

THE WHEAT QUARTER

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT • JANUARY 2018

ColladoCollinsArchitects

Project Team

Applicant	Plutus Estates (WGC) Ltd and Metropolitan Housing Trust (Joint Application)
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Landscape Architect, Ecology, TVIA	Bradley Murphy Design
Town Planning	Iceni Projects
Transport	Entran
Decontamination	EAME - Earth And Marine Environmental Consultants
Civic Building Architect	Louis de Soissons Ltd
Energy and Sustainability	Sol Environmental
Structural Engineering, Bridge Refurbishment and Planning Scheme	Meinhardt
Environmental Impact Assessment	Entran
Health and Safety	Orsa
Heritage Advisor	KM Heritage
Public Relations	Marengo Communications
Railway matters	Masons
Planning Lawyers	Howard Kennedy

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ColladoCollinsArchitects

The Wheat Quarter

Application for Planning Permission
Design and Access Statement

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1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose of this Document

ColladoCollins Architects have been appointed by Plutus Estates (WGC) Limited and Metropolitan Housing Trust to prepare this Design and Access Statement, which accompanies the planning application for the redevelopment of the land at Broadwater Road, known locally as the former Shredded Wheat Factory site.

The purpose of this Design and Access Statement is to provide an overview of the design proposal for the former Shredded Wheat Factory site. The document reviews several aspects of the relevant context (location, planning guidance, precedent designs); it summarises the collaborative process which lead to the design proposal; and it discusses specific places and buildings within the application site, offering some details and principles for further design work.

The legacy of Welwyn Garden City as a planned environment and the prominent, gateway location of the Shredded Wheat factory site within it accentuates the need for a striking, landmark development for the town. Having been informed by a thorough consultation process and design legacy, this proposal is the first step in an effort to establish a new, thriving community within Welwyn Garden City; to enrich the town with new, active and inviting places; and to lay out an inspiring vision for the future of the site, at the turn of WGC's first century.

1.2. Description of the Development

Creation of a mixed-use quarter comprising the erection of up to 1,340 residential dwellings including 414 (31%) affordable dwellings (Use Class C3); 114 extra care homes (Use Class C2); the erection of a civic building comprising 494 m² of health (Use Class D1), 494 m² of community use (Use Class D1), 1,232 m² of office (Use Class B1) and 646 m² of retail (Class A1/A2/A3/A4/A5); alterations, additions and change of use of Grade II Listed Building and retained Silos to provide 5,096 m² of flexible business floorspace (Use Class B1), 265 m² Combined Heat and Power (Sui Generis), 2,494 m² International Art Centre (Use Class D1), 1,226 m² Gymnasium (Use Class D2), 1,576 m² of restaurant/coffee shop/bar (Use Class A1/A3/A4/A5), Creche/Day Nursery of 644 m² as well as a Network Rail TOC Building of 364 m²; plus associated car parking, access, landscaping, public art and other supporting infrastructure.

1.3. Design Brief and Objectives

ColladoCollins have been instructed by Plutus Estates (WGC) Limited and Metropolitan Housing Trust to review the hybrid planning permission scheme produced by EPR Architects (the consented scheme), and to formulate a new proposal (the proposed scheme) that responds to the limitations of the consented scheme while achieving a successful planning outcome for all parties.

The design proposal presented in this document has specifically retained the garden city principles outlined in the Broadwater Road West Supplementary Planning Document (BRW SPD), and which underpinned the design approach for the consented scheme. Building footprints and landscape design, in particular, depart as little as possible from the consented scheme.

Nevertheless, the proposed scheme differs materially to the consented scheme, most importantly by increasing the number of dwellings while also significantly increasing the amount of affordable housing. In addition, the regeneration strategy for the community/commercial centre of the site – where the listed former factory buildings sit – has been developed and refined.

The proposed scheme builds on the knowledge accumulated for previous proposals, yet its design brief is inspired by new ideas and objectives as well as by previously established principles:

- To transform the Shredded Wheat Factory site into a vibrant new destination with a distinctive character: The Wheat Quarter.
- To restore and re-purpose the original 1920s factory buildings.
- To create beautiful, durable, and useful buildings within an enjoyable setting.
- To provide a substantial amount of new homes in a range of sizes and tenure types, including good quality affordable housing.
- To create public spaces that are well-connected, safe, inclusive, and enjoyable.
- To create places with quality and character, drawing primarily on the prominent location and industrial heritage of the site (hardscapes, mixed use, civic space) and on the potential for amenity provision (landscapes, biodiversity, environmental improvements).
- To create beautiful and enjoyable new landscapes, including new sensory gardens designed especially for disabled people.
- To improve the quality, connectivity and accessibility of existing routes and infrastructure, with a focus on east-west routes and

connections to the town centre and surrounding areas – including the pedestrian bridge over the railway.

- To benefit the local community by accommodating activities and services such as employment space, health and fitness, community services, and the Train Operating Company offices.
- To set out a vision for an arts centre and museum, investing in public art to be exhibited – indoors and outdoors – for the enjoyment of all.
- To provide new facilities for the benefit of the local community, including a new civic building that will celebrate the site's unique legacy, in time for Welwyn Garden City's centenary celebrations.

