

5.4 VERNACULAR & CHARACTER

The elevations aim to provide attractive elevations with the use of high quality materials and simple yet intricate details that add to the richness of Welwyn Garden City. Frontages will predominantly feature red brick to reflect the local heritage and vernacular.

The repeated rhythm of Georgian style sash windows facilitates a formal character which remains in keeping with its town centre location. A reconstituted stone band and double height brick soldier course are proposed to wrap around the building at ground floor level to create a consistent and unbroken plinth at street scale and further offer some delineation to upper floors.

In order to emphasise the vertical hierarchy, brick detailed surrounds and infills will be applied to first and second floor windows only. Above this, windows are typically smaller in height and/or do not contain decorative motifs.

Further brick detailing is used to accentuate the main ridge line, providing visual interest and richness to elevations.

The use of cantilevered balconies at upper levels not only provide a level of private amenity for residents but presents articulation at upper levels and contrast of materiality.

Simple fenestration denoting top floor vertical hierarchy

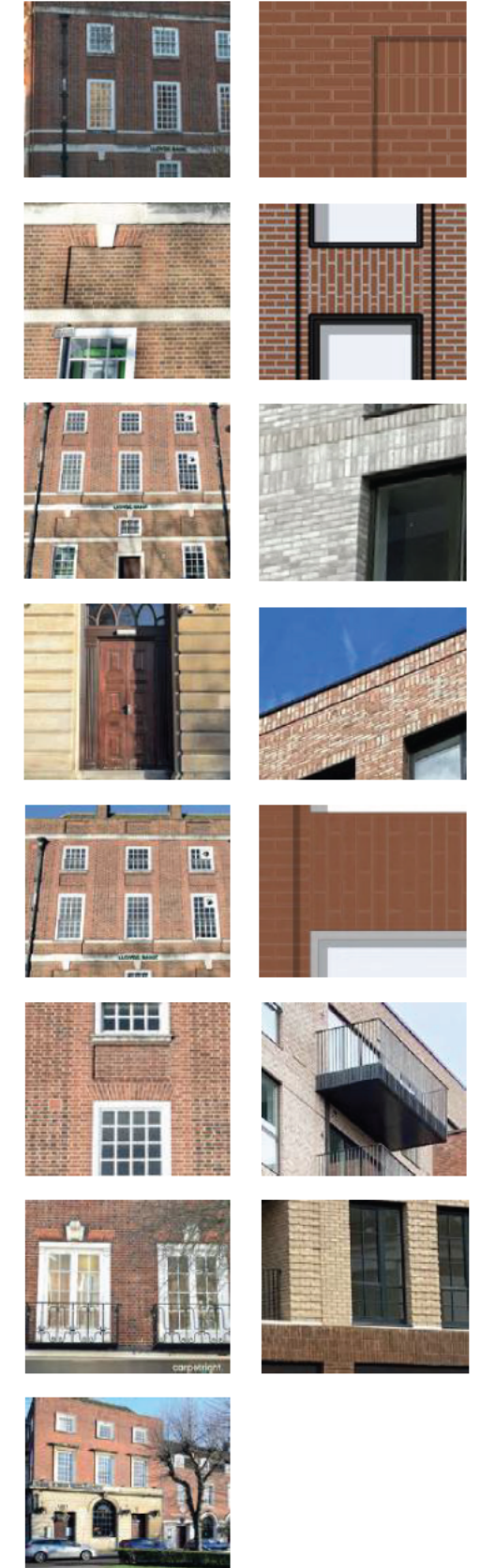
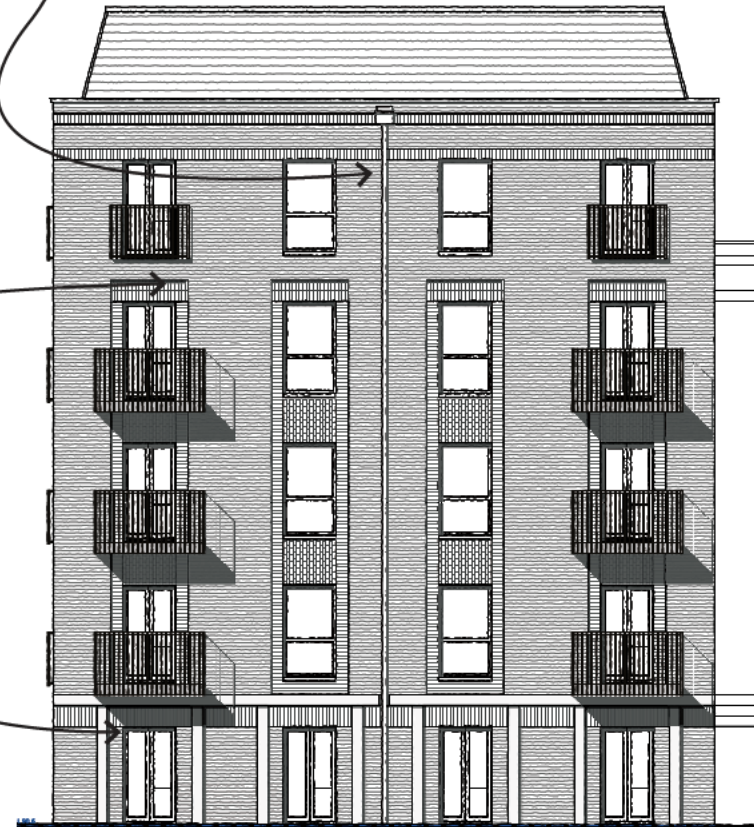
Repeating recess feature as site motif

