



Land at the former Highways House Site  
Broadwater Road, Welwyn Garden City

## Design & Access Statement



Produced by Woods Hardwick Ltd on behalf of Wheatley Homes (WGC) Ltd



January 2015

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# 1. Introduction



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## 1.1. Purpose of the Statement

1.1.1. This document is the Design and Access Statement accompanying the Full Planning Application for residential development on part of the former Highways House site at Broadwater Road, Welwyn Garden City.

1.1.2. The document has been prepared by Woods Hardwick Architects Ltd and is submitted on behalf of Wheatley Homes (WGC) Ltd.

1.1.3. It is relevant to note this application relates to the northern half of the site presently accommodating office use. The overall site is divided broadly in half, with the northern half accommodating the majority of the car parking related to the office building (Highways House), which is sited on the southern half. It was the decision of the site owners to sell the site to two parties so that the northern half could be redeveloped as housing (which is the subject of this application), while the southern half be redeveloped as an 80 bed Care Home (the subject of a separate application by another party). During the design process, discussions have taken place between both parties to ensure that both schemes work together well, both spatially and architecturally.

### General

1.1.4. This document has been prepared in accordance with the General Development Procedure Order (GDPO as amended and the guidance given in the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) publication: Guidance on information Requirements and Validation (March 2012)), which requires planning applications to be accompanied by a Design and Access Statement. Consequently, the purpose of this statement is to explain:

“the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the proposed development and how issues relating to access to the development have been dealt with”

1.1.4. Reference has also been made to the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment’s (CABE) guidance on ‘Design and Access Statements: How to write, read and use them’ (CABE, 2006).

1.1.5. This design and access statement therefore provides the framework for an informed and creative design-led response to the constraints and opportunities of the development site.

### Approach

1.1.6. The approach taken is based on a comprehensive assessment of the site context in terms of opportunities and constraints for development of the site.

The following sections therefore deal with:

#### Section 1: Introduction

- Outlines the purpose of the document

#### Section 2: Assessment

- Appraises the site and its surroundings in terms of physical, social and economic contexts

#### Section 3: Evaluation & Design Principles

- Identification of the sites constraints and opportunities, as well as the design objectives which underpin the design approach for the site

#### Section 4: Design Proposals

- Outlines information on the use and amount of development, movement and access arrangements, layout of the development, scale of buildings, landscaping and appearance

#### Section 5: Sustainability

- Considers the relevant issues and proposed standards to meet sustainability objectives



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## 2. Site Assessment







Fig. 1: Aerial View of the Site (indicated red)



## 2.1. General

### Location and Background

2.1.1. Welwyn Garden City is located within the Borough of Welwyn Hatfield in the County of Hertfordshire (fig. 2). The Garden City was established in 1920 by Ebenezer Howard and was part of a wider Garden City Movement in Britain. Welwyn Garden City was the second Garden City to be established and built by Howard, following Letchworth in 1903. Louis de Soissons was selected to design the master plan based on Howard's Garden City ideals - principally, the merging of the opportunities of a town with the benefits of the country.

2.1.2. After the Second World War, Welwyn Garden City was designated a New Town under the 1946 New Towns Act. Retaining Louis de Soissons as Planning Consultant, the newly formed Development Corporation proposed major extensions to the existing residential areas to the north-west and south-east to increase the population from approximately 18,500 to 39,000. A substantial number of houses were built during the postwar years in these areas, which were within the original surrounding agricultural green belt.

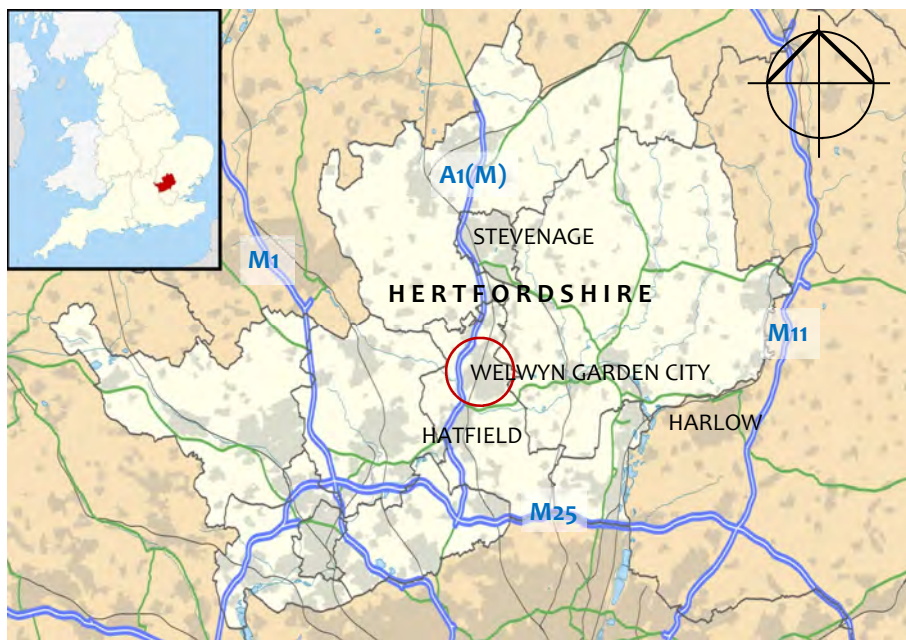


Fig. 2: Location of Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire

2.1.3. Welwyn Garden City has an estimated population of 48,380 (2011 census).

2.1.4. It is situated approximately 25 miles north of London and 25 miles south-east of Luton. The New Towns of Stevenage and Hatfield are nearby to the north and south respectively.

2.1.5. Welwyn Garden is well connected to the National road network with the A1(M) running north/south to the west of the town. The site is close to the mainline railway station which connects Welwyn Garden City to London in the south and Stevenage and beyond to the north.

