

### 2.2. Wider Context

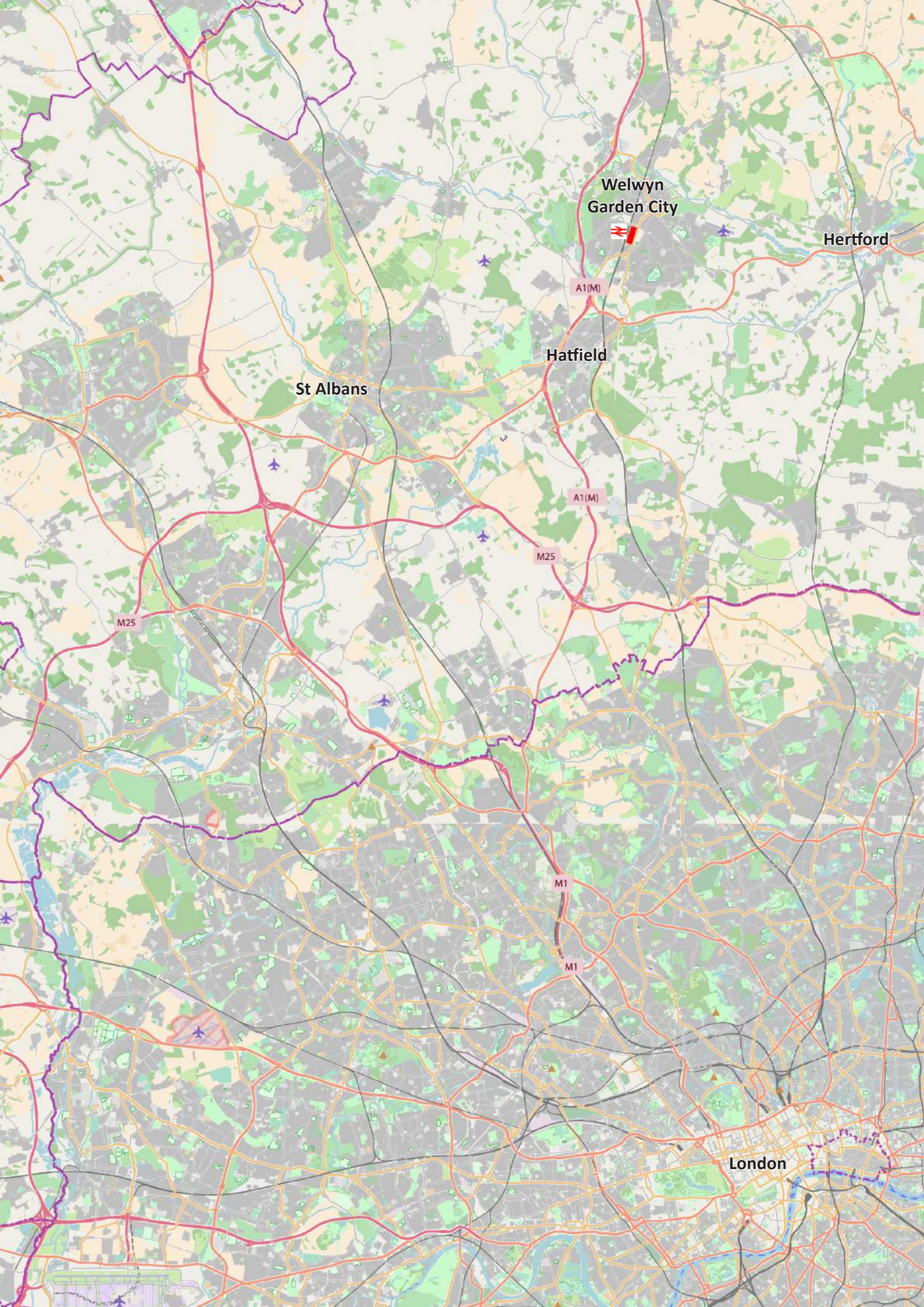
Welwyn Garden City today is a town with a population of 116,000 (ONS estimate mid-year 2014) and a strong commercial base. Companies such as Ocado, Roche, Tesco, and Xerox are based there. HSBC has a high-security global data centre in Welwyn. The A1(M) motorway and the Great Northern railway provide fast connections to Central London (20-25 minutes to King's Cross, for a 40km distance), as well as to Cambridge and the North. Other trains connect the town with local stations through the north London suburbs. London Luton Airport is 13 miles away, London Stansted 30 miles, and London Heathrow 33 miles away – all are easily accessible from Welwyn. Other local destinations for employment and housing – besides London – are within short drives, particularly St Albans and Stevenage.



Above: View of Howardsgate, one of the primary boulevards in the centre of Welwyn Garden City.

Opposite page: Welwyn Garden City in the local Hertfordshire and Greater London context.







### 2.3. Local Context

#### Welwyn Garden City and the Application Site Today

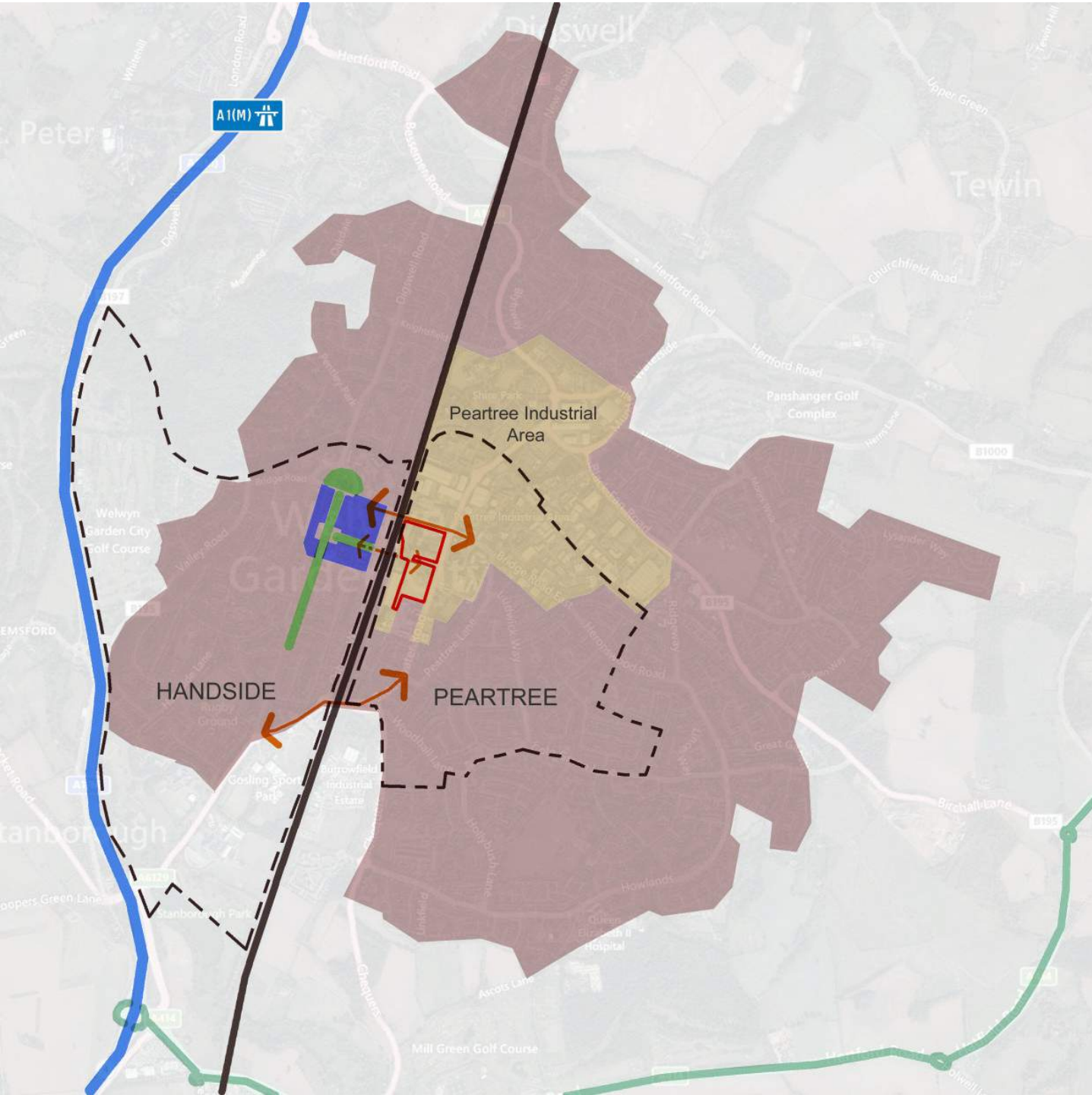
Despite substantial growth around the industrial areas and the construction of the Howard Centre shopping mall in the 1980s, Louis de Soisson's master plan for Welwyn Garden City can easily be recognised, especially in the city's commercial centre.

