk Register○ Supplementary Planning Documents:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• WGC 2120, Heritage and Townscape Assessment (2020)• WGC 2120, Building Code (2020)	2.5	As part of the design development process Savills Heritage and Townscape advised the architects on ways to mitigate, as far as possible, any potential adverse effects of the proposed development on the setting and significance of nearby heritage receptors, the townscape and visual receptors, while maximising any beneficial effects available. This process included the use of 3D computer models to illustrate the effects of different design options. A brief description of the proposed development is provided in section 5.0 and the reader is encouraged to read this HTVIA alongside the architects’ Design and Access Statement (DAS) and plans.
2.2	When assessing the impacts of newly proposed development within a dense urban environment there is often an overlap between the resulting effects on built heritage, known as ‘heritage receptors’ and on the surrounding townscape and its visual amenity. Therefore, these are assessed in the same document, albeit using different methodologies, following current policy and guidance. When the assessment of visual effects has also informed heritage assessments, for example by illustrating the expected changes to the setting of a heritage asset in a visual way, a cross reference to the relevant views is provided.			2.6	Given the above design development process, it is considered that mitigation is embedded in the designs and that it is unlikely that any further or ‘supplementary mitigation’ will be needed. If necessary, however, it would be clearly stated in the assessments.	
2.3	The assessment of effects on the townscape, including its aesthetic qualities and its distinctive character, are assessed in a visual way by considering how the proposed development will change the visual amenity of the townscape as seen from specific viewpoints by people experiencing the views, referred to as ‘visual receptors’ in this HTVIA.			2.7	Additionally, the detailed process of consultation with Hatfield’s planning officers, which included several pre-application meetings and design workshops, enabled the proposed development to be optimised prior to the planning application submission.	
					Effects on heritage receptors <u>Aims, objectives and scope</u>	
				2.8	The purpose of this heritage assessment is to determine, as far as is reasonably possible from existing records, an understanding of the historic environment resource in order to:	

<p>i. Provide a heritage baseline assessment to understand the historical and archaeological (where relevant) background of the site;</p> <p>ii. Formulate an assessment of the importance and sensitivity of the known or potential heritage assets considering their archaeological, historic, architectural and/or artistic interests and their setting; and</p> <p>iii. Formulate an assessment of the likely effects of the proposed development on the significance of the known heritage assets and their settings.</p>	<p>artistic. Significance can derive not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.</p> <p>2.10 The NPPF defines significance as '<i>the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic.</i>' The determination of the significance is based on statutory designation and/or professional judgement against these values. They are identified in Historic England's <i>Advice Note 12 - Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets</i> (2019), as follows:</p>	<p>in artwork. It can also include the skill and emotional impact of works of art that are part of heritage assets or assets in their own right.</p> <p>2.11 In addition, professional judgement is used to consider the change the proposed development of the site would have on the significance of a known heritage asset. This is assessed in NPPF terms as '<i>no harm</i>', '<i>less than substantial harm</i>', '<i>substantial harm</i>' or '<i>total loss of significance</i>'. Generally, the following levels of harm may be identified:</p>	<p>2.14 Historic England's guidance advocates a systematic and staged approach to the assessment of the implications of development in terms of their effects on the settings of heritage assets.</p> <p>2.15 Step 1 of the approach is '<i>identifying the heritage assets affected and their settings</i>'. This initial step is carried out by undertaking documentary research, including (where relevant) assessing data sourced from the Historic Environment Records and national heritage datasets.</p>
<p><u>Assessment methodology</u></p> <p>2.9 Local planning authorities require an applicant to provide an assessment of the significance of any heritage assets affected by the proposed development, including any contribution made by their setting to this significance. This includes designated and non-designated heritage assets. The following terminology has been adopted within this assessment for classifying and discussing the historic environment:</p> <p>a) A '<i>heritage asset</i>' is a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as meriting consideration in planning decisions because of its heritage interest (NPPF, Annex 2 Glossary). In this HTVIA, those assets likely to be affected by the proposed development are referred to as '<i>heritage receptors</i>';</p> <p>b) The '<i>setting</i>' of a heritage asset is the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed, can extend beyond the asset's curtilage and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral (NPPF, Annex 2 Glossary); and</p> <p>c) '<i>Significance</i>' (for heritage policy), as defined in the NPPF (Annex 2 Glossary), is used to describe the heritage interest of an asset to this and future generations. This interest may be archaeological, historic and/or architectural/</p>	<p>i. <i>Archaeological interest</i>: the potential of the physical remains of an asset to yield evidence of past human activity that could be revealed through future archaeological investigation. This includes above-ground structures and landscapes, earthworks and buried or submerged remains, paleoenvironmental deposits, and considers date, rarity, state of preservation, diversity/complexity, contribution to published priorities (research value), supporting documentation, collective value and comparative potential, and sensitivity to change;</p> <p>ii. <i>Historic interest</i>: the ways in which the asset can illustrate the story of past events, people and aspects of life (illustrative value, or interest). It can be said to hold communal value when associated with the identity of a community. Historical interest considers whether the asset is the first, only, or best surviving example of an innovation of consequence, whether related to design, artistry, technology or social organisation. It also considers an asset's integrity (completeness), current use / original purpose, significance in place making, associative value with a notable person, event, or movement; and</p> <p>iii. <i>Architectural and/or artistic interest</i>: derived from a contemporary appreciation of an asset's aesthetics. Architectural interest can include the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures. Artistic interest can include the use, representation or influence of historic places or buildings</p>	<p>• <i>Substantial harm</i> – the Planning Practice Guide discusses '<i>substantial harm</i>' (using Listed buildings as an example) and states that '<i>an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed</i>';</p> <p>• <i>Less than substantial harm</i>; and</p> <p>• <i>No harm (or 'preservation')</i> – such that the attributes identified within the statement of significance of the heritage asset have not been harmed.</p> <p>2.12 In relation to designated heritage assets, an assessment of significance will also need to consider the contribution that the setting makes to the asset. Setting is the way in which the asset is understood and experienced. It is not an asset in itself. It differs from curtilage (historic/present property boundary), context (association with other heritage assets) and historic character (sum of all historic attributes, including setting, associations, and visual aspects).</p> <p><u>Assessment of setting</u></p> <p>2.13 Historic England has issued Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning guidance notes, of which the following are relevant to the proposed development: <i>Advice Note 2 – Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment</i> (March 2015), as well as <i>Advice Note 3 (2nd Ed.) – The Setting of Heritage Assets</i> (December 2017) and <i>Advice Note 4 – Tall Buildings</i> (2022).</p>	<p>2.16 Step 2 requires consideration of '<i>whether, how and to what degree these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s)</i>'. The guidance states that this stage of the assessment should first address the key attributes of the heritage asset itself and then consider: i) the physical surroundings of the asset, including its relationship with other heritage assets; ii) the way the asset is appreciated; and iii) the asset's associations and patterns of use.</p> <p>2.17 Step 3 involves '<i>Assessing the effect of the proposed development on the significance of the asset(s)</i>'. This stage of the assessment addresses the key attributes of the proposed development, such as its: i) Location and siting; ii) Form and appearance; iii) Additional effects; and iv) Permanence.</p> <p>2.18 Step 4 encourages to explore opportunities for '<i>maximising enhancement and minimising harm</i>', while Step 5 is to '<i>make and document the decision and monitor outcomes</i>'. For the purposes of this assessment, Steps 1-4 of the process have been followed. Step 5 falls under the duty of the Local Planning Authority and therefore not undertaken as part of this assessment.</p> <p><u>Historical and archaeological baseline</u></p> <p>2.19 Baseline conditions were established through consideration of the historic environment within the vicinity of the site and a desk-based review of existing primary publicly accessible sources and synthesised information. A list of documentary, archive, and cartographic sources consulted is included in the <i>References</i> section of this report.</p>

Proportionate approach to assessments		The assessment process		Assumptions and limitations
2.20	<p>In this HTVIA, a proportionate approach is taken to carry out the assessment of effects of the proposed development on the significance of heritage receptors, owing to changes to their setting. Those receptors most likely to be affected by the proposed development (e.g. those in closer proximity to the site, or most exposed to it owing to the topography or townscape of the area) are assessed in detail following the above methodology. Other receptors less likely to be affected, or those which share a setting and are therefore likely to have similar effects, are assessed in a more proportionate way or in groups, based upon a judgement of likely levels of significance and effects.</p> <p>Effects on the townscape and on visual receptors</p>	<p>regional and local policy and guidance, the site and its townscape context were visited, studied, researched and photographed as set out in section 4. The information gathered represents the baseline conditions against which the assessments are made. The site visit was carried out on November 2021.</p> <p><u>Selection of townscape views</u></p>	<p>2.28 The visual assessments are carried out by comparing an ‘existing’ photograph of the baseline condition with a ‘proposed’ image of the final condition after the proposed development has been completed, using Accurate Visual Representations (AVRs).</p> <p>2.29 Following guidance, unlike assessments that form part of an Environmental Statement (ES) where these follow a complex procedure based on significance tables, the assessments in this HTVIA are written in a simple and proportionate narrative manner.</p> <p>2.30 The AVRs were produced in accordance with Rockhunter’s methodology (see Appendix 1).</p> <p>2.31 The narrative assessments are structured under the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. ‘Existing’: a description of the existing view in its baseline condition, which seeks to evaluate its townscape qualities and the visual amenity;ii. ‘Proposed’: a description of the proposed development as seen in the view and how this will change the visual amenity of people (visual receptors); and <p>2.32 In accordance with Historic England’s recommendations in Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (2017), the assessment commentary that accompanies the ‘proposed’ and ‘cumulative’ views is intended to provide ‘a clearly expressed and non-technical narrative argument that sets out ‘what matters and why’ in terms of heritage significance and the setting of assets affected, together with the effects of the development upon them’. The reader is therefore encouraged to appreciate the assessments in the context of the narrative text about each view. The effects found should not be translated into scoring systems or statistics.</p>	<p>2.33 The methodology in this HTVIA includes some assumptions and limitations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. This report is compiled using primary and secondary information derived from a variety of sources, only some of which have been directly examined. The assumption is made that this data, as well as that derived from other secondary sources, is reasonably accurate;ii. The views included in chapter 7.0 of the HTVIA do not cover every possible view of the proposed development, but were selected using professional judgement of where there are particular instances of townscape or visual sensitivity;iii. The AVRs included in chapter 7.0 are a useful tool for assessment, but there is a degree of professional judgment made by the visualisation specialists in the artistic representation of materials and the effects of weather conditions, daylight and distance; andiv. Assumptions have been made in this HTVIA about the susceptibility of people to visual changes in the townscape, as well as on the types of people likely to experience particular views. These assumptions are based on professional judgment but are limited as the responses of individuals are varied and cannot all be covered in the assessment. <p>Authorship</p> <p>2.34 This HTVIA has been prepared by Savills Heritage and Townscape, a multidisciplinary consultancy with expertise in the areas of built heritage, townscape and archaeology. The consultants have been employed by the applicant to provide independent and un-biased professional advice to the design team and then assess the proposed development based on best practice guidance in a balanced and transparent manner. Any qualitative aspects of the assessments that can be considered to a certain extent to be subjective are based on informed professional judgment based on the authors’ experience. All consultants are highly qualified and trained professionals in the areas of planning, architecture, urban design, and the historic environment.</p>
2.21	<p>The GLVIA, at paragraph 2.7, defines townscape as: “...areas where the built environment is dominant. Villages, towns and cities often make important contributions as elements in wider-open landscapes, but townscape means the landscape within the built-up area, including the buildings, the relationship between them, the different types of urban open spaces, including green spaces and the relationship between buildings and open spaces.”</p>	2.25	<p>Site visits, supported by map analysis and the use of computer models, allowed for the identification of viewpoint locations from which the proposed development would potentially be visible, as presented in section 7. Although digital means informed the process, the selection of views was only finalised once the site was visited. Considerations for selected views include, amongst other factors: the likely maximum visibility of the proposal; the likely people that may experience the views from a certain location; winter and summer-time tree cover (where relevant); hierarchy of viewpoint (e.g. public or semi-public access, where relevant); the heritage significance of the viewing location or viewed place; the position of traffic signs or other visual obstructions; and the ability for surveyors to safely place equipment without causing obstructions. Views are generally restricted to street level (i.e. 1.6 metres above ground), as this is from where townscape is most commonly appreciated.</p>	
2.22	<p>Paragraph 2.20 of the GLVIA goes on to define visual amenity as “When the interrelationship between people (‘human beings’ or ‘population’ in the language of the Directive and Regulations) and the landscape is considered, this introduces related but very different considerations, notably the views that people have and their visual amenity – meaning the overall pleasantness of the views they enjoy of their surroundings.”</p>	2.26	<p>The selected views were chosen in consultation with Hatfield’s planning authority and taking into consideration Hatfield’s guidance. The agreed viewpoints represent a spread of close, medium and distant views, where either the silhouette or the architectural design of the proposed development will be clearly visible.</p>	
2.23	<p>As in most cases the townscape is generally experienced by people in a visual way, in this HTVIA effects on the townscape resource as a whole are considered as a reflection of the effects of the proposed development on visual receptors, i.e. people experiencing views.</p> <p><u>Baseline conditions</u></p>	2.27	<p>The selected views are from publicly accessible locations and illustrate the urban relationships likely to arise between the proposed development and the setting of heritage assets and other important elements of the townscape. Each viewpoint and view from it aim to represent the ‘maximum exposure’ of the proposed development as well as its ‘maximum conjunction’ with sensitive elements in the built environment.</p>	
2.24	<p>In order to get a full understanding of the site and its role in the townscape in relation to national,</p>			

3. Historic Background

Introduction

- 3.1
- The following section provides an overview of the historical development of the site and its environs. This baseline will inform the assessments of potential effects of the proposed development on the setting and significance of nearby heritage assets as described in our methodology in section 2.
- 3.2
- Understanding the history and context of the relevant heritage assets is important to establishing their significance and the contribution that their setting makes to this significance. Historic England guidance on the setting of heritage assets advises that while this matter is primarily a visual assessment, there are other factors, such as historical associations and relationships that define settings and contribute to significance.
- 3.3
- This section describes the historical development of the site and its surroundings in a chronological manner based on the findings of a map regression exercise and the result of primarily web-based research. These research methods provide sufficient historical context in proportion to the designation of the assets affected or the impact of the proposed development on their significance. A list of references and attributions is included in the *References* section of this report.

Historic development of Welwyn Garden City

- 3.4
- There is archeological evidence that Saxons established themselves close to the old Roman settlement and gave the place their name of Welga, amongst many other variations, meaning 'at the willows'. Digen's well with fresh water from stream and spring, is probably old English, written down the centuries variously as Dixwell, Dicheleswell and Digneswelle. The Saxon settlement, where Digswell Water is today has also given Digswell Road its name. Handside has an unclear first element, possibly a man's name, but the 'hide' was a Saxon measure of land approximately 100 acres.
- 3.5
- During the 19th century, the area which is now Welwyn Garden City was used predominantly for agriculture, comprising several agricultural buildings and farmhouses interspersed throughout. In addition, historic mapping shows railway lines cutting through this land and encompassing the south east portion of Sherrardspark Wood, an ancient woodland consisting mainly of sessile oak and hornbeam. The area was part of the ecclesiastical Parish of Digswell centred upon Digswell House and St John's Church.
-
- The Garden City Movement
- 3.6
- Welwyn Garden City was founded in 1920 by Sir Ebenezer Howard as a planned town which was to provide space for industry and pleasant living conditions. Howard was influenced by early socialist literature and decentralized decision-making, including Olmsted's masterplan for Riverside suburban community and models of utopian cities proposed by James Buckingham and Benjamin Richardson's Hygeia. This led to him publishing



Figure 3.1: OS map of the existing location of Welwyn Garden City, 1881. The approximate position of the site is circled in red.

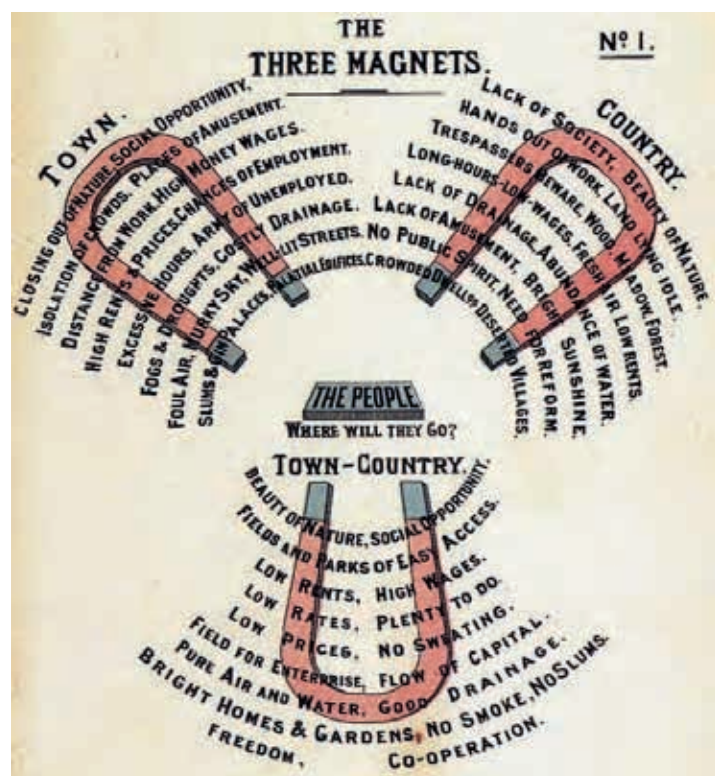


Figure 3.2: Three Magnets- Garden cities of tomorrow, 1898.

