

FARRELL DESIGN STUDIO

29th March 2019

Planning Department
Welwyn Garden City Borough Council,
The Campus,
Welwyn Garden City,
Hertfordshire,
AL8 6AE,

PRE-PLANNING APPLICATION
FOR THE ERECTION OF TWO DWELLINGS AT:
54 BRIDGE ROAD, WELWYN GARDEN CITY

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Please find enclosed herewith, a Planning Application for the erection of two, two bedroom, semi-detached, houses with associated access and parking arrangements.

Planning Consent for a pair of semi-detached houses in this location (Application No.N6/2014/2504/FP) was granted utilising land from both 52 and 54 Bridge Road. The approved scheme sited the two semi-detached houses almost entirely on 54 Bridge Road, with the agreed access road running from the access of 52 Bridge Road. This application seeks your approval for an almost identical scheme except for the alteration to the position of the access, smaller dwellings and exclusion of 52 Bridge Road Land.

Enclosed Documents Are:

Design, Access and Planning Statement.
Location Plan (IND-754-L01).
Existing Site Plan (IND-754-E01).
Proposed Site Plan (IND-754-P01).
Proposed Floor Plans Option 1 (IND-754-P11).
Proposed Elevations Option 1 (IND-754-P21).
Proposed Floor Plans Option 2 (IND-754-P21).
Proposed Elevations Option 2 (IND-754-P21).
Proposed Cross Section (IND-754-P01).
Highway Report.
Tree Survey & Tree Impact Assessment.
Ecology Report

I trust you find the application acceptable and look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours Sincerely,

Henry Farrell

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DESIGN, ACCESS & PLANNING STATEMENT

On Behalf of A BEE Developments.

1.0 LOCATION

1.1 54 Bridge Road is situated on the north side of Bridge Road with the proposed development sited to the rear of the property. Bridge Road one of the earliest roads of the Garden City and as such it is a well-established residential road located to the north-west of Welwyn Garden City Town Centre. It is identified as being within the Conservation Area and, as with much of Welwyn Garden City, is also controlled via the Estate Management Scheme. The residential section of Bridge Road is a relatively short road running from the road junction of Valley Road / Brockswood Lane Junction in the west to the junction with the Campus at its most easterly.



Context Location Plan

- 1.2 The Town Centre is located within a flat, level, walk of approximately 500M. Waitrose, John Lewis and other stores all providing everyday essentials and needs. The Town Centre has a transport hub providing superb bus and train transport links to local and major networks.



A view of 54 Bridge Road (Taken facing North West)

- 1.3 To the north of the site is Sherrardswood, an ancient woodland containing oaks and native broadleaf trees. Within the woodland, there are national route links as well as interlinking footpaths to parkland and neighbouring towns and villages.



Location Plan of the application site, Bridge Road

2.0 BRIDGE ROAD VERNACULAR AND CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

- 2.1 Bridge Road runs west-east from Valley Road, passed the south The Campus, over the 20th-mile bridge to Broadwater Road, where the Road is extended to become Bridge Road East.
- 2.2 The character of the western section of Bridge Road, (Valley Road to The Campus) is a verdant, residential, street scene, however, from The Campus heading east the massing, street scene and general character changes to a more commercial environment. The Campus provides a large expanse of, formally landscaped, open space but even this does not lessen the very apparent transition from residential to commercial uses along the road.
- 2.3 The site is located within the residential (western) section of the road and, for this reason, we have concentrated our comment on this part of the road. Much of Welwyn Garden City (WGC) New Town vernacular is Neo Georgian and has a very consistent rhythm and repeating patterns, making the Garden City architecture very identifiable. Bridge Road, however, comprises a mixture of housing types and designs which gives a slightly different feel to the street scene than say a more stereotypical road within the West Side, such as Parkway, Barleycroft, Attimore or Elmwood. The fact that the road was once the centre of the construction zone for the building of Garden City has ultimately ended up influencing the appearance of the road. Westwood House, an independent and monolithic development, coupled with dwellings that predate the Garden City and early Louis de Soisson styling all combine to create a less uniform and more eclectic example of the WGC expression. A detailed review of the character of the western end of Bridge Road can be found in Appendix A
- 2.4 As can be ascertained from appendix A, Bridge Road is a sylvan through route and is one of the original roads for the area. The residential part of the road is a relatively short span of public highway that retains 48, 50, 52, 54 Bridge Road, Weavers Cottage (56 Bridge Road) and Old Cottage (39 Bridge Road) all of which pre-date the Garden City. Further disruption to the “west side” architectural vernacular is brought about by the three and four storey flats at Woodside House. The flats occupy a large part of the northern side of the road and are quite unusual for the area, in that they bear little of the ethos provided by Louis de Soisson. In reviewing the character of the road, it can be seen that even the Garden City architectural influence are from early designs and thus slightly unusual to what is now perceived to be standard Welwyn Garden City architecture. As such, the road produces one of the most diverse street scenes in the vicinity. However, despite this seemingly eclectic architectural mix, the road still manages to retain sufficient Louis de Soissons’ influence to ensure the Garden City style and character is maintained.