The original zoning also remains, with the railway still separating the industrial areas from the residential areas around the Parkway. This means that the Peartree neighbourhood, east of the railway, remains noticeably separated from the city centre and from the residential areas west of the railway. The application site lies just east of the railway – along the separation line – and so presents an opportunity to improve the connectivity between two currently separate parts of Welwyn Garden City.



Above: The application site lies along the railway which separates the residential areas on the west from the industrial zone on the east; the Peartree neighbourhood is currently separated and could be connected to the city centre through new routes through the site.

Opposite page: Welwyn Garden City local context.



## Assessment

### The Application Site in Context

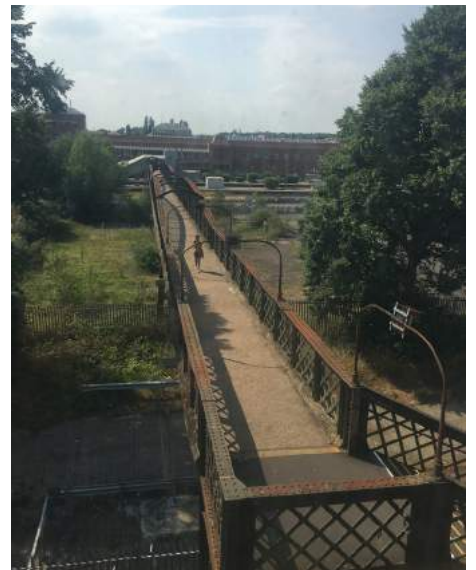
The application site, located on Broadwater Road and visible from the railway, is still well known as the factory site of the popular Shredded Wheat breakfast cereal. Previously owned by Tesco Stores Ltd, it was purchased in 2016 by the joint Applicant (Plutus Estates (WGC) Limited and Metropolitan Housing Trust), who is the current owner.

The application boundary encompasses approximately 22 acres (89,000 m<sup>2</sup>) of level ground and is composed of two land parcels, to the north and south of Hydeway. A short spur road links to a footbridge that connects the site to the Railway Station and to the Howard Centre shopping mall on Howardsgate, which serves as a gateway to the town centre.

The recent introduction of Permitted Development rules facilitated the conversion of non-residential buildings (such as the former Xerox offices) to residential use, therefore transforming the character of certain sectors of Welwyn Garden City. A new mixed-use development (in accordance with local planning guidance) will continue a pattern of change of use in some formerly non-residential sites. This particular location – adjoining the railway station and the thriving town centre – is potentially very appealing to future residents and visitors.



View of Broadwater Road looking north, with the application site on the left.



The footbridge linking the site to the railway station and to the Howard Centre.



Panoramic view of the railway and the application site, from the footbridge.





Local context of the application site

### Conservation Area and Listed Buildings

Although the application site is not located within a conservation area, it is in close proximity to the Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area (see diagram on opposite page), which covers a large portion of the town centre (to the west of the site) and its residential hinterlands within the ward of Handside.

There is a wide separation between the development site and the conservation area, due to the railway lines with associated sidings, and the Howard Centre's large bulk, all of which sits between the site and the town centre. Nevertheless, the design team has considered the potential effects of the design proposal upon the conservation area – in particular through distant views. The potential effect of the proposed design on existing views from locations within the conservation area are assessed within BMD's *Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, under separate cover.

As illustrated by the plan on the opposite page, there are two groups of listed buildings located within the application boundary or in close proximity to the site. The listed buildings within the application boundary (near its northern edge) were commissioned by the American Shredded Wheat Company and designed by Louis de Soissons. They include the original Production Hall and the original cluster of wheat silos built in 1925, all of which have a Grade II Listing (as do the more recent buildings added during the 1930s and 1950s to support the factory's growth). All listed buildings have been vacant since the relocation of Cereal Partners UK in 2008.

#### Historic England List Entry Summary:

Grade: II

Date first listed: 16-Jan-1981

1925. Architect Louis de Soissons. Two concrete ranges, at right angles with links. Southern range consists of giant range of cylindrical concrete drums 15 bays long with flat oversailing capping with railings right over the whole top. Behind this is a plain attic storey with 28 plain windows with plain capping over. On one end elevation is a 3 bay projecting tower rising just above the main roof level.

At the west end of the range is a 2 bay wing with large windows, the southern bay of 3 storeys and the northern of 4. Flat roofs. Adjacent is a 7 bay, 4 storey block, with large windows divided by narrow piers and small scale structural divisions between the storeys, making it almost wholly glass. Flat oversailing capping at roof level.

