

# SOUTH SIDE



Metropolitan  
Thames Valley

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## DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

FEBRUARY 2021

ColladoCollins Architects on behalf of  
Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing

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# WGC SOUTH SIDE DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

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# CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION		6.	PROPOSED DESIGN	
1.1.	Introduction	8	6.1.	Phasing	86
1.2.	Overview	9	6.2.	Landscape and masterplan	88
1.3.	Planning History and Development Plan	10	6.3.	Proposed Residential Layout	90
1.4.	Retaining a Shared Vision for the Wheat Quarter Site	12	6.4.	Height and Massing	92
1.5.	Design Brief & Objectives	14	6.5.	Route to Welwyn Garden City Centre/ Station	98
1.6.	Design Team	16	6.6.	Gateway approach views	100
			6.7.	Architectural expression	102
2.	BACKGROUND		7.	PHASE 2 (FULL PLANNING)	
2.1.	Historical Background	24	7.1.	Overview	108
2.2.	Wider Context	28	7.2.	Layout	110
2.3.	Local Context	30	7.3.	Architectural Expression	114
2.4.	Planning Context	36			
2.5.	Wheat Quarter - emerging context	38	8.	PHASE 3 (OUTLINE)	
3.	INVOLVEMENT		8.1.	Overview	132
3.1.	Consultation Process	42	8.2.	Indicative Layout	134
3.2.	Pre-application Meeting 1	43	8.3.	External Amenity	136
3.3.	Pre-application Meeting 2	44	8.4.	Scale and Massing	137
3.4.	Pre-application Meeting 3	45	8.5.	Indicative Architectural Expression	138
3.5.	Design Workshop 1	46			
3.6.	Design Workshop 2	47	9.	ACCESS	
3.7.	Pre-application Meeting 4	48	9.1.	Summary of Access and Movement Strategy	144
3.8.	Response	49	9.2.	Pedestrians	146
4.	KEY PRINCIPLES		9.3.	Cyclists	147
4.1.	Interaction with wider masterplan	52	9.4.	Road Vehicles	148
4.2.	Character	54	9.5.	Refuse Strategy	149
4.3.	Built Form	56	9.6.	Emergency Vehicle Access	150
4.4.	Architectural Design Principles	58	9.7.	Secure by Design	151
4.5.	Landscape Design Principles	60			
4.6.	Energy & Sustainability	62	10.	APPENDIX FLAT LAYOUTS	
5.	CONTEXT ANALYSIS		10.1.	Typical Floor Plan Block 9	154
5.1.	Garden city typologies	66	10.2.	Typical Floor Plan Block 12	156
5.2.	Welwyn Garden city	67	10.3.	Typical Studio	158
5.3.	Garden city and Garden Suburb Precedents	68	10.4.	Typical 1B2P	158
5.4.	Character area	70	10.5.	Typical 2B3P	159
5.5.	Street analysis	72	10.6.	Typical 2B4P	160
5.6.	Reference for Facade detailing	74	10.7.	Typical 3B5P	161
5.7.	Crest references	81			
5.8.	Contextual colouring	82			

# 1. INTRODUCTION

WGC SOUTH SIDE



ColladoCollins Architects on behalf of  
Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing

1.1. INTRODUCTION

It is long established that the wider Former Shredded Wheat Factory site is an unrivalled development opportunity within the jurisdiction of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council ('Welwyn Hatfield') to create a thriving, sustainable community which responds to modern demands by integrating the garden city philosophy with the very best in high quality 21st century design. The site is a key gateway into Welwyn Garden City town centre from the east. The site comprises the South Side, under the control and in the ownership of MTVH, and the North Side, which is in separate ownership.

Metropolitan Thames Valley ('MTVH') believes there are opportunities to meet the needs of more households than would presently be able to access homes on the South Side.

Our vision for the South Side can be summarised as follows:

- More homes;
- More affordable homes; and
- Affordable homes which are more affordable

We think our vision resonates with the ambitions of Welwyn Hatfield for its residents, and we think this site presents an especially sustainable opportunity to deliver this vision and those ambitions. Not least, it is considered that this site represents a significant opportunity to demonstrably boost the supply of housing to address identified need in accordance with planning policy of all levels.