Introduction

1.4. Development Team

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

Plutus Estates (“Plutus”) is a private investment company and funding partner for ZMLC. ZMLC/Plutus have successfully funded projects together over a number of years, including the recent acquisition of a 3.5 acre site in Rye from J Sainsbury/Tesco Stores and a 6.8 acre site in Braintree from J Sainsbury, and further schemes in Welwyn Garden City and Hertford.

ZM Land & Capital (ZMLC) sources and purchases pre-planning development opportunities and oversees best-in-class consultant teams to secure planning consents and optimise development potential. The ZMLC team have delivered over 100 planning consents over the last 15 years and established partnerships with a range of institutions and government agencies, including: Allied Irish Bank, Lloyds/HBOS, Defence Estates and Network Rail.



Allied Domecq Brewery, St John Street, London EC1.
500,000 sq.ft. of mixed use accommodation



Royal Mint Gardens, London E1. New 700,000 sq. ft. mixed use development above Network Rail train line. Currently under construction.



Eversholt Street, London NW1. 112,000 sq.ft. office building adjacent to Euston Station.



Farringdon Road, London EC1.
28,000 sq.ft. of mixed use accommodation.

Introduction

Metropolitan Housing Trust

Metropolitan is one of the UK's leading providers of affordable housing and care and support services. The Trust owns and manages a large portfolio of nearly 38,000 homes, providing services to more than 71,000 customers across London, the East Midlands and the East of England.

Metropolitan has an ambitious development pipeline and is on track to deliver new homes at a rate of 1,000 a year.

Metropolitan maintains and manages existing dwellings in Welwyn/Hatfield and is committed to increasing its presence in the district. It is currently developing over 500 new dwellings on the former Xerox campus, now Times Square, with substantial affordable provision.



Times Square (former Rank Xerox site) refurbishment and new build, Welwyn Garden City.



Stonebridge Park, London.



Clapham Park, London.



Bridport Place, Hackney, London.