Listing NGR: TL2417112968

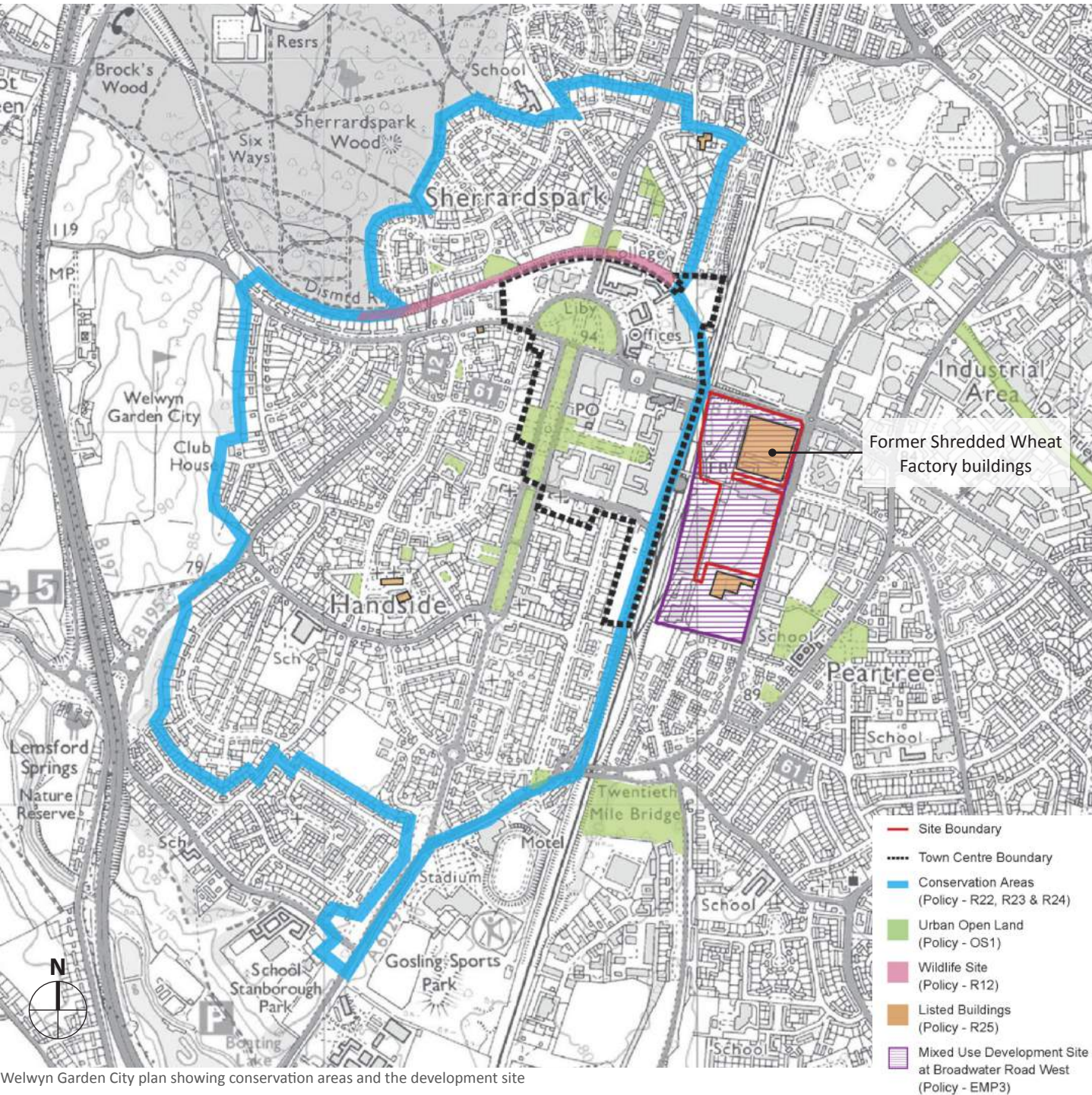


View from Parkway (within the conservation area) looking towards the site. The Howard Centre is visible in the middle.



View of the former Shredded Wheat Factory buildings





Welwyn Garden City plan showing conservation areas and the development site



## 2.4. Planning Context

### Planning History

The site, located to the east of Welwyn Garden City town centre, is bisected by Hydeway, which stretches east-west. North of Hydeway is the location of the former Shredded Wheat breakfast cereal factory; to the south of Hydeway the land was used for other factories and industrial facilities. The site is redundant and has been vacant since 2008. It is approximately 12.7 ha in size (including areas of the surrounding road network to which works are proposed) and comprises the majority of the site described by the BRW SPD. The Former Shredded Wheat factory buildings (including the silos) are Grade II listed.

The surrounding area is mixed in use and character. Broadwater Road stretches along an industrial/office area on the eastern side and to the north of the site, and along a residential development (the Taylor Wimpey site) abutting the southern edge of the application site, as well as the large Hertfordshire BioPark office and laboratory building to the south west. Welwyn Garden City town centre is immediately west of the adjoining East Coast Mainline railway, and an existing pedestrian route extends across the site via Hydeway.

In 2010 proposals were put forward for redevelopment of the site, including conversion of the 1920s Production Hall to offices, conversion of the silos to a heritage centre and café, and redevelopment of the remainder of the site (excluding the Pall Mall distribution centre) for a mix of uses in total comprising:

- 13,957 m<sup>2</sup> of office floor space;
- 344 residential units (approx.);
- A retail supermarket (4,646 m<sup>2</sup>);
- 800 m<sup>2</sup> of additional retail floor space (A1-A5);
- 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> of café restaurants; Existing site plan
- A 3,225 m<sup>2</sup> leisure centre;
- A 950 m<sup>2</sup> doctor's surgery;
- A 4,200 m<sup>2</sup> extra care home;
- A YMCA facility of 5,800 m<sup>2</sup>;
- A 3,200 m<sup>2</sup> hotel;
- The provision of 909 cycle spaces;
- The provision of 1,108 car parking spaces.

The application was refused permission in January 2012 for seven reasons that can be summarised as follows: Retail Assessment has failed: (1) to demonstrate an adequate sequential approach to retail development; (2) the retail store would have a significant adverse impact on investment in and viability of Welwyn Garden City town centre; (3) unacceptable in urban design terms; (4) the proposal failed to a) make the most efficient use of land for housing and b) to deliver the Pall Mall site in accordance with the SPD; (5) adverse impact on highway safety, capacity and free flow of traffic; (6) the over-provision of car parking for the Tesco store, and the failure to promote wider sustainable transport measures; and (7) the failure to meet the minimum car parking standards for the residential units.

In 2015, another planning application was submitted, for a scheme that included:

- New build and change of use to include up to 850 dwellings, workspace, a healthcare facility, a hotel, Class A1, A3 and A4 units and a community building;
- The demolition of non-original silos and factory and the refurbishment and change of use of the original silos, Production Building, Grain Store and Boiler House;
- The provision of landscaping to include a linear park, a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA), allotments, green walls and a neighbourhood square; and
- Highway works, to include the widening of footways and the provision of cycleways to Broadwater Road and Bridge Road, together with works to Hyde Way and the erection of a new footbridge from Bridge Road leading directly into the scheme.

This recent application was consented, but the scheme (the Consented Scheme) was not implemented.

Following a change of site ownership in 2016, the current application puts forward a new scheme, based on design principles set forth in the BRW SPD and in the Consented Scheme, while advancing new parameters to ensure that the scheme is feasible.

## Design Guidance

Regarding planning policy, the application site (and other adjoining sites) are covered by the *Broadwater Road West Supplementary Planning Document* (BRW SPD), adopted by Welwyn and Hatfield Borough Council in December 2008. The BWR SPD sets out a vision for the site and key objectives as follows:

‘To deliver an energetic and pioneering scheme of development which integrates the spirit of the garden city with the very best of high quality 21st century design, seizing the opportunity to enhance the local environment and create a sustainable, supported neighbourhood of an appropriate scale, which successfully integrates with the local community.’

This vision is based on the following objectives:

- To create a sustainable neighbourhood with an appropriate mix of uses for its central location;
- To establish strong connections between the east side of town, the site, and through to the town centre;

- To use the industrial heritage as a cue for form, character and identity - re-use listed structures and ensure sympathetic development;
- To explore innovative and sustainable uses drawing on the natural, infrastructure and spatial assets of the site;
- To create urban grain capable of supporting appropriate uses while reflecting the town centre morphology;
- To consider accommodating large scale uses which would best be located near the centre as the opportunity to do this is unlikely to arise again;
- To support live-work proximity;
- To define the amount of employment land/floor space that should be provided for;
- To enhance biodiversity.

This Design and Access Statement aims to articulate a feasible vision and design for the application site, reflecting and building upon the vision and objectives set out in the BRW SPD masterplan.

The following documents have been taken into consideration for the design of the master plan and general layout of the residential and commercial elements:

- *Welwyn Hatfield District Plan. Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005.*
- *Secured by Design. Homes, February 2016*
- *Welwyn Hatfield District Local Plan adopted 2005 and emerging Welwyn Hatfield District Local Plan 2017*



### 2.5. Consented Scheme Summary

In 2015, Spen Hill Developments Ltd (then the owner of the site) submitted a planning application for the redevelopment of the former Shredded Wheat Factory site. The scheme, which was consented, proposed:

- New build and change of use to include up to 850 dwellings, workspace, a healthcare facility, a hotel, Class A1, A3 and A4 units and a community building;
- The demolition of non-original silos and factory and the refurbishment and change of use of the original silos, Production Building, Grain Store and Boiler House;
- The provision of landscaping to include a linear park, a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA), allotments, green walls and a neighbourhood square; and
- Highway works, to include the widening of footways and the provision of cycleways to Broadwater Road and Bridge Road, together with works to Hydeway and the erection of a new footbridge from Bridge Road leading directly into the scheme.