Ground floor entrance detailing aiding legibility

Rainwater goods forming facade rhythm

Repeating recess feature as site motif

Articulation of ground floor at human scale denoting plinth section



FIGS 31 - DESIGN DEVELOPMENT



DORMERS/ROOF

- Dormer windows to be well-proportioned, have a slim profile around the window and of a smaller scale than other windows.
- The construction of dormers to be integral to the main roof.
- Mansards roof set slightly back and behind a parapet adhering to local character.
- Adequate space provided behind the parapets for gutters and cleaning access.

WINDOWS/DETAILS

- Limited range of traditional window types.
- Sash typology reproduced in contemporary materials and style.
- Used to emphasise vertical proportion and hierarchy of elevations.
- Variation in reveal depth and glazing bar patterns to add articulation to elevations.
- Brickwork soldier courses have been used to define horizontal banding and recesses.

BRICKWORK/ORNAMENTATION

- Red brickwork used as dominant material with soldier courses in same brickwork. A range of details have been used to provide visual interest and add richness to the elevations.
- These include header courses and decorative bands, and contrasting materials and textures.
- Recesses have been applied to create horizontal rhythm and hierarchy on the elevation.
- Spandrel panels have been used vertically between windows and selected as the same colour as frames to accentuate verticality.

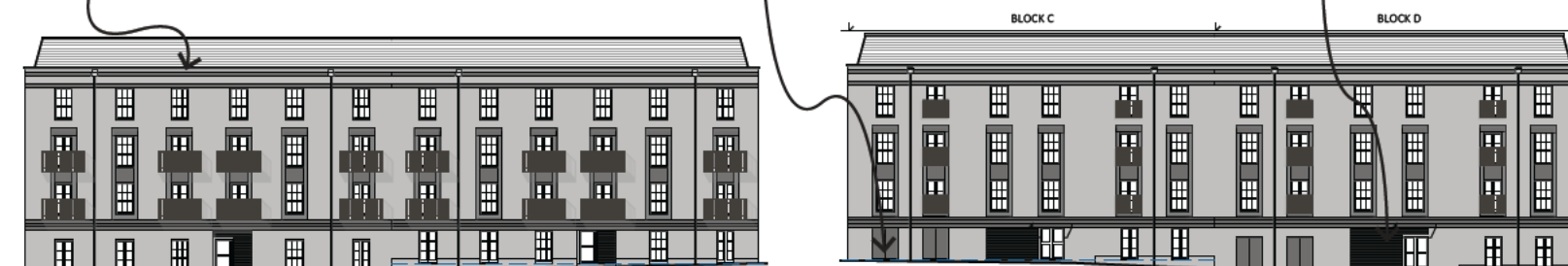
BASE/PLINTH DETAILING

- Contrasting materials have been used on the Ground Floor to express a horizontal base and articulate vertical hierarchy.
- Brickwork soldier courses used to delineate Ground from upper floors, creating a formal base level.
- Increased Ground Floor Storey employed to define formal vertical hierarchy.
- Base level, contrasting materials and golden ratio dimensions taken as design cues from surrounding area.