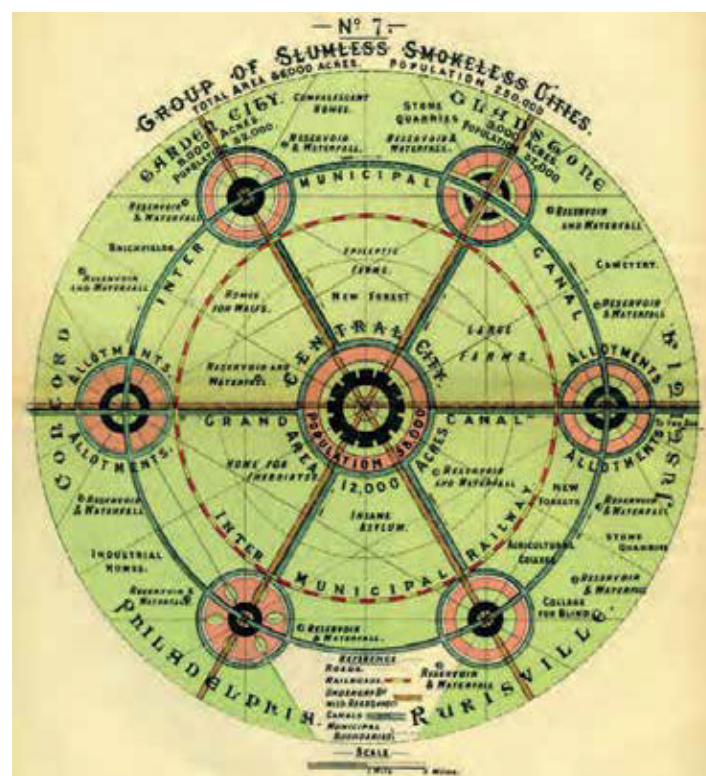


Figure 3.3: Diagram from *Garden Cities of To-morrow*, 1992.

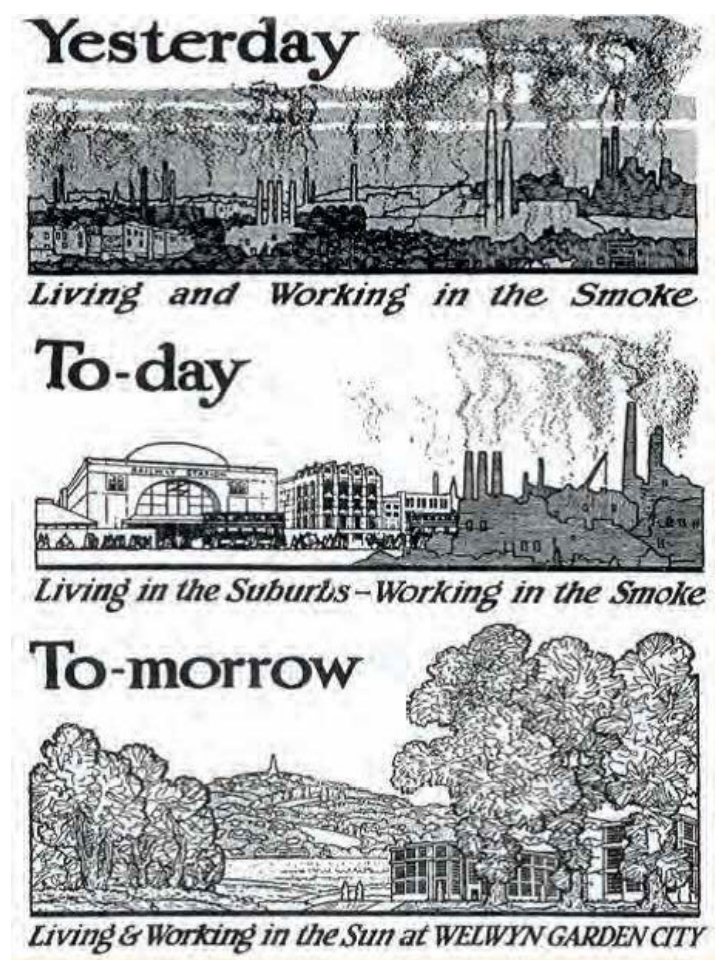


Figure 3.4: Advertisement for WGC, 1920.

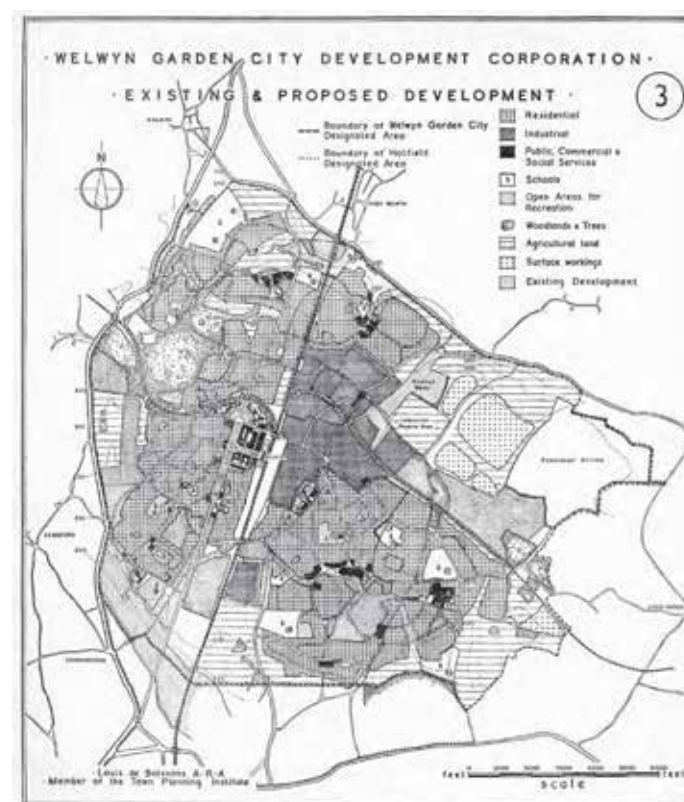


Figure 3.5: Welwyn Garden City Development Corporation, 1949.

'To-morrow: A Peaceful Path of Real Reform" in 1898 which set out the broad concept of his 'three magnets' diagram. This diagram attempts to answer the question 'Where will people go?' where he lists the choices:

- The town for work, high wages, stress, foul air, social opportunities and access to culture
- The country for rest and contact with nature, health, food, boredom, lack of society, deserted villages; and
- Town-country for the beauty of nature, low rents, employment opportunities, fresh air, bright homes and gardens, freedom, co-operation.

3.7 From 1899, Howard founded the Garden Cities Association (now known as the Town and Country Planning Association) in order to bring forward the garden cities movement. Its official definition is stated as: 'a town designed for healthy living and industry of a size that makes possible a full measure of social life but not larger, surrounded by a rural belt; the whole of the land being in public ownership, or held in trust for the community'. The essential principles of the Garden City are summarized:

- **Planned dispersal:** Organised planned dispersal of industries and people to towns of sufficient size to provide the services, variety of occupations, and level of culture needed by a balanced cross-section of modern society.
- **Limit of town size:** (to around 30,000) so that their inhabitants may live near work, shops and other facilities and within walking distance of the surrounding countryside. New garden cities to be built once the population limit reached.
- **Low density:** Spaciousness of layout providing for houses with private gardens, enough space for schools and other functional purposes, and pleasant parks and parkways.
- **Town and country relationship:** A close town and country relationship with a firm definition of the town boundary and a large area around it reserved permanently for agriculture, providing a ready market for farmers and access to the countryside for residents.

- Planning control: Pre-planning of the whole town framework, including functional zoning and roads, the setting of maximum densities, the control of building as to quality and design while allowing for individual variety, skillful planting and landscape design.
- Holistic approach to neighbourhoods: The creation of neighbourhoods as developmental and social entities.
- Unified land ownership: with the whole site, including the agricultural zone, under quasi-public or trust ownership; enabling planning control through leasehold covenants, and capturing land value for the community.
- Progressive municipal and co-operative enterprise: without abandoning general individual freedom in industry and trade.

3.8 The first Garden City was established in 1902 at Letchworth between the old village of Letchworth and Baldock in Hertfordshire, comprising 3818 acres and designed by Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker. This was followed by Hampstead Garden Suburb in 1906, whose master plan was prepared by Barry Parker and Sir Raymond Unwin. The predominant architectural style of these developments was Arts and Crafts with some Art Deco buildings developed later.

1920-30s

3.9 The design of Welwyn Garden city was original planned to be a radius of 1 mile which contained enough space for 50,000 people and allowing sufficient space for industry, commerce and recreation. The town was planned to be small enough to be within 15 minutes' walk of both the Town Centre and open country. Its shape was dictated by the train station and the industrial area adjoining the railway lines for easy provision of sidings. Louis de Soissons was appointed in 1920 as architect of the scheme. This included a commercial and civic centre which grew from The Campus, east of Parkway. These buildings were designed with a uniform scale, materiality and design on either side of Howardsgate, and most commonly presented a simplified Georgian style.

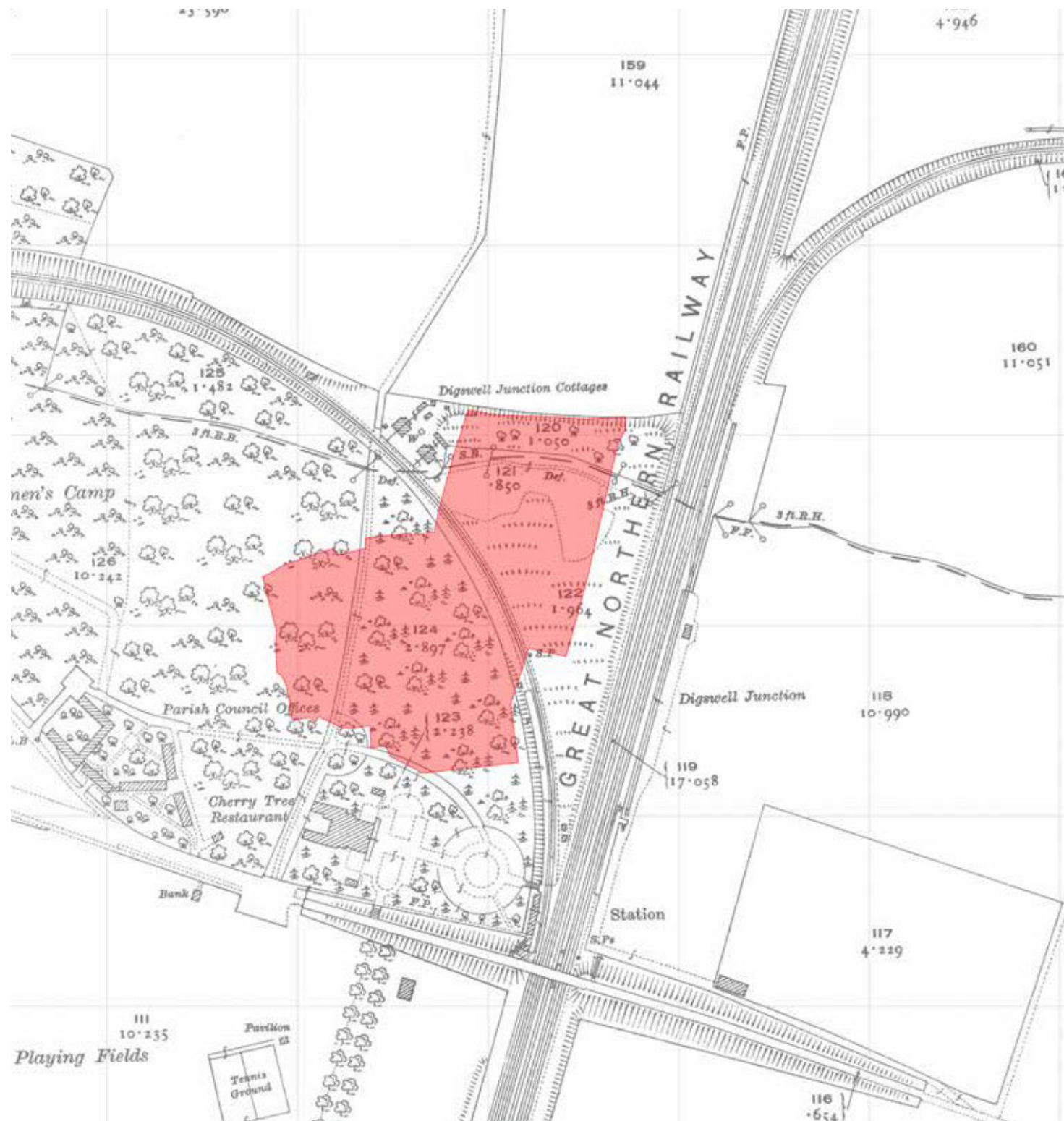


Figure 3.6: 1923 OS map. The approximate location of outlined in red.

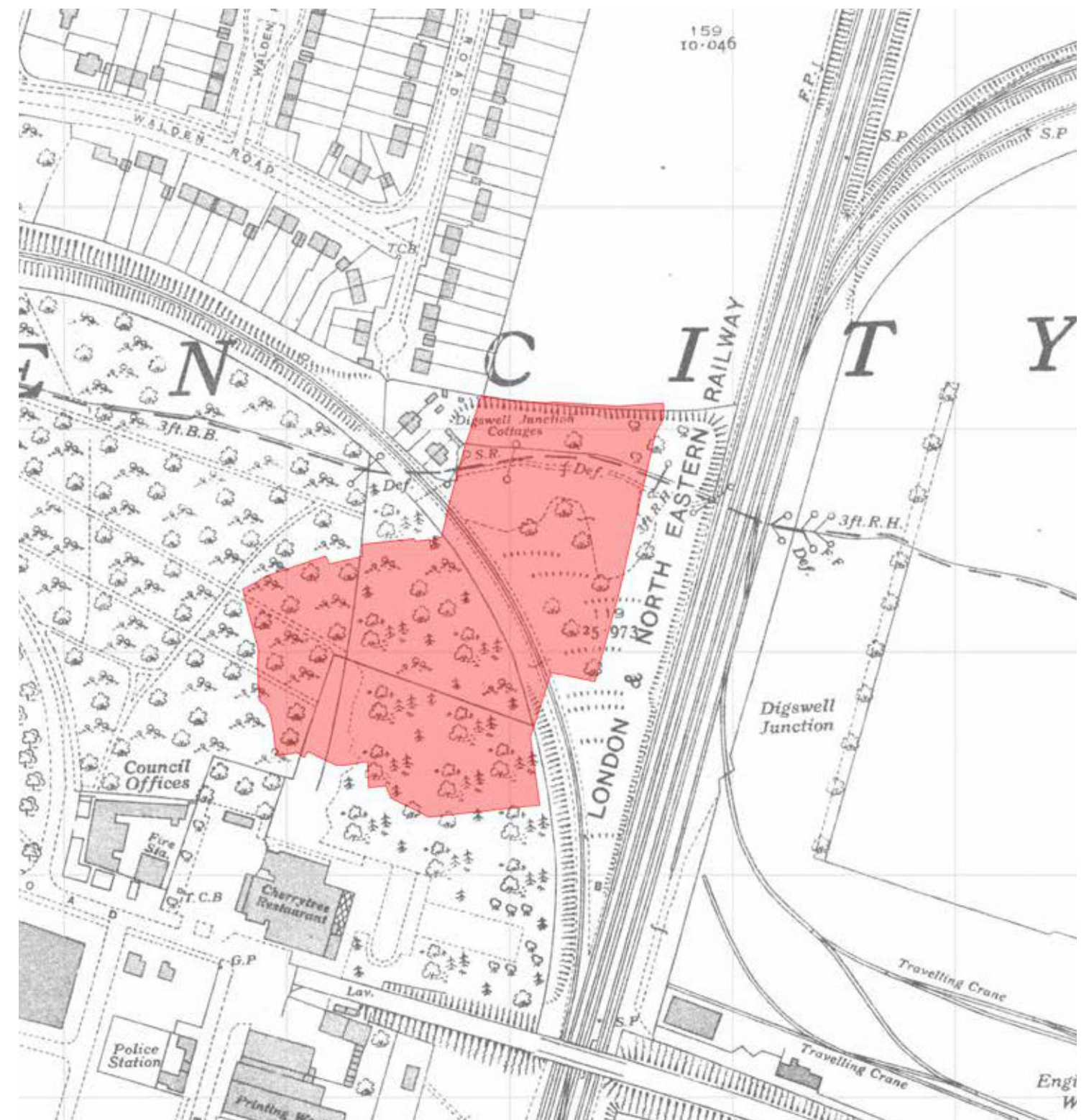


Figure 3.7: 1938 OS map. The approximate location of outlined in red.

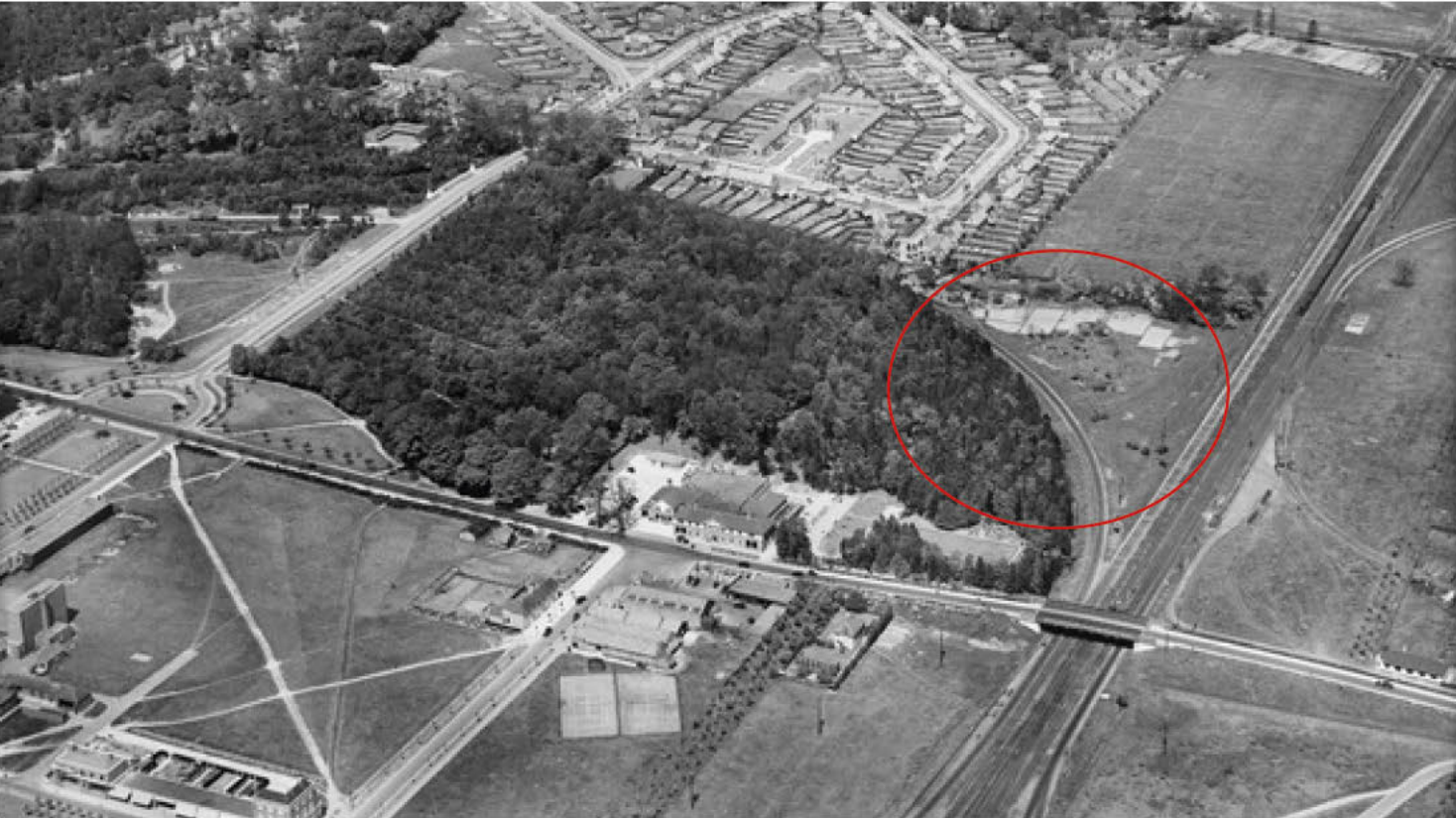


Figure 3.8: 1935: Digswell Junction and the Cherry Tree Restaurant, Welwyn Garden City. Britain From Above The approximate location of outlined in red.