Brampton, Huntingdonshire



Brampton, Huntingdonshire

Introduction

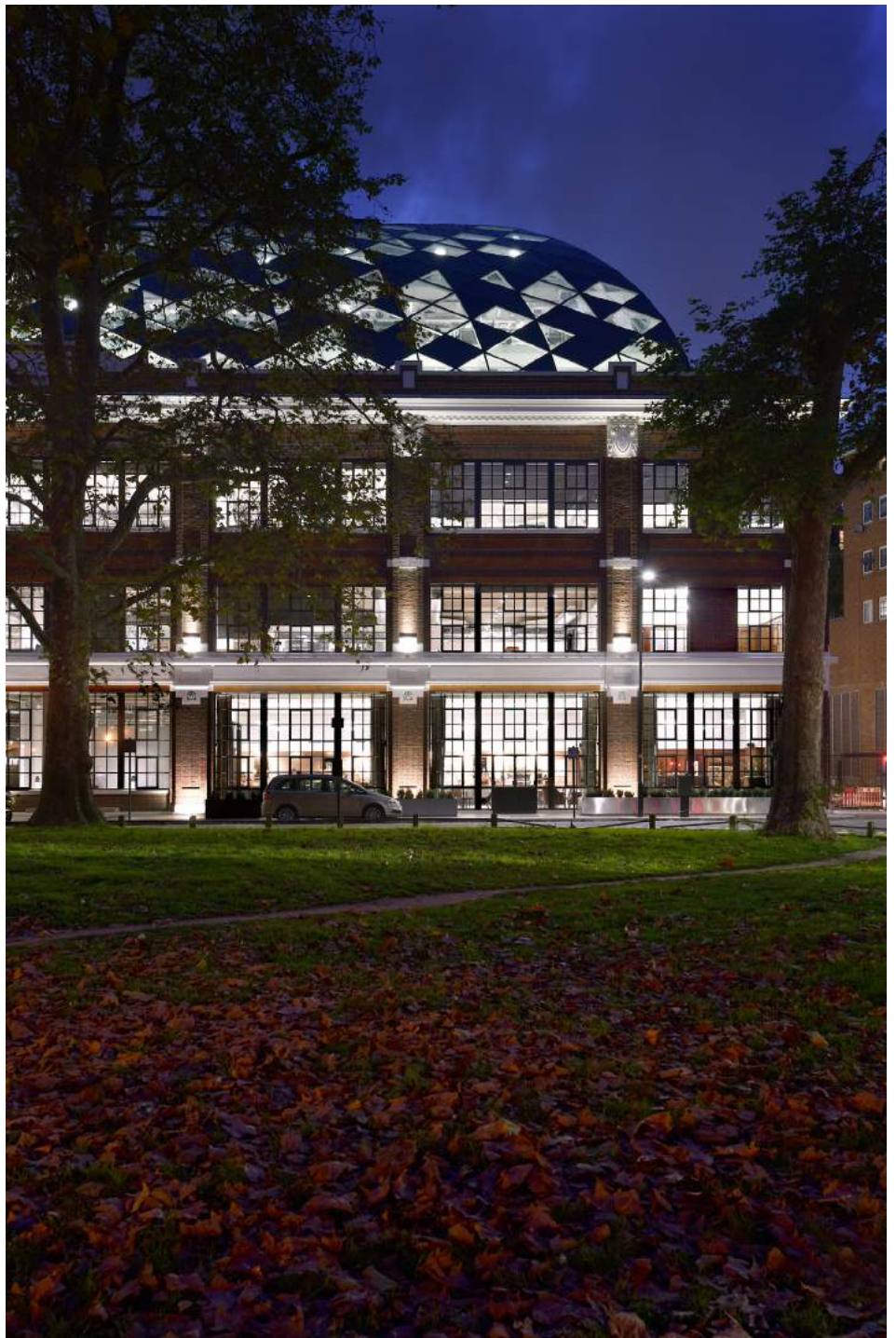
1.5. Design Team

Collado Collins Architects

Since its formation in 2004, ColladoCollins has embraced the challenges of complex mixed-use design to create successful buildings and urban environments. ColladoCollins secures planning permissions through openness, sensitivity and tenacity to produce commercial schemes that are deliverable.

The practice operates across several sectors, combining a strong design ethos with sound technical strength through every stage of the design process. Unlike many firms who specialise in one particular area, ColladoCollins' unique approach ensures that its designs are informed by experience across a wide range of schemes.

ColladoCollins brings a unique approach to the process of designing and developing buildings, combining a full understanding of the commercial challenges faced by clients with a sensitive, sustainable work method. ColladoCollins works to ensure every building it designs perfectly fits its surrounding area in an environmentally conscious and visually arresting way.



Introduction

Selected Work



Bath Press

Location	Bath
Client	Spenhill
Contract Sum	£50m
Status	Planning Consented
Composition	244 Residential Units 15,000 sq.ft. Commercial

The site is located in the City of Bath. It is currently occupied by the former premises of the Bath Press, built in various phases from 1889 to 1970, now vacant since 2007. It is proposed to retain some of the most iconic elements of the building such as the main historic façade and the chimney.

The proposals comprise 244 dwellings, 15000 sq.ft of commercial space and a total of 207 parking spaces.



Hillingdon Gateway

Location	LB Hillingdon
Client	Meyer Homes
Contract Sum	£73.4m
Status	Planning
Composition	377 Residential Units 4,600 sq.ft. Retail 3,600 sq.ft. Offices

Despite a prominent location in Hillingdon and excellent transport links – next to Hillingdon station and the M40 – the site has been derelict after the Master Brewer hotel was demolished in the early 2000s. In 2016, Meyer Homes took over the site from Tesco and set a project brief calling for an intelligent design that responded to the sensitivities of the site, the surrounding area, and the local community, where there is a lack of affordable housing. ColladoCollins’ design complements the existing interbellum and post-war housing stock and balances the needs of the local population with current London standards for building density, housing design, accessibility, and car parking.



Brook Green

Location	LB Hammersmith
Client	Westerland Real Estate
Contract Sum	£30m
Status	Completed
Composition	83,000 sq.ft. refurbishment 56,000 sq.ft. new offices
Listing	Grade II

The former Ford Motor Company garage along Shepherd’s Bush Road will be adapted to a new use, adding three new floors to the Grade II listed building housed in a striking glass dome. The design comprises over 115,000 sqft of office space across six floors and proposes the creation of a unique, high quality office space that incorporates contemporary design elements.

The design adds 50,000 sq.ft of new office accommodation above the existing building, and is a contemporary take on an historical precedent using modern diagrid technology.

Introduction

Bradley Murphy Design

BMD is a landscape architectural practice founded and led by Laura Bradley and Ryan Murphy. We have a proven track record in designing and delivering high quality landscape and public realm for large-scale residential developments from inception through to completion.

Landscape is an evolutionary process shaped by the relationship between people and place. We believe that our role as landscape architects is as guardians of existing landscapes and as champions for the creation of new, high quality landscapes and public realm. Our placemaking approach is informed by an iterative, contextual design process that focusses on realising design vision and delivering places of enduring quality.

Our landscape-led approach to masterplanning creates added value by finding the right balance between spaces and built form, to create places where people love to live. Green Infrastructure is integrated at the heart of the masterplanning process and forms an essential part of our placemaking design approach. We are passionate about facilitating the sharing of new ideas and developing new methods of collaborative working to explore what landscape can do for people and place.

BMD was commissioned in 2013 to lead the public realm and landscape design working with the wider design team to develop the detail of the masterplan, ensuring a landscape-led approach to the shaping of the development. BMD are delighted to have been retained in the continued evolution of this unique development on the former Shredded Wheat site.