Omission of roof accommodation.
Retention of mansard to screen rooftop plant.

Articulation of accesses to ancillary spaces forming facade composition.

Definition of accesses through use of canopies and brick features.



FIGS 32 - DESIGN DEVELOPMENT



6.0 Consultation

6.1 PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION

Following introduction of the scheme to political representatives, the design development of the proposals have been presented at 8 pre-application meetings with WHBC on a regular basis, beginning in December 2021. This collaboration has been in addition to the numerous public and local group meetings in order to understand and incorporate amendments stemming from concerns from local residents and heritage groups.

Detailed feedback has been incorporated into the design proposals resulting in a coherent scheme, congruous to the Welwyn Garden City design principles.

Early meetings with officers raised a concern regarding the proximity and height of blocks nearest to the adjacent off-site residential properties. The layout was developed to increase the distance from the shared boundaries and plans developed to intensify accommodation within larger blocks in order to reduce the height of these blocks.

Vehicle dominance and its erosion of the available amenity in the centre of the site was also addressed and, following options to re-distribute site coverage, a simplified highway strategy was developed to reduce the extent of road affecting pedestrian/cycle routes through the Green Spine.

Success of the site access's character was also developed with the Council's Design Consultants to improve the separation between larger blocks and create an appropriate vista and frontages to this route into the site.

Early elevations and massing design proposals for longer blocks enclosing the central Green Spine were revisited through dialogue with Officers to ensure that large, unbroken lengths of facade was appropriately articulated, avoiding a homogeneous edge. Further development of blocks to separate elements, vary roof forms, and add articulation a more resolved proportion. This consistency was also addressed with Design Officers at consultation and added

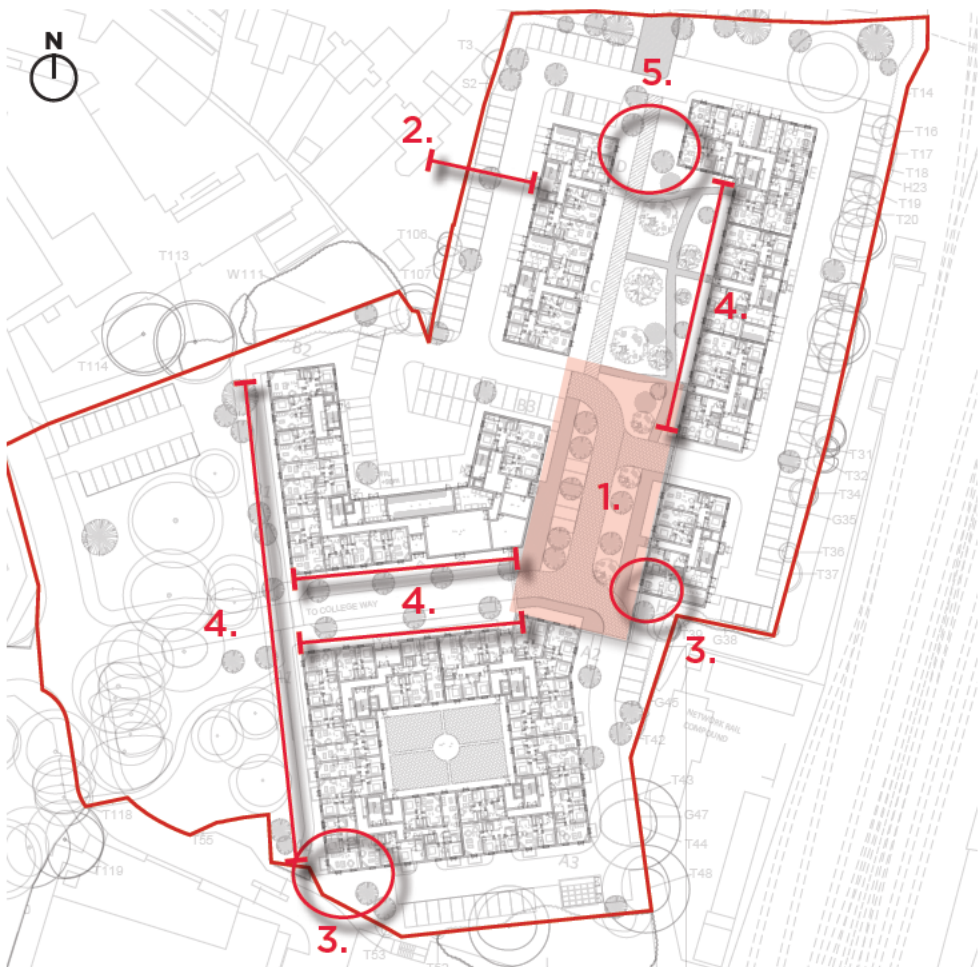
variety and interest in the elevation treatment of blocks at the front of the site and facing the Green Spine were explored and discussed with CGI modelling.