BRIDGE ROAD

HYDE WAY

BROAD COURT

BROAD COURT

POWNEY WAY

BROAD PARK DRIVE

N

ALLOTMENT GARDENS





## 3. Involvement



### 3.1. Summary of Consultation Process

The consultation process consisted of several initiatives aimed at ensuring that residents living near the site and other key stakeholders were aware of the emerging scheme, and that they had an opportunity to express their opinions, comments, and aspirations. The initiatives included:

- immediate and near residents and stakeholder mailing,
- project website,
- public exhibition,
- site visits,

in addition to pre-application meetings with WGC planners.

#### Consultation timeline

02 October

Public presentation to Committee Members as part of the Development Consultation Forum.

10 November

Invitations to public exhibition sent by mail 4,770 local households. The invitations advertised a dedicated website ([www.thewheatquarter.co.uk](http://www.thewheatquarter.co.uk)) with information about the emerging proposal and online feedback forms.

15 November

Site visits hosted by the Applicant's representatives, attended by Councillors: Steve Roberts, Stephen Boulton, Helen Beckett, Bernard Sarsion, Jonathan Boulton, Terry Mitchinson, and Barbara Fitzsimon.

16 November

Site visits hosted by the Applicant's representatives, attended by Councillors: Roger Trigg, Harry Bower, Malcolm Cowan, Lynn Chesterman, Alan Chesterman, Mike Larkins, and Jill Weston.

22 and 23 November

Public exhibition held at the Howard Centre, attended by more than 440 residents, stakeholders and councillors. 107 visitors returned feedback forms.

23 November

Site visits hosted by the Applicant's representatives, attended by Councillors: Will Davis, Shaun O'Reilly, Lesley Mardell, Elahe Taylor.

29 November

Site visits hosted by the Applicant's representatives, attended by Councillors: Patricia Mabbott, Mandy Perkins, Helen Bromley.

7 December

On-site meeting with Sheila Stones, Historic Buildings and Areas Adviser at English Heritage.

15 December

Site visits hosted by the Applicant's representatives, attended by MP Grant Shapps.

15 December

Meeting with Peartree School.

Other meetings also took place with interested stakeholders and consultees including Cereal Partners, Digswell Arts Trust, Gardening for Disabled Trust, Hatfield House, Oaklands College Students' Union, Resolve, University of Hertfordshire, the Welwyn Garden City Centenary Foundation and the Welwyn Garden City Heritage Trust.

Many topics were covered during these consultations, from the provision of office space for start-up companies through matters relating to youth and community culture, and the provision of an art hub and associated galleries.

The current proposal has evolved to encapsulate a long history of research, design iterations, and planning consultations. It assimilates important parameters from the Consented Scheme and from the BRW SPD's Masterplan Framework, while embodying a new design brief focused on feasibility and the value of the public realm. Its main aim is to describe a feasible development that will enrich and enliven Welwyn Garden City, and to set basic principles for design quality to be further developed.

Opposite page: exhibition boards shown at the Howard Centre on 22 and 23 November 2017.

# Involvement



## THE WHEAT QUARTER

### Welcome

Welcome to today's exhibition regarding the former Shredded Wheat Factory. Please take a look at the information we have provided on these exhibition boards and speak with a member of the team, who will be happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.

### Who are we?

#### ZM Land and Capital and Plutus Estates (WGC) Ltd

ZM Land and Capital are the development manager for Plutus Estates (WGC) Limited the owners of the Former Shredded Wheat Factory site. ZM Land and Capital has over 30 years' experience in the successful delivery of complex mixed use development projects.

#### Metropolitan

Metropolitan is one of the UK's leading providers of affordable housing and care and support services. They own and manage a large portfolio of nearly 38,000 homes, including 500 new homes which they are delivering on the nearby Rank Xerox site.

### The Site



## THE WHEAT QUARTER

### Why are we creating new plans?

We believe the site can deliver more for local residents including: affordable housing, sustainable employment, an Art Hub, Museum, Wellness Centre, Public Art and a new community building. We look forward to working with the Censery Foundation to support the delivery of their vision.

We are determined to echo the original principles on which Welwyn Garden City was founded – combining the benefits of healthy living with industry.

We are proposing to increase the amount of homes, including most importantly affordable homes, as well as create a new civic quarter and introduce public art. This, together with a refined strategy for the Listed Buildings and community commercial heart, will create a destination in which people want to live, work and spend their leisure time.

We believe this will create a better development for the town.



## THE WHEAT QUARTER

### We're on site

Many local residents and Councillors have told us how important it is to get on with this site and start building homes as quickly as possible. Subject to achieving planning consent in time, we are hoping to start construction in September 2018.

In the meantime, we are moving ahead with clearing the site and, preparing for demolition and the first phase of development.

It is very important for the listed buildings to be properly cared for as they can deteriorate very quickly. We are halting further unnecessary decay to the listed buildings and carrying out a full environmental clean.

Site clearance work has now started and is due to be completed by Spring 2018 so that the land is ready for redevelopment.



## THE WHEAT QUARTER

### Affordable housing

The previous planning permission was for 850 homes, of which just 50 were classed as 'affordable'. This equated to under 6% of all homes proposed.

We are seeking to increase the amount of homes on the site. Our current plan is to create over 1,400 homes and a significant increase in affordable housing (circa 30%).

Whilst we are optimising the development capacity of the site, we are actually managing to reduce the storey height on 17 of the 19 buildings across the site, whilst raising the storey height on just 2 buildings by one extra floor.



## THE WHEAT QUARTER

### The Factory Buildings & Silos

We propose to transform the existing spaces into a vibrant cultural, commercial, museum & art and leisure hub; providing a real sense of place and destination to this side of Welwyn Garden City.

Current proposed uses are:

- Flexible We-Work office spaces
- Café & Bar with Art Studio and Art Spaces
- International Art centre including Permanent Gallery / printing / studios
- Gym / Pool
- Digital Library / Digital & Editing facilities
- Restaurants
- Crèche / Nursery
- Projection displays onto the silos
- Large Public Art Installations
- Vintage & Racing Motorbike Museum



## THE WHEAT QUARTER

### The Civic Building

Louis de Soissons Architects were appointed as architects for Welwyn Garden City in 1920 and the practice was significantly involved in the town's development over the next 60 years. The practice designed the concrete Shredded Wheat factory. We have commissioned Louis de Soissons Architects for the Civic Building to provide a genuine Community Facility linked to an Alternative Health Centre.

### Connectivity

Our ambitious plans include refurbishment and improvements to the current footbridge which connects the Wheat Quarter to the Railway Station and Town Centre. The works include refurbishing the structure and walkway, making the bridge fully accessible for the disabled with the provision of a new passenger lift, and updating all the lighting across the length of the bridge from The Howard Centre to The Wheat Quarter.

We are proposing an increase in both parking and cycling provision across the site. The commercial parking provision remains unchanged from the previous scheme and the per dwelling parking ratio will be reduced to reflect the highly sustainable nature of the site, crucially, residents will be able to utilise a private electric car club as well as enhanced levels of cycle provision.

As part of our masterplanning exercise we have also looked at pedestrian and cycling routes into, through and around the site and propose to encourage more environmentally-friendly travel by introducing more cycling parking spaces.