Introduction

Selected Work

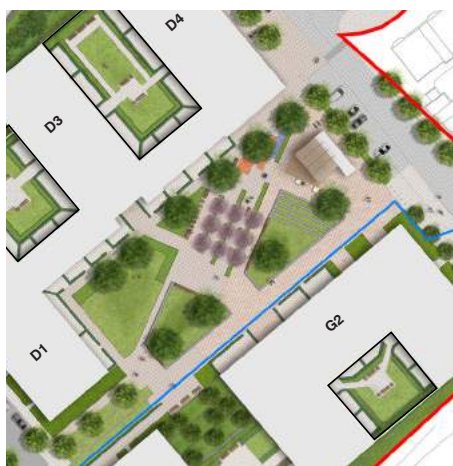


Peruvian Wharf

Location: London
Client: Galliard Homes
Status: Planning
Composition: 950 Residential Units

BMD was commissioned in 2015 working alongside EPR architects to produce the landscape design proposals for a primarily residential development located in the Thameside West area, delivering c.1000 homes.

The proposal consists of a high quality residential-led, mixed use development with a well-connected public realm integrated into a unique townscape. The landscape proposals help to define a stronger site identity and landscape character that responds to the context of the local area and contributes to the development's sense of place. Despite the challenges presented by the current industrial context, the Peruvian Wharf masterplan proposal maximising the opportunities that the vacant brownfield site offers, becoming an integral part of the Thameside West vision.



Tolworth

Location: London
Client: Meyer Homes
Status: Planning
Composition: 950 Residential Units

BMD was commissioned in 2016 to produce the site wide proposals for the former industrial, brownfield Toby Jug and former Ministry of Agriculture site adjacent to Tolworth train station. The proposals comprise c.950 units mixed use development structured in a sequence of streets and spaces with varying and contrasting characters.

The concept for the appearance of the scheme draws from a number of influences including the defensive characteristics of medieval hill towns in response to the environment conditions of the A3 corridor. The landscape vision for Tolworth focuses on the creation of a place that fosters sustainable and lasting social, physical and environmental connections with neighbouring communities and the wider townscape and landscape context.



London Road

Location: Hounslow
Client: Meyer Homes
Status: Starting construction
Composition: 300 Residential Units

BMD was commissioned in 2015 to prepare the landscape and public realm design proposals for a residential development of c.350 contemporary duplexes, apartments and commercial retail on London Road in Hounslow.

This exciting scheme drew on Woonerf principles, encouraging the use of mews streets as social spaces through the introduction of shared surfacing, integrated play, trees and feature planting.

Mews streets were combined with a sequence of publicly accessible spaces and communal gardens at ground & podium level to deliver interconnected green space across the development.

Introduction



Iceni Projects: Town Planning

Iceni is a town-planning led, multi-disciplinary consultancy. Currently in its 12th year, Iceni has recently expanded its regional presence beyond its Central London base through new offices in Glasgow and Manchester. Iceni is a modern, forward-thinking consultancy, partly reflected by the age of its team, but more relevantly, by its mind-set. Iceni is naturally attracted to complex and strategic scale developments that have the potential to achieve positive transformational change to communities, with homes, jobs and infrastructure delivered in tandem to create new sustainable development. The team considers itself ideally placed to formulate these projects and secure successful planning outcomes.

Iceni has extensive casework experience in Welwyn Hatfield and Hertfordshire. It has secured a major employment land allocation on the eastern edge of Welwyn Garden City through the draft Local Plan and is promoting numerous schemes for residential and mixed-use development across the County. Iceni's team is fully conversant with parking requirements, design policies and the approach of both Welwyn Hatfield District and Herts County to Planning Obligations from successfully promoting these projects.

Iceni's project of greatest relevance to the subject proposal is the re-development of the former GlaxoSmithKline and Lyons Bakery site at Greenford, West London. Iceni initially secured planning permission in 2014 for 593 new homes and a canal-side leisure hub including a cinema, food store, restaurants and cafes. The scheme preserved and restored the Grade II listed Glaxo House and included new public space, opening up the site for the first time in decades. The site was subsequently sold to the PRS operator Greystar Europe, who instructed Iceni to revise the scheme in order to achieve a significant intensification of the amount of floorspace and transform the site into a PRS-led mixed-use development. In March 2017, Iceni secured planning permission for 1,965 new homes to create the UK's largest purpose-built Build-to-Rent scheme. The similarities between the two projects site are striking, as is the nature of the instruction to optimise the development potential of a major brownfield site following a previous decision to grant planning permission for a comprehensive development.



Entran: Transport, EIA

Entran is an independent environmental and transportation consultancy with specific abilities and expertise in traffic engineering, transportation planning, environmental impact assessment, air quality and noise assessments and monitoring. Entran was formed in 2005 on the premise of providing the highest quality advice, solutions and services to suit individual clients' needs and to provide high quality advice throughout the development lifecycle.

Entran has offices in Bristol and London and is the retained transport and environmental consultancy to numerous national firms and institutions operating across all sectors including, retail, residential, education, leisure, health, and energy.

Entran has specific experience in developing multi-modal access strategies and assessing the transport effects and traffic impacts, as well as the environmental effects of major new developments and regeneration projects.