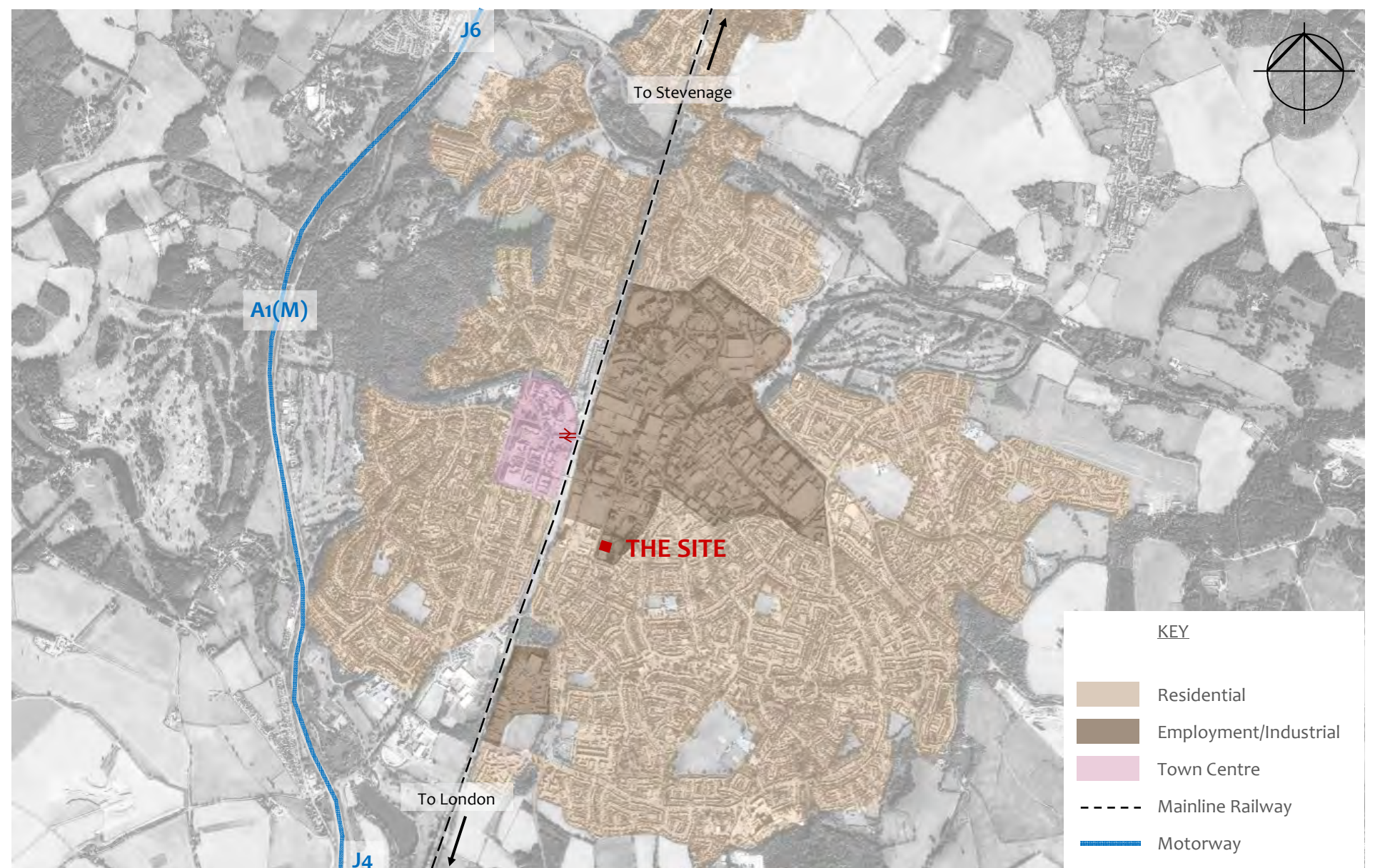


Fig. 3: Aerial Map of Welwyn Garden City (site indicated red)



Fig. 4: Site Location Plan and Photographs of Adjacent Surroundings



1. View north-west from site boundary along Broadwater Road.



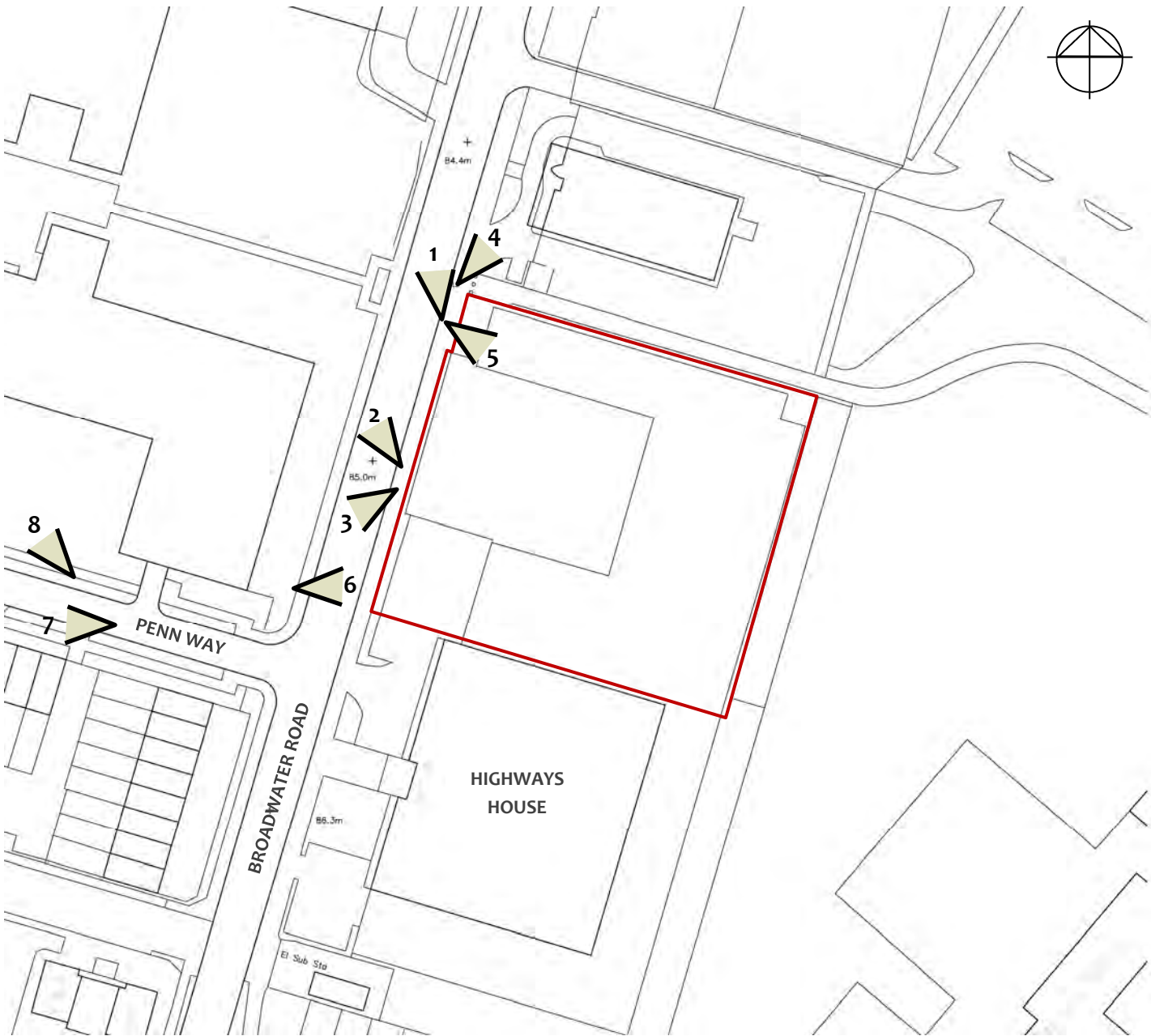
4. Adjacent office building to the north of the site.



2. Flats and open space on Broadwater Road, opposite the site.



5. View south-west across the site from Broadwater Road.



OS Map showing locations of photographs



3. Flats and Houses on Broadwater Road, opposite the site.



6. View of the site west across Broadwater Road



7. Semi-detached houses along Penn Way.



8. Flats and terraced housing off Penn Way.



## 2.2. Physical Aspects

### Site Description

2.2.1. The application site extends to 0.38 hectares and comprises the northern half of a site offering Office (B1) use facilities located at the southern edge of the industrial area (EA1). The site, which is indicated outlined red at Figure 4, is located relatively close to the railway station and town centre to the east and presently consists of an extensive car parking area which serves the adjoining vacant two storey office block known as ‘Highways House’.

2.2.2. The northern boundary of the site adjoins a public footpath which runs from Broadwater Road eastwards connecting to Peartree Lane approximately 100m to the east of the site. North of the footpath is a two-storey office building currently occupied by Saunders Partnership Architects for which vehicular and pedestrian access to the building are taken directly from Broadwater Road, with parking facilities to the rear of the building.

2.2.3. The western boundary of the site is defined by the A1000 Broadwater Road. Four separate direct accesses to the ‘Highways House’ site exist from Broadwater Road. Directly opposite the site along the western side of Broadwater Road, there is a four-storey block of flats (built recently as part of the Broadwater Road West (BWRW) master plan). The block is of contemporary design, rendered white to complement the neighbouring former office to the Roche Products factory, which is Grade II listed. Adjacent to the flats across Penn Way is a row of three-storey terraced houses constructed in brick. The terrace and the flats are set back from Broadwater Road with generous front gardens enclosed by low shrubs and railings. The gardens are separated from the pavement by a grass verge; existing trees have been retained to ensure the tree-lined street is maintained.

2.2.4. The southern boundary of the application site adjoins the two-storey ‘Highways House’ office building.

2.2.5. The eastern boundary is defined by a relatively narrow belt of mature trees, beyond which, lies the playing fields of the adjacent Peartree Primary School.

### Land Use

2.2.6. The application site is part of the former ‘Highways House’ site and was previously used as the car park to the County’s Highways Department Office.

### Topography

2.2.7. The site is relatively flat.

### Movement and Circulation

2.2.8. The site fronts onto A1000 Broadwater Road, which serves as a primary route to the Industrial Area from Junction 6 of the A1(M).

2.2.9. The site is located approximately 0.5 miles from Welwyn Garden City Railway Station and approximately 0.6 miles from the town centre, which is just beyond the station. The site is currently well served by existing bus routes.

2.2.10. There are no public footpaths or otherwise designated routes through the site, although a public footpath runs immediately to the north of the site.

### Geotechnical

2.2.11. A ‘Phase II Ground Investigation Report’ accompanies this application.

2.2.12. The Ground Investigation has indicated that the site comprises made ground to a maximum depth of 1.10m below ground level. The made ground was recorded as a thin layer of concrete or block paving overlying light brownish grey sandy gravel, with common fine to coarse brick and concrete fragments, brick and concrete cobbles.

