

**WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - PLANNING, PUBLIC PROTECTION AND GOVERNANCE**

DELEGATED APPLICATION

Application No: 6/2018/0960/LB
Location: Former Shredded Wheat Factory Welwyn Garden City AL8 6UN
Proposal: Repair, restoration, extension and conversion of the retained original 1920's silos, production hall, grain store and boiler house to provide 5,096 sq.m of flexible business floorspace (Use Class B1), 265 sq.m Combined Heat and Power (Sui Generis), 2,494 sq.m International Art Centre (Use Class D1), 1,226 sq.m Gymnasium (Use Class D2), 1,576 sq.m of restaurant/coffee shop/bar (Use Class A1/ A3/A4/A5) and Creche/Day Nursery of 644 sq.m.
Officer: Mr Gerry Ansell

Recommendation: Granted

6/2018/0960/LB

Context	
Site and Application description	<p>The Application Site</p> <p>The application site is located within a commercial area within the eastern part of Welwyn Garden City. The site itself, known as the former Shredded Wheat factory which includes other land occupied as a Polycell factory, lies within an area allocated for industry in the original Louis de Soissons garden city plan. The Shredded Wheat factory opened in 1926 becoming a major employer and breakfast cereal manufacturer until its closure in 2008 when production was moved to a new location in Wiltshire. The site contains a Grade II Listed Building - albeit parts of this have been removed following approval of a Listed Building Consent (Ref: N6/2015/0293/LB) last year.</p> <p>Proposal Description</p> <p><i>Production Hall</i></p> <p>Listed building consent has been granted for the demolition of the later structures that formed the factory complex as well as the restoration and conversion of the remaining, most significant, listed buildings.</p> <p>These present proposals build upon the principles established in that consent in order to enhance areas and facilitate new uses. As well as commercial, community and leisure uses within the former factory building, a new Energy Centre is proposed on the site of the former garages and it is proposed that the Boiler House and Grain House are converted into a unique Art/Museum Hub with multidisciplinary indoor and outdoor space.</p> <p>Externally, it is proposed to introduce a ramp and stair along Reiss Walk to provide a main entrance into the new central atrium on the west elevation.</p> <p>Internally, the majority of the proposed subdivision is located on the ground floor. Partitions relate to the existing column grid to ensure the structural and architectural integrity of the building can still be read. This floor is also where,</p>

amongst other facilities the swimming pool will be located.

On the upper floors, the full open plan nature of the spaces can be fully appreciated. The office spaces will be separated by the atrium space with full height glazed walls ensuring noise but not visual separation.

On the second floor art studios will be created at the southern end that will connect with the proposed art centre via a new glass bridge.

At third floor level it is proposed that the existing building line will be retained (as opposed to extended in the original listed building consent) with a small roof terrace set well back from the edge of the roof and invisible from the ground. The existing eastern wall of the third floor will be re-constructed with similar glazing and details as the rest of the building.

The central atrium space will contain a feature stair and lift core. The proposed atrium stair construction will be a contemporary blend of glass treads and metal runners in order to create an open and light environment. It will also minimise the visual impact internally, allowing occupiers and visitors to read the open office floor plate. The lifts, which provide access to all floors, will also provide panoramic views of the space when moving up through the building.

As consented in the previous scheme, it is proposed that the facades of the building will be carefully restored and/or reinstated. It is also proposed that internally the building will receive an insulated lining in order to improve thermal efficiency. This will be painted white which will ensure it has no visual impact on the character of the space.

The Heritage Statement indicates that the proposed glass bridge link between the Grain Store and Factory building has been inspired by that of the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden. Its purpose is to give the Arts Centre the capacity to expand from one building to the other – an important part of providing a sustainably flexible future for the listing buildings.

The Grain House and Silos

Unlike the previously consented scheme, it is proposed to convert the Grain House and Silos into an Art/Museum Hub. It is proposed that the existing machinery still remaining in the Grain House will be renovated and cleaned to retain the building's industrial character and could be used within exhibitions as well as serving as a visual reminder of the history of the building.

The silos will be repaired and restored and the base of them opened up allowing the hollow space to be used for art installations. It is proposed that the building on top of the silos will be converted to a restaurant and bar with views across Welwyn Garden City. Access will be by a stair and lift located within two of the silos.

The structure between the Grain House and Silos (previously consented for removal) will be retained – providing at ground floor, the entrance to the Arts Centre.

This use is a considerably more light-touch approach to that previously consented and will allow for the retention of much more historic fabric within these buildings. It will also allow for a fuller appreciation of the scale and nature of the space and should be regarded as a major heritage benefit in comparison to the previous scheme.