Relevant recent projects include:

- Bracklesham Bay (West Sussex) – 1,000 houses, new school, Park and Ride – Means of access/movement strategy to support LP allocation.
- Keybridge House (LB Lambeth) – 590 dwellings, retail uses and new school – Transport Assessment and Travel Plans.
- Medina Yard, Cowes (Isle of Wight) – Town centre regeneration comprising 535 dwellings plus 18,600 m² non-residential uses (retail, food, museum, boat yard, employment) – Transport Assessment, Traffic Impact Assessment, Travel Plan.

Introduction



EAME, Decontamination

EAME is a multi-disciplinary environmental consultancy practice that specialises in providing technical expertise and innovative solutions to complex and challenging environmental problems. The firm is based in the UK, Iraq, Kurdistan, Romania and Guyana which allows it to operate globally across a wide range of technical disciplines and industrial sectors. EAME's Environmental Scientists are a well-established team of environmental consulting professionals whose core members began working together over 15 years ago and have remained together as an integrated team ever since. Mr Steven Rowan (EAME MD) has over twenty-six year's environmental experience initially as a regulatory officer and technical specialist for UK Waste Regulation Authorities but for most of his career, in the private sector as a consultant to many multinational corporations from all industry sectors. Recent relevant project experience includes the redevelopment of a former coal tar creosote works (UK), regulatory negotiation associated with a residential development of a former petrol filling station (UK), and an environmental assessment of a former illegal waste depository (UK).

Louis de Soissons

Louis de Soissons Ltd: Civic Building Architects

Louis de Soissons Architects was founded in the 1920s by Louis E J G De Savoie-Carignan, Viscount d'Ostel Baron Longroy 1890 - 1962, younger son of Charles, 37th Count of Soissons.

The practice's first major commission was the design for Welwyn Garden City. Louis de Soissons was appointed Architect for the town in 1920 and the practice was heavily involved in its development for the next 60 years. Other important projects during this time included the Home Office and various Duchy of Cornwall private estates in London.

Introduction



Sol Environment: Energy and Sustainability

Sol Environment Ltd is an independent environmental, low carbon and sustainability consultancy that provides comprehensive and pragmatic advice in relation to commercial, residential, and industrial developments. The company's work focuses on Renewable Energy, Built Environment, Low Carbon Technologies and Environmental Permitting & Planning. Sol also offers a wide range of Corporate Compliance and Environmental Management services for the industrial, commercial and development sector.

Sol Environment specialises in the following services:

- Planning Sustainability
- Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Technology
- Environmental Permitting and Regulatory Assistance
- Verification and Operation Compliance
- Business Sustainability and Environmental Management



Meinhardt: Structural/ Bridge Engineering

Meinhardt is an international and multi-disciplinary firm of 4,000+ consulting engineers, planners, and managers with a record of designing some of the world's most notable buildings and infrastructures.

Meinhardt brings together its local experience of infrastructure developments with its international infrastructure capability, and offers technical expertise in a range of disciplines; structures, civil engineering, MEP, rail infrastructure, and construction planning. The company's approach is to provide maximum value within the risk and programme profiles of the major infrastructure operators.

Meinhardt's London office provides a hands-on multidisciplinary design service, operating across all building sectors on a wide range of project types, and focusing on coordination, value and collaboration, delivered via BIM. The team incorporates worldwide best practice into its projects.

Selected projects:

- Peninsula Place. Three tall buildings up to 32 storeys in height, a central glazed shopping arcade and a deep basement over a live Underground Station. Total Height: 135 metres (Approximately). Construction Cost: >£800 million. Completion Date: 2022.
- Camden High Line. A proposal for a disused railway owned by Network Rail. Total Length: 1,300 metres (approximately). Construction cost: >£50 million. Completion Date: 2023.



Orsa: Health and Safety

Orsa is an independent boutique compliance consultancy, specialising in all matters related to health, safety and environment. Orsa offers a broad range of compliance consultancy services in support of construction and development projects, film production, and day-to-day business delivery.

Orsa's roots are in construction and the built environment, with experience of small and major projects all over the world.

The construction industry is aware of the sensitivity surrounding health and safety issues on-site and its appalling safety record. It is against this backdrop that Orsa offers a wide range of tailored specialist safety services that can be commissioned individually, or as part of a fully integrated package, each designed to add value by optimising safety.

Introduction



KMHeritage: Heritage Advisor

KMHeritage provides support on all aspects of the historic built environment, advising clients as they develop projects, negotiate with local planning authorities and English Heritage, and prepare material to explain and justify proposals in terms of national and local guidance on the historic built environment.

KMHeritage has worked on projects for major developments such as significant tall building proposals in London, Manchester, and Leeds. Examples include a successful planning application and listed building consent for the comprehensive conversion of the Royal Mint Court site into an employment-led mixed use development in the context of the conservation area, the setting of the World Heritage Site and the setting of nearby listed buildings; and support for the redevelopment of sites and conversion of various Grade II and Grade II* listed former mill and warehouse buildings within the Ancoats Conservation Area in Manchester.