2.2.13. The Investigation showed that the made ground was underlain by firm to stiff fissured orangey brown gravelly slightly silty (material which has been interpreted as Glacial Till) to a maximum depth of 3.00m below ground level.

### Drainage

2.2.14. In accordance with PPS25 and the General Development Procedure Order (GDPO), since the application site does not fall within the Environment Agency’s Flood Zone 2 or 3, and has a site area of less than 0.5 hectares, the application is not accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment.

2.2.15. Surface water will be attenuated on site and discharged to the surface water sewers located in Broadwater Road to the west of the site. The rate of discharge will not exceed that of the current site and sufficient attenuation to accommodate a 1 in 100 year storm with an additional 30% allowance for climatic change will be provided on the site. This strategy has been agreed in principle with Thames Water. By virtue of the significant increase in landscaping proposed on the site compared to the current site betterment will come about in terms of a reduction in surface water runoff.



## Ecology

2.2.16. Given the existing developed nature of the site and extensive hard standing area, there are no ecological issues to consider, other than the presence of boundary landscaping.

2.2.17. A Bat Roosting Assessment carried out by ELMAW Consulting also accompanies this application. The Assessment concludes that the office block adjacent to the application site has no apparent damage or architectural features which could provide recesses or cavities which bats could utilise. It is therefore concluded that the building has a negligible bat roosting potential.

2.2.18. The Assessment notes that the site is surrounded by mature trees, however, as a result of the negligible bat roosting potential offered by the existing office building, it is considered that the area is not likely to be of high value to bats.

2.2.19. As it is not predicted that bats would be encountered in the redevelopment of the site, mitigation or compensatory measures are not considered to be necessary.



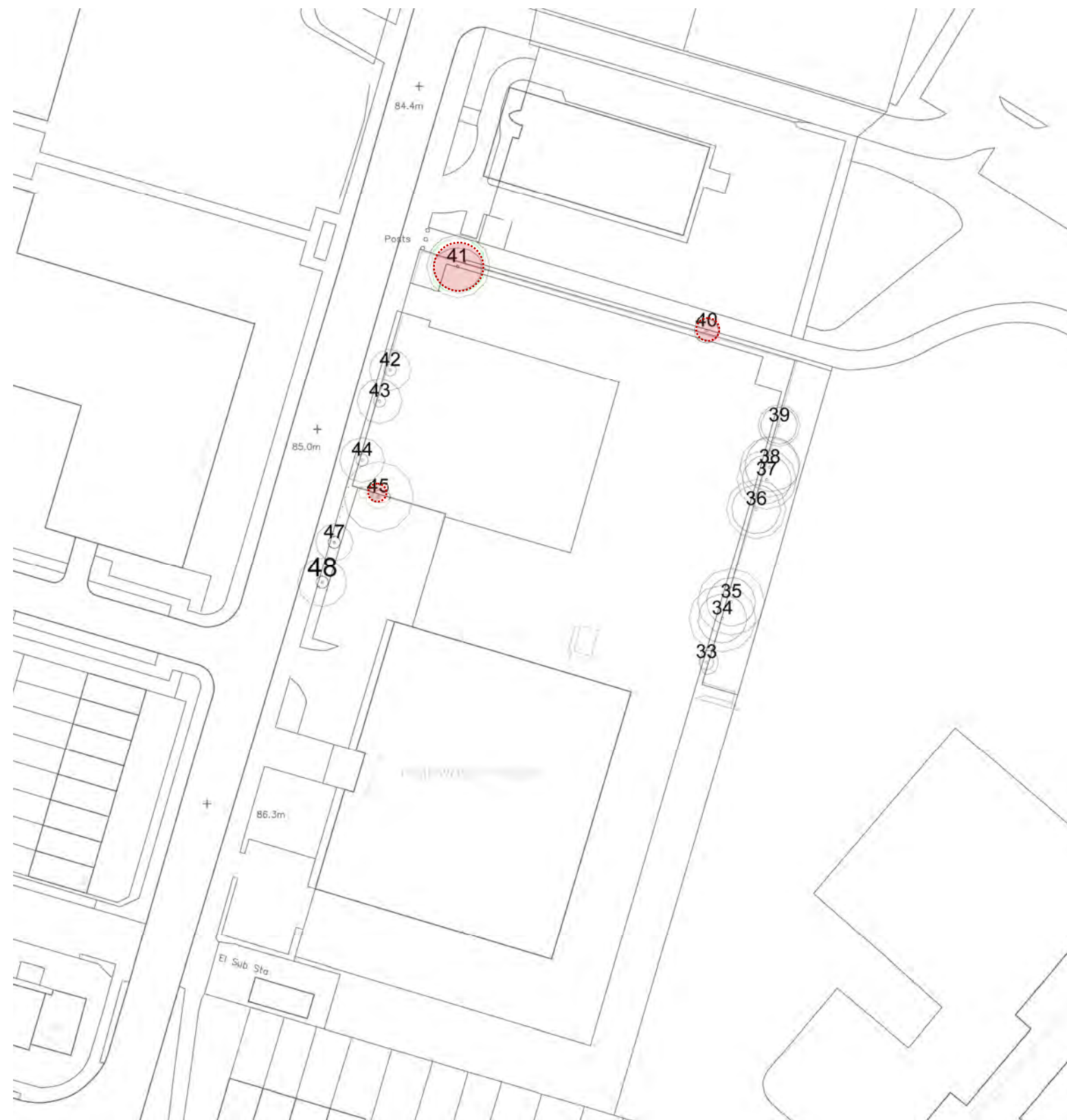


Fig. 5: Tree Survey (BHA Trees Ltd) shown with OS Map

### Arboriculture

2.2.20. An Arboricultural Impact Assessment by BHA Trees Ltd accompanies this application.

2.2.21. The Assessment has identified three Category U trees within and close to the site boundary. These are highlighted at fig. 5. It is recommended tree 41 at the north-western corner of the site be removed as it has been assessed as structurally poor.

2.2.22. Tree 40 has also been graded as Category U, as has tree 45 owing to an adjacent group of sucker growth. It is recommended that the Category U trees be removed.

2.2.23. The Assessment concludes that the size of the remaining trees on the site and on the adjacent land should not cause unwanted shading or dominance of the development proposals.

 Category U Tree

## 2.3. Planning Policy

2.3.1. Planning Policy guidance in relation to matters influencing the ‘design’ of a scheme exists from government to local level. A full consideration of policy issues is set out in the accompanying ‘Planning Statement’, but the following is an outline of relevant policy and guidance in ‘design’ terms.

### Government Policy

2.3.2. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published and came into immediate effect on 27 March 2012 and sets out a ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development that is the basis for every plan and decision’.

2.3.3. A core principle of this is:

‘Always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings’ [paragraph 17, point 4, NPPF 2012].

2.3.4. Section 7 requires new development to be of ‘good design’ with paragraphs 56 and 57 stating:

‘The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.’

2.3.5. ‘It is important to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes.’

2.3.6. Paragraph 60 goes on to state that:

‘Planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated

requirements to confirm to certain development forms or styles. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.’

2.3.7. Section 7 of the NPPF, seeks to promote more sustainable developments by requiring developers to address the following:

- Add to the overall quality of the area;
- Establish a strong sense of place;
- Optimise the use of land and placing an importance on high quality design;
- Respond to the local character and history;
- Create safe and accessible environments; and
- Are visually attractive with good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

2.3.8. Paragraph 61 advises that planning decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment. Paragraph 64 states that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.

2.3.9. The NPPF expects applicants to work closely with those directly affected by their proposals and to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Proposals that can demonstrate this should be looked on more favourably.

2.3.10. The NPPF promotes healthy communities (section 8), advising that planning decisions should aim to achieve places which promote:





## 2.4. Local Planning Policy

“Safe and accessible environments which take into account crime and the fear of crime, and that have clear and legible pedestrian routes and high quality public spaces.”

2.3.11. Paragraph 70 highlights the importance of delivering social, recreational and cultural facilities and services. It states that planning policies and decisions should plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities and other local services and should also ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.

2.3.12. Paragraph 73 advocates the importance of access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation and suggests that policies should be based upon robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities.

2.3.13. Paragraph 75 states that planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access.

2.3.14. Section 10 of the NPPF deals with meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change. To support the move to a low carbon future, new development should comply with adopted local plan policies on the requirements for decentralised energy supply and seek to minimise energy consumption (paragraph 96).

### Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005

2.4.1. The Welwyn Hatfield District Plan (WHDP) was adopted in 2005. Lasting for a period of only 3 years, a number of policies were ‘saved’ in 2008. The saved policies continue to form part of the current development plan.

2.4.2. A number of the saved policies are relevant to the determination of this application and have therefore been taken into account when designing the proposed scheme.

2.4.3. In particular, Policy H6 states that all residential developments of 5 or more dwellings are to be built at densities of 30 to 50 dwellings per hectare and in central areas and areas with good accessibility by modes of public transport, residential development will be expected to be close to or exceed 50 dwellings per hectare.

2.4.4. Policy H7 states that proposals for residential development on sites of 1ha or more, or with 25 units or more, a minimum of 30% affordable housing must be provided.

2.4.5. Policy H10 states that for all proposed residential developments of 5 or more dwellings, a proportion of dwellings should be built to Lifetime Homes standard.

2.4.6. Policy OS3 deals with the provision of open space and states that new residential developments of 0.4 hectares or above will be expected to make a contribution to the provision of children’s play space and informal open space.

2.4.7. In terms of design, Policy D2 states that new development should respect and relate to the context of the area in which it is proposed. Proposals should maintain and where possible, enhance the character of the area.

2.4.8. Policy D3 also deals with design and stated that all new development should incorporate the principles of continuity and enclosure to distinguish between public and private spaces.

2.4.9. Policy D5 states that all new development should take account of its impact on existing and proposed movement patterns make provision for pedestrian, cyclist and passenger transport facilities.

2.4.10. In relation to landscaping, Policy D8 states that all development should include landscaping as an integral part of the overall design and should reflect the urban landscape design in the district. Please refer to the Supporting Statement for the full reproduction of relevant policies.





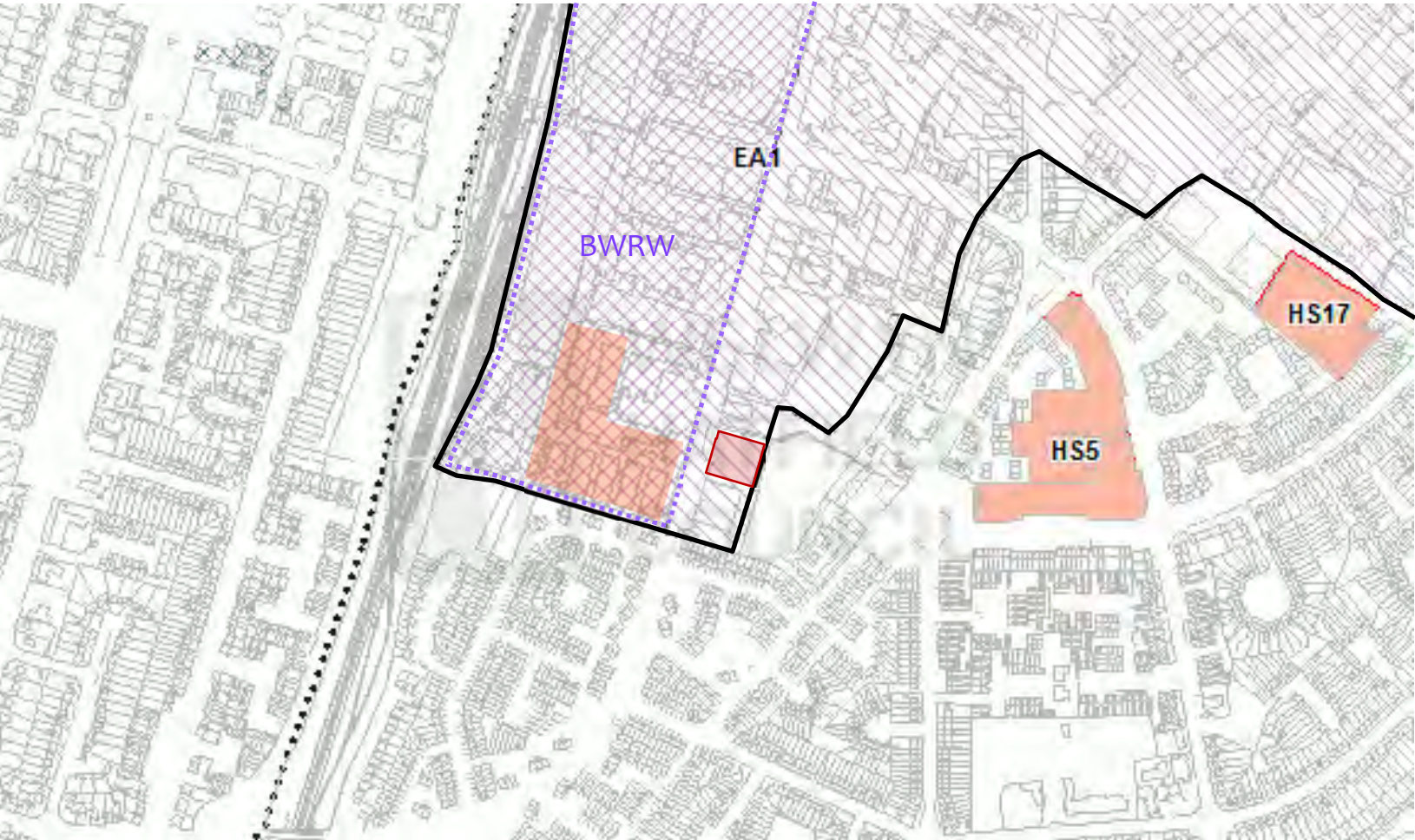






Fig. 6: Extract of Welwyn Hatfield District Plan (2005) showing Application Site location in relation to Employment Area 1 (EA1), BWRW Area, and designated Housing Development Areas HS5 and HS17



Fig. 7: Plan showing Broadwater Road West (BWRW) Area location in relation to Application Site location

-  Employment Area 1 (EA1)
-  Broadwater Road West designated for mixed development
-  Areas designated for residential development
-  Application Site



2.4.11. Policy EMP1 of the WHDP designates 9 Employment Areas throughout the District. Fig. 6. shows an extract of the WHDP with the location of the application site highlighted in red. It shows that the site falls within Employment Area 1 (EM1). Policy EMP2 stipulates that within Employment Areas, proposals for development within Use Classes B1, B2 or B8 (business, general industry or storage/distribution) will be permitted.

2.4.12. However, a large part of EA1 had become disused, and since the parts of the Area are highly accessible (close to the town centre and railway station), Policy EMP3 was implemented. This policy recognised the opportunities within the site for planned regeneration for mixed used development comprising employment, housing and leisure.

2.4.13. In December 2008, an area within EA1 was designated as the Broadwater Road West (BWRW) Area and a Supplementary Planning Document was published accordingly. Fig. 7. shows the extent of the BWRW area and the location of the application site in relation to it.

#### **Broadwater Road West SPD (2008)**

2.4.14. The extent of the BWRW Area is outlined in red at fig.5 and covers an area of approximately 16 hectares (40 acres). Located to the east of the railway station, the SPD recognised the site as a key gateway into Welwyn Garden City town centre.

2.4.15. Fig.8 shows the proposed Land Use Strategy Plan from the 2008 BWRW SPD. The plan proposed primarily residential blocks along Broadwater Road. It was also proposed that the centre of the proposed residential community be located to the south of the BWRW site, to create a smooth transition between the new and the existing housing.

2.4.16. The application site is indicated outlined and shaded red at fig.6. This demonstrates that although the site falls within EA1, it is located adjacent to the area of BWRW highlighted (and since built out) as residential development. Furthermore, the site is also within close proximity to the existing residential developments to the south.

2.4.17. In conjunction with the residential developments which have now recently been built in the southern portion of BWRW, residential development of the application site will therefore offer a transitional element between the Employment Area and the residential area on the east side of Broadwater Road. This transition would be further enhanced and assimilated should the concurrent Care Home application be approved.

2.4.18. In addition to the new residential developments opposite the site on Broadwater Road, the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan (2005) designated two further disused employment sites for residential development (HS5 and HS17 shown at fig. 4). Together with the proposed residential development (the subject of this application) the new housing which now occupies both these areas to the east of the site will create a more cohesive band of residential development to the south of EA1.



Fig. 8: BWRW Land Use Strategy Plan with Application Site indicated

## 2.5. Design Guidance

2.5.1. Current ‘best practice’ advice can be found in several documents and publications.

**2.5.2. By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System: Towards Better Practice, CABE**



2.5.3. The aim of this guidance document is to promote higher standards in urban design, with a central message that “careful assessments of places, well-drafted proposals, robust decision making and a collaborative approach are needed if better places are to be created”.