The former Garages

The former garages, previously consented for replacement, will still be replaced, and house a restaurant/café, facing out onto the newly created

	<p>Goodman Square and also the Energy Centre – which will be glazed so that passers-by can look in and see the various parts of the plant at work. The energy centre will make use of the existing chimney.</p> <p>Behind the new building will be a covered courtyard which will link to the silos and provide a more open indoor space to appreciate the scale of the adjacent silos.</p>		
Constraints (as defined within WHDP 2005)	<p>LBC - LISTED BUILDING Architect Louis de Soissons. Two concrete ranges - Distance: 0</p> <p>LBC - LISTED BUILDING 1938-40 by Otto R Salvisberg of Zurich in - Distance: 14.64</p> <p>Wards - Peartree - Distance: 0</p>		
Relevant planning history	<p>The site's history goes right back to the 1920's and hence there are various schemes over the years relating to the evolution of the site in its life as a cereal manufacturer. More recent proposals for redevelopment following the site's closure in 2010 are noted below.</p> <p>The most relevant application (N6/2015/0293/LB) was for part demolition, repair, restoration, extension and conversion of the former Shredded Wheat factory complex to include demolition of all buildings and structures except the original 1920's silos, production hall, grain store and boiler house. Refurbishment and change of use of the retained listed buildings to provide 2 Class C3 residential units, a Class C1 boutique/budget hotel, Class B1(a) offices, a class Class A4 pub/bar, a class Class D1 crèche and a Class D2 gym/dance/exercise studio.</p> <p>As indicated above the demolition work has taken place but none of the conversion works have been carried out.</p>		
Consultations			
Neighbour representations	Support: 0	Object: 1	Other: 0
Publicity	<p>Site Notice Display Date: 19 April 2018</p> <p>Site Notice Expiry Date: 10 May 2018</p> <p>Press Advert Display Date: 2 May 2018</p> <p>Press Advert Expiry Date: 16 May 2018</p>		
Summary of neighbour responses	None		
Consultees and responses	<p>1. Hertfordshire County Council - Historic Environment Advisor This office has previously been consulted on similar schemes for the development of the site as a whole, notably planning applications N6/2015/0293/LP and N6/2015/0294/PP, on a request for a scoping opinion (6/2017/2491/EIA), and most recently on a further scheme for the development of the entire site (N6/2018/0171/MFA). In our response to the request for a scoping opinion, we advised that the effects of the proposed development on potential below-ground archaeological assets could be scoped out of the EIA, but that it was likely that we would recommend that an archaeological evaluation be carried out and secured by negative condition should planning permission be granted. We also advised that a professional standard historic building recording be carried out prior to any development commencing. In this context we note that demolition of the grain silos may have already begun under the previously</p>		

	<p>granted permissions, and that this office has still not yet seen a completed historic building recording report. In our most recent comments, concerning N6/2018/0171/MFA, we advised that the proposed development should be regarded as likely to have an impact on heritage assets with archaeological interest, and we recommended that provision should be made, via the placing of appropriately worded conditions on any planning consent, for the archaeological</p> <p>2. Historic England</p> <p>Historic England have no objections to the application on heritage grounds. We consider that the application meets the requirements of the NPPF, in particular paragraph numbers 126, 131, 132 and 134. In determining this application you should bear in mind the statutory duty of section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any</p> <p>3. Highways England.</p> <p>Comments in relation to Highway matters. HE are satisfied with the proposals and there are various planning conditions</p> <p>4. Thames Water – comments in relation to water supply, foul waste.</p>
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Relevant Policies

NPPF Paragraph 193 of the Framework outlines that, when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, ‘great weight’ should be given to the asset’s conservation and the more important the asset the greater the weight it should be given. Paragraph 194 states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting) should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of: a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional; b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and world heritage sites, should be wholly exceptional. Where the harm is considered less than substantial Paragraph 196 states that this should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, its optimum viable use. The NPPF therefore does allow for a degree of harm to a heritage asset in particular circumstances.

Main Issues

Impact on the character and setting of the listed building and adjoining listed buildings

Section 16 of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act states that the local planning authority shall have “*special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses*”. The specific historic environment policies within the NPPF are contained within paragraphs 184-202.

