

3<sup>rd</sup> March 2020

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

**Full Application for The Erection of a Single Detached Dwelling in the Land To The Rear of  
54 Bride Road, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, AL8 6UR**

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find enclosed herewith, A full Planning Application for the erection of a single detached dwelling to the rear of 54 Bridge road.

This application improves upon the schemes presented in the approved applications *N6/2014/2504/FP* and the more recent, refused application *6/2019/0879/FULL*.

We believe that for the reasons outlined in this document the Officer will agree that we have overcome the minor concerns laid out in the previous application.

The previous application (*6/2019/0879/FULL*) had only one reason for refusal which was *"The proposed development would represent an unduly cramped and over intensive form of development on the site, poorly related to the established special character and form of this part of the Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area. Furthermore, the proposal fails to maintain the landscaped greenery of the site failing to retain the appearance and ethos of the Garden City. Whilst this would result in less than substantial harm, in line with paragraph 196 of the NPPF the public benefits identified are not considered to outweigh the harm identified. Accordingly, the proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the character of the Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area. As such the proposed development would be contrary to Policies D1, D2, D8 and R17 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005; the Supplementary Design Guidance 2005; Policies SP9, SADM15 and SADM16 of the Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Local Plan Proposed Submission August 2016; and the National Planning Policy Framework 2019"*

This application addresses these minor concerns in the following ways.

To address the issue of the Officer's opinion that the scheme in the application *6/2019/0879/FULL* was *"an unduly cramped and over intensive form of development"* This scheme has reduced the density of the proposal. The owner of 54 Bridge Road currently has an extant permission for 2 x 3-bedroom dwellings in the same location. This application is for a single, detached 4-bedroom dwelling. By reducing the number of dwellings, the site will be exposed to significantly less movement of people and vehicles and will address the officer's feelings that the previous scheme (represented in the application *6/2019/0879/FULL*) was an over development of the site. However, it is important to consider that there is an extant permission for two larger dwellings in the same location, so the principle of development should still be appropriate as there has not been a material change in planning policy.

The reduction to one unit also addresses the officer's appraisal of the previous scheme in which they stated in the Officer's Report that they believed it was *"poorly related to the established special character of the area"*. By proposing a 4-bedroom, detached dwelling with a much larger private amenity space we feel that it is more befitting of the high quality, family sized dwellings in the local area and therefore, better meets the character of the area.

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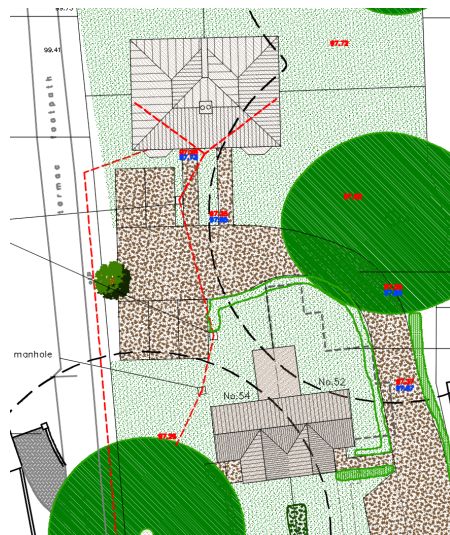
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The Officer's report for the application 6/2019/0879/FULL states that *"landscaping is of particular importance in the Garden City, with the 'Arcadian' landscape context with mature trees, hedgerows and planting contributing to the significance of the area"*.

The Officer goes on to state that the previous application is contrary to Policy D8 and R17 (with regards to landscaping). Policy D8 states that *"The retention and enhancement of existing key landscape features such as trees and shrubs, ponds and watercourses will be expected where feasible; where this is not possible, replacement planting should be carried out"* the removal of a trivial amount of hedge on either side of an existing pedestrian entrance in order to facilitate access to the site via a motor vehicle will have negligible impact on the street scene and the character of the area and should, therefore, be an acceptable proposal. The planting of approximately 190m of native species hedgerow within the application site (as proposed in this application) should provide the officer with comfort that the scheme represents an increased volume of hedgerow befitting of a high-quality dwelling In this 'arcadian' context. It is prudent to remember also that it was deemed appropriate by the Officer in the extant permission to approve the removal of 4.2m of hedgerow in the frontage to the identical 52 Bridge Road.