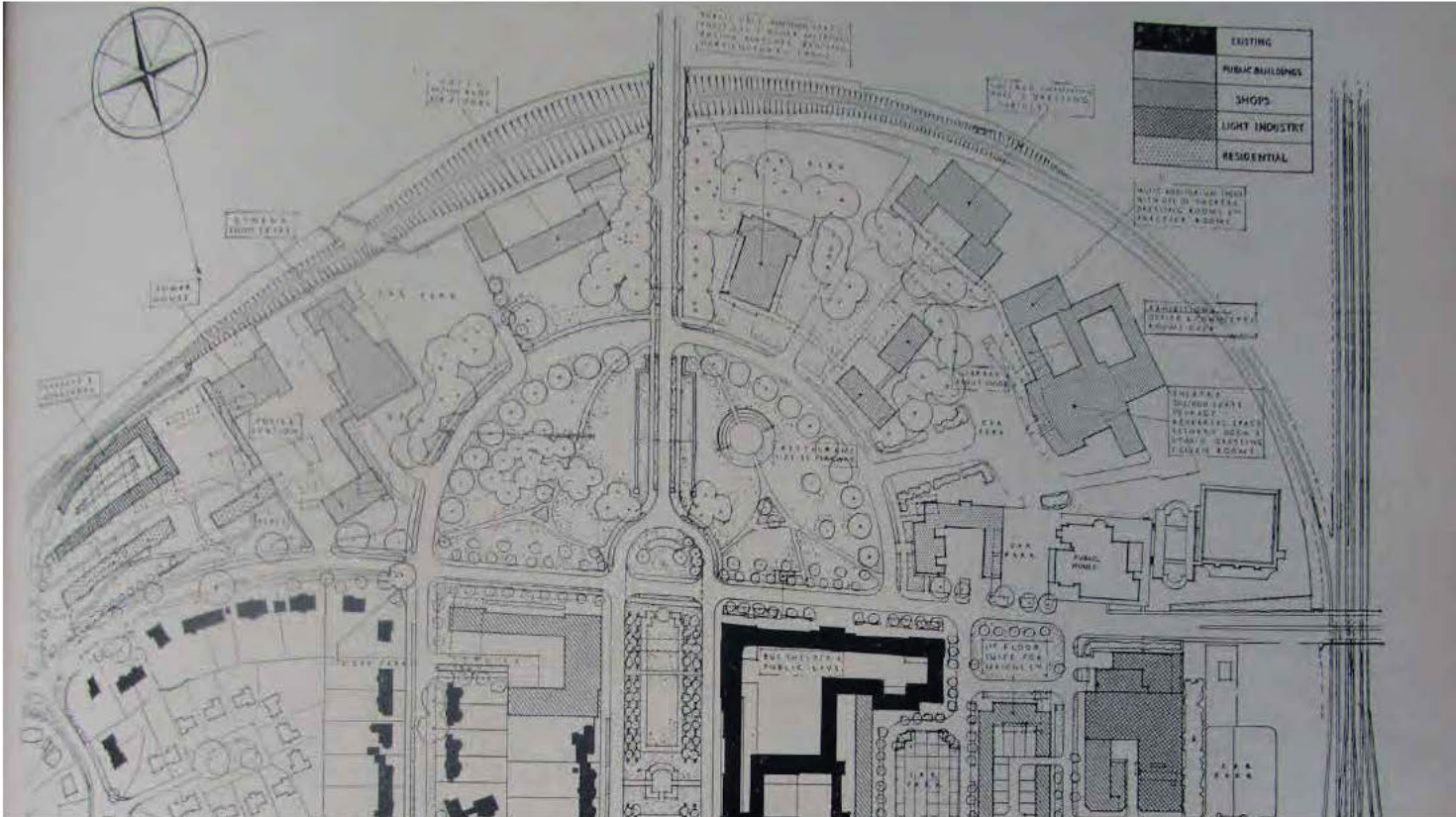


Figure 3.9: 1951: Proposed development plan for the Town Centre . Note the road around the exedra was not proposed to be linked to the main north-south Digswell Road.



Figure 3.10: 1949 Aerial photo looking south along Parkway Britain From Above. The approximate location of outlined in red.



Figure 3.11: 1962: The re-developed Campus area with a new ringroad around the central green space.

Other early development in this area included two churches, YWCA hostel, The Cherry Tree social club and new entrance to the station. These were built by a number of architects including C.G.Elsom, H.Stone and Howardsgate Developments.

- 3.10 Industrial uses were also developed in the early 1920 as part of Welwyn Garden City. These included purpose built factories for Dawney's, Shredded Wheat and Welwyn Cinema Studios and a number of Sectional Factory Units built in Bridge Road East, Broadwater Road, Hyde Way and Tewin Road.

- 3.11 The residential neighbourhoods constructed within Welwyn Garden City aimed at providing three bedroom houses with internal bathrooms and gardens for the working classes, with a density of less than 12 houses per acre. By 1922, the first residential houses were sold on Handside Lane, Brookwood Lane and High Oaks Road. Architects who designed some of the first residential buildings included Allen Foxley, Hannell & James, Clapham Lander, Barry Parker, Arthur Kenyon, William & Cox, Bennett & Bidwell, C J Kay, Berkeley Wills and Mauger & Tanner. Due to this variety of architects it was considered that there was a lack of unity. This led to an overall designing of a consistent scheme in subsequent development, carried out by different builders. Further, there is no evidence to suggest that de Soissons regarded his buildings as immutable, and indeed many of his houses had already been demolished or altered and extended by the 1930s. By concentrating the initial development of the housing in the south-west area, it ensured that it was virtually complete by the end of the 1930s.

1940s

- 3.12 The development of the town centre had been paused by World War II so that, by the end of the war, the population of WGC was around 18,500. Since this was short of Howard's target population of 50,000, it was identified as a satellite town. In 1947, a new masterplan was prepared by de Soissons for the WGC Ltd as the town's area was

increased to accommodate a growing population after the war, which led to the company purchasing more land.

- 3.13 Proposed Development included major extensions to the existing residential development to the northwest and southeast and the construction of new residential houses to the northeast and also of cultural, educational and recreational facilities in the town centre. The industrial areas were also extended to the north east and south east of the town which were used for warehousing, coal merchants, builders' yards and small service undertakings. The road network was updated including amendments to some existing road junctions and improvements and widening to bridges crossing the railway, in addition to a new major north to south industrial traffic route.

1950s

- 3.14 At the end of March 1950, the population of the Welwyn Garden City was 18,500 but continued to gradually grow within this period, following the 1949 masterplan principles. Notable elements of construction include the completion of the new bank building and the development of Wigmores North and South with a car park. The public library on The Campus was commenced and several more churches planned. It was also during this time that a significant amount of the space began to be given over to car parking.

1960-70s

- 3.15 In 1966 the Development Corporation ceased to exist and the Commission for the New Towns took over the development and management of the garden city. Although the town was considered substantially completed when handed over in 1966, in practice, the commission had to carry out a good deal of development work in the years of its stewardship.



Figure 3.12: 1961 OS map. The approximate location of outlined in red.



Figure 3.13: 1974 OS map. The approximate location of outlined in red.

3.16 In order to combat traffic problems, particularly around parking, several new plans for the town centre were produced. This included a scheme to create large car parks under The Campus and another two-level car park for 380 cars on the east side of The Campus. Other development during this time included the College of Further Education (Oaklands College) and library, which are constructed in a modernist style. Campus West complex redevelopment opened in 1975, comprising a banqueting suite, 400 seat theatre and new library, designed by Richard Shepard Robson & Partners. The cinema was demolished in 1980s and the Campus West site used to accommodate this. The wooded area of Sherrardspark, between The Campus and the rail tracks, was lost by the 1970s, which impacted the connection between nature and the town centre.

1990s- present

3.17 Into 1992 the Howard Centre, an indoor shopping mall, was constructed within the town centre. Today the town centre of Welwyn Garden City provides a minor sub-regional centre within Hertfordshire. The industrial area is undergoing transformation into a mixed use part of the town, which includes the former Shredded Wheat Factory site, a scheme between 5 to 9 storeys and a net density of 201 units per hectare. The residential areas of the town are continuing to expand. One key part of this is the Panshanger Site, formerly used as an aerodrome, 2km north-east of the town centre, for residential units up to 40 dwellings per hectare, with some lower density along the southern and eastern boundaries.

The Site

3.18 OS Mapping from the late 19th century shows the site largely absent of built form and divided in two by a hard boundary of train lines running north west to south east through the site. At this time, the site comprised woodland to the southwest, which formed part of Sherreskspark Wood. The southern and southeastern section of the site is shown in agricultural use. Meanwhile the land to the north of the rail tracks is rough grassland with several trees and a public right of way located through this. The northern boundary is further defined by a sloped edge.

3.19 By 1923 the tree covered area of Sherreskspark Wood was extended to the east, so that the southern and south eastern area of the site became tree covered. The area to the north of the rail tracks remained free of built form during this time. Slightly later in the 20th century, the 1938 OS mapping shows that the southern portion of the site was divided further into separate ownerships. The south and south eastern area of the site became the grounds of the Cherry Tree restaurant, whilst the south west area formed part of the landscaped park to the east of The Campus.

3.20 By 1961 The public right of way to the north of the site was removed and the land form surrounding it appears to have changed. Two raised pieces of ground are shown in OS mapping, to the north of the site and at the centre of this northern section. The Government Offices were constructed along The Campus which partially fell into the site boundary, to the south west. By 1974 the Government Offices were demolished and the entire southern section of the site redeveloped as a two level car park with landscape buffer to the east. At this time the north of the site appears to have been mostly levelled and the existing trees removed.

3.21 OS mapping from 1994 shows train lines which divided the site were removed and the site was combined with one single use as car parking, with the exception of the north west corner of the site, which remains part of Junction Cottages to the west, and a buffer zone to the north, bounding with the residential houses along Gresley Close with the northern portion of the site hardscaped. The site remains largely the same since, as there have been no substantial changes.

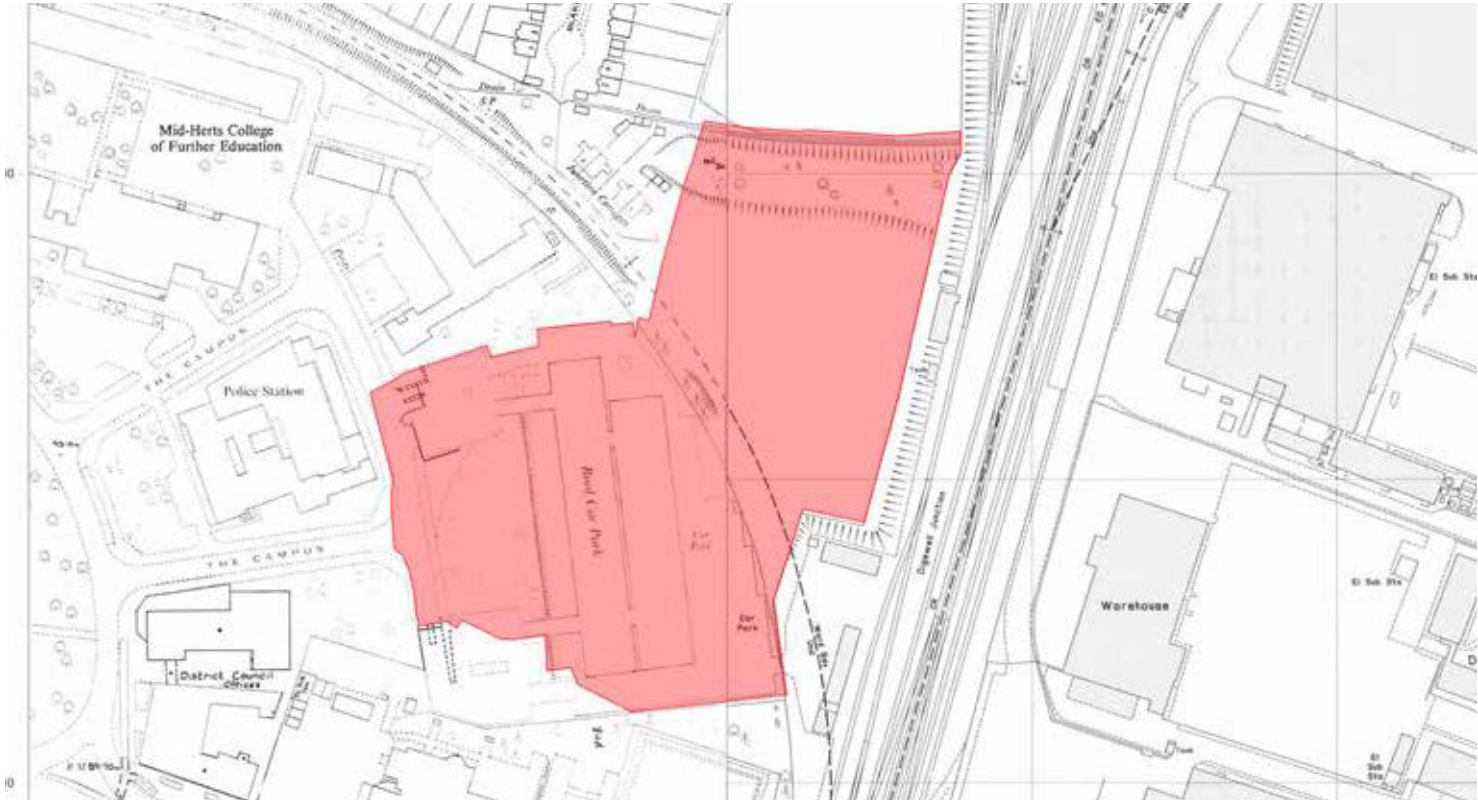


Figure 3.12: 1986 OS map. The approximate location of outlined in red.

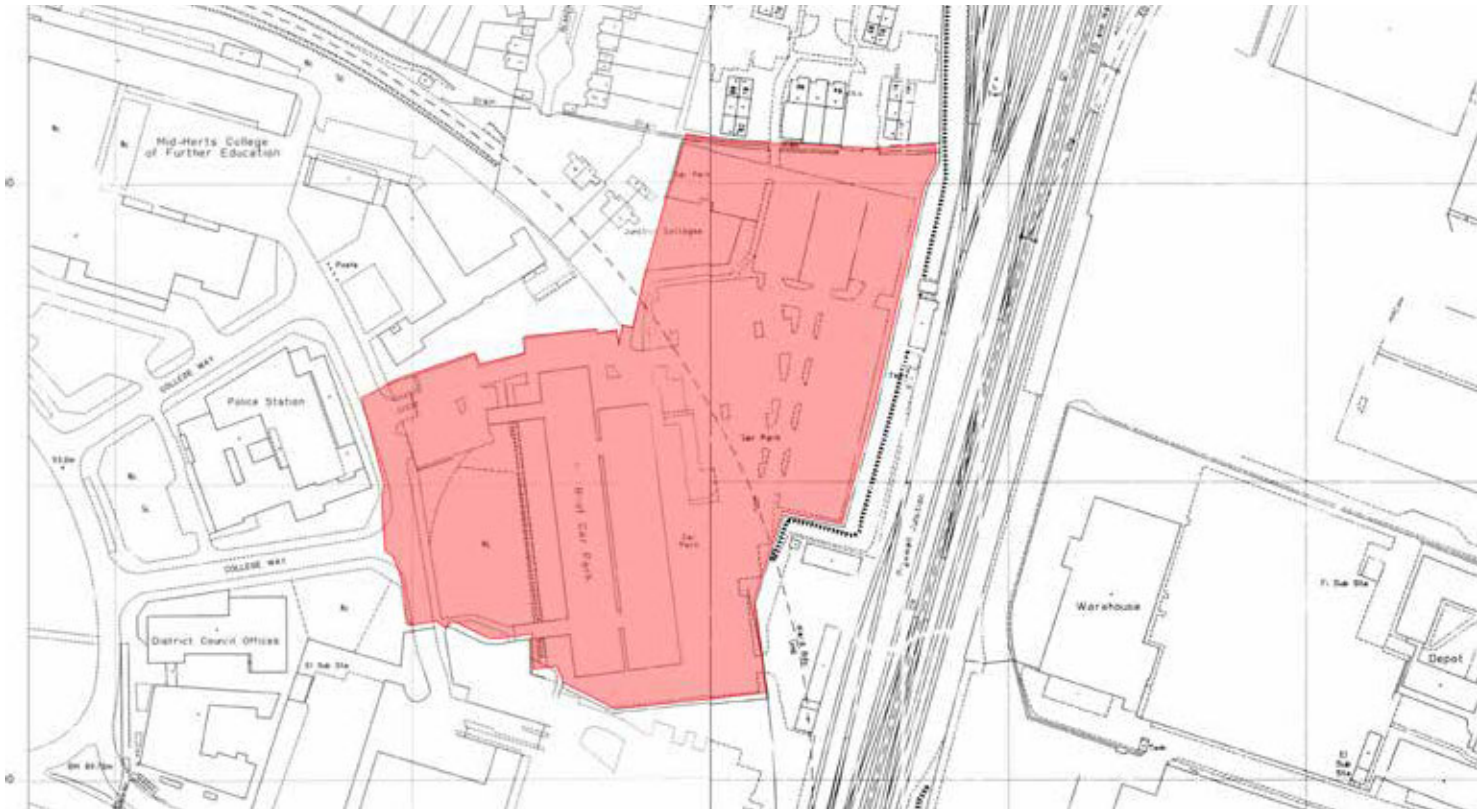


Figure 3.13: 1989-1994 OS map. The approximate location of outlined in red.