3.0 THE SITE:

- 3.1 The application site is located at 54 Bridge Road with the proposed development to the rear (north) of property. 54 Bridge Road is the left-hand side (west) of a pair of semi-detached houses, that, for the area, has an unusually long and reasonably level rear garden. It is a three bedroom two storey house with a large steeply pitched roof. As part of the Conservation Area and Estate Management, the properties is, perhaps, interesting but not considered to have any significant architectural or historical importance.



Photos – Front of 54 Bridge Road

- 3.2 To the front and western boundary of 54 Bridge Road there is an oak tree that is the subject of a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). There are a further three trees on the eastern boundary of 52 Bridge Road that are also TPO'd. The root protection area of the trees on the eastern boundary of 52 Bridge Road would preclude any new development to the rear of the property, save for no dig construction.
- 3.3 The site lies immediately south of the National Route 12 Footpath (a section of the disused Luton to Welwyn branch railway line). The railway line closed as a public transport link in 1965, and the track finally closed to commercial traffic and removed in 1966. The route now forms a part of the National Route 12 and Ayot Greenway. The Greenway runs from the small white bridge through Sherrardswood out to Ayot then Wheathampstead and beyond.
- 3.4 A wide tarmac path located to the west of the site was historically the access to the railway halt. This is now a bridleway and provides easy pedestrian and cycle connectivity to the Greenway and surrounding woodland paths. In conjunction with access to the Greenway and woodland, the tarmac bridleway also provides access to the woodland for vehicles and machinery used in maintaining the woodland. Weavers Cottage, number 56 Bridge Road, also uses the Bridleway to provide private vehicular access to the garage located at the rear of their property. Opposite the Weavers Cottage driveway access, there is also a 3.6-metre wide vehicular gate to the Western boundary of the site.



Photos - Bridleway & Western Site Boundary and Gate

- 3.5 The site has a 2-metre high wooden panel fence along the west boundary. The shared eastern boundary is dilapidated, and a temporary fence erected to help demarcate the boundary. The northern boundary has a concrete retaining wall with an iron fence on top. Trees, shrubs and general undergrowth between the public footpath and the concrete retaining wall screen the rear of the property. None of the trees in the rear garden of 54 Bridge Road are considered to be of quality or significant in terms of public amenity and to confirm. The previous approval approved the same trees to be removed.
- 3.6 The existing properties have been subject to heave and root ingress. Number 54 was purchased from the Council some twenty years ago and has slowly been subjected to necessary repairs. 52 was purchased more recently and is the subject of repair and extension (*Application 6/2017/ 2159*) which has recently been constructed.
- 3.7 To the front of 54 Bridge Road is a small lawn area and a footpath leading from a gap in the hedge to the front door. The irregular front boundary hedge is maintained at the same height neighbouring hedge. There is only one tree in the front garden, which is the previously mentioned large oak tree located on the western boundary.