2.5.4. The guide is relevant to all aspects of the built environment, including the design of buildings and spaces, landscapes and transport systems. The guide is pertinent to Local Authority officers, house builders and all those who promote new development and apply for planning permission.

2.5.5. By Design has been drawn up around a number of simple design principles and provides sound, practical advice to help implement good design. The guide is divided into 4 main sections that discuss:

- (1) The need for better urban design;
- (2) Thinking about urban design;
- (3) Urban design and the planning toolkit; and
- (4) Raising standards in urban design.

2.5.6. It also highlights the relationship between the ‘key objectives’ of urban design and the ‘aspects of development form’, and encourages readers to consider both when developing design schemes;

**2.5.7. Objectives of Urban Design:**

- Character
- Continuity and Enclosure
- Quality of the Public Realm
- Ease of Movement
- Legibility
- Adaptability, and
- Diversity

**2.5.8. Aspects of Development Form:**

- Layout: Urban Structure
- Layout: Urban Grain
- Landscape
- Density and Mix
- Scale: Height
- Scale: Massing
- Appearance: Details
- Appearance: Materials

**2.5.9. Urban Design Compendium 1 & 2, English Partnerships & Homes and Communities Agency**



2.5.10. Originally published in 2000, the purpose of the Urban Design Compendium was to “help equip all those involved in the delivery of places with guidance on achieving and assessing the quality of urban design in developing and restoring urban areas”.

2.5.11. The Compendium was developed to establish how to use predicted housing growth in England as a basis for regenerating our towns and cities. It was developed to complement ‘By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System: Towards Better Practice’, and to implement higher standards of urban design by providing sound, practical advice. It was also hoped that it would inform and assist all those involved in new development and regeneration, and contribute to the promotion of sustainable developments.

2.5.12. The revised edition of the document is now known as ‘Urban Design Compendium 1: Urban Design Principles’ (UDC1). The document focuses on the key aspects of urban design and demonstrates how these can be applied to create successful spaces for living, working and socialising. Some of the key aspects which run throughout the Compendium include:

- Places for People
- Enrich the Existing
- Make Connections
- Work with the Landscape
- Mix Uses and Forms
- Manage the Investment
- Design for Change

2.5.13. ‘Urban Design Compendium 2: Delivering Quality Places’ was published in 2007 to accompany UDC1 and to give practical guidance on the steps that can be taken during project development to improve the quality of place delivered.





**2.6.14. Building for Life 12 (2012)**

2.6.15. Led by CABI and the Home Builders Federation, “*Building for Life is the national standard for developing well-designed homes and neighbourhoods*”.

2.6.16. Building for Life promotes urban design excellence by advocating to 12 ‘Building for Life criteria’ that embody the vision of functional, attractive and sustainable housing.

2.6.17. Developers can use the 12 questions as a basis for designing and writing development briefs, helping them to speed up planning approvals and win local community support.

2.6.18. The Building for Life principles are founded on government policy, and Local Authorities can use the Building for Life criteria as a tool for establishing high standards of design; assessing and evaluating the quality of development schemes at both pre-planning and post-construction phases.

2.6.19. The 12 Building for Life criteria/questions are:

**Integrating into the Neighbourhood:**

- 1 Connections
- 2 Facilities and Services
- 3 Public Transport
- 4 Meeting Local Housing Requirements

**Creating a Place:**

- 5 Character
- 6 Working with the Site and its Context
- 7 Creating Well Defined Streets and Spaces
- 8 Easy to Find your Way Around

**Street & Home:**

- 9 Streets for All
- 10 Car Parking
- 11 Public and Private Spaces
- 12 External Storage and Amenity Space

**2.6.20. Manual for Streets**

Department for Transport (March 2007)



2.6.21. The Manual for Streets is a joint publication produced by the Department for Transport (DfT) and Communities and Local Government. It is expected to be used predominantly for the design, construction, adoption and maintenance of new residential streets, but it is also applicable to existing residential streets subject to re-design. It aims to assist in the creation of high quality residential streets that:

- build and strengthen communities;
- balance the needs of all users;
- form part of a well-connected network;
- create safe and attractive places which have their own identity; and
- are cost-effective to construct and maintain.

2.6.22. Transformation in the quality of streets requires a Fundamental culture change in the way streets are designed. This needs a more collaborative approach between design professions and other stakeholders with people thinking creatively about their various roles in the design process. This publication is therefore aimed at all those who have a part to play in creating high-quality streets.

**2.6.23. Manual for Streets 2**

CIHT (September 2010)



2.6.24. Streets and roads make up around three-quarters of all public space – their design, appearance, and the way they function have a huge impact on the quality of people’s lives. Manual for Streets 2 - Wider Application of the Principles is the result of collaborative working between the Department for Transport and the transportation industry. It is an excellent demonstration of what can be achieved when Government works in partnership with professional industry representatives.

2.6.25. The aim of the document is to extend the advantages of good design to streets and roads outside residential areas and to provide an environment that improves the quality of life. By rethinking the way high streets and non-trunk roads are designed, the fabric of public spaces and the way people behave can be changed. It means embracing a new approach to design and breaking away from inflexible standards and traditional engineering solutions.

2.6.26. The new guide does not supersede Manual for Streets; rather it explains how the principles of the first document can be applied more widely. The guide further integrates the fundamentals of “Link and Place”, allowing designers to set the right design strategy for the particular nuances of busier streets. It also outlines a process to deliver the Governments new de-cluttering agenda.

2.6.27. The flexible and pragmatic guidance will assist all professionals involved in regeneration, development and highway management with a toolkit of approaches and methods that address the challenges on our busier streets.





**2.6.28.Planning and access for disabled people: a good practice guide**

DCLG (March 2003)

2.8.29. The primary objective of this guide is to ensure the planning system in England successfully and consistently delivers inclusive environments as an integral part of the development process. An inclusive environment is one that can be used by everyone, regardless of age, gender or disability.



### 2.6.29. Safer Places: The Planning System and Crime Prevention (2004)



2.6.30. The Central Government document *Safer Places: the Planning System and Crime Prevention* aims to show how good planning can contribute to crime prevention and the creation of safer places. It sets out seven attributes of sustainable communities that are of particular relevance to crime prevention which form the focus of the guide. The seven attributes are as follows:

- **Access and Movement:** places with well-defined routes, spaces and entrances that provide for convenient movement without compromising security
- **Structure:** places that are structured so that different uses do not cause conflict
- **Surveillance:** places where all publicly accessible spaces are overlooked
- **Ownership:** places that promote a sense of ownership, respect, territorial responsibility and community
- **Physical protection:** places that include necessary, well-designed security features
- **Activity:** places where the level of human activity is appropriate to the location and creates a reduced risk of crime and a sense of safety at all times
- **Management and maintenance:** places that are designed with management and maintenance in mind, to discourage crime in the present and the future

### 2.6.31. Secured by Design New Homes 2014



2.6.32. Secured by Design (SBD) is a police initiative to guide those involved with the specification, design and construction of new housing to adopt crime prevention measures.

2.6.33. The latest edition of the guide, New Homes 2014, addresses community safety as well as security in the individual dwelling.