4. Site and Surroundings

Introduction

- 4.1 This section presents a description of the site. These are accompanied by a selection of photographs that help illustrate its character and qualities. The information gathered presents the baseline conditions against which the visual assessments are made, following the methodology (section 2).

The site

- 4.2 The site at Campus East is located within Welwyn Garden City, sitting partially within the town centre and approximately 350m south east of Welwyn Garden City Train Station. The site boundary comprises an area of hardstanding, currently used as a car park, including a two storey podium car park. The topography of the site is relatively flat which allows long views across and presents a bland and featureless character. The main vehicle access to the site is to the south western boundary, from College Way. There is an additional pedestrian route from the north.
- 4.3 The site is bounded to the north by the rear gardens of houses along Gresley Road, with a tree lined buffer between. A train line runs north-south to the west of the site which presents a hard boundary, in addition to a linear area of hardstanding associated with the railway. To the south are large retail buildings currently being used by Waitrose and its associated two storey car park. To the west of the site is College Way, including Peel Court, a four storey residential apartment block, and Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council offices at two storeys plus dormer. Each of these boundaries to the site turns away from the site, which results in a hostile edge.

- 4.4 Though the majority of the site is occupied by hardstanding, however there is some greenery within this. A grassed bank with tree coverage is located to the west of the site, preventing direct views onto the two storey car park from the western approach. In addition, cluster of trees are located at the centre of the site and around the boundary of the car park and several more interspersed within the open space. This somewhat softens the appearance of the site, breaks up the space and adds visual interest.

- 4.5 The built form of the site comprises the two level car park to the south west with rows of garages at ground levels and open parking deck on the first floor. Access to the upper level is via a slope to the west. The appearance of the car park is plain and lacks any architectural interest.

- 4.6 The site does not contain any designated or non-designated heritage assets, however the southern portion of the site is located within Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area. It is also in close proximity to a number of Key Unlisted Buildings, including The Council Offices, Original Cherry Tree Building and Welwyn Stores building. These are set out in detail in section 6 of this report.

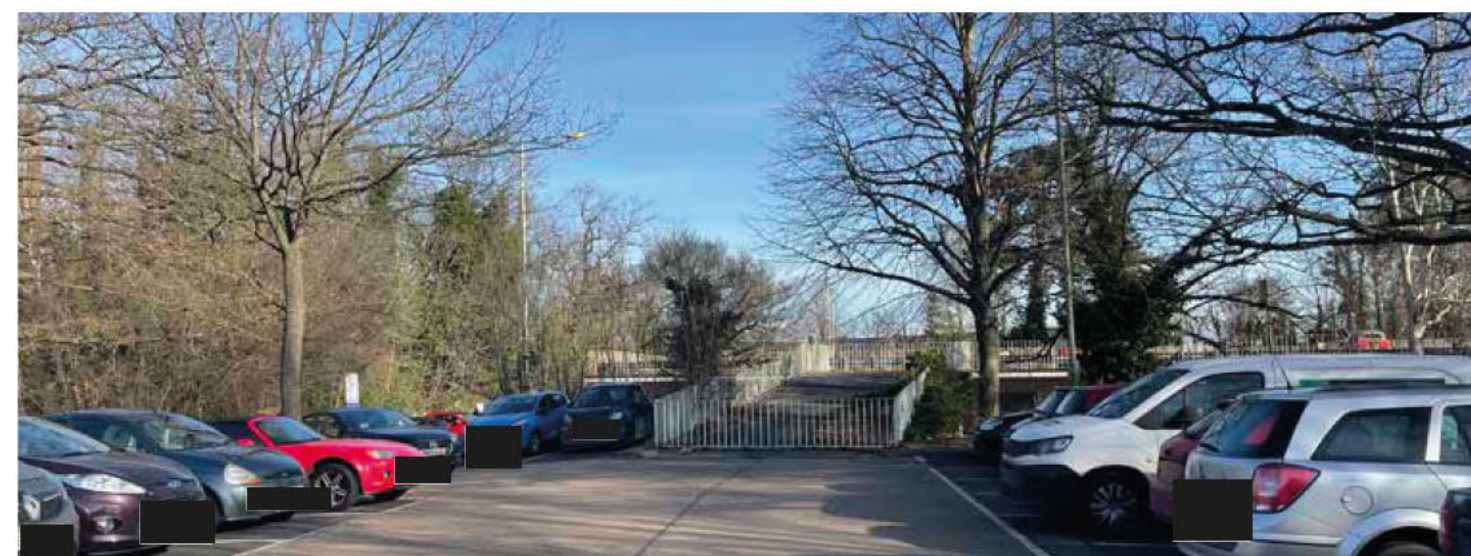


Figure 4.1: The site - hardstanding and entrance to first level car parking, looking east from the west of the site.



Figure 4.2: The Site- looking south to the west of two storey carparking



Figure 4.3: The Site .

The surrounding context

- 4.7 The townscape in the immediate context of the site exhibits a mixed character and urban grain, comprising mainly residential uses to the south, retail uses to the south, educational and civic buildings to the west and industrial uses to the east. Within this, there are some notable buildings which diversify the townscape and provide landmarks and variation.
- 4.8 Regarding landscape, the area surrounding the site has a generous amount of open space which was an important part of the Garden City movement. The landscaping has a formal arrangement including some striking street trees, some of which were originally part of Sherrards park and those which were planted as part of the Welwyn Garden City development. The green space within Welwyn provides a defining feature of the townscape and reinforces the principles of a Garden City. Despite the number of some open spaces and their provision of green enmity and feeling of spaciousness within the town, some including those surrounding The Campus, are undefined and therefore underused.

The Campus Character Area

- 4.9 The site is located within an area surrounding The Campus, made up of varied, largely non-commercial, uses which are difficult to define. The area broadly acts as a buffer between the commercial uses to the south and residential uses to the north. It is poorly defined with buildings set in their varied plot sizes and areas of informal open space, which has led to a disjointed townscape contained by symmetrical road layout due to piecemeal development since the 1920s. The buildings surrounding The Campus generally have large footprints which contrast the residential character areas to the north and meet the scale of the surrounding road network and open spaces.
- 4.10 The buildings heights within the eastern side of The Campus are fairly uniform with the Oaklands College, Peel Court and District Council Offices all being of a similar scale. Contrastingly, the western side has more varied heights, the tallest of which is Campus West at five storeys. There is a lack of active edges within the area as building

frontages often do not face onto the adjacent road or pavements. In addition, the area has somewhat poor levels of pedestrian permeability as it is separated from the heavily trafficked Bridge Road which acts as a barrier to movement north to south of the towns centre. Pedestrian access to this area is assisted by an underpass under Bridge Road, however, this add a layout of isolation to the surrounding townscape. This creates a fairly hostile environment which is dominated by the influence of the car. This has negatively impacted this area of the town by eroding the planned formal, tight urban grain and introducing extensive areas of car parking and reduced pedestrian movement by the dominance of roads.

Eastern Industrial Character Area

- 4.11 The railway line, which divides the built environment, is an important feature in the immediate context of the site, acting as a hard barrier that shapes the character and streetscape of the local townscape. To the east of the rail tracks is an area of industrial uses and large retail units which have a mixed character. The majority of buildings comprise single and two storey, large plan warehouse units set around a gridded road network which is dominated by cars and lacks permeability. There are a number of areas of hardscaped car parking and distinct absence of green open space and street trees in comparison to the surrounding development within Welwyn Garden City.
- 4.12 Most notable are the striking Art Deco buildings, including the now-disused Shredded Wheat buildings, constructed in 1926. The white concrete silos provide a distinctive townscape feature in long views. There is much emerging development taking place within this area in which some industrial uses are being converted to residential. This includes the Wheat Quarter which is planned to be developed with residential buildings up to 8 storeys.
- Residential Character Area
- 4.13 Immediately to the north of the Site is a residential neighbourhood comprising two storey detached houses. Their low density and the leafy setting establishes a peaceful character away from the town centre. Some of these fall within Welwyn

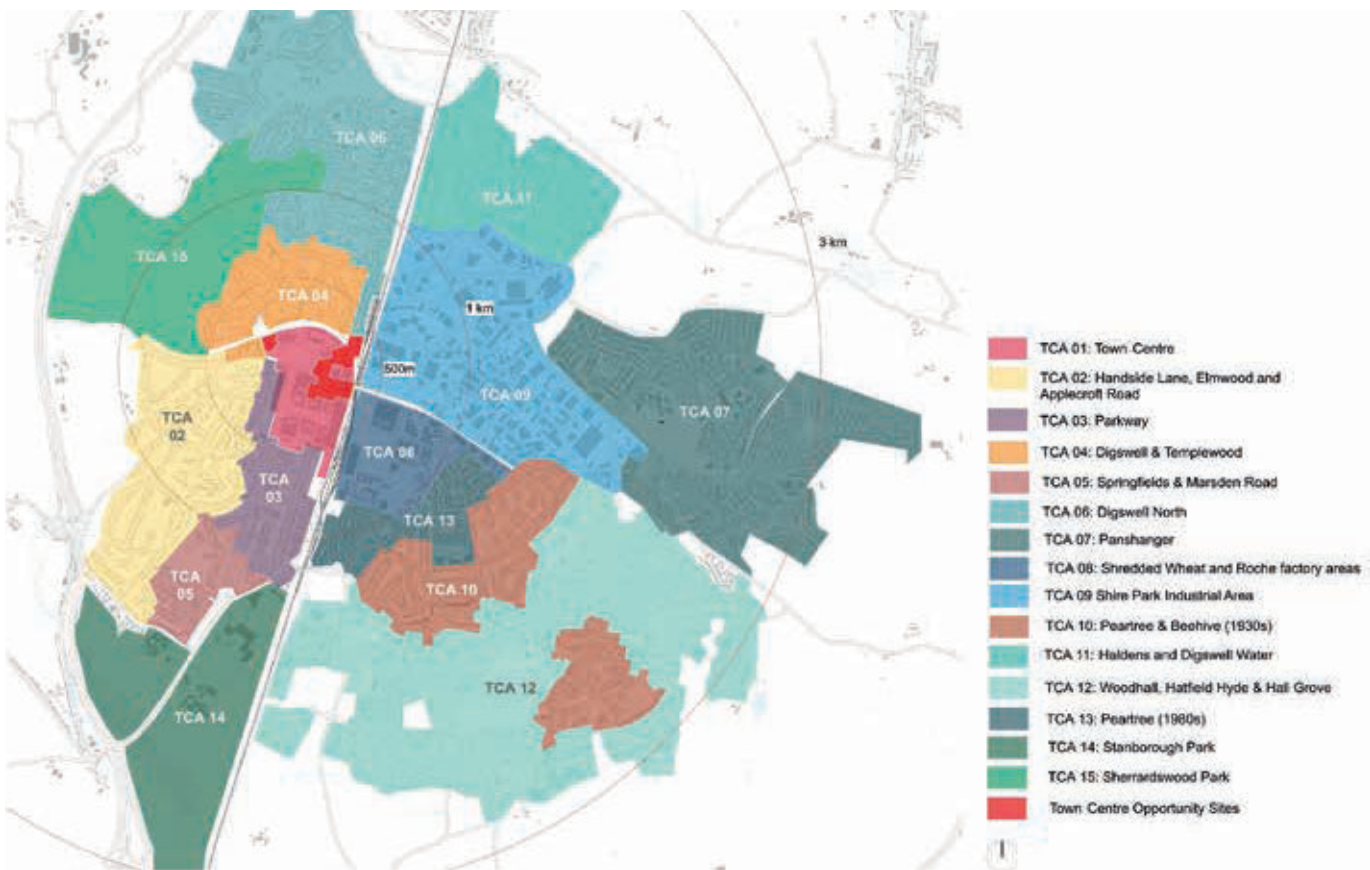


Figure 4.4: Townscape Character Areas (TCAs) as identified across WGC (BA, March 2020).



Figure 4.5: Bridge Road, junction with The Campus, looking north.



Figure 4.6: College Way, looking north east.

Garden City Conservation Area and formed part of the original development and typically have Arts and crafts style, with steeply tiled roofs and broad chimney breasts. Others have a more neo-Georgian appearance, with architectural features such as columns and Georgian type sashes. In addition, few have an Art Deco design, however, these are rarer and have been later altered which has eroded this character. Within the residential area there is variation between many of the individual houses, with some elements of symmetry and rhythm.

- 4.14 Some of the buildings within this area north of the site are of high quality, particularly those which were constructed as part of the early development of the town, for example along The Orchard. These include low-lying neo-Georgian terraces with steep pan-tiled roofs and through-passages. The group value of these houses becomes especially attractive in this residential area, north of the site. More recent development in this area however tends to have a plainer and more homogenous design which lacks distinctiveness, such as the houses along Gresley Close. Additionally, there is somewhat poor pedestrian permeability within the area, both between the streets and to the neighbour areas due to the number of cul-de-sacs and the street layout.

Town Centre Character Area

- 4.15 To the south, Welwyn Garden City town centre comprises a group of buildings based on the Georgian tradition, designed to reflect classical proportions and principles while accommodating modern demands. These buildings have a predominantly commercial use, with active ground floor frontages, and were mostly constructed in the 1920s and 1930s. The buildings within this area are generally of a larger scale, massing and height, however, are still relatively low, up to 5 storeys. The taller elements of the massing are located on corner plots, marking the end of these streets. The formal grid pattern which de Soissons originally planned is clear within the town centre, despite some later alterations in the 20th century due to increased vehicle requirements and growth. This grid network becomes looser to the north

of the town centre, toward the site, where more modern developments are located. There is a good level of connectivity within this area, including the attractive green spaces around Parkway and Howardsgate, helping navigation around this area.

- 4.16 The buildings within this character area have a fairly homogenous design with a consistent palette of materials reflecting the local tradition. These include red sand-faced bricks produced at the company's brickworks, imported clay pan roofing tiles, large, white painted timber sash windows, and simple, white painted timber fascia boards and shopfronts. Buildings tend to have a horizontal form, whilst mansard roofs and dormer windows feature strongly. Decorative elements include pilasters and pediments to building entrances, together with occasional stucco detailing.



Figure 4.7: Campus West along Digswell Road, junction with the Campus, looking west.



Figure 4.9: The Howard Centre from public gardens along Howardsgate, looking south.



Figure 4.11: Mixed use retail buildings along Howardsgate, looking north.



Figure 4.8: Detached houses along Parkway, looking north. Some now converted to office use.



Figure 4.10: View from outside The Howard Centre, looking west along Howardsgate.



Figure 4.12: Two storey detached houses along Gresley Close.



Figure 4.13: Arts and Crafts style, detached two storeys homes along Digswell Rise.



Figure 4.14: Digswell Lodge cul-de-sac along Digswell Rise, looking south.



Figure 4.15: Two storey detached houses along Gresley Close.



Figure 4.16: Arts and Crafts houses along Blakemere Road, looking east.



Figure 4.17: Rail tracks, industrial buildings and emerging taller development from Bridge Road, looking south east.

5. Proposed Development

Introduction

- 5.1 This chapter offers a description of the proposed development, with particular emphasis on how townscape-related considerations have informed the final design, as well as an independent assessment of the design quality proposed. To illustrate this, only a small selection of images and plans produced by Saunders Architects are included. For a full description of the proposed development the reader is referred to the Design and Access Statement (DAS) and the plans submitted as part of this planning application.

- 5.2 The proposals comprise: 'Demolition of all existing buildings and structures followed by the erection of five buildings to provide 313 residential units (Use Class C3) including 30% affordable housing, resident's car parking, cycle storage, refuse storage, hard and soft landscaping, external lighting, drainage, infrastructure and all associated works'.

Massing, scale and form

- 5.3 The proposed development comprises of 5 blocks, namely Blocks A, B, C, D, E and F, G and H, arranged to the perimeter of the site, allowing the creation of a central landscaped space between blocks. Each of these blocks has a varied plan and massing which has been influenced by their situation within the masterplan site. Block A is located to the south of the site and comprises a perimeter block building with an internal courtyard. This block will introduce five storeys from ground level with an additional partial mansard floor and a partial basement level. The northern elevation of the block steps outward

at the two taller elements of the block. Whilst, along the eastern elevation of the building, the basement level carparking is partially visible due to the falling topography of the site which slopes downwards to the east. The roof form across this block comprises a setback mansard form, containing partial mansard accommodation with dormer windows. The mansard form is a reflection of the building form and typology in the area.

- 5.4 Block B is located to the north of Block A and is split into two components, which also front onto this new extension of Collage Way and allow vehicles to pass between the B blocks via an new internal road which loops around the perimeter of the site. Both elements of Block B are five storeys in height. The eastern elevation of the eastern element of Block B steps in and out with a flat roofline, whilst the eastern elevation of the western element of Block B also steps out to the end of the façade but has a continuous dormer roofline.

- 5.5 Block C and D comprise of one rectangular plan building located toward the north of the site at three storeys in height and fronting onto the internal landscaped space. Blocks E and F are formed by on L-shaped plan block, at five storeys in height, stepping down to four storeys to the northern element of Block E. Finally Blocks G and H sit to the east of the site, wrapping around the corner of the site and establishing an end to the internal road which provides a continuation of the existing Collage Way into the site.



Figure 5.1: Proposed ground floor layout plan. Source: Architect's DAS.



Figure 5.2: Proposed character lan showing the blocks. Source: Architect's DAS.

Façade articulation and materiality

- 5.7 The architectural expression of the proposed blocks presents robust materials and a simple palette of mixed red brick. The blocks are further articulated by brick detailing. Sash windows are used across the blocks. The facades of the blocks step in and out, whilst respecting the continuous build line. The facades have been further modulated by Ribbed brickwork. The mansard roof level on Block A will feature dormer windows.
- 5.8 The proposed development features brick as a primary material in response to its predominance in the local context. A range of brick details have been applied to the different blocks to ensure that the masterplan creates, in a sympathetic manner, a dynamic and varied townscape. Fenestration patterns and styles also contribute to creating unique identities to each block, whilst adding depth and texture to the elevations. Although distinctiveness of blocks is enhanced, a singular architectural language is maintained throughout the scheme, ensuring that the overall composition remains legible and coherent.