## THE WHEAT QUARTER

### Landscaping & public realm

Public open space comprises just under half of the total area and making best use of it will be fundamental to successful redevelopment. We are proposing both formal and informal areas of green space and urban realm, as well as semi-private open space such as communal roof terraces for residents.

A public square, allotments, children's play areas, roof gardens and a skate park are just a few of the things we are proposing.



### Disabled & Sensory Garden

We are proposing a dedicated space for a disabled and sensory garden, this will include: raised beds at wheelchair level, a Chamomile lawn, directional paving for the visually impaired, a planting strategy incorporating sound, smell and colour.



## THE WHEAT QUARTER

### Concept plan



### Next Steps

We are planning to submit a detailed planning application shortly, but before we do, we would appreciate your feedback. By submitting a detailed planning application, we would anticipate starting on site once approval is granted which could make it possible to start in Autumn 2018.

Please either complete a feedback form, visit our website [www.thewheatquarter.co.uk](http://www.thewheatquarter.co.uk) or email [info@thewheatquarter.co.uk](mailto:info@thewheatquarter.co.uk)

First Pre-application Consultation, August 2017



Residential units	1,491	Summary of main changes to Consented Scheme:	north site to optimise the development potential of the site, whilst creating a more appropriate design response to the Listed Building, elevating residential yield from 357 to 795 units
Affordable housing units	464	· Removal of residential block in southeastern corner of south site	· Increase in parking provision across the site, increase in cycling provision, and provision of electric car club vehicles for residents, through a decrease in the parking ratio per dwelling from 1.02 to circa 0.7
Affordable housing quota	31%	· Retention of residential blocks in same approximate locations as south site masterplan and within same height parameters	· An enhanced community core within the heart of the development to create increased public performance space, art uses, museum and open top cinema.
Community use	12,858 m <sup>2</sup>	· More efficient and buildable residential blocks to increase south site dwelling yield from 493 to 696 units	
Car parking spaces	1,140	· Reworking of design strategy to the north, west and east of the Listed Building in the	



Second Pre-application Consultation, September 2017



		Summary of main changes:	
Residential units		South Site	
Affordable housing units		· Retention of residential blocks in same approximate locations as south site masterplan and within same height parameters	
Affordable housing quota		· Removal of residential block in southeastern corner of south site to create a public square against the listed building.	
Community use		· More efficient and buildable residential blocks to increase south site dwelling yield from 493 to 659 units	
Car parking spaces		Increase in parking provision across the site, increase in cycling provision, provision of electric car club vehicles for residents, through a decrease in the parking ratio per dwelling from 1.02 to circa 0.7	

Third Pre-Application Consultation, November 2017



Residential units	1,453	<p>At the date of the final pre-application consultation, the design brief had been settled and the concept had evolved significantly. The discussion focused on design progress in general, as well as specific topics such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Envelope design concept aiming to provide consistency and variety across the site</li><li>· Landscape design strategy and character zones</li><li>· Landscape design in connection with the use of the public realm</li><li>· Layout of residential blocks</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Street frontages</li><li>· On-street parking</li><li>· Public art strategy</li><li>· Connection between railway pedestrian bridge and surrounding area</li></ul>
Affordable housing units	440		
Affordable housing quota	30%		
Community use	12,348 m <sup>2</sup>		
Car parking spaces	1,113		



Summary of Pre-Application Consultations

The proposed scheme has evolved considerably over the course of three pre-application consultations, and reflects many recommendations made during the process.

Although the proposed scheme is based on a new development brief, it builds on important principles that underlie the Masterplan Framework and the consented scheme – particularly east-west connectivity, the grid form,

preservation strategy, land use, and the palette of architectural materials. The main elements of the landscape design concept – character zones, courtyard spaces – have also been carried through. Nevertheless, the new development brief introduces new ideas and strategies which improve on the consented scheme, for example: a new art district, sensory gardens designed for the disabled, and a stronger focus on community facilities in the heart of the site.

The following pages include a summary of the main issues raised during the pre-application process, and the design response provided.

Issue	Key comments	Response
Design approach	Propose clear and coherent alternative concept to the consented scheme.	The masterplan concept is derived from the BWR SPD and from the consented scheme – the emphasis on the east-west connectivity, the grid form, the preservation strategy, the land use, and the palette of architectural materials are consistent with the principles previously established. In addition, the proposed scheme clearly introduces new ideas and strategies such as arts-based facilities and public spaces, new community uses, sensory gardens with inclusive access, and a significant increase in affordable housing – which reinforce the urban design principles and underpin the viability of the proposal.
Hierarchy of public spaces	Improve pedestrian accessibility into the town centre; enhance the quality of experience and safety of the existing footbridge.	The east-west link to the town centre and Peartree (via the footbridge and Hyde Way) is the heart of the proposed scheme. Goodman Square, in the middle of this route, is the main public space, where community and retail uses are concentrated. The refurbished footbridge will be connected to the new Louis de Soissons Building through a generous deck, and ample stairs will lead into Goodman Square. The footbridge will thus become part of the most active and most prominent public space.
Effect on listed buildings and surrounding context	Allow views of the listed buildings beyond the site, appropriate to their proposed use and importance.	The tallest buildings are located along the edges of the site, where separation distances guarantee no adverse impact on neighbouring buildings. The lowest buildings are located in the middle of the site, in deference to amenity areas and to the listed buildings. The Visual Impact Assessment demonstrates an overall impact commensurate with the consented scheme. The proposed scheme allows new views of the monumental east elevation of the Production Hall. Distant views of the silos remain unhindered.
Variety of scale and character	Develop building articulation, heights, typology – across the site and by building.	The architectural design has been developed to enhance the legibility of the character zones. Different types of buildings (varying in height, volume, and facade design) consistently address different areas of landscape, public realm, and neighbouring context.



Issue	Key comments	Response
Building density	Indicate the potential quality of the place.	This proposal seeks to maximise the use of a brownfield site adjacent to the railway station. Seventeen of the buildings previously consented have been reduced in height, and only two have been increased by one storey. Several blocks have been reduced in bulk. Greater density has been achieved across the site through a combination of measures, including reducing the amount of family housing and increasing the amount of smaller properties, which is more befitting of the location and its infrastructure characteristics.
Residential design	Minimise single-aspect flats; provide amenity space and access to external space; minimise overlooking and overshadowing.	All flats have balconies and benefit from communal access to landscaped semi-private external space. Within the block forms, building heights have been adjusted to avoid overshadowing, and plan layouts have been optimised to provide as many dual aspect flats as possible.
Street frontages	Provide active ground floor frontages, in particular along podium edges.	Active ground floor frontages are predominant throughout the site, with non-residential uses around public spaces and residential use – including flats, entrance lobbies, and ancillary spaces – where possible. It is unavoidable that some plant spaces, bin stores, and cycle stores will have ground floor frontage. Gates to the parking structures are also unavoidable.
Parking provision	Provide better parking than the consented scheme.	The proposed scheme includes fewer family dwellings and more smaller dwellings than the consented scheme, therefore a decreased projected rate of car ownership. Parking spaces are being provided at a ratio of 0.7 per dwelling, based on that projection, and taking into account the type and size of dwellings provided – as well as the central location and excellent access to public transport.

## 3.2. Public Involvement

Since starting the consultation process, the Applicant's Team has been receiving questions and comments, all of which have been considered and have helped formulate an appropriate response – either in the design or in the development strategy. Below is a summary of the main issues raised in consultees' comments, and the Applicant's response to each.