The secondary site access to the rear of the site bounding Gresley Close (north) was also identified as a weak element of the proposals and through continued consultation with WHBC, the internal layouts of the northernmost blocks were evolved to ensure appropriate positions of windows to ensure surveillance, and considered embellishment and articulation to add interest.

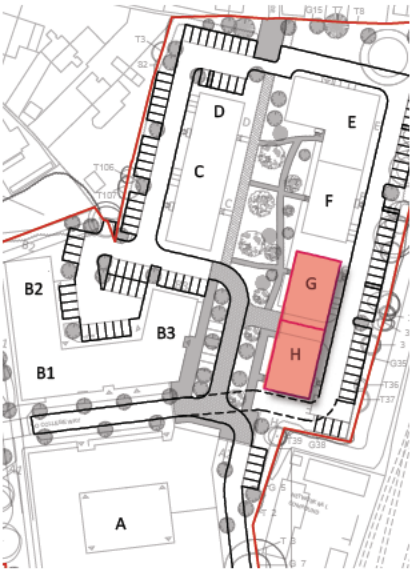
Officers also discussed the corner of Block A and its perceived prominence when viewed from the Waitrose boundary and its access road. Subsequent resolution of the internal layout of Block A allowed the southernmost corners of this block to be stepped back above ground floor, replicating the massing principles of John Lewis in WGC town centre, increasing separation from the boundary, and adding relief to the corner-turning element of the 5-storey block in this location of the site.