Public realm and landscaping

- 5.9 The proposed development includes a comprehensive landscape strategy, which is predominantly focused along the central space between blocks B, C, D, E, F, G, H. As described earlier in this report, the existing site is largely absent of greenery, excluding several informal clusters of trees. The proposed scheme includes a shared public/ private space, providing play, secluded seating areas and a clear pedestrian/ cycle route. Some existing trees will be retained on the site, most notably the cluster of trees to the south west of the site. In addition new trees and other soft landscaping will be introduced on the site, particularly along the central green space. The perimeter of the site will be predominantly hardscaped and utilised for parking, separating the internal courtyard space from cars and principle circulation roads around the blocks.

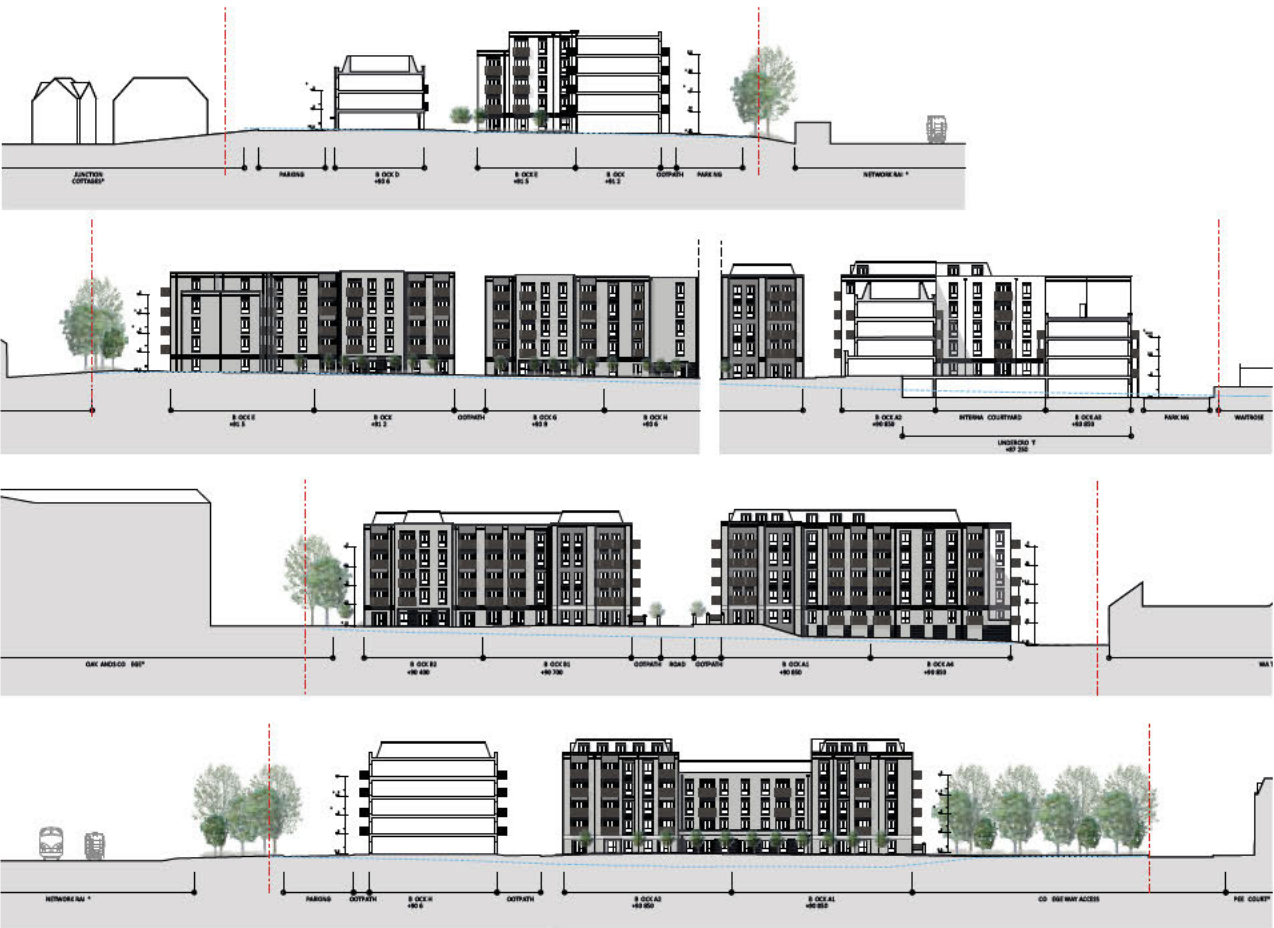


Figure 5.3: Proposed development sections. Source: Architect's DAS.



Figure 5.5: Elevation and entrance to Block G. Source: Architect's DAS.

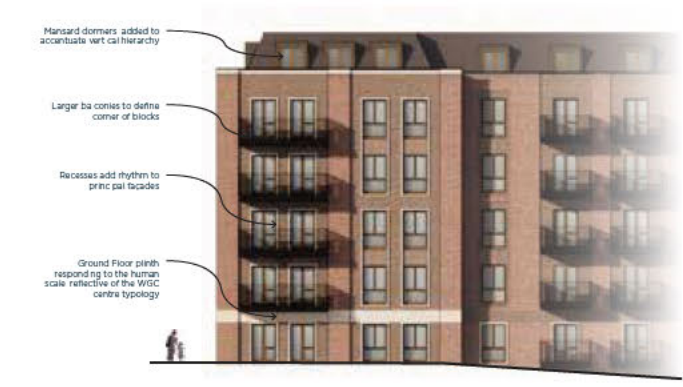


Figure 5.6: Elevation and feature corner of Block A. Source: Architect's DAS.

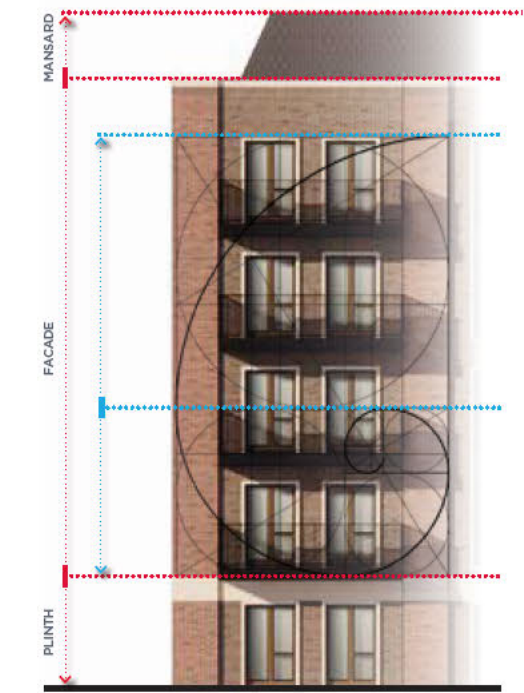


Figure 5.4: Typical bay elevation Blocks A and B. Source: Architect's DAS.



Figure 5.7: Elevation and entrance to Block C. Source: Architect's DAS.

Assessment of design quality

Massing, scale and form

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| 5.10 | The proposed development has been the result of a long and through process of design development, consultations with the council, and consultation with local members groups. These discussions considered a range of constraints and opportunities that have defined its scale, mass, form and expression. This approach has led to in a coherent scheme that responds well to the existing context through its expression and form, whilst also becoming a distinctive element in the townscape through elements of more contemporary expression. | of the site are of a lower scale and therefore, building heights to the north of the site respond to these heights, including blocks C and D and the north westerly wing of D. This delivers a logical and sensitive stepping down toward the residential streets, revealing a careful understanding of the townscape sensitivities of the surrounding context. | patterns and balconies with a variety of treatments seen throughout the facades also contribute to texturizing the buildings, creating visually dynamic elevations. |
| Façade articulation and materiality | | | |
| 5.11 | The form, mass and scale of the proposed blocks has considered the effects of the proposed development's presence in the immediate and wider townscape, where blocks have been designed with staggered heights, to respond to the more sensitive elements of the surrounding context, including the lower neighbourhoods of Blakemere Road and Gresley Close to the north. The varied roofline, with a mix of flat and mansard roofs, increases variation within the site and reflects the existing built form within Welwyn town centre, including within Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area and non-designated heritage assets along Bridge Road. The existing absence of built form on the site creates a fragmented townscape which is incongruous with the surrounding formal arrangement of the town and is of very poor quality. The proposed layout of the blocks further increases the legibility of this area and navigation from College Way, northwards to Gresley Close. This allows for a more clearly defined and safer route between the town centre and residential neighbourhoods due to the formal, active edges. | 5.13 The elevational approach is cohesive throughout the masterplan and presents a residential character in response to the site's transitional context between Welwyn Garden City town centre and residential neighbourhoods to the south. There are shared characteristics between each proposed block within the site that results in a coherent masterplan. Between each there is variation in brick detailing and window arrangement, which helps to visually mitigate the quantum of development and potential coalescence of blocks. | 5.16 The proposed central landscape space has been carefully designed to provide adequate and attractive amenity space, which is easily accessible to both residents and visitors using the north-south connection from College Way to Gresley Close. The retention of the trees and landscaping to the south west of the site acts as a buffer to the site and limits intervisibility from along College Way and The Campus. The proposal brings this greenery into the site, connecting this space to the site and reflecting the existing townscape character within this part of Welwyn. Further, the increase of soft landscaping meets the Garden City principle to provide generous green space. In addition to the visual quality of the soft landscaping, which is an improvement to the existing poor quality hardscape at present, this further contributes to the sustainability of the proposal by increasing the biodiversity and attracting pollinators. |
| 5.12 | The tallest blocks proposed within the masterplan area, blocks A and B, are located to the entrance of the site. This introduces a distinctive entrance to the site and continuation of College Way and formal street layout which exists within this area. Remaining taller blocks proposed within the site are located adjacent to the railway, blocks E, F, G and H, a less sensitive area which has lower levels of intervisibility with the surrounding townscape. The buildings located to the south and south west | 5.14 The palette of mixed red brick is reflective of the construction materials within the surrounding townscape, particularly the buildings within the town centre and surrounding suburban residential development, which were designed and constructed as part of the initial design of Welwyn Garden City and located within Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area. The articulation of the building is textured which helps to emphasise the lower levels of the scheme. The materiality and articulation of the block is cohesive across the masterplan and presents a connection with the commercial and residential characters within the surrounding townscape context. The framing of the windows across the façades, emphasises the vertical proportions of the building and exhibits a more elegant silhouette. Sash windows correspond with those found elsewhere within the conservation area | 5.17 By setting the parking and circulation spaces to the rear of the blocks, this reduces the visual impact of these less attractive spaces by placing them away from the principle and higher footfall areas of the site. |
| | 5.15 Through a sensitive choice of materials, that celebrate the historical materiality in the context, the proposed development interacts in a responsive manner with the immediate and wider townscape. Furthermore, the depth created by the fenestration | 5.18 Overall, the landscaping strategy provides a series of functional and comfortable amenity spaces that contribute to the residential character of the proposed development, complementing its built form. These spaces have carefully been allocated in between the blocks and provide areas for playspace, communal gardens, seating areas and spaces for recreation, amongst generous planting and trees that encourage privacy and soften the edges of the residential blocks. The proposed landscaping strategy also considers the site's access constraints and the requirement for parking and circulation. | 5.19 The consultants' independent assessment is that this is a well-judged design of high quality, which achieves the desired outcomes in a site, responding positively to the surrounding existing historic context of Welwyn Garden City. The proposal will be a beneficial addition and extension to the town's exiting residential homes, promoting visual amenity through its architectural expression and improving legibility of the streetscape a result of its scale, mass and form. |

6. Heritage Assessment

- 6.1

This section considers the effects of the proposed development on built heritage assets, including conservation areas, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens and non-designated heritage assets, such as locally listed buildings of merit. The assessments provided here are based on the methodology presented in section 2.0, which is not repeated here.
- 6.2

A heritage asset may be defined as a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape positively identified as having a degree of importance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage assets include designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing). The NPPF defines the importance of a heritage asset as “The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.” The NPPF definition largely correlates with the interests identified by Historic England in their Historic England Advice Note 12 (October 2019).
- 6.3

Change, including development, can sustain, enhance or better reveal the significance of an asset, as well as detract from it or leave it unaltered. The design of a development affecting the setting of a heritage asset may play an important part in determining its impact. The contribution of setting to the historic significance of an asset can be sustained or enhanced if new buildings are carefully designed to respect their setting by virtue of their scale, proportion, height, massing, alignment and use of materials.

Scoping

- 6.4

In accordance with Step 1 of the methodology recommended by the Historic England guidance (GPA 3), some designated heritage assets within the wider environs of the site have been scoped out of this assessment as they would not be affected by the proposed development, in terms of material changes or changes to their setting and importance. This has been based on the distance of the asset from the site; the asset’s location, scale and orientation, and the nature, extent and scale of intervening built form, vegetation and topography between the asset and the site.
- 6.5

Following a site walkover and assessment utilising modern and historic mapping, aerial photography, Google Earth and the National Heritage List to identify designated above ground heritage assets located within 500m of the site boundary, a number of heritage assets have been scoped out of this assessment due to distance and lack of inter-visibility with the site. A radius of 500m from the site was chosen to ensure that the assessment remained proportionate to the scale of the proposed development and because this point, interposing built form and vegetation ensures a good level of no intervisibility between the site and the surrounding heritage receptors.
- 6.6

As a result of this sifting process, the following assets in the vicinity of the site whose settings and significance could potentially be changed by the development are included in this report. The map at figure 6.1 shows the location of the heritage assets assessed, in relation to the site, as detailed at table 6.1.
- 6.7

The heritage assessments are presented in the following pages.

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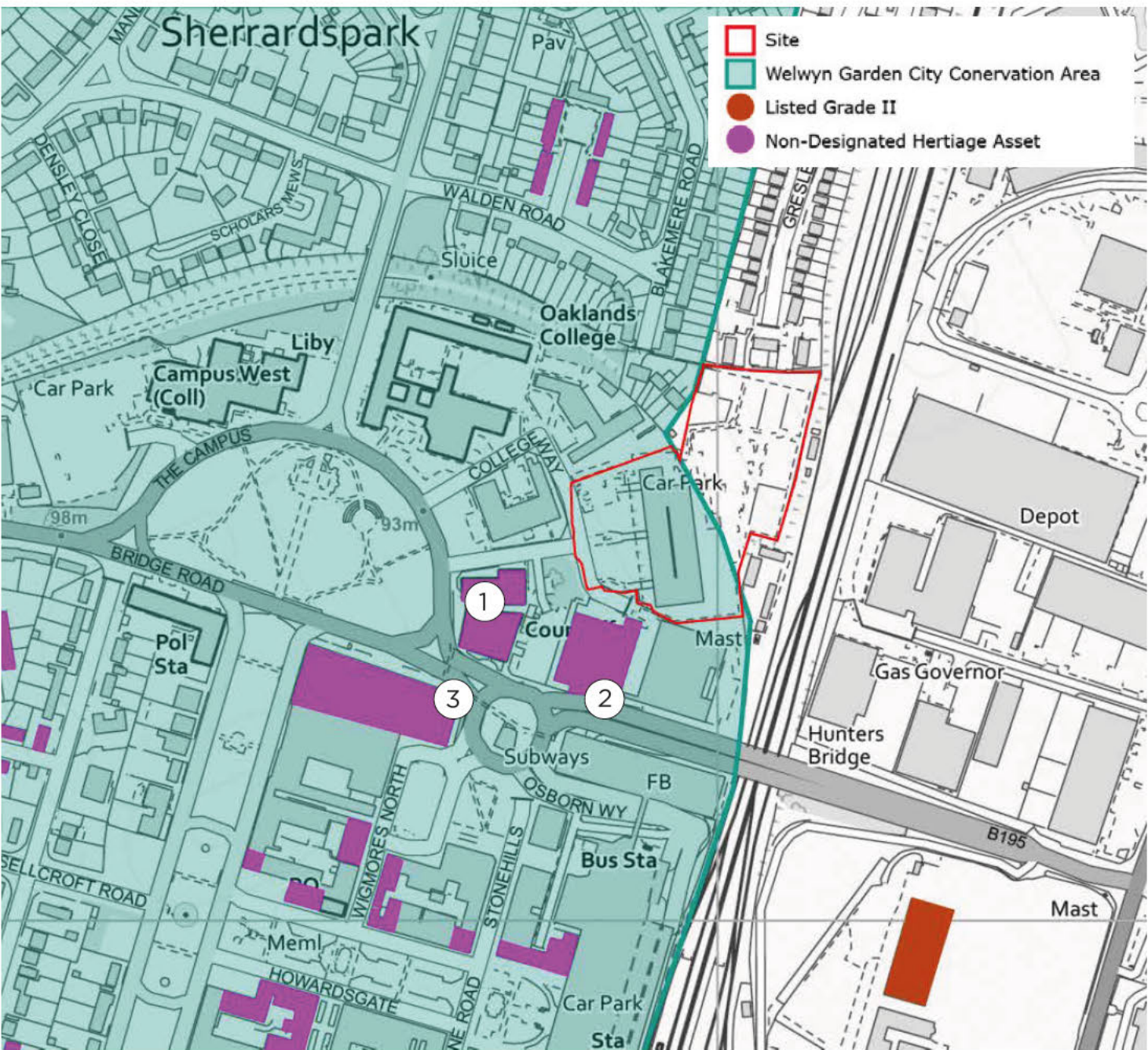


Figure 6.1: Heritage assets in the vicinity of the site. Numbers indicate receptors included for assessment as per list in the introduction.

Heritage asset		Grade	Approx. distance from site
Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area		Conservation Area	Within CA boundary
1	The Council Offices (original building), The Campus	Key Unlisted Building	360m NW
2	Original Cherry Tree building, Bridge Road	Key Unlisted Building	365m NW
3	Welwyn Stores building (de Soissons, 1938)	Key Unlisted Building	420m NW

Table 6.2: Heritage Assets Scoped in the assessment.