2.6.34. Section 1 deals with the layout and design of new developments. Guidance is given on a number of aspects of layout design and can be summarized as follows:

- **Layout of roads and footpaths:** vehicular and pedestrian routes should be designed to ensure that they are visually open, direct, well used and should not undermine the defensible space of neighbourhoods
- **Through-roads and cul-de-sacs:** should avoid backing onto open land, railway lines or canal towpaths, should not be very long, and should not be linked to one another by footpaths
- **Footpaths:** should be designed to be integrated with routes for cyclists and vehicles to create a network of supervised areas
- **Planting next to footpaths:** is encouraged to create buffer zones between footpaths and buildings
- **Communal Areas:** should be designed to allow supervision from nearby dwellings with safe routes for user access
- **Front Boundaries:** should be designed so that public and private spaces are easily distinguishable. Layouts should be designed so that building fronts overlook streets and public spaces to improve community interaction and to offer surveillance

- **Layout and Orientation of Dwellings:** dwellings should be positioned facing one another to allow neighbours to easily view their surroundings
- **Car parking:** cars should be parked in locked garages or on a hard standing within the boundary of the dwelling. Where communal car parking areas are necessary they should be in small groups, close to adjacent homes and within view of active rooms within these homes



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## 3. Evaluation & Scheme Design



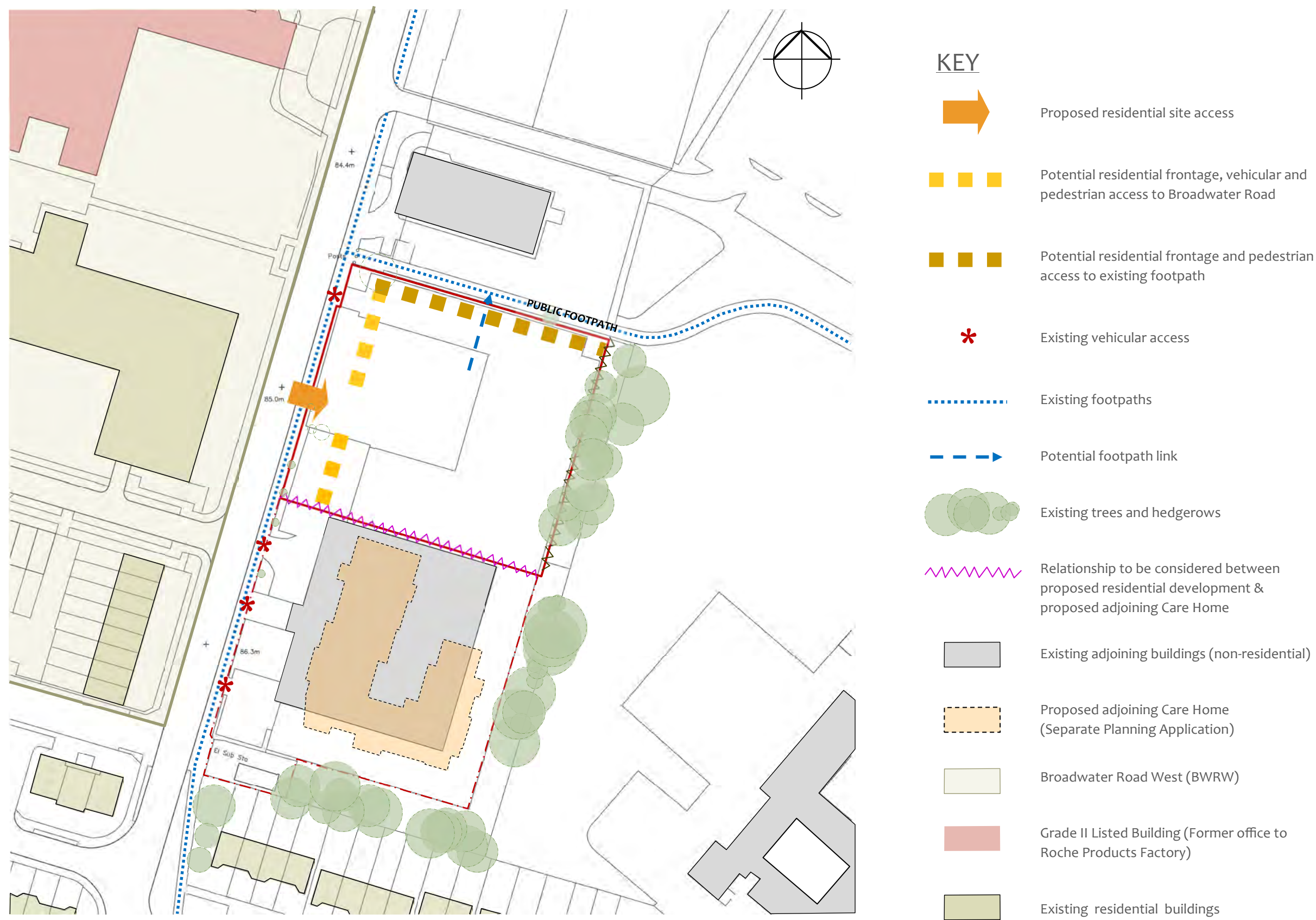


Fig. 9: Opportunities and Constraints Plan



### 3.1. Constraints & Opportunities

#### Site vehicular access

3.1.1. Primary site vehicular access is proposed to be taken from Broadwater Road.

#### Pedestrian access/connectivity

3.1.2. The site has direct frontage access to Broadwater Road as well as to the existing footpath to the north of the site, offering opportunities for pedestrian linkages and connectivity through the site.

#### Development Aspect

3.1.3. The central location and urban character of the surrounding context means the juxtaposition of built form, particularly the spatial relationship with the ‘public’ arenas, areas and spaces, will be significantly determinative on the scheme design and layout arrangement.

3.1.4. Good design principles of spatial relationship should be observed (public space should be related to public space; private space should be related to private space).

#### Response to Local Character and Integration with Context

3.1.5. The existing character of the locality is mixed with residential, commercial and educational uses. The immediate surroundings are predominantly residential, with low/medium rise dwellings of a ‘contemporary’ style.

3.1.6. A scheme proposing similar characteristics would therefore be entirely appropriate in terms of assimilating new development into the area.

#### Respecting Local Communities

3.1.10. New building forms throughout the development will be designed to front onto the main routes and public realm areas and respond positively to the general character and scale of existing settlement.

#### Broadwater Road

3.1.11. The new residential development directly opposite the application site has created a definitive edge along Broadwater Road to create a strong urban character in response to the proximity of the town centre. The buildings are set back from the street edge, however, to allow for planting, as well as to preserve existing trees. This helps maintain Broadwater Road’s ‘tree-lined boulevard’ character, which in turn, preserves the Garden City theme in the area.

3.1.12. Historical maps of the area show that prior to the site’s use as an office building and associated car park, the site was used for an Engineering Works. The 1965-71 OS Map shows that the building which previously occupied the site was part of a larger well-designed urban area. Along with the neighbouring factories and depots, the Engineering Works building was part of the definitive edge of built form which defined the long straight, tree-lined boulevard. With the site now vacant, there is an opportunity to redevelop the empty site; in conjunction with the new residential development to the west of the site, the proposed scheme has the potential to enhance Broadwater Road by reintroducing the sense of enclosure to the tree-lined boulevard.



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3.2. Summary Schedule

Constraints	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Site access arrangements.</li><li>• Need to preserve existing boundary trees wherever possible.</li><li>• Priorities for building form orientation in relation to external site features and boundary relationships.</li><li>• Relationships and proximity to existing adjoining buildings to north and south of site.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The provision of a sustainable residential development.</li><li>• The provision of 2 and 3 bed housing development.</li><li>• Enhanced connectivity and supervision of public footpath.</li><li>• Ability of the new development to support existing services and facilities.</li><li>• Retention of existing landscape features and their potential for increasing the landscape amenity of the development and provide a maturity to the built form for existing and future residents.</li><li>• Opportunity to enhance Broadwater Road by providing an attractive, active and supervised development frontage.</li></ul>



### 3.3. Design Principles

#### Character - a Response to Context

3.3.1. Understanding the local context will be fundamental to the creation of a successful new development. High quality places will only emerge if the design process considers the integration of local communities, the creation of a distinctive character and integration with the surrounding environment.

3.3.2. New development provides the opportunity to establish a distinctive identity to a place which, whilst having it's own character, integrates with the surrounding built form and landscape context.





### **Community & Enclosure - a Place where Public & Private Spaces are Clearly Distinguished**

3.3.3. The design process must aim to create public spaces which are clearly defined through the positioning of the built form in order to ensure a continuity of boundaries and variations in enclosure. This will not only increase the variety of place experience possible but will also help focus social activity and interaction in public spaces. Public spaces which are overlooked and ‘fronted’ by buildings will assist in creating a safe public realm.

3.3.4. Additionally, the design process must aim to provide clearly defined private spaces which will assist in the perceived safety of those living and visiting the development. Therefore, the control of access to private areas, particularly rear gardens and internal parking courts, is critical.

### **Quality of the Public Realm - a Place with Attractive & Functional Outdoor Areas**

3.3.5. A clear hierarchy of interconnected spaces and places, accessible by a variety of users, assists in the creation of a safe public realm which encourages the use of the spaces. Linkages for pedestrians and cyclists between the various spaces are crucial for the accessibility of such locations.