We believe MTVH is well placed to realise the full potential of the South Side for the following reasons:

- We are a stable and robust organisation, with a strong financial covenant, and a long and successful track record of building and managing new homes. We currently own, manage and / or administer 57,000 homes across London, the South East, East Midlands and the East of England, and we aim to provide significantly more homes in communities where people want to live.
- We have an increasing presence in Welwyn Hatfield. In addition to the new homes on the South Side of the Former Shredded Wheat Factory Site, we are delivering 595 new homes at Times Square (the former Xerox site). This means that in a few years' time, we will own and manage at least 1,200 homes in the borough, making us a major long-term investor and landlord.
- Not only does MTVH have extensive experience of investing in building new homes, we also invest in the areas we operate in to create thriving, sustainable

- communities for the long term.
- MTVH's recent award winning experience of creating such communities on significant sites includes 2,000 homes at West Hendon in LB Barnet, and 4,077 homes at our flagship regeneration project at Clapham Park in LB Lambeth.
  - Our residents at Westthorpe Gardens in LB Barnet recently passed regeneration proposals through a first-of-its-kind resident ballot, demonstrating MTVH's ability to deliver high-quality homes in thriving, sustainable communities, with the support of existing communities and stakeholders.

Alongside our vision for the site and our strategy for accommodating homes for a wider range of households and household incomes, we have developed built parameters which establishes our vision for the site whilst achieving the following ambitions of the built form:

- Appropriately locating the buildings on site in accordance with the 2019 Planning Permission.
- Ensuring a good level of daylight and sunlight to homes and open space.
- Providing an appropriate quality and quantity of amenity space, including space which is publicly, communally and privately accessible.
- Maximising current and future connectivity to surrounding residential neighbourhoods.
- Enhancing the gateway into the site along Hydeway, on approach from the east and west.
- Preserving identified key views of the retained listed buildings.
- Respecting the setting of the original 1920 silos - including working with the Local Planning Authority and Historic England to ensure an appropriate relationship with the proposed buildings.
- Improving the hierarchy of building height, transitioning up from existing built form in the south - to taller buildings around the gateway at Hydeway.

Further details of the layout and massing proposals, and the refinement work behind those are provided within the body of this pack.

1.2. OVERVIEW

The wider Former Shredded Wheat Factory site benefits from Planning Permission for redevelopment to accommodate up to 1,454 homes in a mix of tenures and a range of non-residential uses (ref: 6/2018/0171/MAJ) ('2019 Planning Permission').

The site comprises the South Side, under the control and in the ownership of MTVH, and the North Side, which is in separate ownership. The 2019 Planning Permission allows the development of 643 homes on our South Side, arranged over 3 phases, 19 buildings and 6 distinct blocks.

The pragmatic nature of the planning obligations relating to affordable housing has supported the delivery of Phase 1 and allowed us to investigate the feasibility of the exciting opportunities explored below.

We have committed to delivering Phase 1 of the South Side and work on site is already underway.

Phase 1 is being built in line with the 2019 Planning Permission, accommodating 208 homes within 3 traditional affordable tenures, and a typical range of predominantly 1 and 2-bed unit types.

The 2019 Planning Permission's South Side arrangement is illustrated below.

- Key
- Ownership Boundary
  - Planning Submission boundary
  - Phase 2 boundary





1.3. PLANNING HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

There is a planning permission to redevelop the former Shredded Wheat site for 1,454 homes in a mix of tenures and a range of non-residential uses that collectively form a new civic centre underpinned by the renovation of the Grade II Listed Production Hall and Silos in the centre.

The planning permission was granted in February 2019 (ref: 6/2018/0171/MAJ - 'the 2019 Planning Permission') having been designed in response to a previous and still currently extant planning permission granted in August 2017 ('the Tesco permission') for up to 850 homes and associated commercial development. The Tesco scheme had been

conceived and designed against the background of the adopted but now dated Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan and the associated Broadwater Road Supplementary Planning Document for the Development Plan allocation covering the site.