The National Planning Policy Framework indicates the requirement to consider heritage matters as follows:

In determining applications, local planning authorities should take

	<p>account of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. <p>In exercising its planning functions the local planning authority has a general duty with regard to listed buildings.</p> <p>Policies D1 to D11 Adopted District Plan 2005 deal with detailed aspects of design for the application. Policy SP9 of the Draft Submission Borough Plan 2016 deals with place making and high quality design and Policy SADM11 amenity and layout. The Council has several policies devoted to this subject together with a Supplementary Planning Document. The applicant has supplied a Design and Access Statement, Landscape and Design Access Statement and Heritage Statement.</p> <p>Section 66(1) of the Planning Listed Buildings and Conservations Areas Act 1990 states:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">66.—(1) In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local respects listed planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have buildings in special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or exercise of any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.</p> <p>Section 72 of the Planning Listed Buildings and Conservations Areas Act 1990 states:</p> <p>In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any powers under any of the provisions mentioned respects in subsection (2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of conservation preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.</p> <p>The Broadwater Road West SPD sets out the Council’s vision for the area as:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>To deliver an energetic and pioneering scheme of development which integrated 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.</i></p> <p>The site is divided into two halves. The Design and Access statement describes (at Section 6.3) this as follows:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">“The character that defines the north part of the site is defined by</p>
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	<p>the post-industrial nature of the former Shredded Wheat Factory, which the proposed scheme seeks to respond to in both layout, public realm and landscape terms.</p> <p>The south site character, in contrast to the north, is less formal in layout, architecture and landscape terms. The central park known as the Weave is proposed as an undulating, naturalistic environment.”</p> <p>The renovation of all of the remaining listed structures (the Silos, Grain Hall and Production Hall) are considered to provide a balance between preserving and enhancing the character of the area and listed building whilst providing a positive setting in the design of surrounding buildings and spaces. It is considered that the works proposed will be faithful to the retained building although greater detail would be required to assess the full impact on the historic fabric of the listed building.</p> <p>It is considered that the application in the context of the wider scheme has many significant qualities that help to create a new part of Welwyn Garden City whilst respecting the heritage of the listed building and conservation area setting.</p> <p>Whilst not all views are able to be protected the scheme does offer important glimpses through the site and the preservation of the iconic character of the retained Shredded Wheat Buildings, in a new setting.</p> <p>The surrounding proposed development is taller and denser than the previous scheme but the overall design and feel of the scheme does not overwhelm or negatively impact on the listed building.</p> <p>Policy R27 relates to the demolition of listed buildings (partial or complete) under listed building consent. As indicated much work is already complete under the listed building consent ref N6/2015/0293/LB. Applicants have already gained approval (ref/2016/2018/COND) to record details of the building where demolition/alteration is granted.</p>
<p>Design (form, size, scale, siting) and Character (appearance within the streetscene)</p>	<p>The Council commissioned an independent critique of the design from Tibbalds. It is clear that the scheme has been through a design evolution from the design and access statement and an addendum was supplied to that document to respond to the more recent issues raised by Tibbalds.</p> <p>Having weighed up the scheme it is concluded that the listed building works are proportionate to the regeneration and retain and enhance the remaining structures in combination with the new development. Although the proposed setting will be of high density it is not out of place being one of the most accessible parts of the borough and a location which because of its size, existence of buildings of height (e.g. the silos) and low impact on residential neighbours provides a high quality design response to the demands of the site.</p> <p>The detailed proposals are well detailed and presented with the Heritage Report setting out clear context and justification for the proposals. Subject to more details being supplied it is clear that the works are of a nature that help to secure the future of the building but also respect the presumption of retaining the buildings’ historic fabric and form both internally and externally. Additions such as the access</p>

	<p>ramp and glazed link bridge are considered to be sympathetic and respectful of the character of the buildings they link.</p> <p>Overall the conclusion is that, subject to approval of the finer detail, these proposals are acceptable in the context of the Listed Buildings and Conservations Areas Act and heritage aspects of the NPPF and Local Plan.</p>
Any other considerations	<p>Protected Species: The wider redevelopment proposals for the site is accompanied by an Environmental Statement (ES) which includes an Ecological report. The site is identified, on the whole, to be of low ecological value. Bat surveys have been undertaken and found that bats were not present at the site at that time, and habitat for bat roosts on the site are poor. The planning application will secure the implementation of measures for ecological protection and enhancement.</p>
Conclusion	
<p>For the above reasons the proposals are considered to be acceptable and would preserve the special architectural character of the buildings for the longer term. The bulk of works have been implemented via an earlier LBC. These current works seek to deal with the associated restoration works linked to the current scheme 6/2018/0171/MAJ. Approval is therefore recommended.</p>	

Conditions:

1. Prior to the commencement of any works to the Listed Buildings, the applicant shall submit to, and have approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority a detailed specification for the proposed works to each phase or block that will be subject to commencement. Drawings shall be provided at 1:20 scale for typical elevations and sections and 1:5 for sectional details.