### **Ease of Movement - a Place that is Easy to get to & move through**

3.3.6. A well connected movement network, accessible by all users, will help ensure that all areas of the development are easy to navigate, safe and secure. A movement hierarchy clearly defines the main routes which link key destinations. A permeable development which is well connected provides choices for pedestrians and cyclists. Buildings fronting onto such routes will provide natural surveillance or ‘eyes on the street’, thereby creating a safer environment for all users.

3.3.7. Although different modes of transport will often use the same routes, the movement network itself should be designed in order to prioritise pedestrian, cyclist and public transport movement over the car wherever possible. The overall aim is to reduce the dependence on the car, particularly for short journeys within the local community, which will in turn encourage social interaction and create greater vibrancy.

### **Legibility - a place that has a clear image and is easy to understand**

3.3.8. Successful environments are traditionally based around a hierarchy of routes, where smaller streets feed off one or two main routes. It is vital to maintain a human dimension in terms of scale and ensure that pedestrians feel relaxed and orientated within the built environment.

### **Adaptability - a place that can change easily**

3.3.9. New development should be flexible in order to respond to future change in use, lifestyle and demography.

### **Safety & Security**

3.3.10. The manner in which the development is designed, structured and landscaped will have an impact on the perceived safety and security of the area as well as assisting in discouraging crime.

3.3.11. Other elements, such as those relating to management and maintenance, sense of ownership, clear demarcation of private space and physical protection can also assist in achieving this objective.

3.3.12. The creation of safe and secure routes which provide easy access for pedestrians and cyclists throughout a development ensures accessibility for all residents and users of the place.

### **Making Efficient Use of Resources**

3.3.13. A scheme which encourages walking and cycling rather than the use of the private car assists in reducing the reliance on natural resources.

3.3.14. The efficient use of resources can also be achieved through maximising sustainable building construction techniques and materials.





Fig. 10: Initial Sketch Layout





### 3.4. Scheme Design

#### Initial Sketch Layout

3.4.1. Fig.10 shows the outcome of the early stages of the design process. As set out in the Opportunities and Constraints Plan, the sketch shows residential frontage along Broadwater Road to the west of the site and along the existing public footpath to the north of the site.

3.4.2. A block of apartments are proposed at the junction of Broadwater Road and the public footpath, as this housing type offers an opportunity for a 'closed corner', thus maintaining building frontage, while enclosing the parking area to the rear. This, in turn, screens the view of the car park from Broadwater Road and avoids the requirement for 'private' space (as would result from houses on the frontages) within the site as such arrangement would have created private/public spatial tensions within the site.

3.4.3. The initial Illustrative Layout at fig.11 demonstrates how parking for Plots 1-4 might be accommodated to suit the proposed arrangement. The result on the overall scheme is that the dwellings at plots 1-2 are separated further from the apartment block to allow car parking spaces. This would have a detrimental effect on the visual composition when viewed from Broadwater Road, as the large gap between the two proposed buildings would weaken the frontage development along the road.



Fig. 11: Initial Illustrative Master Plan



Fig. 12: Sketch Layout 2







Fig. 13: Revised Illustrative Layout

### Revised Layout

3.4.4. As a result, the layout proposals were revised in order to strengthen the edge of built form along Broadwater Road (fig.12)

3.4.5. The Illustrative Layout shown at fig.13 demonstrates the changes made to the layout. Rather than a semi-detached unit and associated parking in the south-western corner, a terrace of four units has been proposed. While reducing the gap between the proposed frontage buildings, this arrangement also allows for a car parking area to the rear of plots 1-4.

3.4.6. This layout also achieves a better relationship with the proposed Care Home adjacent to the application site (indicated by an orange dashed line at fig.13). The flank elevation of the proposed dwelling at plot 1 enhances the sense of enclosure to the parking area of the Care Home, while the Care Home encloses the parking area to the rear of plots 1-4.

3.4.7. Within the proposed scheme, dwellings have been positioned along the proposed access road to create an element of enclosure, while at the same time, marking a clear distinction between public and private space.

3.4.8. Existing trees along the eastern boundary have been retained and dwellings have been positioned so as not to compromise root protection areas. In addition, proposed trees and generous grass verges throughout the scheme soften the overall character of the proposed development, in keeping with the Garden City concept.

3.4.9. The proposed dwellings along Broadwater Road have been set back to mirror the dwellings opposite to create an enclosed residential street and where possible, existing trees along Broadwater Road have been retained.

3.5. Layout Principles Illustrated



Fig. 14: Broadwater Road Frontage







Fig. 15: Public Footpath Frontage

3.4.10. The layout principles of the revised layout are illustrated at figs. 14-17.

3.4.11. Fig.14 demonstrates how the proposed scheme re-established a level of continuity to the building edge line along Broadwater Road. It also illustrates the clear response to the residential development to the western side of Broadwater Road.

3.4.12. Fig.15. illustrates how the proposed dwellings in the northern part of the site could enhance the existing public footpath by creating an active street frontage.



Fig. 16: Well-defined public realm

3.4.13. Fig.16 above highlights how the proposed arrangement of dwellings, trees (both existing and proposed) and planting help create a well defined public arena.



Fig. 17: Parking areas screened from Broadwater Road

3.4.14. Finally, fig.17 demonstrates how the parking areas are enclosed and screened from view from Broadwater Road.

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## 4. Design Proposals





Fig. 18: Housing mix plan



Fig. 19: Lifetime Homes location plan





4.1. Scheme Proposals

Use

4.1.1. The application is for residential development comprising 23 dwellings.

Amount of Development

4.1.2. The basis of the detailed layout has evolved as a consequence of the further assessment, evaluation and overall conceptualisation principles set out in earlier sections. The scheme comprises 23 dwellings with three bedroom houses and two bedroom flats.

4.1.3. As indicated in fig.18, the proposed scheme comprises:

11 no.	=	2 bed units
12 no.	=	3 bed units

4.1.4. All 23 dwellings are proposed for open market sale. Policy H7 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan (2005) states that schemes of 25 units or more, or schemes with a site area larger than 1.0 hectare, should include a minimum of 30% affordable housing. Since the proposed scheme falls into neither of these categories, provision of affordable housing is not required in this instance.

4.1.5. The scheme has been designed in accordance with Policy H6, which states that residential developments of 5 or more dwellings should be designed to a density of 30-50 dwellings per hectare (dph). Development within central areas should ideally exceed 50 dph; the proposed scheme has a density of 60.5 dph.

Access

4.1.6. The layout proposes a new vehicular access from Broadwater Road comprising a priority T-junction. In relation to the site’s previous use (car park to the adjacent office building), traffic generated from the proposed residential development will be considerably less than its comparable ‘office’ related use.

4.1.7. The detailed design of the proposal is fully inclusive, taking account of the needs of people with restricted mobility or sight impairments. The requirements of Part M of the Building Regulations and the Disability Discrimination Act will be met.

4.1.8. Of the 23 dwellings proposed, 3No. have been designed to comply with Lifetime Homes Criteria. These units are located within the apartment block at ground floor level and are indicated at fig.19.

Movement

4.1.9. The proposed movement route includes the use of a variety of surfacing materials to help distinguish between public and private areas, as well as to compliment the design of the individual house types.

4.1.10. The location of the site offers excellent opportunities to access shops, services and employment on foot, cycle or by public transport.

4.1.11. Car parking associated with the apartment block is provided in accordance with the requirements of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, with one space provided per dwelling. Cycle parking provision has also been accommodated within the apartment block. In terms of the proposed houses, two spaces have been provided per dwelling. This is slightly in excess of the Council’s requirement of 1.5 spaces per three bedroom house.

4.1.12. Access for refuse collection vehicles and fire-tenders meets the requirements of Hertfordshire Highways.



Fig. 20: Planning Layout.





### Layout and Form

4.1.10. The scheme has been designed around a strong unified architectural concept that seeks to respond to the layout opportunities and landscape and environmental features. The character of the site will compliment the context of the surrounding area.

4.1.11. The layout of the site has been shaped with reference to the design principles and scheme objectives set out above. Observing the desire to maintain and enhance the character of the area, the proposed development is arranged in an orthogonal layout. The buildings define the public spaces, while varied surfacing textures and planting bring variety to the proposed development.

4.1.12. Throughout the layout, built form frontage is provided to define public spaces wherever possible. This continuity serves to enclose the public realm, promotes an active street-scene and contributes significantly to creating a safe and attractive environment.

4.1.13. A variety of different house types will be provided. The variety of house types will also assist in providing interest and contribute to enhancing different character areas within the scheme.