Conservation Areas:		
Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area		
Designated: 1968		
<u>Description</u>		
6.8	The conservation area can be divided into separate character areas which are defined by use, scale and architectural style. The town centre comprises of Neo-Georgian style buildings which are generally up to four storeys in height. The form of these buildings is fairly uniform, with subtle variation within a formal framework. It is strongly characterised by its use of materials and rhythmic pattern of sash windows across the long facades. Many of the buildings within this part of the conservation area were designed by Louis de Soissons. Buildings are generally constructed of red brick, with some stuccoed facades, and architectural detailing includes decorative architraves, projecting brick quoins and ornamental railings.	6.10 The residential areas to the north comprise of houses which differ in size, type, style and detail. The buildings are predominantly Neo-Georgian and Arts and Crafts, with some more experimental groups such as the Daily Mail Model Village, and the infrequent modern or unique designs interspersed. This area has a strong suburban character with grassed or planted gardens and communal gardens. There is also a consistency in the layout, building forms, materials and details, with thoughtful variations to break up tedium between streets.
6.9	The area around The Campus comprises a variety of uses which divides the town centre to the south and residential part of the conservation area to the north. The area comprises a number of institutional and civic buildings which display a variety of styles. For example, the Campus West building has a Modernist appearance, whilst the Council Offices building located at the south east corner is Neo-Georgian Garden City in its architectural expression. The materials used within this part of the area and incorporation of trees and green spaces are consistent with the rest of the garden city. Overall, though The Campus displays many of the characteristics which are complementary	6.11 The conservation area is bounded to the west by the East Coast Mainland railway line, to the east by the Green Belt boundary, encompassing the residential area to the north and the residential and open spaces running along the south eastern boundary to the south.
<u>Significance</u>		
6.12	The primary cause of significance is the historic interest of the area. The planning of Welwyn Garden City has a very high level of expression, and reflects social, cultural and economic ideas of its period of construction. It has been highly influential at both national and global level and has been regarded as an exemplar of sustainable development. The architectural interest of the conservation area derives from the uniformity of form and style of the buildings, set in an attractive and formal landscape setting, which is described above. The coherent layout and consistent design of the area offers a distinctiveness in sense of scale and order,	

which is reflective of the garden city principles and aesthetics of the time it was planned. The significance of the conservation area is furthered by the number of statutory listed buildings within it which are of architectural interest.

Site's contribution to the Conservation Area

- 6.13 The southern portion of the Site is located to the north west of the Conservation Area, within The Campus sub-area. During the initial phases of construction of Welwyn Garden City, the site provided a wooded backdrop to The Campus and buffer between the town centre and residential neighbourhood prior to being laid out. This is shown in aerial images across the site from 1934. Following this, the Master Plan of Welwyn Garden City, 1951 demonstrates the subsequent plan for the site to be designated for a large plan public building. This was never realised. The existing use of the site as car parking was influenced by the increasing car use during the 1960s and 70s and pressure to store these cars, as street parking was presenting a continuing problem in terms of both safety and aesthetics.

- 6.14 Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area Appraisal, September 2007, states that the two level car park which is located on the site, is a negative building. The car park and garages are of poor architectural quality and do not share the architectural treatment or style which is common throughout the Conservation Area, The Campus area in particular. Further, despite being set back from the main thoroughfares within Welwyn Garden City, the principle of large swathes of area to be dedicated to parking does not adhere to the garden city principles, notable generous green spaces and walkable neighborhoods with integrated and accessible transport systems.

- 6.15 Though there are some trees within the hardscaped car park and a buffer of trees to the south west, overall, the existing site is of low-quality and poorly defined. The lack of built form deviates from the formal street layout and relationship between the street and building frontages which is present elsewhere in the conservation area.

Likely effect of the proposed development

- 6.16 As described in above, the south and south westerly parts of the site fall within the Welwyn Garden City conservation area. The remainder of the site falls within the immediate setting of the conservation area but will be assessed as a whole since the remainder of the site forms part of the immediate setting of the conservation area.
- 6.17 Currently, the existing car park affords a negative contribution on the conservation area due to its unattractive design and large amount of poor quality hard surfacing. The site forms a key connection through the town, north-south, yet pedestrian movement is weakened by the sites existing unattractive and hostile character, which lacks the same definition and clearly planned routes found elsewhere in the conservation area. Further, the site fails to meet garden city principles which the conservation area is informed by, partially based on healthy communities and generous amounts of green scape.
- 6.18 The proposal includes the development of residential apartment blocks, laid out around a central landscaped green space with a circulation road and car parking located around its perimeter (further detail provided within 5.0 of this report and DAS provided by Saunders architects). The articulation of proposed blocks successfully incorporates the character of existing buildings found within Welwyn Garden City conservation area, including their materiality, flat and mansard roof forms and Georgian style sash windows. The blocks feature subtle differences in detailing to differentiate between blocks and increase variation, whilst maintaining a sense of formality and uniformity typical of this part of the conservation area, around The Campus. Some contemporary elements have been incorporated sensitively into the design, including within the ribbed brick work to embellish the ground floor level and balconies. This elevates the scheme to a higher quality and differentiates it from the earlier buildings, rather than becoming pastiche.
- 6.19 The layout of the blocks are set out so as to extend College Way, and continue this key vista within the conservation area and join up the site with the surrounding street network. The site has a fairly

rectilinear layout of blocks, similar to the street pattern within the Welwyn town centre to the south. The central landscaped space increases the amount of spacious, formally designed green space on the site, typical of the garden city, for example the pedestrianised routes along principal axis elsewhere in the conservation area, Howardsgate and Parkway, but at a smaller scale. Further, the placement of circulation road and parking to the edges of the development lessens its visual impact on the surrounding area and conservation area.					
6.20	The height and scale of the massing is consistent with the surrounding development within the conservation area. The area immediately around the site is clearly defined by taller mansion blocks, including Peel Court and Oaklands College, appropriate with the scale of the surrounding road network. In addition, the 1951 masterplan for the town shows a large scale office building planned for this part of the conservation area, which was never developed but indicates the strategic scale of buildings here. The scale and use of the buildings helps to provide a continuous connection between the town centre to the south and low scale residential development to the north. The buildings stagger in height across the site, between 3 and 5 storeys. Lower elements of the scheme are located to the north, outside of the conservation area, whilst taller elements are to the south. This pattern of development corresponds with the heights and sensitivity of the buildings within the conservation area and its setting, including the two storey residential houses along Blackmere Road, and Gresley cottages. Whilst overall fairly consistent in terms of scale and massing, this variation in building heights is also seen within the town centre area of the conservation area.				
6.21	Overall, the proposed development successfully reinstates Garden City principles and character of the conservation area into the site, which were lost when the site was redeveloped as a car park. The proposed development would have a positive contribution to the conservation area and its setting.				
		Unlisted Buildings of Merit		Setting	
		1. The Council Offices (original building), The Campus			
		<u>Description</u>			
		6.22	The Council Offices comprise a two storey plus dormer, square plan building which was constructed in 1935. As its name suggests, the building is currently occupied by the Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.	6.27	The Council Offices are located within Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area, at the junction between Bridge Road and The Campus, a main thoroughfare into the town centre from the east. The building itself offers a principal feature within its surrounding context due to its height and distinctive architectural features. A grassed bank with several street trees buffers the building from Bridge Road to the south and to the west, a grassed open area within The Campus. To the east is Cherry Tree Building, also an Unlisted Building of Merit, and Peel Court to the north which sits taller than the Council Offices, at 3 storeys plus dormer, yet its simple form and articulation mean that it remains subordinate. The setting of the Council Offices has changed since it was first constructed. Until the 1940s, the building was bordered by dense tree coverage to the north, encompassing the site. However currently this area is designated as car parking.
		6.23	The Council Offices have a Neo-Georgian style with architectural detailing such as brick cornice along the roofline, and large sash windows across ground and first floors and cupola, which provides a landmark feature within the townscape. The cupola comprises a clock faces along is square lantern, copper dome and ornamental golden weather vane. The building is accessed via stepped entrances to the southern, western elevations and eastern elevations. The building was extended in the late 1970s/early 1980s to include a new northern wing and alterations to the eastern elevation, most notably a glassed foyer which has now become the principle entrance to the building.		
		<u>Significance</u>		<u>Likely effect of the proposed development</u>	
		6.24	The historic interest of the building is principally due to its being one of the earlier buildings constructed as part of the Welwyn Garden City development in the 1930s and was set out in the early plans by de Soissons. Further, it marks the civic and institutional uses within The Campus, separating between the southern retail uses and northern residential uses. The aesthetic interest of the building is due to its attractive Neo-Georgian design consistent with the overall style of its Garden City context. In addition, the cupola on the top of the building affords an attractive townscape element which is unusual within Welwyn Garden City.	6.28	As mentioned before, the site is located to the south west of The Council office and forms part of its immediate setting. As part of the Welwyn Garden City development, the site is partially influential in the significance of the building. Currently, the existing site has a negative contribution to the setting of the building due to the absence of built form and poor quality design value of the landscaped car park. The proposal, which seeks to introduce a group of mansion-style apartment buildings within the site, is of a high quality and responds well to the character, scale and massing of the non-designated heritage asset. In terms of materiality, the proposed development is constructed of a similar red brick with sash windows, whilst the more contemporary elements of the building are restrained and complementary to the Neo Georgian aesthetic of the heritage asset.
		6.25	The extension to the Council Offices somewhat weakens the significance of the building by eroding the form and style of its host, however these are mostly in keeping with the character of the original building.	6.29	The proposed blocks on the site are mostly of a greater height to this unlisted building of merit. However, the heritage asset retains its status as a prominent feature within the townscape, in part, due to the considerate and simpler form and articulation of the proposed blocks. Further, the
		6.26	The Council Offices have further group value as part of a collection of 1930s buildings around The Campus, which each share similar architectural features and scale.		
				taller elements of the proposed development are located to the east of the heritage asset, behind a buffer of mature trees so that there is a low level of intervisibility and the copper dome and ornamental weather vane appear prominent features from The Campus and Bridge Road.	
				6.30	Overall, the proposed development will make a positive contribution to the setting of the heritage asset and will not impact the significance of The Council Offices.
				2. Original Cherry Tree building, Bridge Road	
				<u>Description</u>	
		6.31	The Cherry Tree was constructed in 1932 along Bridge Road, situated next to the railway. The building is 2 storeys in height with red brick ground floor and white stuccoed upper floor. The original part of the existing building is roughly rectangular in plan and 11 bays across, with full length round arch windows at ground floor level and sash windows across the first floor. The gable roof with dormer window at the centre is red tiled with a pair of symmetrical chimney stacks on the eastern and western wings of the building. A setback extension is located to the left and offers the main entrance to the building. This element also contains a picture of a cherry tree imprinted at the centre of the upper floor façade. Other detailing includes a brick cornice along the roofline. The building was converted to a Waitrose supermarket with associated car park in 1990.		
				<u>Significance</u>	
		6.32	The historic interest of the building derives from its original use as the first social space developed especially for residents and visitors or Welwyn and its connection with the original Cherry Tree Building, opened in 1921, which was the first subsidiary enterprise of the WGC Company. The building was developed to replace an earlier building, The Cherry Tree, which also provided residents and visitors with meals and entertainment. This building was a simple timber construction which lay slightly further from the road than its successor. The historic significance of the existing Cherry Tree building has weakened due to its later change of use to a supermarket.		

- 6.33 The architectural interest of The Cherry Tree stems from its Neo-Georgian character with some Arts and Crafts influence, including the tall chimney stacks, and increased significance due to its group value with the neighboring Council Offices.

Setting

- 6.34 The Cherry Tree building fronts onto Bridge Road, a heavily trafficked road providing access into and out from Welwyn town centre. The building is situated next to the railway tracks to the east and Council Offices to the west. Notably, to the north of the site, the setting of the building has changed significantly since it was constructed. OS mapping and historic images from the mid-1930s show the buildings set within a landscaped setting. This includes bowling greens which were connected to the social club and which have since been removed and replaced with a two storey car park for the supermarket. To the north the dense coverage of trees, once belonging to Sherradspark Wood, have been removed and an area of hardscaped carparking and two sotrey carpark (the site) have been developed to the north of the unlisted building of merit.

Likely effect of the proposed development

- 6.35 The site is located to the north of this unlisted building of merit and currently has a negative impact on its setting due to the absence of built form and poor quality hardscaping around the site. The proposed development, which is described in section 5.0 of this report, will introduce new high quality group of mansion apartment blocks. These have been designed in a complementary material palette of red brick and slate roof, with references to the Neo-Georgian proportions of the heritage assets and found elsewhere within its setting.
- 6.36 The scale of the proposed blocks within the site will be greater than the Original Cherry Tree building, however, the heritage asset will remain a key feature along Bridge Road, along the entrance to Welwyn Garden City from the east, with no massing introduced behind this principal elevation visible.
- 6.37 Overall, the proposed development will make a positive contribution to the setting of the heritage asset and will not impact the significance of the Original Cherry Tree building.

3. **Welwyn Stores building (de Soissons, 1938)**

Description

- 6.38 Welwyn Stores was constructed in 1938 and designed by de Soissons. The four to five storey building is constructed in red brick with pale stone dressings at ground floor level. It is a large plan retail building, now occupied by John Lewis, and has a grand Neo-Georgian style.
- 6.39 The principle entrance along Bridge Road, to the north of the building, comprises a central pedimented porch, three bays across with separating pilaster, with stuccoed pillars and stepped entrances with wrought iron railings. Windows are regularly spaced across the building. At ground floor level, windows are wide shop fronts, whilst sash windows are located across the upper floors. Windows at first floor level are slightly larger in scale and have a decorative splayed red and pale brick lintels above. There is a secondary entrance to the building to the west, along Parkway and inactive edges, excluding service entrances, to the east of the building. The massing of the building is at four storeys along its principle elevation fronting Bridge Road and then steps up to five storeys to the south. The corners elements of the building drop down to two storeys at the junction between Bridge Road and Parkway and Bridge Road and Wigmores North.

Significance

- 6.40 The Welwyn Stores building has a high level of historic interest as it is one of the few buildings within Welwyn which was designed by de Soissons and formed part of the earlier construction of the town. The building has been in consistent retail use, marking the beginning of the town centre which was designated within the original masterplan. The architectural interest of the building is established by its symmetry and proportions and fine Neo-Georgian architectural detailing. Further, the scale of the building provides a sense of grandness located at the entrance to the town from the east. The long elevations of the building help to reinforce the regularity of the street layout within this part of the town.

Setting

- 6.41 The building fronts onto Parkway to the west, Bridge Road to the north and Wigmores North to the east. Bridge Road is a heavily trafficked thor-

oughfare and creates a fairly hostile northern edge to the building. The building itself is set back from the road with wide pavements and street trees. To the north of this, there is an area of green open space with several trees which soften the setting and provide a sense of scale. Parkway, which offers a secondary access to the building, comprises a formal linear landscape which is reflective of the Garden City principles and provides a sense of openness and scale. Overall, the building is located at a prominent position within the town, marking the entrance to the town centre.

Likely effect of the proposed development

- 6.42 Welwyn Stores building is located to the south of the site and currently there is no intervisibility between them. The site does however fall within the wider setting of the heritage asset.
- 6.43 The development on the site will have a positive impact on the wider setting of this unlisted building of merit. The proposed buildings will introduce a higher quality of design and continue the structure and formality found elsewhere within its setting. Further, the style and materiality of the design is complementary to the Neo-Georgian influence of the Welwyn Garden Stores building.
- 6.44 Overall, the proposed development will not impact the significance of Original Cherry Tree building.

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7. Visual and Townscape Assessment

Introduction

7.1 This section presents the visual effects of the proposed development on the visual amenity of visual receptors (people experiencing the views) and the surrounding townscape. In order to assess the visual effects, the consultants have selected **4** townscape viewpoint locations for assessment, based on the methodology described in section 2.0. It is essential for the reader to refer to back to the methodology if necessary, as it is not fully replicated here.

7.2 The views assessed in the following pages are not the only views which are likely to be affected by the development, but they represent a general spread of views which illustrate the urban relationships likely to arise between the proposed development and the surrounding townscape. The views chosen and assessed in this chapter represent 'maximum exposure and maximum conjunction' of the development in its context.

7.3 The consultants have assessed the visual effects of the proposed development on the local environment, making use of both the quantitative and the qualitative material as provided in the AVRs presented in this chapter. The written assessments, found in the following pages, include both objective and subjective commentary based on professional judgement.

7.4 Each of the views are presented and assessed according to our methodology as two images:

- An 'existing view' with a photograph of the baseline condition;
- A 'proposed view' with an image of the proposed development within the view

7.5 The fully verified Accurate Visual Representations (AVRs) were produced by visualisation specialists, Rockhunter. Their methodology for the production of views is at Appendix 1 of this HTVIA. The AVRs are presented as wirelines showing the external outline of the proposed development.

7.6 All wirelines (proposed) are depicted as solid (light green) lines where visible from the viewpoint location and as dotted (light green) lines where the proposed development (or part thereof) is occluded by built form in the foreground, and hence not visible.

The views

7.9 The **4** viewpoints included in this set of views are listed below and illustrated on the map at figures 7.1. They were selected in close consultation with Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council's planning officers and conservation officers at Place Services and include a mix of close and medium distance views. The townscape and visual effects are assessed in the following pages.

View 1: View south from Blakemore Road.

View 2: View north-east toward College Way.

View 3: View east from in front of the John Lewis store at the Council Offices.

View 4: Bridge Road.