Photo of Front Garden of 54 Bridge Road

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 6/2018/2232/PA – This was Pre-Application advice for the erection of 2 x 2 bedroom dwellings with vehicular access. This scheme excludes access from 52 Bridge Road and proposes 2 bedroom dwellings as opposed to 3 bedroom.
- 4.2 N6/2014/2504/FP – The consent was for a pair of 3 bedroom semi-detached properties to the rear of 52 and 54 Bridge Road. The scheme is very similar to the proposal. The previous approval utilised the land from both 52 and 54 with 52 providing access from Bridge Road and the houses predominantly located to the rear of 54 Bridge Road. Application N6/2014/2504/FP was granted permission on 22/06/2015.
- 4.3 The owner of 52 Bridge road submitted details to clear some of the conditions on the site and then implemented the access. The owner of 52 Bridge Road acted independently of the owner of 54 Bridge Road in both clearing conditions and implementing the access. In constructing the access, the driveway went too close to the protected oak and did not utilise the agreed no dig construction method shown on the approved plan. The Council has previously issued a letter advising of potential enforcement action to the owners of 52 and 54 Bridge Road, which was responded to by the owner of 54 Bridge Road. However, we are informed by the Enforcement Dept that there are currently no outstanding actions on 54 Bridge Road. The owner of 52 Bridge Road, having cleared pre-commencement conditions and constructed the driveway he has implemented the consent and therefore, the permission is extant. This is confirmed by the Planning Officer in the Pre-Application Response.



Photos - showing the construction of 52 Bridge Road Driveway adjacent to TPO Oak Tree. This drive was subsequently re-laid in accordance with the approved plans & more recently dug out again within the root protection area.

- 4.4 6/2017/2159/HOUSE – This application is for 52 Bridge Road, for the erection of a single storey rear extension with alterations to openings following part demolition of existing party wall. This application was granted permission on 06/12/2017 and has recently been constructed. The details on the council's website relating to the clearance of

conditions are not clear. It is believed that details such as foundation design, before commencement, must have been agreed as the construction has now progressed and is reaching the final stages of construction. A great deal of the extension is within the canopy and Root Protection Area of the A1 category oak tree located on the eastern boundary. The tree is subject to a TPO. More recently, the levels to the rear of the site have been excavated. These are areas inside the root protection area of the protected oak on the eastern boundary. This disregard for the TPO tree along the eastern boundary maybe why the oak tree has on the eastern boundary went into decline and has been allowed to be removed.

- 4.5 When this extension application was being assessed, the Planning Officer confirmed that the scheme did not affect the approval for the two new dwellings to the rear and confirmed also that the distances between windows and impact upon private amenity and car parking were acceptable.
- 4.6 N6/2013/2664/PA – This was the pre-application for the approved 3 bed, semi-detached house scheme application *N6/2014/2504/FP*. The Pre-Application states that the site represents an opportunity for development and that two dwellings in the semi-detached form shown would be acceptable.
- 4.7 N6/2018/1824/TPO - Removal of TPO oak tree. There has been a recent approval to remove one of the three protected oaks on the eastern boundary of 52 Bridge Road. This application has only just come to our attention as there has been no notification to any of the adjoining properties and no notice on the public highway. It is slightly unusual in that having not been advertise or notified the application has been approved. It is also interesting to note that the poor and dangerous condition of the tree outlined in the application is different to that of the arboricultural report carried out on that tree three years previously (approved application *N6/2014/2504/FP*), where the tree was given a 40 year life expectancy. Its deterioration could, of course, be as a response to the JCB tracking up and down the site re-levelling the ground, as mentioned earlier in this document.
- 4.8 As part of the *N6/2018/1824/TPO* Decision Notice, the applicant is required to plant a replacement tree following the felling of the oak tree. Ordinarily, a TPO planning condition would require that the replacement tree is planted in the same place and of the same species, which we believe is the correct outcome now that the Council has agreed to remove the tree. However, on this basis, we also believe that a similar root protection area should also be maintained going forward to allow for the future growth of the tree and not simply allow space for additional development on the site.

5.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

- 5.1 The relevant planning policies as identified as key issues are:

5.2 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

5.3 **Welwyn Hatfield District Plan** – Policy SD1 (Sustainable Development), Policy R1 (Previously Developed Land), Policy R11 (Biodiversity and Development), Policy R17 (Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows), Policy D1 (Quality of Design), Policy D2 (Character and Context), Policy D3 (Continuity and Enclosure), Policy D7 (Safety by Design), Policy D8 (Landscaping), Policy D9 (Access for the disabled), Policy H8 (Dwelling Type and tenure).

