



Historic England

Ms Clare Howe
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
The Campus
Welwyn Garden City
Hertfordshire
AL8 6AE

Direct Dial: 01223 582751

Our ref: P01343350

13 January 2021

Dear Ms Howe

**T&CP (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015
& Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990**

**BIOPARK, BROADWATER ROAD, WELWYN GARDEN CITY, AL7 3AX
Application No. 6/2020/3420/MAJ**

Thank you for your letter of 24 December 2020 regarding the above application for planning permission. On the basis of the information available to date, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the application.

Historic England Advice

The application site lies within the designated industrial zone of Welwyn Garden City. The nearby Shredded Wheat Factory was the first building to be built within this zone and its grain silos have become the most iconic image associated with this part of the city. It is listed at grade II. Even closer to the site is the grade II listed Roche factory. Both of these sites have extant permission for restoration and re-use of the listed buildings and high density residential development.

The Broadwater Gardens site lies to the east of the Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area and is separated from it by the railway line. It contains no listed buildings but is within the setting of the Roche factory and the Shredded Wheat factory. It is the furthest south of the four development sites in the area and contains an existing building. This was the BioPark building recently vacated by the University of Hertfordshire. The building is visible in the long range views from the south at Hatfield Hall.

Historic England's remit for comments on this case lies with the highly graded heritage assets of Hatfield House and its grade I registered park and garden and, the Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area.

Impact of the Proposed Development

As part of recent pre-application submissions, Historic England asked for further information on the impact of the development upon the Hatfield House and designed



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landscape. The HTVIA has been updated to provide some extra information which indicates that because of their highly graded status the value of these heritage assets is high. The impact the Broadwater Gardens site makes on the setting of these assets is currently harmful due to the colour and scale of the development and the demolition of the existing building would represent an improvement and could be considered a positive impact on the setting.

The proposed development would introduce more mass and development on the site. Where at present there is one discreet block of mass, it is proposed to replace this with more blocks that are taller and more spaced out. There does not appear to be a comparison drawing that shows how much higher and how much more mass is being proposed but, given the increase of development on this site, we consider that the development has the potential to be more visible and add more mass to the setting of the grade I registered park and garden and the setting of the grade I listed house.

Policy Context

Paragraph 189 indicates that sufficient information should be provided by the applicant to properly determine the harm to heritage assets

Paragraph 193 of the NPPF states that great weight should be given to an asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be)

Paragraph 196 of the NPPF states that where a proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

Historic England's Position

Historic England have some concerns relating to this application as we consider that the impacts of the proposed mass and scale of the new development has not been properly considered as they relate to Hatfield House and registered park and garden. We consider that a diagram showing the existing and proposed heights and masses, from the viewpoint at Hatfield House and from the south of the park and garden should be provided. This will enable the scale of the new development to be properly assessed for harm.

Recommendation

Historic England has concerns regarding the application on heritage grounds.

We consider that the issues and safeguards outlined in our advice need to be addressed in order for the application to meet the requirements of paragraphs 189, 193 and 196 of the NPPF.

In determining this application you should bear in mind the statutory duty of section 66(1) 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 features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.





Historic England

Your authority should take these representations into account and seek amendments, safeguards or further information as set out in our advice. If there are any material changes to the proposals, or you would like further advice, please contact us.

Yours sincerely

Lynette Fawkes

Inspector of Historic Building and Areas

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