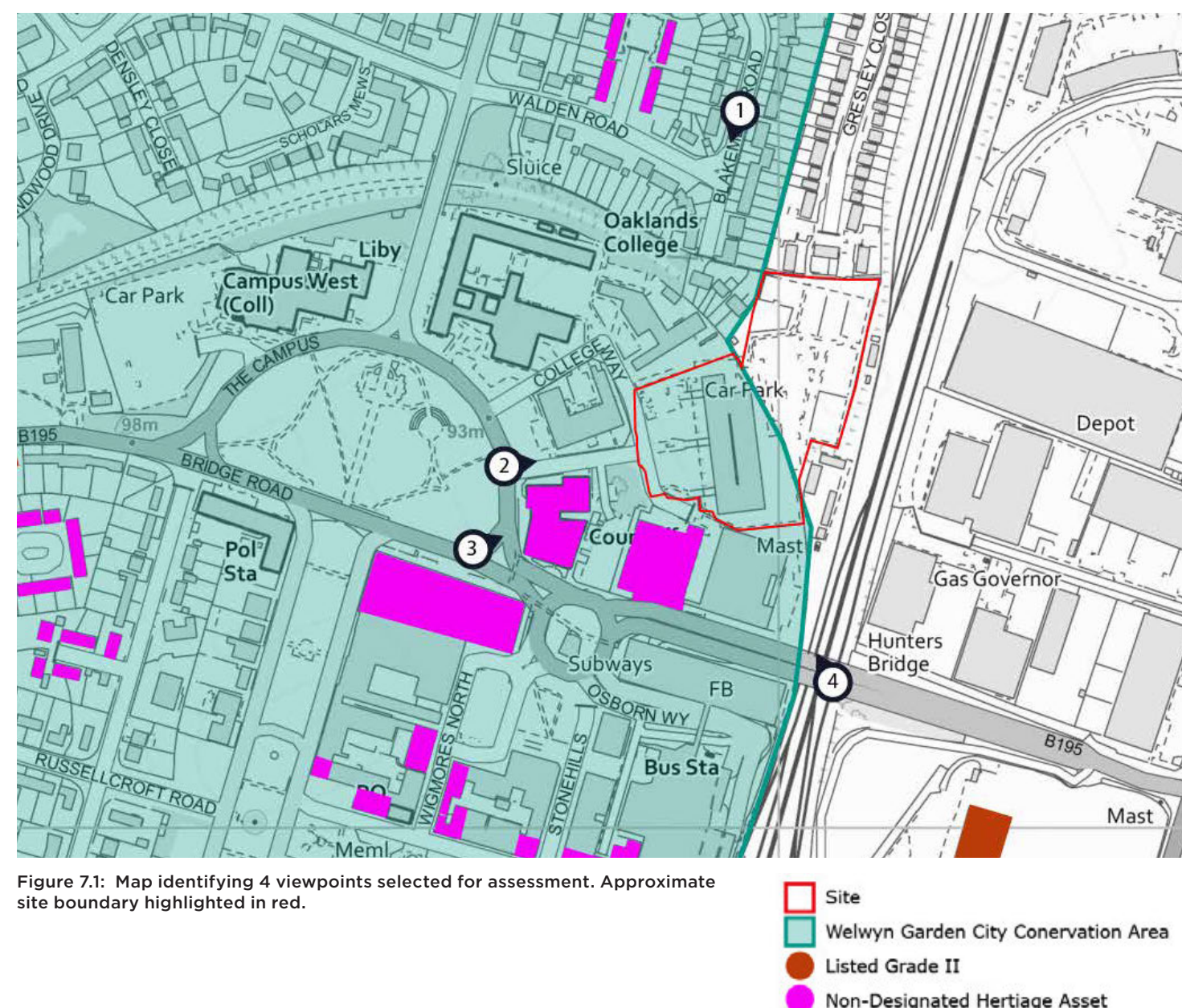


Figure 7.1: Map identifying 4 viewpoints selected for assessment. Approximate site boundary highlighted in red.

VIEW 1 - EXISTING: View south from Blakemore Road.

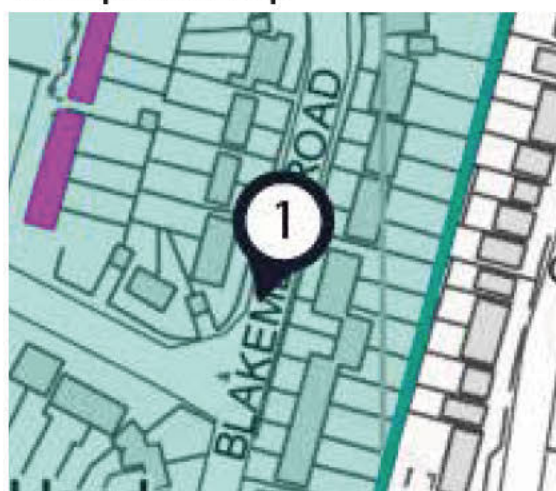
Existing

The viewpoint is located on Blackmore Road looking south towards the site. This location is within northern parts of Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area. The view does not show any designated and non-designated building or structure.

This view is presenting an enclosed townscape with a dense landscape featuring a number of mature trees and vegetation. The foreground of the view is dominated by Blackmore Road's layout, road's lawns and pavements, and other landscape features of the road such as the hedges and the tree lines (along both sides of the road). To the right, the view is framed by the boundary hedges of the houses. The central middle ground of the view illustrates a row of semi-detached houses, mostly visible in their roof level and featuring 'A-framed' tiled rooflines, sash and dormer windows, brick chimney stacks, and red brick façades resembling Arts and Crafts architectural style and built in c.1920s; the ground level of these houses are occluded by the hedges to their front. On this part, the building of Oakland College (just opposite the site), can be seen in the centre of the view and where the road is terminated. This building is visible only in its upper floors and is popping out from above the roof ridges of the aforementioned houses. From the centre towards the left frame of the view, a row of semi-detached houses with similar Art and Craft style and similar details to those in the middle are presented. The existing structures/car parks on the site are located in the middle and extended to the left of the view and are not visible from this distance.

The visual receptor in this view are likely to be the local residents and visitors of Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area.

Viewpoint map



VIEW 1 - PROPOSED: View south from Blakemore Road.



Proposed

The proposed development is illustrated as light green wireline and will appear centrally in this view, while being extended slightly towards the left frame of the view. The proposed development will be partially visible in some of its upper floors (on blocks A, B, C, D and E) and will be seen from the existing gaps in between the houses on Blackmore Road. The apparent height from this position will not appear taller than the prevailing roofline of these houses. As mentioned before due to dense trees and vegetation in this view, the visibility of the proposed development will be reduced further during summer.

Overall, the architectural quality and choice of contextual material will enhance the visual amenity and will aid legibility in this view.

VIEW 2 - EXISTING: View north-east toward College Way.

Existing

Taken from The Campus and College Way intersection looking north-east, this view is located in Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area. The immediate foreground is dominated by the intersection's layout, the street furniture such as traffic lights, lamp posts, semi-formal lawns, and a number of mature tall trees. To the right middle ground, the view is framed by the building of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council which is a non-designated heritage asset, featuring Neo-Georgian architectural style and a two storey plus dormer. Moving a little towards the centre, and towards the end of College Road, the existing carpark structure on the site is partially visible from the gaps in between the dense branches of the treeline on this road. To the left middle ground, the view is framed by the building of Peel Court in Neo-Georgian style, featuring four storeys, sashed windows and white Portland stone on its ground floor. Overall the view presents a cluttered townscape which is interrupted by the dense branches of the trees or other vegetation. The visibility of the existing structures on the site will be reduced in summer condition. The visual receptors in this view are likely to include the local residents, the office workers, students and travellers walking along these streets or visiting the area.

Viewpoint map



VIEW 2 - PROPOSED: View north-east toward College Way.



Proposed

The proposed development is outlined in light green wireline and will appear centrally in this view. The only visible part of the proposed development will be Blocks A, B and H, which will be partially occluded by the existing dense trees on its front. This visibility will be reduced during summer. The proposed massing and height are contextual and the proposed blocks visible in this view, will appear no taller than the existing buildings shown here.

Overall, the proposed development will enhance the public realm and landscape qualities and will aid the visual amenity and legibility in this view. The proposed scheme will create a well-connected and permeable place.

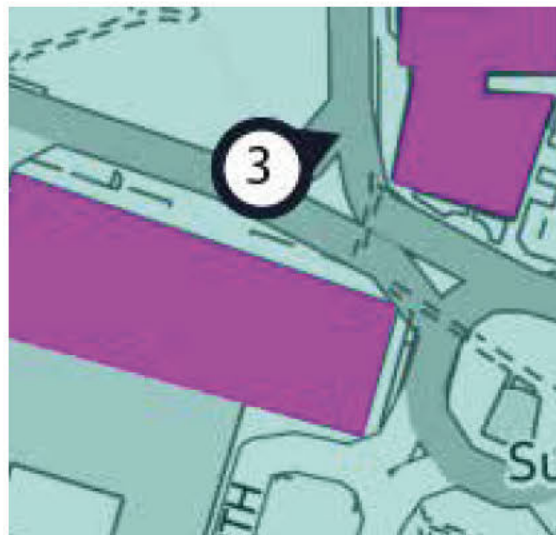
VIEW 3 - EXISTING: View east from in front of the John Lewis store at the Council Offices.

Existing

This view is located in Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area, on the intersection of Bridge Road and The Campus. It is taken from (in front of) John Lewis building on Bridge Road, which is a non-designated heritage asset, and is looking north-east towards Welwyn Hatfield Borough offices and the site. The view is presenting an enclosed townscape. The development site is located in the centre of the view and is not visible from this position. The immediate foreground of the view is dominated by the road's layout, street furniture, semi-formal lawns, as well as the intersection between Bridge Road and The Campus. To the left middle ground, the image is framed by the Neo-Georgian building of Peel Court featuring white Portland stone on its ground floors and red buff bricks on upper floors, which is partially occluded by a number of mature trees on this side. This visibility will be reduced in summer. The centre of the view features the Neo-Georgian building of Welwyn Hatfield Borough offices which is a non-designated building. To the left middle ground, the Neo-Georgian Welwyn Stores building, which is a non-designated heritage asset designed by de Soissons and constructed in 1938, can be seen. This building is partially occluded by a few mature trees to its front.

The visual receptors in this view are likely to include the local residents, the office workers, students, people using John Lewis and Waitrose stores and travellers walking along these streets or visiting the area.

Viewpoint map



VIEW 3 - PROPOSED: View east from in front of the John Lewis store at the Council Offices.



Proposed

The proposed development is outlined in light green dash line in the centre of this image. The proposed development will not be visible from this viewpoint; and thus it will have a negligible visual and townscape impact in this view.

VIEW 4 - EXISTING: Bridge Road.

Existing

This view is located on Hunters Bridge, looking north-west towards the development site, which is not visible from this position. The view presents a leafy townscape. The foreground is featuring the layout of the bridge, the bridge road surface, the bollards and the edge railings as well as other street furniture. Due to heavily dense trees and scenery presented in the middle ground of the view and beyond the bridge, the built areas are obscured and hidden. The only visible building is the tiled roof and chimney stack of Welwyn Stores building, seen to the left of the view. Overall the townscape presented in this view has a poor visual amenity and a poor legibility. The visual receptors in this view are likely to include the local residents and travellers walking on the bridge or visiting the area.



Viewpoint map



VIEW 4 - PROPOSED: Bridge Road.



Proposed

The proposed development will appear centrally in this view and will be visible in upper floors of Blocks A, H, G, F and E. The apparent height will appear taller and above the line of trees (seen beyond the bridge). The volumes and articulation of parts of the façade (seen from here) will create visual interest and will provide a visual relief in this view. Overall, where visible, the proposed development will aid the legibility of this view, the architectural quality and the choice of material will contribute positively to the overall visual amenity.

Townscape Assements/Conclusions

- 7.10

Considering the visual impact assessment and the proposed illustrative scheme and assessment, above, the proposed development is found to appear as a positive contribution in the townscape and a distinct improvement to the current condition in the immediate townscape (view 2), through clear activation of the street, high quality architecture (including the massing strategy and arrangement) and creating well-connected space. In the wider townscape (view 1), the proposed development’s visibility is more limited, due to the street composition and urban grain of the surrounding area. The proposed development will have a negligible impact in view 3 due to lack of visibility. Some parts of the taller elements of the proposed development (Blocks A2, A3, B3, H, G and F) may appear amongst the existing houses and trees, creating a high quality backdrop that works successfully with the existing context (see view 4). This will not have an adverse impact on the townscape in this location.
- 7.11

The submitted proposals have been discussed in depth as part of detailed pre-application consultation with Hatfield officers and through review panel sessions and the design and massing of the proposed development is now considered to be an appropriate approach for the site in accordance with the guidance set out in the local plan.

-

8. Conclusions

- | | | | |
|-----|--|-----|--|
| 8.1 | This HTVIA was prepared by Savills Heritage and Townscape to assess the heritage, townscape and visual effects of the proposed development. This was considered in terms of the significance of nearby heritage assets and the visual amenity of people experiencing views of and within the Welwyn Garden City and The Campus neighbourhood, where the site lies. | 8.5 | In all cases, it was found that the proposed development would either have no impact on the significance of heritage assets or contribute positively to the setting and significance of these assets (for further information please refer back to section 6.0 of this report). Furthermore, the high quality contemporary design of the proposed development and the sensitive choice of materials, complement the character of the heritage assets in the immediate context of the site. As such, and considering the embedded design mitigation against scale, the proposed development is considered suitable and not harmful in respect to the setting of the protected heritage assets. |
| 8.2 | This document should be read alongside the DAS and plans produced by Saunders Architecture, and the Planning Statement produced by Savills Planning. | | |
| 8.3 | The assessment has taken into account the effects on heritage receptors through an assessment of their significance and the contribution that their setting makes to this significance, as well as the change to the setting that would arise as a result of the proposed development. In terms of townscape and visual impacts, the effects on visual receptors arising from changes to a number of views were assessed. These views were scouted by the consultants and agreed with planning officers at the Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council prior to the assessment taking place. | 8.6 | A total of 4 townscape views were considered and assessed in detail, comparing the 'existing' baseline condition with the 'proposed' condition after the scheme is completed. |
| 8.4 | The proposed designs were described and independently assessed for their effects on the immediate and wider townscape. It was found that they have been sensitively designed, taking into consideration, and mitigating against, any potential adverse effects on the setting of the neighbouring designated heritage assets. | 8.7 | The assessments on the visual effects concluded that the introduction of the proposed development would have a positive impact on the surrounding townscape, especially in views 1, 2 and 4. In view 3 it was concluded that the visual and townscape impact will be negligible due to lack of visibility. The carefully sculpted form, mass and scale of the proposed blocks consider the lower surrounding context as well as the role of the proposed development in the local skyline. Through a sensitive arrangement of mass, scale and height as well as choice of materials; the proposed development will celebrate the materiality of the historical context, and will interact in a responsive manner with local townscape. The architectural expression, enhanced by the use of brick tones and detailing have also contributed in mitigating coalescence of forms |
| | | 8.8 | The proposed development is the result of a long consultation process, where the proposal has been reviewed and guided by several discussions with the planning officers at Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, and Historic England. As such the proposed development is considered to have been designed in compliance with policy and guidance in relation to heritage assets, townscape and visual impacts and is recommended by the consultants to receive a positive response from Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council in this planning application. |

by ensuring that each proposed block is legible individually, whilst maintaining overall design unity. As such, it is considered that the proposed development is responsive to the local environment and will redefine in a positive way the existing townscape and visual amenity at the Campus East.

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<https://www.welhat.gov.uk/planning-applications/planning-considerations-conservation-areas/1>
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Ordnance Survey and County Series mapping - <https://www.groundsure.com/>

Historic England Archive - <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/photos/>

Britain from Above - <https://www.britainfromabove.org.uk/en>

Appendix 1 - Rockhunter's Methodology

PAGE 1

2004 - CAMPUS EAST - SAVILLS
AVR IMAGES METHOD STATEMENT

PREPARED FOR 18.03.2022

Method Statement

1	STANDARDS	5	PHOTOGRAPHY
1.1	The AVR images contained in this document have been produced in accordance with the best practices and advice taken from the following documents: a) Revised Supplementary Planning Guidance, London View Management Framework, March 2012, henceforth LVMF b) 2015 Erratum to the LVMF 2012 SPG c) Landscape Institute: “Visual Representation of Development Proposals, Technical Guidance Note 06/19”, henceforth TGN06/19 d) Landscape Institute/IEMA: Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3)”, henceforth GLVIA3. e) Scottish Natural Heritage: “Visual Representation of f) Wind Farms v2.2 February 2017”, henceforth SNH 2017	5.1	The Photography was carried out by ArcMinute Ltd. A digital 35mm format mirrorless Camera, mounted on a tripod, was used throughout the project. The details of each photo (Camera, Lens, Date, Time, as well the position are listed in the Technical Methodology). Unless otherwise specified, the camera is positioned 1.65m above ground level, and the positions permanently marked on the ground. Alternatively, where marking of the ground is impractical or not permanent, an existing, distinct feature on the ground was chosen, or the point marked with temporary markings and surveyed within a few days of the photograph taken.
2	SCOPE OF WORK	6	SURVEY
2.1	Rock Hunter Ltd. were appointed as imaging consultant, producers of AVRs and computer generated view study images on behalf of Bellway Homes Limited. The architects are Saunders Architects. Rock Hunter Ltd. are an architectural visualisation company with 20 years of experience in creation of 3D computer models, rendering and digital imaging.	6.1	A professional surveyor was commissioned to survey the marked camera location and a set of camera control points for each viewpoint. This is used to determine the location of the camera position and for camera control points, a set of survey points within each photograph that are used to demonstrate the accuracy of the camera match. The survey is carried out using a mix of GNSS and laser total station and are tied into OS coordinates.
3	AFFILIATION AND PLACE OF WORK	7	TYPE OF AVR SHOWN
3.1	Rock Hunter Ltd. is not affiliated with any party involved in the planning, consultation or design of the Campus East - Savills project and is acting as an independent consultant on the project. Photography, survey and camera matching has been carried out by ArcMinute Ltd. Survey data, camera matches and proof have been supplied to Rock Hunter Ltd.	7.1	Based on the above mentioned information and our computer model, Rock Hunter then generated a set of AVRs for each viewpoint. The set includes the baseline photograph, one montage showing baseline + proposed development, and a “baseline + proposed development + cumulative schemes”. Depending on what type of visualisation has been agreed with the local authority, the proposed development will be shown as AVR1 or AVR3 (LVMF) / Visualisation Types 3 or 4 (TGN 06/19).
4	COMPUTER MODEL	8	VERIFICATION
4.1	Rock Hunter received a 3d computer model of the proposed development from Saunders Architects as well as selected architectural drawings and a site survey. The computer model was adapted to work with Rock Hunter’s 3d modelling software and design changes were undertaken on instruction from Saunders Architects on the basis of supplied architectural drawings to reflect the latest design. All AVRs in this document are based on this computer model.	8.1	Rock Hunter publishes in this document in the Technical Methodology all relevant details of the recorded photographs and the source information of all computer models as well as the working methods used in the creation of the AVRs to which will allow independent verification of the AVRs.
		9	METHOD STATEMENT
		9.1	This document was created by Rock Hunter Ltd., and shows visual representations of the proposed development in accordance with LVMF “Accurate Visual Representation” standards and TGN06/19 “Survey-verified” standards.

a) The LVMF defines an AVR as: “An AVR is a static or moving image which shows the location of a proposed development as accurately as possible; it may also illustrate the degree to which the development will be visible, its detailed form or the proposed use of materials. An AVR must be prepared following a well-defined and verifiable procedure so that it can be relied upon by assessors to represent fairly the selected visual properties of a proposed development. AVRs are produced by accurately combining images of the proposed building (typically created from a three-dimensional computer model) with a representation of its context; this usually being a photograph, a video sequence, or an image created from a second computer model built from survey data. AVRs can be presented in a number of different ways, as either still or moving images, in a variety of digital or printed formats.”

b) The TGN06/19 defines Survey-verified as: “ Survey-verified photography involves using a surveyor, or survey equipment, to capture camera locations and relevant target points within the scene, which are then recreated in the 3D-model and used to match the camera image with a high degree of precision. Surveying equipment allows the camera location and fixed target points in the view to be calculated down to centimetre accuracy. Highly accurate visualisations may be produced by correctly matching the 3D model camera position and geometry of the view to the original photograph, using pixel level data, resulting in a survey-verified photomontage.”

