

CHARTER HOUSE, WELWYN GARDEN CITY

NHS Property Services Ltd
Job No. 1000057

Design and Access Statement and Heritage Statement

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Project Details	
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This supporting Planning, Design and Access, and Heritage Statement has been prepared by Ingleton Wood LLP in support of a full planning application for the installation of 81 replacement windows to Charter House, Parkway, Welwyn Garden City, AL8 6JL.

These measures have been proposed following issues related to sourcing replacement parts to the existing aluminium windows which allow it to be a safe and operable window. This issue has become a constant irritant for users of the building, and the replacements are necessary to ensure the windows can be safely operated.

The proposed replacement windows will match the existing windows in dimensions of the existing windows, visual style, and colour.

This Statement should be read in conjunction with the submitted application package, which includes the following documents:

- Completed application form.
- Location and Block plan
- Existing elevations
- Proposed elevations

The submitted documents are in full compliance with the requirements for the validation of the full planning application.

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

Charter House is an NHS support services office building located on Parkway, in the centre of Welwyn Garden City. The site is within an accessible location, situated 340m northwest of Welwyn Garden City railway station, and within 200m of several bus services. The surrounding area is predominantly commercial. The site is located within the Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area.

The site consists of a part-3, part-4 storey brick and concrete office building constructed in the 20th Century, with a modern extension and an area of hardstanding and undercroft vehicular parking to the rear. Pedestrian access runs from Parkway, and vehicular access runs from Wigmores North through to the parking area.

This application is for replacement windows to the rear modern extension.



South Elevation taken from rear Carparking area accessed from Wigmores North



North Elevation taken from pedestrian passageway between Parkway and Wigmores North



West Elevation taken from pedestrian passageway between Parkway and Wigmores North



Close up of existing windows to be replaced.

3.0 USE

The site comprises of offices providing support services to the NHS. Users of the building have been experiencing problems related to the poor condition of the existing windows. Replacement parts of these windows are no longer available and therefore full window replacement is necessary to ensure the efficient and comfortable operation and maintenance of the building.

4.0 AMOUNT

This proposal is for 81 no replacement windows. Replacement windows are to the rear extension part of Charter House. North and South Elevations with 3no being to the small west return elevation.

5.0 LAYOUT

The location of the replacement windows is identified on proposed elevation drawing 1000057-IWD-XX-XX-DR-A-2002 Proposed Elevations. Windows for replacement are identified in red.

6.0 SCALE

The replacement windows have been designed to reflect the existing windows for style and dimensions.

7.0 APPEARANCE

The existing windows are white aluminium framed. The replacement windows are double glazed uPVC versions, sensitively designed to reflect the existing style and dimensions. Currently the entire windowpane opens. The replacement windows will be designed to have half-light openings. The position of this line is designed to reflect the current style of window.

8.0 ACCESS

Access to the site will be maintained via the existing pedestrian access from Parkway, and the existing vehicular access Wigmores North. This proposal will not impede on access or circulation around or to the building.

9.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

This section identifies national and local planning policy and guidance relevant to assessing the proposal to replace the windows at the site.

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless other material conditions indicate otherwise.

The Development Plan for Welwyn Hatfield Borough comprises:

- Welwyn Hatfield District Plan Saved Policies (2005)
- Emerging Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan 2013-2032

Relevant National Planning Policy and Guidance include:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (2019)
- Planning Practice Guidance

The Development Plan – Welwyn Hatfield District Plan (2005)

The Welwyn Hatfield District Plan is the key policy document in Welwyn Hatfield's LDF. Several of the policies remain saved, those of relevance are set out below, and will be addressed in Sections 10.0 and 11.0 of this statement.

Policy R3: Energy Efficiency

All developments are expected to: Include measures to maximise energy conservation through design.

Policy D1: Quality of Design

The Council will require the standard of design in all new development to be of a high quality.

Policy D2: Character and Context

The Council will require all new development to respect and relate to the character and context of the area in which it is proposed. Development proposals should as a minimum maintain, and where possible, should enhance or improve the character of the existing area.

Policy D3: Continuity and Enclosure

The Council will require all new development to incorporate the principles of continuity and enclosure to distinguish between public and private spaces.

Policy D6: Legibility

The Council will require all new development to enhance and contribute to the legibility of the development itself and of the area in which it is located.

Policy TCR13: Environment of Welwyn Garden City Town Centre

The Council will seek to maintain and enhance the unique architectural character of, and the quality of the environment in, Welwyn Garden City town centre. All new development must be designed to respect the architectural style of the town centre and enhance the public realm.

Emerging Development Plan – Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan 2013-2032

The Emerging Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan has undergone examination but is yet to be adopted. Therefore, the following draft policies should be granted partial weight and will be addressed in Sections 6.0 and 7.0 of this statement.

Draft Policy SP8: The Local Economy

The Council will retain a stock of good quality employment premises.

Draft Policy SP9: Place Making and High-Quality Design

Proposals will be required to deliver a high-quality design that fosters a positive sense of place by responding to the following principles in an integrated and coherent way.

- Respond to character and context – relate well to surroundings and local distinctiveness and enhance the sense of place.
- Legible, permeable, and well connected.
- High quality public space and landscaping – Continuity of frontages and appropriate definition of spaces is created/maintained.
- Space for nature
- Vibrant and diverse
- Safe and secure
- Building function and form – Alterations to buildings relate well to the character and proportions of the existing building and its curtilage, the surrounding context and the street scene.