Issue	Key comments	Response
Principle of development	Why does WGC need the extra housing?	The Council's development strategy requires over 10,000 new homes to be built, the majority of which need to be built on Green Belt land. The application site is the largest brownfield site in the district and the most sustainable. Accordingly, density should be maximised with jobs delivered in tandem to optimise the sustainability of the site and bring a large brownfield derelict site back to use. These factors have resulted in the site being identified for comprehensive residential-led mixed-use development in the emerging Local Plan
Density	Building density appears too high.	We are seeking to maximise the use of this brownfield, extremely sustainable site adjacent to the railway station. We have reduced the height of 17 of the buildings previously consented, increased the height of only two by one storey, and further reduced the bulk of many of the blocks. Greater densification has been achieved across the site through a combination of measures, including reducing the amount of family housing and increasing the amount of studio, 1 and 2 bedroom properties, which is more befitting of the location and its infrastructure characteristics.



Issue	Key comments	Response
Infrastructure	Is there existing capacity within local schools / train services and core town facilities?	The site benefits from the best public transport infrastructure in the District and is therefore the optimum location to prioritise development. However, the education infrastructure and surrounding parkland is more limited, and consequently, the dwelling mix has deliberately targeted studio, 1-bed and 2-bed accommodation, aimed primarily at those under 30 and over 55, which the environment and infrastructure best lends itself to accommodating
Parking	Concern about underprovision of parking.	Car parking capacity has been calculated to meet the expected needs, taking into account the degree of public transport accessibility, the size and tenure of the dwellings, and the projected levels of car ownership. The site has better public transport accessibility than anywhere else in the District and it is certainly possible and practical to reside in this location without owning a private car. Accordingly, a resident car club is an intrinsic component of the development and the residential parking provision is still circa 0.7 spaces per dwelling. Furthermore, the commercial/community car parking provision remains as per the consented scheme.
Affordable homes	The previous proposals only allowed for 8%. How many will you deliver?	We are aiming for a policy-compliant level of affordable housing (around 30% affordable homes). In comparison with the consented scheme, the higher building density and the more appropriately sized dwellings allow for more affordable homes.
Management and maintenance	How will long-term management of public areas be guaranteed?	We propose to introduce a management charge to create long term sustainability for the site. This will include upkeep to gardens and buildings.

## Involvement

Issue	Key comments	Response
Balance of retail, residential and public spaces	How many shops and community facilities do you propose to build alongside the homes?	We believe there is scope for some complementary shops and restaurants / cafes. We do not believe the site should compete with the Town Centre and instead offer a different approach with art galleries, the civic building and office space.
The footbridge	Are you going to upgrade it? Will you be including a lift for disabled access?	<p>We are committed to fully refurbishing the footbridge subject to Network Rail allowing us to do so. This would involve creating a new wider stepped access way, installing new lighting and a Equality Act compliant passenger lift.</p> <p>We have offered to work in collaboration with the Train Operating Company who are looking to upgrade the Railway Station by March 2019. The upgraded connectivity offered by the bridge is critical for both the new and existing community.</p>
Construction timescale	Will elements of the site be ready for the Centenary?	<p>Given we have not yet submitted the application, we cannot make guarantees.</p> <p>We and our partners want to commence the refurbishment of the bridge and Listed building together with affordable housing on the southern site by August/September 2018 to meet Centenary timelines for 2020.</p>



## 3.3. Conclusion

Over the course of three formal pre-application planning consultations and numerous other consultations with stakeholders, the proposed scheme evolved both in terms of design and technical quality as well as in response to stakeholder involvement. Important points of development included:

- **Provision of community facilities in form of a new dedicated Civic Building designed by Louis de Soissons Architects which will include community space, alternative health-care and offices located at the heart of the scheme.**
- **Improvements to the layout of the Production Hall, with a focus on the connections with the public realm.**
- **Revisions to the massing of the residential blocks, focusing on townscape variety and legibility.**
- **Revisions to the project brief, focusing on viability.**
- **Revisions to the leisure offer to include a swimming pool, based on the viability of refurbishing the listed buildings, particularly the silos.**
- **Introduction of public art as an essential element of the public realm, and arts facilities as new destinations.**
- **New concept for sensory gardens, designed for universal access and enjoyment, with a focus on disabled users.**
- **Emphasis on the monumental facades of the factory buildings.**
- **Much needed improvement works to the pedestrian bridge linking the station to the site and community beyond.**

The public consultation process has met and exceeded the requirements of the Council's SCI, and has given the Applicant's team a full understanding of residents' and other stakeholders' aspirations, concerns, and degree of enthusiasm – all of which has been instrumental in developing the proposed scheme.

With hundreds of responses and contact details logged, there is now a strong platform for ongoing engagement. The Applicant's team welcome the support of approximately 75% of respondents in favour of the proposed scheme.

The Applicant's team will keep the existing communication channels open, in order keep people informed on progress, and enable the dialogue with stakeholders to continue after the planning application has been considered.

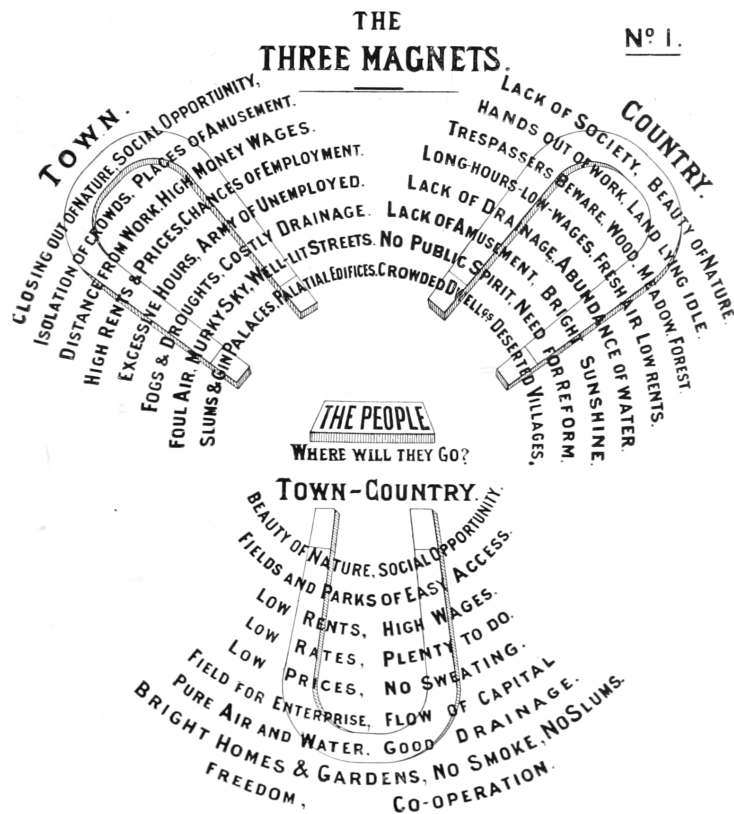
For further information, see *Statement of Community Involvement*, under separate cover.



## 4. Evaluation



## 4.1. Garden City Design Principles



The Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA), founded by Sir Ebenezer Howard in 1899, launched the Garden Cities movement. It originated Letchworth in 1903 and Welwyn in 1920, and carries Howard’s legacy of progressive ideas to this day. The TCPA defines a Garden City as “a holistically planned new settlement which enhances the natural environment and offers high-quality affordable housing and locally accessible work in beautiful, healthy and sociable communities”.

The Garden City principles have been interpreted for a 21st century context, to include:

- Land value capture for the benefit of the community.
- Strong vision, leadership and community engagement.
- Community ownership of land and long-term stewardship of assets.
- Mixed-tenure homes and housing types that are genuinely affordable.
- A wide range of local jobs in the Garden City within easy commuting distance of homes.
- Beautifully and imaginatively designed homes with gardens, combining the best of town and country to create healthy commu-

nities, and including opportunities to grow food.