The submitted specification shall include:

- i) A schedule of repairs to the listed building;
- ii) INTERNAL
 - A method statement for removing buildings, walls and forming openings in floors;
 - Details and samples of materials to be used, including the interior finish;
 - Precise details of new staircases, alterations to existing staircases, lifts; WC accommodation;
 - new floors (including finishes and protection of existing finishes); ceilings, exposed services and/or ducts/suspended ceilings/raised floors;
 - internal insulation and finishes;
 - partitions, opening doors/frames;
 - secondary windows;
 - Heating and ventilation installations (strategic drawings)
- iii) EXTERNAL
 - External envelope including windows and doors;
 - Repairs and decoration of existing concrete and steel fabric;
 - Chimney vent stacks, grilles and all enclosure of plant;
 - Antennae and solar installations;

- Steps, ramps, flush thresholds and handrails;
- Works to (including repair, re-furbishment and re-glazing of) historic metal windows

The approved specification shall be implemented in full on Blocks 4 and 5, prior to the occupation of the 300th residential unit, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In order that the works to the listed building are undertaken in an appropriate manner and timeframe in accordance with Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2018 and Policy R27 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

2. Following the carrying out or completion of the building operations or alterations for which consent is hereby granted, all making good of the existing buildings shall be carried out in materials and finishes which closely match, like-for-like, those historic materials and finishing details used in the existing building or structure to accord with usual conservation good practice and to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority. If there is any doubt regarding the approach to any proposed making good, or any alternative materials are proposed, a precise specification of the materials and finishes should be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure the historic and architectural significance of the buildings is properly maintained.

3. Prior to the first occupation of any of the retained Listed buildings, the applicant shall submit to, and have approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority a Listed Building Management and Maintenance Plan. The approved plan shall then be implemented in full on site in perpetuity.

REASON: In order to ensure that the Listed buildings are maintained in an appropriate manner following the completion of the development in accordance with national policy as set out in Section 15 the National Planning Policy Framework 2018.

DRAWING NUMBERS

4. The development/works shall not be started and completed other than in accordance with the approved plans and details:

Plan Number	Revision Number	Details	Received Date
P1(N-04/05)-100	P2	Block 04 05 - Ground Floor Plan	11 April 2018
P1(N-04/05)-101	P2	Block 04 05 - First Floor Plan	11 April 2018
P1(N-	P2	Block 04 05 - Fifth Floor Plan	11 April 2018

04/05)105				
P3(N-04)-100	P2	Block 04 - North and South Elevations		11 April 2018
P1(N-04/05)-103	P2	Block 04 05 - Third Floor Plan		11 April 2018
P1(N-04/05)-102	P2	Block 04 05 - Second Floor Plan		11 April 2018
P3(N-04/05)-100	P2	Block 04 - East and West Elevations		11 April 2018
P3(N-05)-101	P2	Block 05 - North and South Elevations 2		11 April 2018
P2(04/05)-100	P2	Block 04 05 - Sections		11 April 2018
P3(N-05)-100	P2	Block 05 - North and South Elevations		11 April 2018
P1(N-04/05)-105	P2	Block 04 05 - Roof Plan		11 April 2018
E0-001	P2	Location Plan Existing		11 April 2018
P0-000	P2	Location Plan		11 April 2018
P0(N-04/05)-001	P1	Block 04 & 05 - Site Location Plan		16 April 2018
P1(N-04/05)-104	P1	Block 04 & 05 - Fourth Floor Plan		16 April 2018
P0(N-04/05)-002	P1	Block 04 & 05 - Site Plan		16 April 2018
P1-000		Post Demo - Block 04&05 - Ground Floor		17 April 2018
P1-001		Post Demo - Block 04&05 - First Floor		17 April 2018
P1-002		Post Demo - Block 04&05 - Second Floor		17 April 2018
P1-003		Post Demo - Block 04&05 - Third Floor		17 April 2018
P1-004		Post Demo - Block 04&05 - Fourth Floor Plan		17 April 2018
P1-005		Post Demo - Block 04&05 - Fifth Floor Plan		17 April 2018
P3-001		Post Demo - Block 04&05 - West Elevation		17 April 2018

P3-002

Post Demo - Block 04&05 -
South Elevation

17 April 2018

REASON: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans and details.

Determined By:

Mr Chris Carter
15 February 2019