10 CHOICE OF VIEWS

10.1 Rock Hunter was provided with location maps for photography for each view by Savills. ArcMinute Ltd took the photographs from supplied positions and with knowledge of the proposed development to frame views aesthetically and in line with best practices as set out in TGN06/19.

11 FIELD OF VIEW

11.1 The TGN06/19 (p5, para 2.2) states that “Baseline Photography should:

- include the extend of the site and sufficient context;”

and that (p21, para 4.5.3) “Baseline photography should be carried out with a Full Frame Sensor (FFS) camera and 50mm Focal Length prime lens, unless there are exceptional conditions where wider-angle lenses are required to fully capture the scene (e.g. tall tower blocks - see below). In such cases, any departures from FFS +50mm FL should be explained and agreed with the competent authority.”,

and that (p.28, para 1.1.7) “If a 50mm FL lens cannot capture the view in landscape or portrait orientation (for example, if the highest point of the development is approaching 18° above horizontal) the use of wider-angled prime lenses should be considered, working through the following sequence of fixed lenses in this order: 35mm FL > 28mm FL > 24mm FL > 24mm FL Tilt-Shift.”

and that (p.35, para 4.1.5) “Views should include the full extend of the site / development and show the effect of the it has upon the receptor location. Additional photographs may illustrate relevant characteristics, such as the degree and nature of intervening cover along a highway or footpath, without showing the site / proposal.”

and that (p.36, para 4.2.1.) “The proposal under consideration and its relevant landscape context will determine the FoV (horizontal and vertical) required for photography and photomontage from any given viewpoint.”,

and that (p.54, para 13.1.1) “The 24mm tilt shift is typically used for visualisation work where viewpoints are located close to a development and the normal range of prime lenses will not capture the proposed site”

11.2 The preference for a 50mm prime lens, or to use a prime lens in portrait mode often does not satisfy the para 1.17, para 4.1.5 or para 4.21 for confined urban contexts, and as such a compromise has to be found that produces a wide enough HFoV, as well as including the full height of the proposed development. The reason for each choice of lens that deviates from the “FFS +50mm FL” approach has been noted in **Table “Viewpoint figure notes”**.

12 SCALE VERIFIABLE

12.1 The images are show 325mm wide if the document is printed at it’s correct size of A3. Using the viewing distance reference (TGN06/19 p.14 para 3.8.4 of 542mm) this results in a viewing scale of 90% for 50mm FL landscape views, and 41% for 24mm FL landscape views. To view them between 100-150% as per TGN06/19, prints of 50mm FL views can either be viewed at a slightly reduced viewing distance, or if printed at A2 at 118%, in the middle of the recommended range. 24mm FL views have to be printed at A0 for a 117% scale representation.

12.2 To allow views to be assessed when viewed on screens, which can have a wide variety of sizes and thus unpredictable scale, a graticule overlay has been created for each view. This shows an angle grid for the HfoV and acts as a comparative ruler for the image assessors. The graticule also shows the centre of the view on the top and bottom bars, as well as an indicator for the calculated horizon level on the left and right bars. This helps to assess the amount of vertical shift that used in a photograph that was captured with a Tilt and Shift Lens.

13 EYE LEVEL, OPTICAL DISTORTION AND LEVEL

13.1 The camera was mounted on a tripod, centred over the surveyed camera locations, so that the camera is vertically positioned 1.65m above ground level (measured to the centre of the lens). This can reasonably be considered eye level, and is an accepted common practice for creating AVRs.

13.2The RAW image is converted into a tiff image and remapped to remove all lens distortion using a sophisticated lens calibration and rectification system. The image is then placed into a background template and single frame images are further positioned so that the calculated position of the image’s optical axis is aligned with the centre of the background. In both single frame and panoramic images the resultant image is a geometrically accurate 2d reproduction of the scene.

13.3The camera is levelled horizontally with an accuracy <0.02deg in any direction.

14 CAMERA MATCH

14.1 Camera Control Points provided by the surveyor are used to establish a camera match. The survey points are easily identifiable, static objects in the view such as corners of windows, roofs, bases of street lights, chimney tops or road-markings. ArcMinute Ltd calculates the camera match independent of 3d Software packages and uses the result to script the creation of the virtual cameras. A two stage verification system is in place for quality assurance.

14.2For distances of more than 2000m ArcMinute Ltd. use a combined formula for compensating the curvature of the earth and atmospheric refraction to produce the correct Z offset for camera survey points. The results are confirmed by capturing local reference coordinates near the site.

14.3For views over 5km from a scheme compensation theoretically has to be made for the deviation of the local survey grid (Cartesian) from the (ellipsoidal) OS grid i.e.. curvature of the earth and refraction through the atmosphere. The practical reason however is to ensure that any small angular error resulting from a camera survey alignment is not multiplied out over a long distance to create a large error at the scheme so it is our standard operating procedure to always capture local reference coordinates near to the site with which this error can be accurately corrected.

15 FRAMING VIEWS/ PANORAMAS

15.1 No photographs were cropped in this document. Where indicated for the inclusion of vertical extend of the proposed development a shift lens was used to capture more context above the horizon line than below.

15.2The TGN06/19 makes a case for panoramas (p.36, para 4.2.1-4.2.5) for a variety of reasons. In Appendix 8 (pp.45-47)(para 8.4.1) it confirms the SNH 2017 approach to re-projecting rectangular projections from panoramas. (p.25, para 113). Where panoramic images are required the individual frames are stitched together to create a seamless image to the specified horizontal field of view in an equirectangular projection having a 38-54 degree vertical FOV. The image is then placed into a back-ground template. The resultant image is a geometrically accurate 2d reproduction of the scene.

16 COMPOSITING

16.1 Compositing aims to blend the computer generated content with the source photograph into a consistent montage. The proposed scheme will often be partially occluded by urban context. In long and medium distance views this will typically be buildings and terrain topography, for close views it may also include street lighting, signs, vegetation and movable objects like vehicles. The visualiser will determine the degree to which the proposed development will be visible by identifying its urban context in the photograph from site visits and notes as well as combining information from maps, camera survey data, a 3D context model, aerial and ground level photographs of the site and its surroundings. For close distance views the visualiser will determine the local context from general observations.

16.2The proposed scheme may in places reveal context in the photograph that is hidden from the “existing” view when the existing buildings have a different massing to the proposed building. Where necessary, the revealed context was visually reconstructed from additional photography.

17 LIGHT AND MATERIALS

17.1 For fully rendered views the 3D software package uses a simulation of the sun which is set to the same date, time and geographic coordinates as the photograph. With these settings the software simulates angle and lighting of the sun and the 3D model is rendered in a virtual environment that presents a close match to the conditions in the photograph. Some differences may remain, due to haze, clouds and other atmospheric conditions at the time of the photograph, which the visualisation artist will correct using his/her experience and observations from the photograph.

17.2 The computer model itself is augmented with simulations of materials as specified by the architect. Using his/her experience and libraries of materials the visualiser will closely match these virtual materials to colour, reflectivity, refraction and light behaviour to their real-world behaviour. Such approximations are generally satisfactory in their appearance, however where directed by the design team or based on the visualiser’s experience and judgement the appearance of materials may be adjusted when the AVR montage is assembled. Such alterations are generally holistic

across the material and can include addition of environmental reflections. The final appearance of materials will be adjusted as directed and is at the discretion of the architect.

18 COMPUTER MODEL

18.1 Rock Hunter combined the computer model as well as the camera survey data and maps into a common, **unified coordinate system**. This unified system allows schemes and cameras to appear correctly in relation to each other and is based on OS mapping information with datum point defined near the proposed site. Choosing a local datum alleviates inherent numerical tolerances that occur in 3D software packages.

19 CUMULATIVE SCHEMES

19.1 Computer models for cumulative schemes where produced by Rock Hunter Ltd. based on electronic or paper planning application drawings publicly available from respective local authorities, come from a our library of 3D models, or where provided by the project architect. Table **List of cumulative schemes** lists the sources for each scheme. The computer models were placed in the **unified coordinate system**, using any information contained in the original planning application documents. Some planning documents contain obvious errors or no relevant OS map information. In these cases the respective architects were contacted for more information (and where made available, used) or models were placed using a “best fit” by cross referencing information from other documents, maps and available sources.

19.2Cumulative schemes are shown using a constant thickness wire outline. The line is generated from computer renderings of each scheme and represents an “inside stroke”. This means that the outer edge of the line touches the massing of cumulative schemes from the inside.

19.3Where schemes are not directly visible in a view, the outline is represented with a dotted line that also uses the “inside stroke” principle. Visibility of a development is determined by permanent visual boundaries such as a buildings, infrastructure, terrain and street furniture that obscure the development and by temporary visual borders such as vegetation, people, vehicles or temporary hoardings. We treat the visibility of the proposed development based on a best judgement. A single tree in leaf does not obstruct the development as seasonal or maintenance measures affect the opacity over time, a number of trees behind each other can obscure a development even without leaves. Where the visibility changes across a small section of image, we aim for clarity of the diagram.

20 LIMITATIONS

20.1Rock Hunter strives to work accurately and fairly throughout the creation of AVR images and employs a selection of advanced software packages and working methods. Despite all advances in computer simulations, rendering techniques and care taken in the process, no simulation is currently able to take into account all physical properties of camera equipment and all lighting effects inside the software package. The purpose of these AVRs is to allow a fair representation of the proposed scheme in it’s photographic context as described in the LVMF and LI documents. Adjustments to the proposed scheme’s appearance are done to the judgement and experience of the visualisation artist to allow for lighting and atmospheric conditions of the photograph, they are not however a scientific simulation.

21 OS INFORMATION AND LIMITING FACTORS

21.1 The basis of the 3D computer model and survey information are Ordnance Survey Sitemap® digital maps, at a 1:1250 survey scale. OS define their tolerances as follows:

Survey Scale	Absolute accuracy compared with the National Grid. Absolute error – root mean square error (RMSE)	Absolute accuracy 99% confidence level	Relative accuracy Distance between points taken from the map. Relative error	Relative accuracy 99% confidence level
1:1250 (urban)	0.5 metres	<0.9 metres	+/- 0.5 metres (60 metres)	<+/- 1.1 metres (60 metres)

Source: Ordnance Survey “os-sitemap-user-guide.pdf”

21.2 Camera locations which are positioned on bridges are typically subject to greater tolerances than camera locations which are positioned on stable ground. Bridges are flexible structures and can be subject to movement caused by vibration, loading and wind. This is especially noticeable on suspension bridges.



Technical Methodology

22 VIEWPOINT FIGURE NOTES

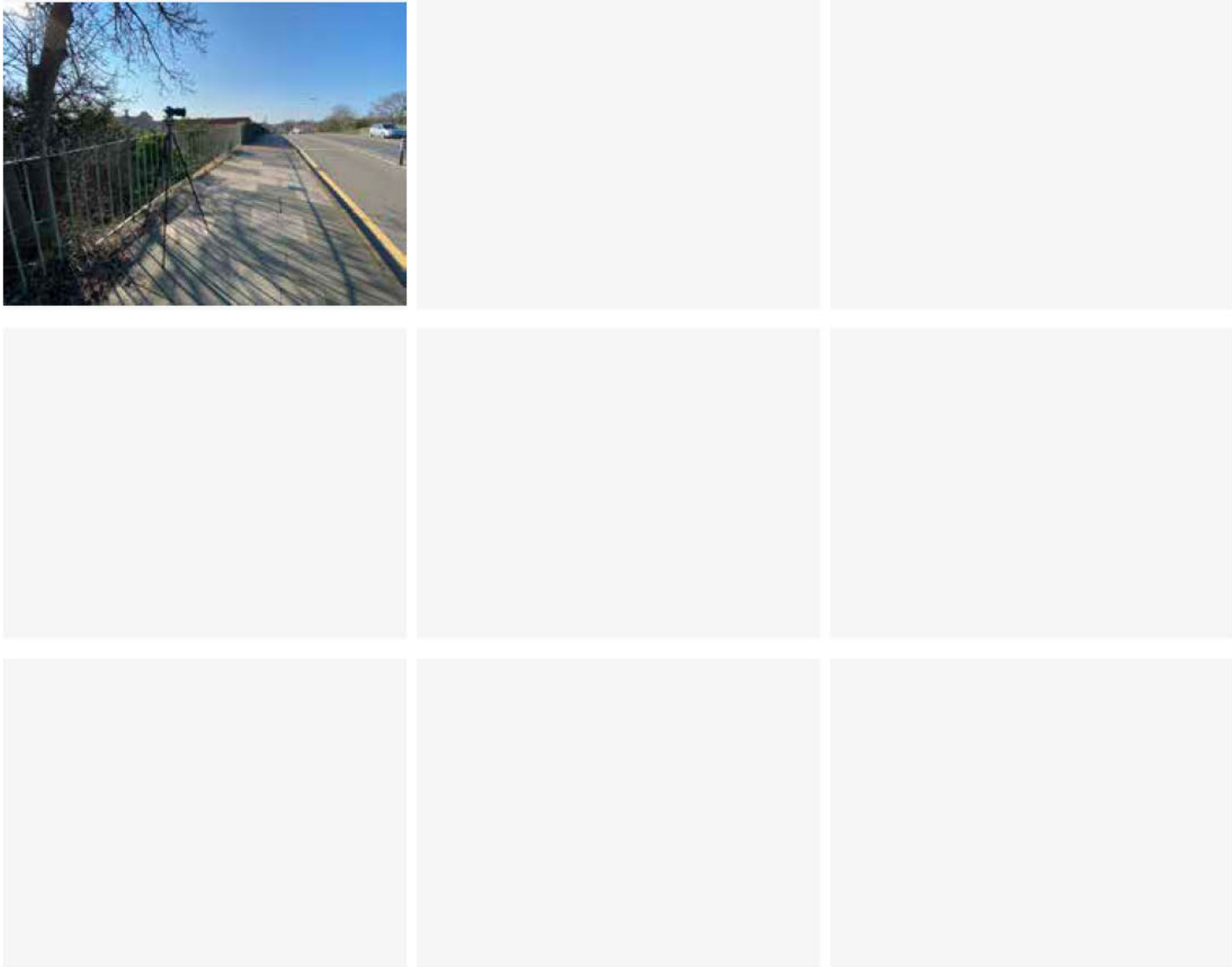
Job ID	Description	Easting/ Northing	Projection	Date/Time	Bearing	Distance	Camera	Lens	HFov	Accuracy	Chosen Lens Justification
VP01	Blakemere Road	523968 , 213539.7	24mm	08.03:2022, 16:00:00	180.3°	236.2m	Sony A7rII	24mm TS/E	76.6°	Better than 1m	Inclusion of local context
VP02	The Campus	523781.8 , 213276.8	24mm	08.03:2022, 14:40:00	88.1°	215.1m	Sony A7rII	24mm TS/E	76.6°	Better than 1m	Inclusion of local context
VP03	Bridge Road Junction	523757.4 , 213197.3	24mm	08.03:2022, 14:53:00	66.7°	260.9m	Sony A7rII	24mm TS/E	76.6°	Better than 1m	Inclusion of local context
VP04	Bridge Road Bridge	524055.3 , 213098	24mm	08.03:2022, 14:22:00	333.8°	215.6m	Sony A7rII	24mm TS/E	76.6°	Better than 1m	Inclusion of local context

23 CAMERA LOCATIONS

- Top row:
VP 010 Blakemere Road
VP 020 The Campus
VP 030 Bridge Road Junction



- 23.1 Second row:
VP 040 Bridge Road Bridge



Appendix 2 - Historic England's Response letter



Adeleh Haghighi
Senior Consultant

Direct Dial: 01223 582751

Savills
33 Margaret Street
London
W1G 0JD

Date: 28th July 2022

Dear Adeleh Haghighi

Pre-application Advice

LAND AT CAMPUS EAST, WELWYN GARDEN CITY, HERTFORDSHIRE

Thank you for meeting with me and my colleague Edward James on Monday 18th July 2022 to discuss the plans for redevelopment of this car park site to residential. We noted that the plans were rather advanced and the scheme was at detailed design phase. We would however, like to make the following comments;

Heritage Context

The campus east site is in an important location within the Soissons masterplan for Welwyn Garden City. It is at the centre of the planned civic core of the town and, it is where some of the earliest and most important buildings were located. The department store and the council offices are important buildings within close proximity to the site.

The site also lies on the periphery between the civic core and the industrial zone, being separated from the latter by the railway line which was the transport heart of the town. Being on this peripheral spot, it is important that any scheme addresses both zones.

Layout

- The layout appears constrained by competing requirements to minimise noise and provide car parking. Broadly we welcome the approach of creating open space through which an active travel route is proposed. This would create a pleasant environment, which is also overlooked by the more actively used rooms of the dwellings, thus creating passive surveillance.
- Although the scheme now appears to be wholly residential, we would suggest that some space is made available for a small commercial unit such as a café, which addresses the green space and adds some public interest.
- The routes of the car movement network appears to be at odds with



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- pedestrians and cyclists. Car movement could be restricted to the outside of the site leaving the green space entirely car free and pedestrian and cyclist friendly.
- We are concerned regarding the position and provision of car parking and consider that where possible these areas should be underground and not placed around the outside of the development as an afterthought.

Building and Development Design

- Is there to be renewable energies integrated into the design of the development? This should be designed in from the outset and not become a secondary bolt on later.
- The gateway buildings are key to the development and the one fronting the campus should reflect its position at the front of the site. This need not be grand or civic but, it is the first part of the development experienced from the campus. The same could be said for the entrance to the development from the footpath to the east(?) of the development yet there are no gateway buildings proposed here. Both should create a sense of arrival.
- We recognise that detailed design is yet to be worked up however these details will be key. At present they seem to represent rather bland elevational design that could be anywhere – they do not announce that this is Welwyn. The Golden Ratio seems rather lost and does not express itself overtly. Perhaps consideration could be given to better ground floor stone detailing and a reduction in size of the upper windows to better respond to the Golden Ratio proportions.
- The prevailing window colour in Welwyn Garden City is white set within red brick. Perhaps a contemporary take on this would better assist the development to integrate successfully.

Next Steps
Thank you for meeting with us last week and I apologise for the delay in getting these comments to you. We hope that despite this delay they may still be of some use in developing the design of the development.

Please contact me should you wish to discuss anything further.

Yours sincerely

Lynette Fawkes
Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas



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