Marengo Communications: Public Relations

Marengo Communications is an independent communications and consultation consultancy working for sixteen years in the property sector, engaging with stakeholders and local residents on behalf of developers and their agents. Marengo is a member of the Consultation Institute and has strict ethical rules of engagement and conduct. The company's role is to coordinate and manage consultation and engagement with local residents, stakeholder groups, interested parties and the media. Marengo produces websites, exhibition boards, and the majority of correspondence on behalf of its clients, and often liaises with elected members from local authorities, other tiers of local Government, and Parliament.



Masons: Planning Solicitors/ Railway matters

Masons Property Advisers is a multidisciplinary Chartered Surveying Practice established in 1990. Over that last 27 years it has built up a deep understanding of the property development process. Masons expertise extends to the feasibility assessment of complex schemes, sustainability, viability, planning and ultimately, delivery. Within this context, Masons provides specialist property-related advice on projects within the Railway environment and has enabled the delivery of over 4 million square feet of development within this challenging and unique sector of the market.

2. Assessment

2.1. Historical Background

Garden City Principles

In 1898, the English reformer and urban planner Ebenezer Howard published *To-morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform* (re-printed in 1902 as *Garden Cities of To-Morrow*). The book described Howard's vision for the 'Garden City': "to bring the best elements of both urban and rural life together into a new, revolutionary way of living". This concept is illustrated in Howard's famous 'Three Magnets' diagram, which lists the perceived advantages and disadvantages of 'Town' and 'Country' – the traditional living environments depicted by two magnets. The third magnet, 'Town–Country' has all the combined benefits of the two traditional, yet diverse models of living, but none of their disadvantages (such as the overcrowded living conditions of towns or the poor social facilities and lack of job prospects of the country).

The intention of blending the best of both city and country into a new way of living was the basis of the Garden City, whose key characteristics, as formulated by Howard, included:

- A fair distribution to the community of the profits that result from new development,

founded on land value capture and the control of core utilities;

- Strong political support and leadership, with firm commitment to a clear vision and community participation;
- A suitable body to manage community assets over the long term;
- Mixed-tenure homes and housing types, with the majority of homes genuinely affordable;
- A full range of employment opportunities within easy commuting distance of homes;
- Beautifully and imaginatively designed, high-quality homes with gardens, combining the best of town and country living to create healthy living environments;
- Development that enhances the natural environment, providing net biodiversity gains and using zero-carbon and energy-positive technology to ensure climate resilience;
- Strong cultural, recreational and shopping facilities in walkable, vibrant sociable neighbourhoods; and
- Integrated and accessible transport systems, with walking, cycling and public transport designed to be the most attractive forms of local transport.

Howard's vision for this new way of living attracted enough financial support to found Letchworth, the first Garden City. Construction work began in 1903 under the stewardship of Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker, whom Howard trusted to implement his vision.

After construction started in 1920, Welwyn Garden City was the second and last true Garden City to be built in England to this date. As was the case with Letchworth, Howard's Garden City principles were implemented by another person – this time the architect Louis de Soissons.