- Development that enhances the natural environment, providing a comprehensive green infrastructure network and net biodiversity gains, and that uses zero-carbon and energy-positive technology to ensure climate resilience.
- Strong cultural, recreational and shopping facilities in walkable, vibrant, sociable neighbourhoods.
- Integrated and accessible transport systems, with walking, cycling and public transport designed to be the most attractive forms of local transport.

## Evaluation



The emerging proposal addresses the Garden City Design Principles within the context of a 21st century development with increased density.

4.2. Constraints

Sunlight and Northern Aspect

The site has a roughly rectangular shape, with the long axis parallel to Broadwater Road, at an angle of 16 degrees from due north. The long edges of the site boundary face Broadwater Road on the east and the railway on the west; the short edges face Bridge Road on the north and the former Roche site on the south.

Schools

The surrounding education infrastructure needs considerable investment. Consequently, it is appropriate and necessary to create a new civic quarter that is aimed at younger as well as older residents, to avoid placing additional strain on the education infrastructure.





## Evaluation

### Listed Buildings

There are a number of listed buildings and structures in the northeast of the site. These have been identified as more of an asset than a constraint, with the buildings being adapted and altered to enable re-use for employment, community and the arts. The scheme has also been designed to put the Listed Buildings and structures at the heart of the development within the new civic quarter with deliberate signposting in the public realm to the industrial heritage of the site and the retained buildings

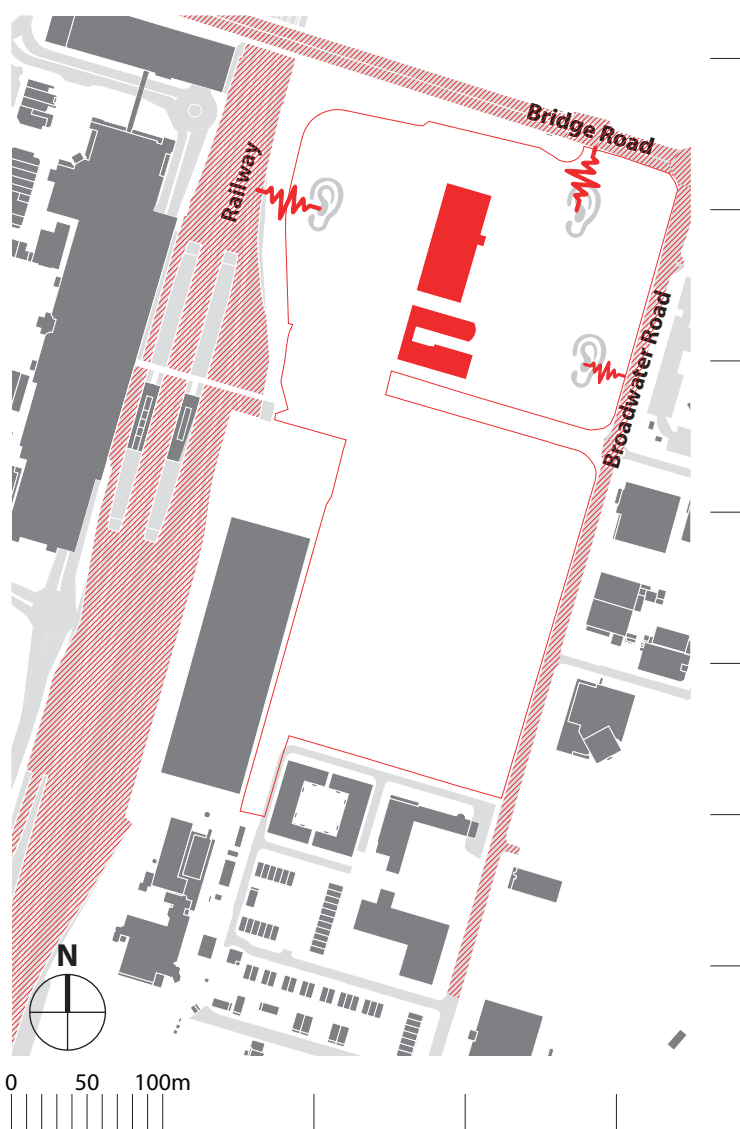
### Traffic/highway network

The site is centrally located and therefore reliant on the transport infrastructure network that has been established over the past 100 years. Accordingly, car parking provision has been reduced with a focus on electric cars and a resident car club, whilst off-site mitigation proposed through the previous consent has been retained and where relevant, modified.

### Noise

Vehicular traffic on the surrounding road network – Broadwater Road to the east and Bridge Road to the north – is often heavy, and emits noticeable levels of noise and pollution in this area of Welwyn Garden City.

The railway lines immediately to the west of the site, which accommodate the fast moving East Coast Mainline, provide an additional source of significant noise levels.



### 4.3. Opportunities

#### Connections

The success of the masterplan for this important site located within the heart of the town centre was seen from the outset to rely on the provision of legible connections to the surrounding areas; connections from established residential areas such as the Peartree neighbourhood, across Broadwater Road and into the site would help connect the currently disjointed parts of Welwyn Garden City together towards a more cohesive and connected town.

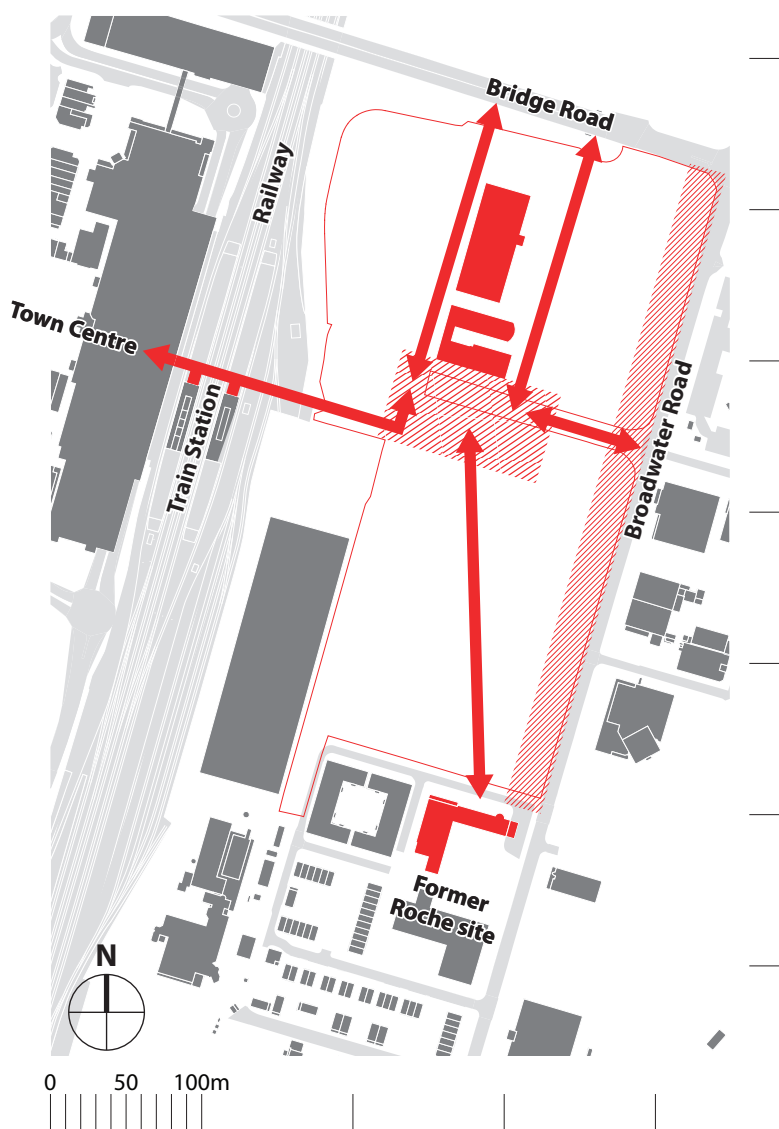
Connections into adjacent sites, which may be redeveloped in the future, such as the adjoining Pall Mall site to the west, were also considered in the initial masterplan to facilitate future development that could be easily and successfully integrated and connected into the redevelopment of this site, as called for in the BWR SPD.