5.4 **Welwyn Hatfield District Plan Supplementary Design Guidance – Policy D1 (Quality of Design), Policy D2 (Character and Context), Policy D3 (Continuity and Enclosure), Policy R3 (Energy Efficiency).**

6.0 THE PROPOSAL

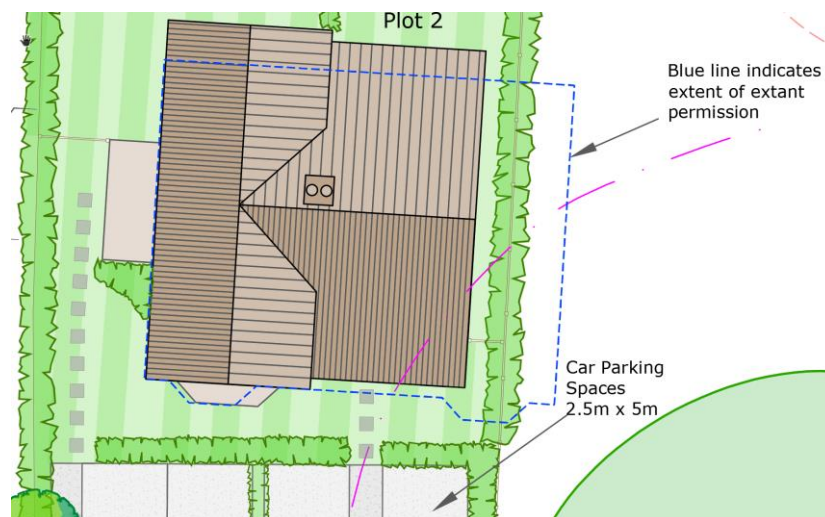
6.1 It is the intention of this proposal to closely mimic the previously approved scheme (N6/2014/2504/FP) with few minor variations, which is to exclude the land of 52 Bridge Road. The omission of 52's land, on the face of it, sounds quite a dramatic change but, in reality, 52 Bridge Road's curtilage is severely restricted by the Root Protection Areas (RPA's) of the TPO trees on the eastern boundary and, therefore, the land could only previously contribute by providing access. 54 Bridge Road provided the majority of the developable land and amenity for the proposed houses. Thus, it is now considered that by creating access through 54 Bridge Road it is possible to recreate a variation of the approved scheme without the need to include 52 Bridge Road. The updated scheme retains equally green vistas from the public footpath as the approved scheme.



Extract of Proposed Site Plan With Outline of Extant Permission

7.0 REDUCTION IN THE SIZE OF DWELLINGS

- 7.1 Application No N6/2014/2504/FP approved a pair of three-bedroom, semi-detached, dwellings, which were positioned just straddling the boundary with 52 Bridge Road. This proposal is for a smaller pair of two-bedroom, semi-detached, dwellings located inside the boundary of 54 Bridge Road. The proposed site plan above designates the outline (in dashed blue) of the approved houses from the previous approval. The revised house design and layout ensures that the proposed houses to sit comfortably within the revised red line. The location of the front, rear and western flank walls are identical to that of the previous approval, retaining a similar if not identical relationship of built form to the adjacent boundaries. The eastern flank wall, however, has moved by over two metres to create a metre gap to the eastern boundary fence with 52 Bridge Road. To achieve this, the two, two bedroom houses have been reduced in overall floor area and width.



Extract Of Proposed Site Plan Showing Reduction in Width Of Proposed Dwellings

8.0 ACCESS & HIGHWAYS

- 8.1 The previously approved access for the development to the site was created by widening the access to 52 Bridge Road. This proposed access follows that same principle, widening the existing pedestrian access.
- 8.2 We have engaged with Herts County and commissioned Glanvilles Highway Consultancy to look at the proposed access and ensure that there are no issues with highway safety. County Highways Report confirms that support should be given to the application. Glanville also confirmed that the highway design was appropriate and would not cause any disruption or cause for concern in terms of safety. The Glanville Highway Report can be found in Appendix B at the rear of this document.