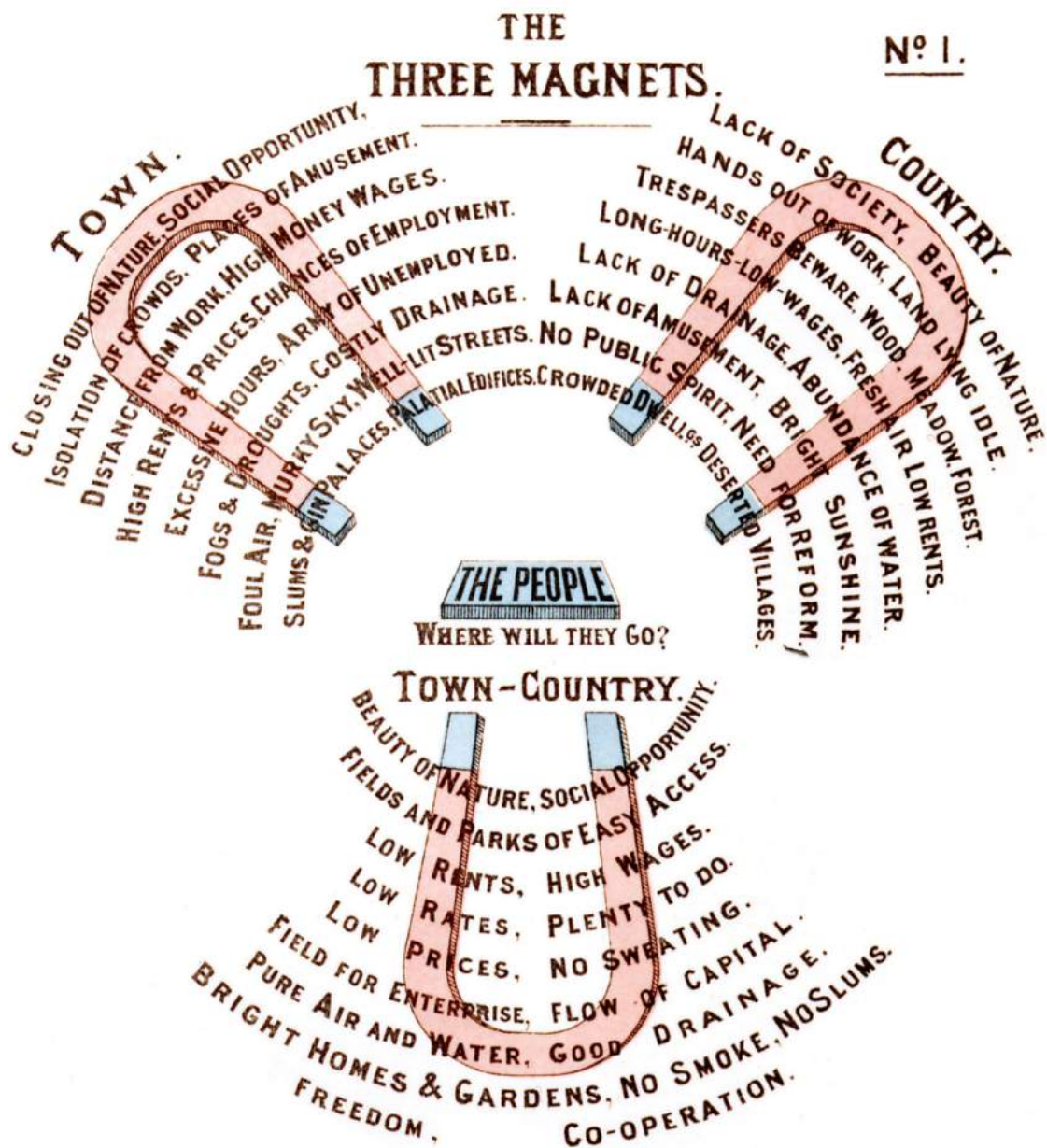


Diagram No.1: The Three Magnets (in Ebenezer Howard, *To-morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*. 1898, Swan Sonnenschein & Co.)

Welwyn Garden City Planning History

Louis de Soissons was born in French Canada in 1890. He trained at the Royal Academy and at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. In April 1920 he was appointed as the principal architect and planner for a new Garden City for 40-50,000 inhabitants.

His employer, Welwyn Garden City Limited, had been formally established as the owner and developer of an 2,378 acre estate in Hertfordshire.

Welwyn was de Soissons's first major commission. To deliver it, he set up a practice – the Louis de Soissons Partnership – with George Grey Wornum, with whom he presented a master plan for the new city in June 1920.

Louis de Soissons and the partnership were actively involved in Welwyn Garden City's planning, architectural design and growth for over 60 years. The development company – Welwyn Garden City Limited – allocated land for industrial and business purposes, as well as for privately owned houses, granting leases with restrictive covenants. De Soissons had total control of the plan of Welwyn Garden City – all plans of buildings had to be submitted to him

under the provisions of the Building and Other Regulations in Force on the Welwyn Garden City Estate of 1923. Welwyn Garden City Limited successfully controlled the appearance of the town, and built about 40% of the buildings.

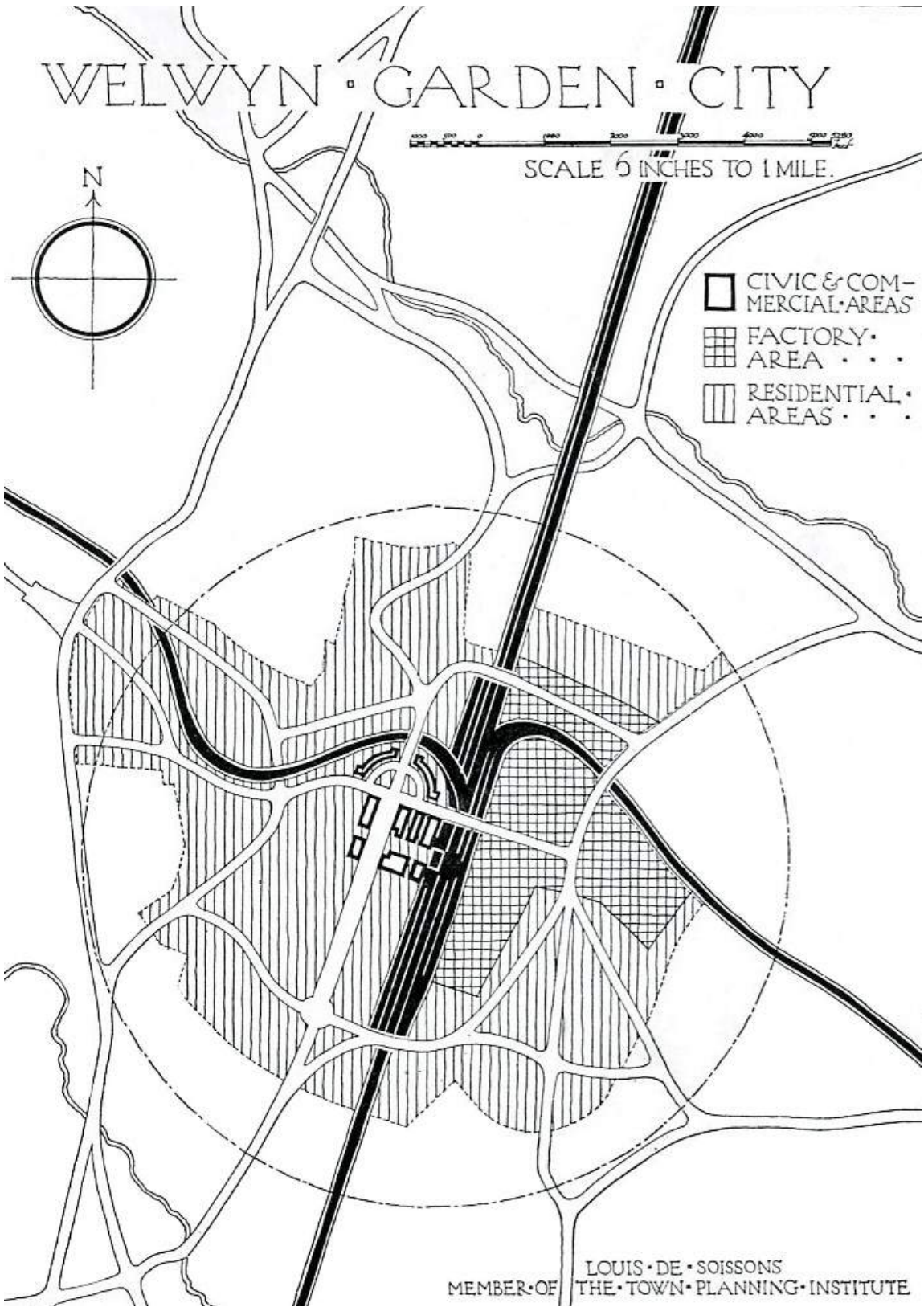
The new Garden City was to be self-sufficient – a carefully planned settlement combining industry and agriculture into a distinct whole; a self-contained community with an industrial area providing jobs in 'clean' manufacturing industries.