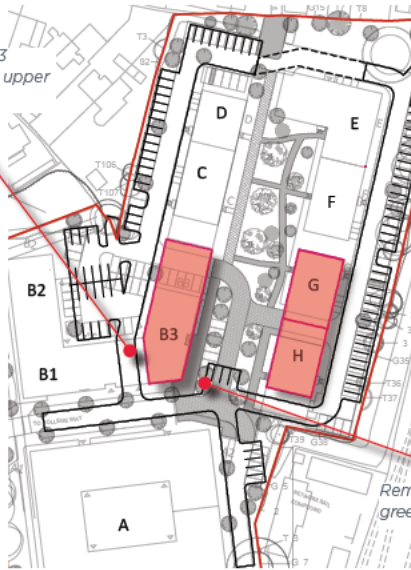
GREEN SPINE DEVELOPMENT SKETCHES



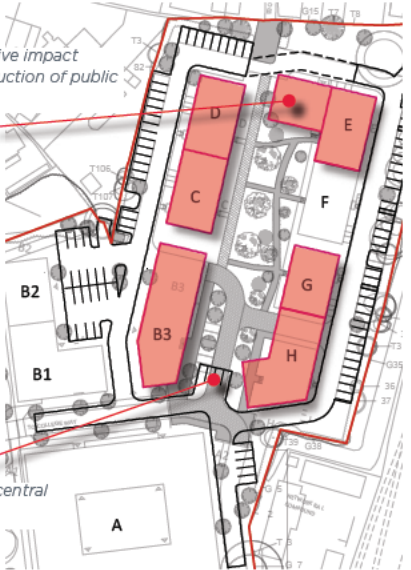
- Comment 1
- Vehicle dominance and extent of roadway within the Green Spine amenity.
- Comment 2
- Massing of Blocks C & D.
 - Proximity of Blocks C & D to Junction Cottages.
- Comment 3
- Proximity to Waitrose and noise.
- Comment 4
- Separation between Blocks A and B on approach road.
 - Homogeneous Façades of larger blocks.
- Comment 5
- Lack of enclosure to the central amenity on northern edge.



OPTION 1



OPTION 2 (preferred option)



OPTION 3

FIGS 33 - PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION

6.2 TECHNICAL CONSULTATION

Several technical consultations have been held between the design team and WHBC officers.

Generally, members of Bellway's team have entered into independent and direct dialogue with Council consultees but formal engagement within pre-application meetings has also been undertaken, particularly on issues/concerns relating to amenity levels for future residents of the site.

Agreement between applicant team and officers regarding trees, highways, noise, and heritage has been reached through continue dialogue since commencement of the pre-application negotiations in December 2021. When appropriate, officers have been kept updated of developments in the design and layout, but also programme to submission.

The following sections of this statement include the summary from each of these technical proposals, including details on how recommendations from WHBC consultees have been considered and addressed in this application submission.

6.3 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Continuous dialogue with local stakeholder groups have taken place during the design phase of the site's development. Regular meetings with Keep the G in WGC and Welwyn Garden City Heritage Trust were held to update them formally on their requests and the scheme's progress ahead of submission of the application.

Discussions with both groups proved to be valuable and as concerns or requests for information were raised, the team was able to respond appropriately either by meetings in person or regular correspondence through Marengo Communications.

Concerns and comments throughout the scheme's development generally revolved around building detailing, quantum of units, allocation of social housing, and parking provision.

A Statement of Community Involvement forms part of this planning application.

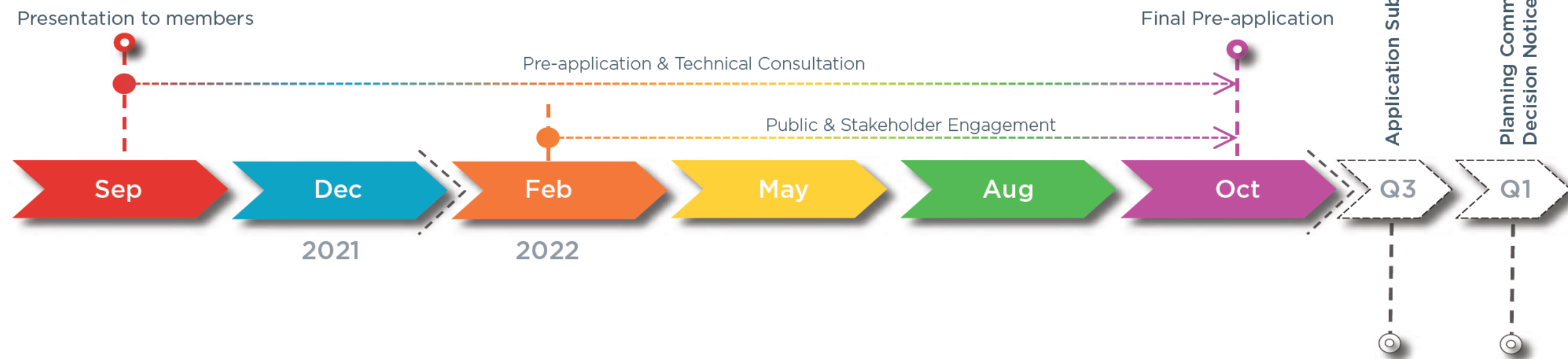


FIG 34 - SUBMISSION PROGRAMME