- 8.3 The proposed access will measure 4.8m as it joins the back edge of the public footpath and continues into the site, allowing two cars to pass in the first 14m ensuring no traffic congestion is caused from traffic ingress or egress. The whole of the driveway is to be constructed using no dig methods. Adjacent to the oak tree the driveway is narrowed to 3m, reducing any potential impact on the oak tree while also minimising the amount of hard landscaping within site. This approach ensures that the amount of hard landscaping is well below the 50% guideline for Estate Management.
- 8.4 The proposed development has a combined hard and soft landscaping area of 183m², of this total area, 121m² is soft landscaping and 62m² is hard landscaping. This equates to 65% soft landscaping and 35% hard landscaping, comfortably siting within the limits set by the Estate Management scheme.
- 8.5 The proposed development is located behind the existing dwellings and, as such, is generally hidden from the Bridge Road street scene, especially given the narrower width of the proposed properties. Therefore, it is only the proposed access to the development coming forward of the existing house that will potentially have any impact upon the street scene.
- 8.6 The existing hedge to the front boundary of the site is a mixed species hedge of a similar height as the neighbouring hedge to 52 Bridge Road. The hedge from the adjoining boundary with 52 Bridge Road across the front of the site to the western boundary is over 14.5 metres long. The hedge appears longer as it continues across the front of 52 Bridge Road, albeit broken in two places for the pedestrian and vehicular accesses.
- 8.7 There is an existing 1.8m wide pedestrian access in the centre of the hedge. The existing footpath leading from Bridge Road to the front door and side of 54 Bridge Road is approximately 1.2 metres wide and is constructed in a loose fill gravel path. The footpath widens to approximately 3 metres wide for a bin storage area adjacent to the hedge.
- 8.8 The proposal seeks to widen the existing pedestrian access and create a shared 4.2-metre wide pedestrian and vehicular access. To enable access to be created, it is proposed to remove a small piece of hedge either side of the existing access. While this will result in a small loss of hedge within the street scene, it is only a very minor percentage of the linear hedgerow. When considered in context with the neighbouring property there will still be a significant amount of hedgerow to the front boundary, and the ratio of the gap to the retained hedgerow would be consistent and in keeping with its neighbours.
- 8.9 The proposed access will be constructed using no-dig construction. The existing ground levels will remain as there are so as not to impact the TPO tree on the western boundary. The driveway will be finished in pea shingle gravel which is consistent and

appropriate within the area, allowing the surface water to drain through the driveway in accordance with good practice of Sustainable Urban Drainage Guidance.



Extract of Proposed Access Showing Small Hedge Removal to Widen Access.

9.0 PARKING

- 9.1 The site is within an easy walking distance of the Town Centre, and it's public transport links making the location of the site very sustainable. Given the proximity of transport links and access to all major shopping outlets, the occupants of the site are far less likely to be reliant upon a car for transport. However, as Bridge Road is double yellow lines, it is thought that the site should ensure that it still meets with the Council's parking requirement of 1.5 spaces per dwelling. In addition to the three parking spaces required for the two proposed dwellings, an additional parking space has been created for the existing property. The additional space will help improve the quality of the existing house and reduce the current level of temporary parking outside the site on Bridge Road or parking adjacent to the bridleway.
- 9.2 We have sought Highway advice from the local authority, county and highway consultants at the earliest opportunity of the design process. The parking standard is met in full and space increased in size and location to ensure all spaces allows for cars to easily manoeuvre and exit the property in a forward gear. Glanvilles Highway Report forms part of this Statement and can be found in Appendix B. We, therefore, firmly believe that there are no technical reasons why the access and parking to serve the existing and proposed houses should not be acceptable.