The removal of a very small amount of existing hedgerow should not be viewed as contrary to the character of the area as the surrounding properties on Bridge Road benefit from the removal of various lengths of hedgerow to their frontages in order to access their hard-landscaped driveways. Further to this, the Estate Management policies (Imposed by the High Court in order to 'protect the environment and heritage of Welwyn Garden City') state clearly in Policy EM4 *"Proposals for hard surfacing, for the parking of private vehicles in front gardens will only be allowed where the works would retain an appropriate balance between hard and soft landscaping and do not result in the loss of any existing hedgerows or landscaping along the boundary, other than the minimum required to access the hard standing, that would be harmful to the amenities and values of the street scene in which it is located"*. Therefore, by adhering to Policy EM4 it should not be deemed to be inappropriate development as its adherence, by definition, protects the environment and heritage of Welwyn Garden City.

In terms of the appropriate balance of hard and soft landscaping, mentioned in Policy EM4 above, the Estate Management booklet suggests *"around 50%"* soft landscaping is desirable, here it clarifies that this figure is advised to *"reduce the visual prominence of parked vehicles"*, it's important to remember here three significant factors with regards to the volume of hard and soft landscaping on site. Firstly, vehicles will not be visible from the highway, therefore, the scheme meets the target laid out in Policy EM4 of protecting the character of the area from being eroded by parked cars. Secondly, the scheme represents well under the 50% hard landscaping limit to the front of the dwelling. And Lastly, the extant permission N6/2014/2504/FP approved 5 car parking spaces in a similar location (see extract of site plan below) this application proposes only 3, a significant reduction in parked cars. This reduction not only reduces the prominence of parked vehicles it also eases the Officers concerns in the previous proposal *"The introduction of parked cars would introduce a harsh appearance to the site which would be out of keeping with the character of the area"*. Although, it is unclear that the Officer considered the extant permission as a material consideration as the refused application offered a reduction in car parking spaces in a similar position over the extant permission also.



(Extract of the Approved Site Plan)



(Extract of the Proposed Site Plan)

The extant application N6/2014/2504/FP approved 315m of driveway and parking. This Application proposes 180m of driveway and parking (135m less than the approved scheme). It is important to consider the context of the site when analyzing these numbers. Although the boundaries have changed between the extant permission

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and the subsequent applications, when the site is viewed from the only public vantage point possible (the bridleway to Sherradspark Woods) the unique, elevated vista includes the rear gardens of 52 and 54 Bridge Road. Therefore, despite the alteration to the application boundary the scheme still offers a huge reduction in hard landscaping to the area. Therefore, this application can only offer a significant improvement to the area.

Finally, the officer remarks that the previous proposal did not enhance the local area. As this proposal is a softer, reduced scheme compared to the extant permission and previous application its approval will offer a new high-quality dwelling in an extremely desirable, sustainable location. As its approval will restrict the ability to complete the extant permission, by approving this scheme, much less harm will be done to the local area. Outside of this application the owner of 54 Bridge Road has remarked that the sale of the proposed dwelling to the rear will be used to generate funds to renovate the existing building (54 Bridge Road), which will clearly have a positive effect on the local area as it currently requires renovation in order to match the other high quality dwellings in the area.

The remaining planning considerations such as the principle of development, aesthetics, the living conditions of future occupants, impact to neighbours, access and parking, refuse and recycling and ecology have all been previously deemed to be acceptable, therefore, under the same policies it should continue to be, in order to maintain consistency.

To conclude, this application represents a clear and obvious betterment over the extant permission and overcomes the issues raised within the previous proposal. To clarify this scheme;

- Reduces the density of the scheme, meaning there will be significantly less impact of people and cars on the site.
- Proposes a 4-Bedroom dwelling with a much-improved garden size which is consistent with the substantive plot sizes and character and context of the local area.
- Reduces the number of parking spaces to 3 (from 5 in the extant permission)
- Proposes to narrow the width of the access in order to protect more of the existing hedgerow.
- Proposes to plant approximately 190m of hedgerow to maintain the woodland nature of the plot and to soften all hard landscaping.
- Has an 11% reduction in dwelling footprint compared to the extant permission, therefore, should have less impact on the local area.
- Proposes to implement an access that has 135m less hard landscaping when compared to the extant application.

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.

Kind regards,  
Henry Farrell