This self-containment was meant to prevent the town becoming merely a dormitory town for London. The limits on its growth were ultimately set by the surrounding green belt and any trees already in the landscape were retained in the initial plan. A follower of Garden City philosophy wrote in 1911:

'The object of a Garden City is to draw away from overcrowded localities or to intercept the ever increasing flow from the country by establishing new industrial towns in the country: towns which shall always stand in their belt of agricultural land' (Sir Ralph Neville, 'Garden City and Garden Suburb', in *Garden Cities and Town Planning*, n.s. Vol. 1, No. 1 (1911).

To the west and north of the town centre were residential districts, and to the east of the railway line were areas reserved for industry and business, beyond which were further areas of housing. The industrial area was beside the London and North Eastern Railway (LNER) and the branch line to Hertford which swept north-eastwards (now closed). The fairly level land close to the railway was recognised as the best site for industry. Most of the factories were eventually located along Broadwater Road, which stretched in the north-south direction.

Since the introduction of Permitted Development rights, Welwyn Garden City's industrial area is undergoing an important transformation – from a predominantly industrial, commercial zone to a mixed use, active part of the town. At the heart of this transformation, the former Shredded Wheat Factory site provides an opportunity for a new vibrant place east of the town centre.



Welwyn Garden City master plan. Drawing by Louis de Soissons.

History of the Application Site

The first company to occupy a site in Welwyn Garden City's new "Factory Area" was Archibald D. Dawnay & Sons Ltd, construction engineers and structural steel fabricators, who took a site near Hunter's Bridge (a bridge over the railway). They were soon followed by the American Shredded Wheat company, which leased seven acres just to the south in an excellent position, directly adjacent to the railway lines.

Shredded Wheat was attracted to the town for several reasons – the close proximity to London, without the 'smoke, grime and fog, that London is apt to indulge in'; and the convenience of getting 'suitable railway siding accommodation for receiving goods to other parts of the country' (Hertford Local Studies Library, *Industry Moves Out* (n/d), p.19).

Equally important to the location near the railway was a healthy environment where the factory workers could profit from all the social and economic benefits of 'the happy Shredded

Wheat Family'. The company believed that 'all food for human consumption should be manufactured under the most rigid sanitary conditions and amidst surroundings that are cleanly, healthy and pleasant'. Welwyn Garden City was chosen as 'more nearly conforming to these ideals than any of the other sites offered'.

Welwyn Garden City was intent on attracting British industries, and offered the southern part of the application site to British Instructional Films on favourable conditions soon after the opening of the Shredded Wheat factory.

Welwyn Studios was built for British Instructional Films and later taken over by British International Pictures. Having started in the silent-movie era, the studios were converted to make sound films shortly after their opening in 1928. Welwyn Studios pioneered sound cinema in Britain.

The facility operated between 1928 and 1950. It served as an overflow facility for Elstree Stu-

dios and was the production site of many supporting features as well as independent films.

After the film studios closed, the site was used as a warehouse by Ardath Tobacco and later by Polycell, until the facilities were abandoned, purchased by Tesco, and demolished in 2009, in preparation for new development.