#### Edges and Active Frontage

Improving the environment of Broadwater Road through considered highways and landscaping design would reduce the perception of the road being a barrier from east to west as well as drastically improving the environment of this busy and often inhospitable road. The site's prominent visibility from Bridge Road and from the railway presents further opportunities for improvements on the surrounding environment through thoughtful urban design.

#### Gateway Development

There is great potential for a gateway development, given the prominent location, the familiar landmarks, and the existing connection



## Evaluation

to the town centre (through the pedestrian bridge and Hyde Way).

### New Public Realm

The site is large enough to accommodate new public spaces, activated by mixed-use development.

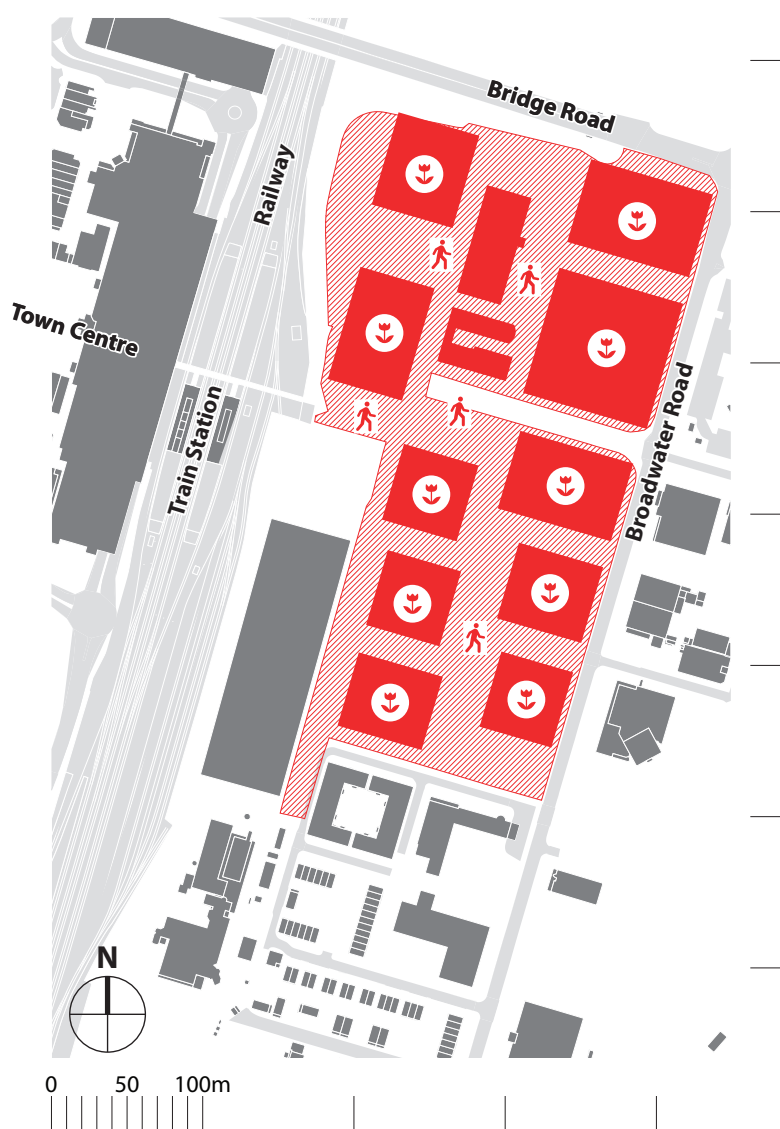
### Courtyards

Safe, secure and attractive communal courtyards will provide communal and private amenity space for new residents; beautifully designed places where the micro communities of each block will come together, meet and socialise. The initial masterplan provided visual connectivity between the publically accessible spaces, particularly the linear park space, and the courtyard gardens, thus engendering a sense of wider community, belonging and pride of ownership.

Located within the heart of the site and 'sheltered' by the perimeter line of buildings were proposed a series of interconnected publically accessible spaces, each with their own distinct character and function within the wider masterplan.

### Sheltered Amenity

Taller buildings on the site's perimeter will help to screen amenity spaces from external noise and views. Within each building cluster, the taller elements will be oriented east-west, thus minimising overshadowing. In addition, the proportions of the site allow for development to be sensitively arranged so as to avoid unacceptable impact on surrounding properties.





### 4.4. Listed Buildings

#### Shredded Wheat Factory History

The Grade II listed former Shredded Wheat Factory and original cluster of 18 silos have been a distinctive symbol for Welwyn Garden City for over ninety years. The factory site, rectangular in plan, is situated at the northern end of the materplan site and is bordered by Hunters Bridge, Hyde Way and the main railway line that runs through the heart of Welwyn Garden City. The factory has remained vacant since 2008 when Shredded Wheat moved their production to Staverton, Wiltshire.

The 1920's factory was design by the principal architect for Welwyn Garden City, Louis de Soissons. The factory development has evolved and expanded over its lifetime, reflecting the corporate expansion of the former occupiers, Shredded Wheat. The nine buildings within the complex have been constructed over three distinct periods. This allowed Shredded Wheat to supply the increasing demand for breakfast foods during the early 20th century.

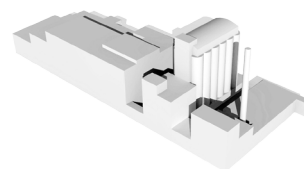
The Shredded Wheat Factory was a symbol for Welwyn Garden City and for de Soissons due to its revolutionary modern style; a dramatic contrast to the Georgian Arts & Crafts architecture found elsewhere in the town. The Factory was Shredded Wheat's first European manufacturing premises and the design was based around their flagship factory in Niagara Falls. The 3 storey complex, excluding the silos, was built in a predominantly functional architecture of painted concrete and rendered walls with Crittall metal windows. The factory was also one of the first buildings in Britain to be built utilising the flatslab construction method, a technique that had been developed in Europe and America.

The development of the former Shredded Wheat factory can be summarised in three main stages.

##### 1926 - 1928

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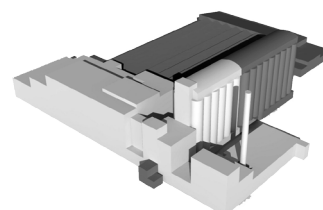
The completion of the original factory complex for Shredded Wheat which included the production hall, boiler house, eighteen silos, wheat elevator and garage.



##### 1937 - 1939

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A new single storey was fixed to the east of the factory and also on the roof of the multistorey original production hall. The number of silos also increased from 18 to 45. The additional 27 storage bins were designed by Louis Wirsching Jnr (the Nabisco company architect) which increased capacity to 8,500 tons. The additional silos were a separate, independent structure to the original 18 silos, but appeared visually to be fully integrated.



##### 1950s

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From 1941 to 1947 the Government introduced a zoning scheme which excluded Shredded Wheat from selling in certain areas; limiting production. Once this zoning came to an end, the company steadily increased its market share. A large extension on Broadwater Road increased production facilities, but reduced the recreation grounds. In 1957 & 1959 two further extensions were added, improving production and providing increased administrative facilities.