Draft Policy SP10: Sustainable Design and Construction

Proposals that adopt sustainable design and construction principles will be supported. Including through design which maximises opportunities to reduce carbon emissions.

Draft Policy SADM15: Heritage

Policies which affect designated heritage assets should consider:

- The potential to sustain and enhance the heritage asset and historic environment in a manner appropriate to its function and significance.
- Successive small-scale changes that lead to a cumulative loss or harm to the significance of the asset or historic environment should be avoided.
- Proposals should respect the character, appearance and setting of the asset and historic environment in terms of design, scale, materials, and impact on key views.
- Architectural or historic features which are important to the character and appearance of the asset should be retained unaltered.
- The historic form and structural integrity of the asset are retained.

Proposals that result in less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset will be refused unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location significantly outweigh that harm and the desirability of preserving the asset, and all feasible solutions to avoid and mitigate that harm have been fully implemented.

Draft Policy SP15: The Historic Environment of Welwyn Garden City

Proposals for new development should protect, conserve and where appropriate enhance its heritage assets.

Draft Policy SP16: Welwyn Garden City Town Centre Strategy

New development should make a positive contribution to improving the town centre's viability and vitality, support the creation of a comfortable, safe, attractive, and accessible shopping

environment, and improve both the overall mix of land uses in the centre and its connectivity to the adjoining areas.

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was updated in 2019 and sets out the Government's overarching economic, environmental, and social planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF does not change the statutory status of the Development Plan as the starting point for decision making; however, it is a material consideration for Local Planning Authorities (LPA) in the determination of planning applications.

Paragraph 128 of the NPPF states that applicants should describe the significance of any heritage asset affected, including any contribution made to their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

Planning Practice Guidance (2019)

The Planning Practice Guidance is a web-based resource for all material relating to planning. The guidance and policies published form a material consideration for any planning application decision.

Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance

The relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance Documents and Explanatory Notes relevant to this application include:

- Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area Appraisal (2007)
- Welwyn Garden City Town Centre North SPD (2015)
- Welwyn Hatfield District Plan Supplementary Design Guidance (2005)

10.0 PLANNING POLICY ASSESSMENT

The application seeks Full Planning Permission for the installation of 81 no replacement windows to Charter House. Policy requirements of relevance for this application relate to design and employment uses. Issues of heritage will be addressed in Section 11.0 Heritage Statement.

Design

The proposed replacement windows have been chosen to respond to design requirements within the Local Planning Policy including the need for high quality design which corresponds to local context; continuity and legibility; energy conservation; and enhancing the viability and vitality of the Town Centre.

In line with District Plan Policies D1, D2 and TCR13, and emerging Local Plan Policy SP9, the style and finishes have been chosen to respect the design and character of the original building and the surrounding context. The proposed replacements will match the existing windows in terms of design and dimensions.

The proposal will maintain the existing continuity of frontages and legibility, the chosen designs reflect the existing windows and the singularity of styles on each frontage will be

maintained. This proposal therefore corresponds with District Plan Policies D3 and D6, and emerging Local Plan Policy SP9.

The existing windows have reached the end of their useful lifetime, and this has led to problems of draughts and excessive external noise. The replacements are necessary to improve the comfort and maintenance of the building. The changes will enhance the building's energy performance, in line with District Plan Policy R3 and emerging Local Plan Policy SP10.

In line with emerging Local Plan Policy SP16, this proposal will make a positive contribution to improving the viability and vitality of Welwyn Garden City, through improving the appearance and quality of the existing office building.

Employment Uses

Emerging Local Plan Policy SP8 states that the Council will look to retain a stock of good quality employment premises. This proposal will ensure the continued use of the existing office building and will improve the comfort and maintenance of the building.

11.0 HERITAGE STATEMENT

Paragraph 189 of the NPPF requires applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

The heritage asset of relevance in this case is the Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area. Welwyn Garden City was planned and designed in 1920 by Welwyn Garden City Limited and Louis de Soissons. The town constitutes a historic example of a Garden City approach to planning.

The Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area Statement includes an analysis of the Conservation Area's significance. Significance is largely historical, relating to the planning of the Garden City.

Significance also arises from the layout of the town centre, particularly the generous open spaces and associated spatial interrelations. Within the town centre, the architectural form is largely neo-Georgian with emphasis on horizontality, homogeneity, and low density.

Charter House is located on Parkway, which is noted for the generous layout, which takes a pan-European form.

Assessment

The development is assessed below in accordance with paragraph 193 and 196 of the NPPF.

Paragraph 193 states:

"When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any

potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.”

Paragraph 196 states:

“Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.”

In line with District Plan Policies D2 and TCR13, and emerging Local Plan Policies SADM15 and SP15, this proposal has been designed to sensitively upgrade the office building to secure its continued beneficial use and enhance its efficiency. The windows have been designed to match the existing, and to respect the character of the building and area. The chosen replacements match the current windows in style, scale and colour, and represent more efficient and effective options.

This proposal represents an opportunity to enhance the offices at Charter House, by improving the comfort and efficiency of the building.

12.0 CONCLUSION

This application seeks Full Planning Application for the installation of 81 no. replacement windows to Charter House.

The replacement windows have been sensitively designed to reflect the existing style and dimensions. The proposed changes are essential due to the issues faced with sourcing replacement parts which is resulting in the occupants having defective windows.

For the reasons identified within this Statement, the proposals provide an opportunity to enhance the appearance and character of the building. The replacements will also enable the efficient and comfortable use and maintenance of the building.

END