Extract of Proposed Site Plan Showing Proposed Parking

10.0 TREES & LANDSCAPE

- 10.1 The N6/2014/2504/FP approved an access driveway with a no-dig construction to wrapped around 52 Bridge Road, within the root protection area of the protected oak tree and provide access and parking adjacent to the previously proposed houses.
- 10.2 This revised proposal uses the same no-dig solution as previously approved. The proposal widens the existing pedestrian access in the hedge in front of 54 Bridge Road and provides access and parking to the proposed houses to the rear. This revised access is more direct route than previously approved resulting in less hard surfacing and less impact to important retained trees.
- 10.3 A British Standard Tree Survey and Arboricultural Report forms part of this Planning Application and provides sufficient comfort that the proposed approach will not have any negative impact upon the retained trees. The Arboricultural Report can be found in Appendix C.
- 10.5 There is an important mature oak tree situated on the western boundary of 54 Bridge Road. Equally important Oaks are located on the eastern boundary of 52 bridge Road, they provide an important focal point within the street scene of Bridge Road. Importantly, these also provide natural screening to the rear, obscuring views of the proposed building beyond that of the existing properties.
- 10.6 In addition to the two mature oaks either side of the existing properties, there is a further oak tree, that is protected by TPO, on the eastern boundary of 52 Bridge Road. As part of the proposal, this off-site trees will, of course, remain. These trees have been assessed by the Arborist to ensure that the development can proceed without harm to these protected trees. It is, therefore, firmly believed the scheme would not result in

harm to the TPO'd or surrounding trees or promote additional pressure on the trees to be lopped topped or felled.

- 10.7 The owner of 52 Bridge Road has made a TPO application to fell the middle of the three TPO trees on his eastern boundary (*N6/2018/1824/TPO*). There was no neighbour consultation to this application or any public notice on or adjacent to a public highway and confusingly the arboriculture report that was carried out on that site for the planning application in 2014 reviewed the tree in a much better state of health. With regards to the condition relating to the replanting of the tree, it would ordinarily require a tree of the same species to be replanted in the same place. While the condition requires the replanting of a tree, it does not require the position of that tree to be agreed. Had the owner of 54 Bridge Road been notified of the application they would have objected to the removal of the tree or at least asked to ensure that a suitable size oak tree is replanted in the same place and afforded protection against development in which it could be allowed to grow.
- 10.8 The trees shown to be removed on the current proposal are identical to that of the previous applications to grow and for light to infiltrate the living spaces of the property, thus ensuring that there will be little pressure from the new owners to lop or fell the remaining TPO trees.

11.0 ARCHITECTURE

- 11.1 The design approach takes inspiration from a more informed review of the surrounding area. It is very much part of the Garden City vernacular with its repeating form, material and detail taken from the immediate local vernacular, making it relate more sympathetically to its surroundings. The architecture is still very much in the vein of Louis de Soisson. However, as the analysis of the area suggests Bridge Road is not a road with typical 1930's Welwyn Garden City architecture. Thus, the architectural approach differs slightly, in that it is more in tune with the local dialect providing a far greater emphasis to the early Louis de Soissons influence in the Bridge Road street scene.



Front Elevation

- 11.2 The proposed proportions of the structure along with the positioning and hierarchy of the casement windows remain consistent with Louis de Soissons' architectural language. To keep the integrity of this design approach, we have created the appearance of a "T" shaped building with a gabled roof. The mass and shape is very much part of the semi-detached and terrace house architecture of WGC and can be referenced on several nearby properties. Again, upon reflection of the surrounding architecture, the proposal lowers the eaves to create a softer eaves line at first-floor level, and flat roof lead cheek dormers.
- 11.3 While the lowered eaves line reduces accommodation at first floor, it softens the vertical emphasis of brickwork, adding architectural interest. Small, but essential, detailing such as one prominent door within the front elevation coupled with under window gutter line and corbel eave details are all imperative to ensuring the proposed building is architecturally accurate and believable. In contrast to 66 Bridge Road, it is envisaged that this proposal will weather and sit comfortably into its surroundings.
- 11.4 With regards to external materials, there is a mix of reds, yellows and render facades in the area. Given the woodland setting, it is considered that a soft red-multi brick, matching that of the Ayot / Welwyn Brickworks would be appropriate. In conjunction with red multi brickwork, it is proposed to utilise the blackened weatherboarding to the first floor. Again, given the woodland location, the use of wood will help soften the upper floor built mass but also reinforce that the original sawmill was only a 50 metres to the east of the site, which was probably the inspiration for Louis de Soisson using the material on the surrounding properties in Bridge Road, Valley Road and Brockswold Lane.
- 11.5 The windows will be high performance, wooden, white painted, casements with external beading to marry with the small pane Georgian windows of the original garden city houses. The proposed gable and hipped roof would be consistent with common detailing in the area, along with the use of clay pantiles; black painted fascia, white soffit, black guttering and simple brick corbel detailing will help to maintain a sympathetic and consistent approach to this proposed development.