The 2019 permission scheme retained many of the key design principles that underpinned the Tesco scheme (and had been first presented in the SPD) but the scheme was significantly re-worked against the backdrop of the emerging Development Plan to achieve the following:

- a considerable uplift on both market and affordable

homes, from 50 to 414 affordable homes and from 850 to 1454 homes in total;

- a significant reduction in family homes and a reorientation to a scheme focused at young professionals and downsizers;
- all affordable housing proposed within the South Side Site
- an improved concept for the Civic Quarter, with a particular focus on international art, culture and place-making;
- a reduced amount of car parking to promote more

- sustainable living and working patterns;
- a broadly commensurate level of open space but with an improved network of different types of space to improve environmental quality and signpost the heritage of the site; and
- a significant increase in development contributions, including a substantial increase in education contribution to facilitate the redevelopment of Peartree School

2017 Tesco Permission



2017 Masterplan  
10 · WGC South Side

2019 Wheat Quarter Permission



2019 Masterplan



# 1.4. RETAINING A SHARED VISION FOR THE WHEAT QUARTER SITE

Whilst both The Wheat Quarter Ltd and MTVH are advancing separate new but complementary planning applications for the two parts of the overall site, the overarching vision remains consistent: to deliver a transformational development that secures substantial economic, social and environmental benefits for Welwyn Garden City by creating a new Civic Quarter in the heart of the town, and a vital and sustainable place, inclusive of the renovation of the Grade II Listed Production Hall and Silos.

The MTVH Site will deliver a range of affordable housing to maximise social regeneration, whereas the Wheat Quarter’s scheme will secure a high quality comprehensive renovation of the Listed Buildings to unlock the heritage benefits of transforming such an important fallen asset into a signature 21st Century building of high social, economic and community value.