### Safety and Security

4.5.4. Layout of development proposals should be carefully considered to ensure the safety or perceived safety of those living or visiting the development. This is achieved through careful layout of the streets, sensitive relationship between the streets and the built form, and utilising buildings that overlook/ front onto public areas. Alleyways and paths to the rear of buildings are avoided wherever practicable. Appropriate lighting will be provided in public and semi-public areas.

4.5.5. Parking is provided mostly 'on-plot' or 'on frontage' courtyard areas. Parking courtyards have been designed so that they are overlooked by adjoining dwellings.

### Appearance

4.1.11. The proposed housing has been designed to reflect the character of the housing within the BRWR development to the west of the site.

4.1.12. A limited palette of materials is envisaged, comprising red and buff facing bricks with light-coloured render in places.

4.1.13. The materials complement those of the neighbouring housing development, as well as those proposed for the adjacent Care Home with the aim of enhancing the distinctive identity of the area. The precise details of the materials are to be agreed with local planning authority at a later date.

### Scale

4.1.14. The scale and massing of the residential proposals have been informed by the site's context as well as the proposals for the adjacent Care Home. The scheme comprises three-storey development throughout.



Fig. 21: Broadwater Road Street Scene

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Fig. 22: Landscape Proposals

### Landscaping

4.1.15. The proposed scheme has a relatively high density resulting in an urban character. Landscaping has been introduced, however, to soften the overall scheme and has been designed as an integral part of the overall layout.

4.1.16. Along Broadwater Road, the proposed housing is set back to accommodate generous front gardens. These are loosely enclosed by low shrubs to reflect the arrangement of the existing terraced housing to the south-west of the site. Where possible, the existing trees have been retained.

4.1.17. Along the northern edge, hedgerows have been proposed as a soft boundary to improve and enhance the existing public footpath. To the east, the mature trees have been retained

4.1.18. Grass verges and shrubs have been introduced to public spaces of the proposed scheme to further soften the overall environment. Proposed tree planting will provide further visual interest while complementing the existing arrangement of trees around the site.

4.1.19. Hedges and low shrubs have also been proposed around the parking areas.

#### LANDSCAPING

-  EXISTING TREES TO BE RETAINED
-  ROOT PROTECTION AREAS
-  EXISTING TREES TO BE REMOVED
-  PROPOSED TREES
-  PROPOSED HEDGES
-  PROPOSED SHRUBS
-  GRASS
-  PERMEABLE BLOCK PAVING



**Secured by Design: Safer Places**

The seven attributes of sustainable communities particularly relevant to crime prevention referred to above can now be addressed individually as directly relating to the residential scheme proposals:



**4.1.20. Access and Movement:**

- The scheme achieves an appropriate balance between connectivity and the issues of community safety.
- Routes for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles avoid unnecessary segregation.
- Convenient access routes will encourage local trips to be made on foot or by bicycle, thus encouraging an on-street presence to help residents identify and take pride in the routes and places.

**4.1.21. Structure:**

- ‘Active frontages’ and overlooked streets create a movement framework that focuses pedestrians and vehicles onto a small number of principal routes.
- Dwellings have access from the street to create a positive interaction with the public realm.
- A sense of definition that reinforces private, semi-private and defensible spaces.
- Treatment of corners maintain visual surveillance.

**4.1.22. Surveillance:**

- Public space is overlooked by ‘active frontages’.
- Windows and doors face onto the street to create ‘active frontages’, windows and doors overlooking the street capitalise on the benefits of natural surveillance.
- Car parking is preferably and generally ‘on-plot’ but grouped car parking ‘areas’ are designed to ensure they are secure via the following methods:
  - Small in size and close to the owners homes;
  - Access points are overlooked;
  - Notwithstanding the need for natural surveillance, a single access point will make car crime more difficult;
  - Use of narrow entrance points;
  - Provision of lighting will enhance night time security;
  - Change of ownership to private space is conveyed through the use of materials that differ from that of the public highway;
  - The scheme ensures landscaping does not assist concealment.

**4.1.23. Ownership:**

- The overall layout framework achieves clear distinction between private and public space.
- Sensitive placement and appropriate selection of physical barriers such as gates, fences, railings, walls and hedges will ensure a safe and attractive environment.
- The layout design promotes an urban structure that encourages residents to assert ownership over identifiable open space.

- Landscaping and/or boundary treatments delineate between the semi-private space of front gardens, the semi-public (communal) space of the flats parking area and the public realm.
- A range of design techniques create a strong sense of ownership of car parking areas, arrangements and relationships.

**4.1.24. Physical Protection:**

- Where appropriate, the detailed design of the new homes will incorporate further ‘target hardening’ and other measures that make it more difficult to commit offences, whilst instilling a feeling of safety amongst the residents.

**4.1.25. Activity:**

- Proximity of local amenities will encourage walking and cycling, helping to encourage activity, on-street surveillance and ownership of the public realm.
- The mix of house types will assist community surveillance with people coming and going.

**4.1.26. Management and Maintenance**

- Care has been taken to establish the principles for creating a good quality public realm.
- A clear legal ownership framework ensures the appropriate management systems (i.e. private ownership, for the houses, management company for the flats, public adoption of roads and footpaths) will be achieved.



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## 5. Sustainability



## 5.1. Sustainability

5.1.1. Homes should be designed to provide good levels of daylight in kitchens, living and dining rooms, and studies. Low energy lighting with dedicated fittings should be fitted as standard within dwellings for external lighting across the site. Good practice criteria for day-lighting and lighting can be found in Eco Homes.

### Sustainability in Housing

5.1.2. The code for Sustainable Homes (the Code, CfSH) is one of the Government's strategies to identify and encourage how development can address a number of sustainability issues. These include, energy, water, pollution, surface water, materials, waste, health and well being, management and ecology.

5.1.3. Consideration will be given to meeting the objectives of the CfSH requirements, as follows;

(i) Energy; Carbon emissions will be reduced by 25% compared with 2006 Building Regulations in line with achieving Code Level 3 for energy.

(ii) Water; provided low water use appliances in the home. All washing machines and dishwashers provided will be A rated.

(iii) Materials; for use in the new construction will be considered on the basis of their overall lifecycle impacts taking in account embodied manufacture and ability for re-use at the end of their life. Where practicable, reclaimed materials shall be used in construction and shall be sourced from local sites or suppliers. Building elements will be assessed in relation to the BRE's green guide where practicable.





(iv) Surface Water Run Off; The proposals recognise that flooding, not just from rivers but also from flash flooding from surface water runoff is a serious issue facing the UK. A Sustainable Urban Drainage Strategy (SUDS) is adopted to mitigate these impacts.

(v) Waste; Sites waste management strategy will be developed and adopted to reduce waste on site. All dwellings will be provided with appropriate facilities to enable them to recycle in line with local collection services.

(vi) Pollution; from insulating material and NOx emissions from boilers will meet the requirements of the Code.

(vii) Health and Wellbeing; The health and well being of the future residents will be considered at all stages and this will ensure that factors such as day lighting and sound installation have been considered.

(viii) Management during the Construction; Developers consider registering the site with the Considerate Constructors Scheme, monitor water use and adopt best practice for both reduction of dust and water pollution on site. A Home Owners guide will advise new residents on how best to manage their new home, to ensure that they are able to continue to help the environment.

(ix) Ecology; This will include new planting including appropriate native species which will ensure biodiversity is enhanced.

### **Water Efficiency**

5.1.4. Design should observe the following order of priorities for reducing mains water use;

- Reduce demand - e.g. through use of water efficient fittings and with drought-resistant landscape planting
- Collect rainwater for non-portable uses

5.1.5. Buildings should consider cost effective water efficiency measures to reduce mains water demand, including;

- Dual, low flush WC's
- Aerating/Spray taps for wash hand basins;
- Low flow showers

5.1.6. Water efficiency measures could also include;

- Water butts, which are particularly suitable for houses with gardens.

### **Access / Public Transport**

5.1.7. The site is well located for access to facilities within the town by both walking and cycling. In addition, bus services are available to serve the wider area.

### **Materials**

5.1.8. A significant amount of energy can be used in the transportation of building materials this can be reduced by recycling materials which may already exist on site e.g. re-using excavated topsoil elsewhere on the site and using locally sourced (aggregates of timber) or locally manufactured products. The use of local products will also support the local economy.

### **Waste Management**

5.1.9. Design and construct activities should take account of the waste hierarchy:

- Reduce refuse
- Recycle
- Dispose



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