



FAO: Planning Department,  
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

Ref: 6/2018/0171/MAJ  
Date: 13/04/2018

## HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION ADVICE

Dear Sir / Madam,

### **RE: Former Shredded Wheat Factory, Welwyn Garden City, AL8 6UN**

The application is for the creation of a mixed-use quarter comprising residential dwellings; care homes; a civic building comprising 494 sq.m of health, 494 sq.m of community use, 1,232 sq.m of office and 646 sq.m of retail; alterations, additions and change of use of the Grade II listed building and retained Silos to provide 5,096 sq.m of flexible business floorspace, 265 sq.m Combined Heat and Power, 2,494 sq.m International Arts Centre, 1,226 sq.m Gymnasium, 1,576 sq.m of restaurant/coffee shop/bar, Crèche/Day Nursery of 644 sq.m, as well as a Network Rail TOC building of 364 sq.m; plus associated car parking, access, landscaping, public art and other supporting infrastructure.

The application site incorporates the Nabisco Shredded Wheat Factory, which is a Grade II Listed Building of architectural and historic importance, and which was one of the first factories to be built as part of the industrial development of Welwyn Garden City. The application site is also located in close proximity to Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area.

This application follows a previous planning permission granted in 2017 and subsequent changes to the proposals. As such, the proposed works are discussed in relation to the revisions to the previously consented scheme and the subsequent proposed changes.

The proposed changes to the Shredded Wheat Factory buildings comprise the conversion of the Production Hall to leisure space, with associated treatment rooms, physio rooms and pool; a crèche/day nursery; art studios, offices and conference space. The proposed leisure space and crèche would be accommodated at ground floor level. This differs from the consented scheme, which proposed office space at ground floor, and would require further subdivision of the listed building at this level. A new central atrium within the listed building is proposed across all floor levels, as well as new core spaces incorporating staircases, elevators and bathrooms. It is also proposed to convert the Grain House, Boiler House and Silos into an Art and Museum Hub, and to create a new Energy Centre which re-uses the existing chimney of the Boiler House.



The proposed conversion works to the Grade II listed building as outlined would require Listed Building Consent and it is therefore expected that a Listed Building Consent application will be submitted to accompany this Planning Application. As such, the acceptability of the proposed works to the Shredded Wheat Factory buildings will be considered as part of the application for Listed Building Consent.

With regard to the new development proposed within the setting of the Grade II listed buildings and the conservation area, the blocks to the east and west of the factory buildings on the north site have been altered in terms of footprint and layout, with associated changes to the landscaping. The block formerly proposed to the north east of the listed buildings has now been removed and a new block is proposed to be located directly to the north of the factory building. The form and massing of the blocks on the south site has also been altered, with further variations in height introduced into their design. In general, the heights of the buildings along the west and east boundaries of the site have increased in comparison to the consented scheme.

It is considered that the proposed development would detract from the appreciation of the significance of the listed building and the conservation area and would compromise the pre-eminence of the listed building. As such, and as identified in relation to the previously consented scheme, it is considered that the proposed development would have an adverse impact on the setting of the heritage assets and would cause harm to the significance of the listed building and the character and appearance of the conservation area.

In accordance with paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme or securing the optimum viable use of the heritage asset.

Were permission to be granted, and notwithstanding the indicative scheme, I would suggest that the local planning authority impose conditions relating to further details on materials, construction details and landscaping.

Yours sincerely,

Hannah Rae  
Historic Buildings Consultant  
Place Services

*Note: This letter is advisory and should only be considered as the opinion formed by specialist staff in relation to this particular matter*