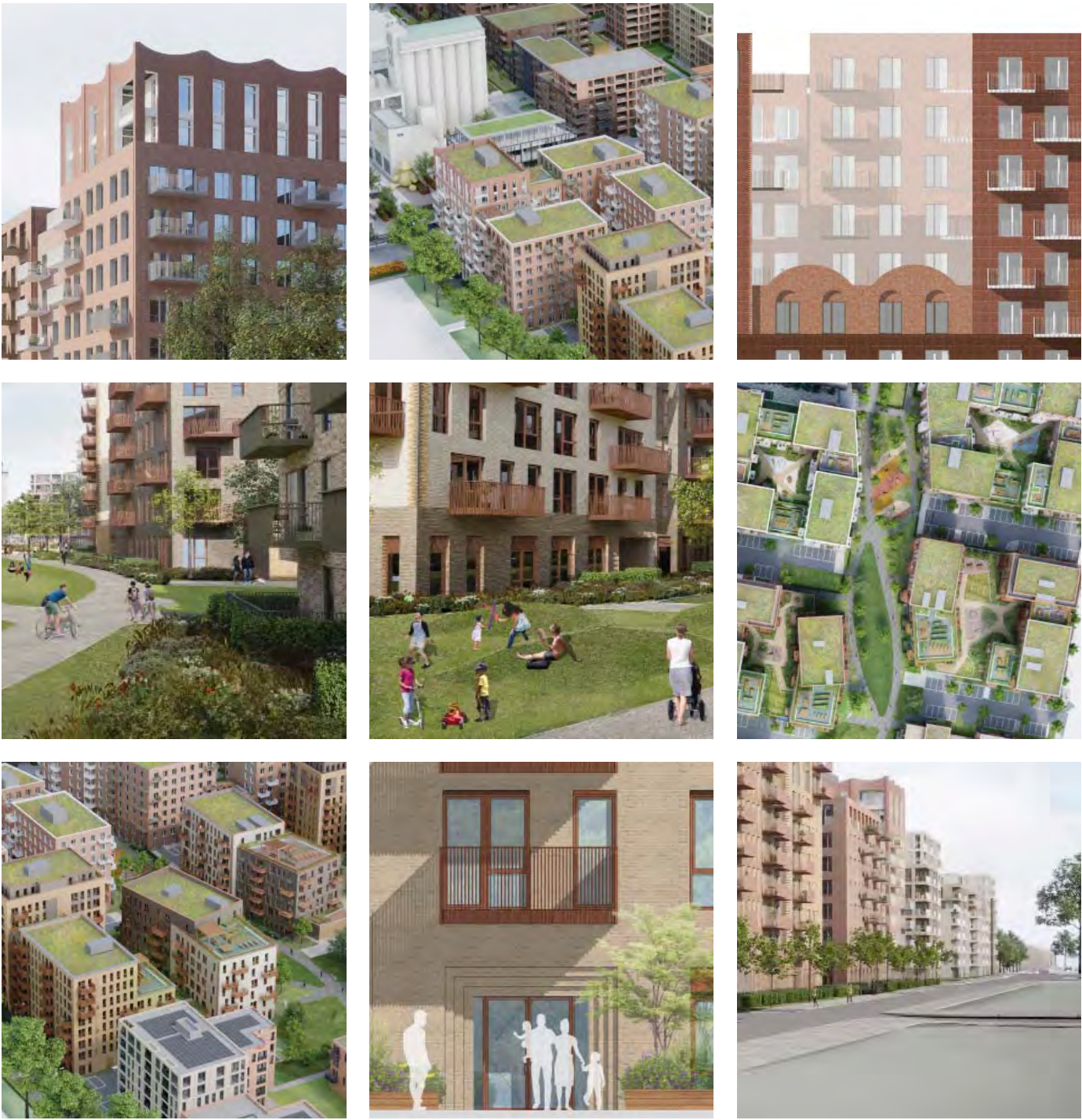


# 1.5. DESIGN BRIEF & OBJECTIVES

The design proposal presented in this document has specifically retained the garden city principles outlined in the Broadwater Road West Supplementary Planning Document (BRW SPD), and which underpinned the design approach for the consented scheme.

We have developed built parameters establish our vision for the site whilst achieving the following ambitions of the built form:

- Appropriately locating the buildings on site in accordance with the 2019 Planning Permission.
- Ensuring a good level of daylight and sunlight to homes and open space.
- Providing an appropriate quality and quantity of amenity space, including space which is publicly, communally and privately accessible.
- Maximising current and future connectivity to the town centre and surrounding residential neighbourhoods.
- Enhancing the gateway into the site along Hydeway, on approach from the east and west.
- Preserving identified key views of the retained listed buildings.
- Respecting the setting of the original 1920 silos - including working with the Local Planning Authority and Historic England to ensure an appropriate relationship with the proposed buildings.
- Improving the hierarchy of building height, transitioning up from existing built form in the south – to taller buildings around the gateway at Hydeway, in accordance with the BRW SPD.
- Interpreting the details and architectural style which proliferates in the Garden city into a contemporary and high density idiom.





1.6. DESIGN TEAM

COLLADO COLLINS ARCHITECTS

Since its formation in 2004, ColladoCollins has embraced the challenges of complex mixed-use design to create successful buildings and urban environments. ColladoCollins secures planning permissions through openness, sensitivity and tenacity to produce commercial schemes that are deliverable.

The practice operates across several sectors, combining a strong design ethos with sound technical strength through every stage of the design process. Unlike many firms who specialise in one particular area, ColladoCollins' unique approach ensures that its designs are informed by experience across a wide range of schemes.

ColladoCollins brings a unique approach to the process of designing and developing buildings, combining a full understanding of the commercial challenges faced by clients with a sensitive, sustainable work method. ColladoCollins works to ensure every building it designs perfectly fits its surrounding area in an environmentally conscious and visually arresting way.