12.0 ECOLOGY

- 12.1 Given the proximity to woodland areas, we have commissioned a Stage 1 Ecology Survey for the site as the previous ecology report was over a year old. The report can be found in Appendix D, at the rear of this statement.
- 12.2 The report identifies that save for some potential reptile habitat improvements that can be incorporated into the bank on the western boundary, there are no ecology concerns with the development area. It further identifies that there is potential for the existing roof space of 52/ 54 Bridge Road to provide habitat for bats, however, as the proposal

does not include works to the roof of this property the proposal represents no harm to existing or potential habitat. It is also worth noting that the previous ecology report did review the existing roof space and soffits and found no evidence of bats.

13.0 AMENITY

- 13.1 The site is adjacent to Sherradswood providing immediate access to the large expanse of woodland, it's paths and surrounding, golf course and playing fields to the north, thus ensuring that there is easy and immediate access to an incredibly large amenity area.
- 13.2 The proposed rear private amenity space retained for the existing house (54 Bridge Road) is almost identical (arguably better) than that in the previous approval. Also, the lawn space to the front of 54 Bridge Road, while reduced due to the proposed access drive, when compared to the previous approval there is a greater amount of lawn and amenity than which has been afforded to 52 Bridge Road under scheme N6/2014/2504/FP.
- 13.3 The two proposed houses have slightly narrower rear gardens than the previously approved, due to the narrowing of the site area. However, while the rear gardens are slightly narrower, the proposed private amenity space is still perfectly acceptable and befitting for two bedroom houses in this location.

14.0 IMPACT ON NEIGHBOURING RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

- 14.1 The distance between the front of the proposed dwellings and the rear of the existing properties remains the same (or slightly greater to 52 Bridge Road) than that previously approved under consent N6/2014/2504/FP. The proposed site plan shows a dashed blue line indicating the outline of the previously approved three bedroom units. In maintaining the same distance to windows and amenity, the relationship, which was previously assessed as acceptable, remains unaltered. For the sake of consistency of the decision-making process, this proposal should therefore, be acceptable.
- 14.2 Following the approval of the pair of semi-detached bedroom houses, N6/2014/2504/FP, the owner of 52 Bridge Road submitted another planning application to extend 52 Bridge Road, (6/2016/0059/HOUSE). In addition to this, an even more recent application 6/2017/2159/House has been approved. In the Planning Officer Report, it states: ***'The application is not considered to adversely affect the ability to implement consent 2014/2504 and neither will it unduly impact on the amenity of the future occupants of the two consented houses'***. Therefore, the relationship between the extended property of 52 Bridge Road and the approved houses has been considered on three separate occasions to be acceptable. Having made the proposed houses narrower the distance to between the too has been increased and therefore, should remain acceptable.

15.0 SUSTAINABILITY

- 15.1 The revised NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In line with the National Policy, the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan Policy SD1 states, *“Development proposals will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the principles of sustainable development are satisfied and that they accord with the objectives and policies of the plan”*.
- 15.2 The location is considered to be very accessible and sustainable being less than a five minute walk to the Town Centre which provides all shopping requirements for everyday living. The benefits of being adjacent to the Town Centre will ensure that the new occupants have easy access to a well structured public transport network, for buses and trains, which when coupled with easy access to shops will ultimately result in reduced car usage.
- 15.3 The proposed dwellings have been designed to meet, and indeed exceed, the latest revisions of the Building Regulations Part M. The front doors have been designed to have flush thresholds and suitable widths to allow easy access. The overall design picks up on all other aspects of mobility and non-ambulant access within the Part M4(1) visitable dwellings section of the Building Regulations.
- 15.4 Thermal insulation requirements will be met with 145mm wide cavity insulation while high performance double glazed windows and doors will keep running costs and energy usage to a minimum. A sensible renewable energy strategy will ensure that at least 10% of the energy requirement for the property is met by green energy.
- 15.6 The proceeds from the sale of the proposed development will enable the owner of 54 Bridge Road to finally renovate his home and bring that dwelling back into the housing supply.

16.0 APPROPRIATE USE OF LAND

- 16.1 Policies GBSP2, D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan state that *“the redevelopment of sites should be of a sufficiently high standard of design in terms of scale, form, siting and detailing”*.
- 16.2 The proposal makes use of extremely long residential gardens to provide a windfall of an additional two small family dwellings within close proximity to the Town Centre. Use of garden land for new development should, of course, be regularly reviewed and kept in check, where necessary. However, the two semi-detached houses consented in Planning

Permission N6/2014/2504/FP is a material consideration for determining this application.

- 16.3 The proposal will provide high quality, highly sustainable homes. Great care has been taken with the design and detailing to ensure that the properties not only fit within the locality but enhance and contribute to that character.
- 16.4 There has been no change in the relevant Planning Policy since the previous approval. The proposal provides two slightly smaller family homes within the borough and does so without negative impact to the neighbouring properties private amenity or surrounding area. Therefore, we firmly believe that this proposal improves upon the previously approved scheme.

17.0 IMPACT UPON AYOT GREENWAY AND SHERRARDSWOOD

- 17.1 The Proposal seeks to follow design cues from the immediate local area as detailed earlier. The design includes blackened timber to the first floor and Bovingdon red Brick to the ground floor. This design is deemed to be acceptable as it appears visually softer within the leafy woodland context in which it is situated.
- 17.2 The flat profile of the site, compared to the increasing height of the bridleway on the western boundary and the raised line of the Ayot Greenway path to the rear ensures that the appearance and scale of development are minimised from these public vantage points. The lowered eaves and “T” shaped roof profile being at eye line continues to ensure that the proposed building is not dominant in the landscape. In the case of this design, the use of soft red bricks, weatherboarding and clay tiled roof will blend and reduce the impact of the buildings within the landscape.
- 17.3 The existing fence and proposed landscaping will provide a large degree of natural screening. The planting of native hedgerows and species appropriate for the woodland location will ensure that there will be little to no detrimental impact upon the Ayot Green Way or the bridleway. From Ayot Green Way the garden size will be immaterial as ownership will not detract from the vista from the footpath, and will still appear sylvan and comfortable within the surrounding area.
- 17.4 Paragraph 7.8 of the Welwyn Hatfield Design Guide states that *“The Crime and Disorder Act introduced by the Government in 1998 obliges local authorities to take account of community safety in its plans and decisions. ‘Designing out Crime’ is an important element of good design, to make environments safer and enable people using them to feel safe”*. The Welwyn Hatfield Design Guide goes on to state in paragraph 7.38 that *“one of the main ways of reducing crime is to allow natural or casual observation over the public realm”*. By developing residential units in the proposed location, the bridleway

and Greenway paths will benefit from increased natural surveillance from the properties.

- 17.5 The properties have been designed to accord with the latest Secure By Design guidelines ensuring that the development is not susceptible to crime due to a lack of inbuilt security features.

18.0 CONCLUSION

- 18.1 The permission *N6/2014/2504/FP* is a material consideration for this application.
- 18.2 The principle of two new dwellings with almost identical scale, mass and bulk have been already established in this location.
- 18.3 The proposed red line site area is smaller than the previously approved scheme. However, to reflect this change the proposed dwellings are reduced in width with a smaller but still, ample private amenity area.
- 18.4 There is a greater distance between facing windows of the proposed houses to the neighbouring property, 52 Bridge Road.
- 18.5 The site's location is extremely sustainable, resulting in far less reliance on the private car.
- 18.6 The design, construction and choice of sustainably sourced materials are chosen to ensure that the development has a small carbon footprint. The use of green energy such as air source heat pumps will decrease the use of and reliance on fossil fuel.
- 18.7 The proposed dwellings are designed to reflect the character and local vernacular of the area.
- 18.7 The parking to the rear of the site is hidden from the highway.
- 18.8 Parking standards for the proposed development are met in full.
- 18.9 The plans represent a carefully considered scheme that safeguards amenity standards and promotes better sustainable, design and living standards while continuing to promote the sylvan character of the area.
- 18.10 The design of the proposed dwellings incorporate typical architectural features of Welwyn Garden City and respect the special appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 18.11 For the above reasons, it is firmly believed that the proposed development accords with all relevant Planning Policies and Guidance and should, therefore, be acceptable.