SELECTED WORK



Bath Press

Location	Bath
Client	Spenhill
Contract Sum	£50m
Status	Planning Consented
Composition	244 Residential Units 15,000 sq.ft. Commercial

The development site is located in the City of Bath. It is currently occupied by the former premises of the Bath Press, built in various phases from 1889 to 1970, now vacant since 2007. It is proposed to retain some of the most iconic elements of the building such as the main historic façade and the chimney.

The proposals comprise 244 dwellings, 15000 sq.ft of commercial space and a total of 207 parking spaces.



Hillingdon Gateway

Location	LB Hillingdon
Client	Meyer Homes
Contract Sum	£73.4m
Status	Planning Consent
Composition	515 Residential Units 4,600 sq.ft. Retail 3,600 sq.ft. Offices

Despite a prominent location in Hillingdon and excellent transport links – next to Hillingdon station and the M40 – the Wheat Quarter site has been derelict after the Master Brewer hotel was demolished in the early 2000s. In 2016, Meyer Homes took over the Wheat Quarter site from Tesco and set a project brief calling for an intelligent design that responded to the sensitivities of the Wheat Quarter site, the surrounding area, and the local community, where there is a lack of affordable housing. ColladoCollins' design complements the existing interbellum and post-war housing stock and balances the needs of the local population with current London standards for building density, housing design, accessibility, and car parking.

Whilst refused locally this project has recently been called in and granted consent by the Mayor of London.



Brook Green

Location	LB Hammersmith
Client	Westerland Real Estate
Contract Sum	£30m
Status	Completed
Composition	83,000 sq.ft. refurbishment 56,000 sq.ft. new offices
Listing	Grade II

The former Ford Motor Company garage along Shepherd's Bush Road will be adapted to a new use, adding three new floors to the Grade II listed building housed in a striking glass dome. The design comprises over 115,000 sqft of office space across six floors and proposes the creation of a unique, high quality office space that incorporates contemporary design elements.

The design adds 50,000 sq.ft of new office accommodation above the existing building, and is a contemporary take on an historical precedent using modern diagrid technology.



# BRADLEY MURPHY DESIGN

BMD is a landscape architectural practice founded and led by Laura Bradley and Ryan Murphy. We have a proven track record in designing and delivering high quality landscape and public realm for large-scale residential developments from inception through to completion.

Landscape is an evolutionary process shaped by the relationship between people and place. We believe that our role as landscape architects is as guardians of existing landscapes and as champions for the creation of new, high quality landscapes and public realm. Our placemaking approach is informed by an iterative, contextual design process that focuses on realising design vision and delivering places of enduring quality.

Our landscape-led approach to masterplanning creates added value by finding the right balance between spaces and built form, to create places where people love to live. Green Infrastructure is integrated at the heart of the masterplanning process and forms an essential part of our placemaking design approach. We are passionate about facilitating the sharing of new ideas and developing new methods of collaborative working to explore what landscape can do for people and place.

BMD was commissioned in 2013 to lead the public realm and landscape design working with the wider design team to develop the detail of the masterplan, ensuring a landscaped approach to the shaping of the development. BMD are delighted to have been retained in the continued evolution of this unique development on the former Shredded Wheat site.



# SELECTED WORK



Peruvian Wharf  
Location: London  
Client: Galliard Homes  
Status: Planning  
Composition: 950 Residential Units

BMD was commissioned in 2015 working alongside EPR architects to produce the landscape design proposals for a primarily residential development located in the Thameside West area, delivering c.1000 homes.

The proposal consists of a high quality residential-led, mixed use development with a well-connected public realm integrated into a unique townscape. The landscape proposals help to define a stronger site identity and landscape character that responds to the context of the local area and contributes to the development 's sense of place. Despite the challenges presented by the current industrial context, the Peruvian Wharf masterplan proposal maximising the opportunities that the vacant brownfield site offers, becoming an integral part of the Thameside West vision.



Tolworth  
Location: London  
Client: Meyer Homes  
Status: Planning  
Composition: 950 Residential Units

BMD was commissioned in 2016 to produce site wide proposals for the former industrial, brownfield Toby Jug and former Ministry of Agriculture site adjacent to Tolworth train station. The proposals comprise c.950 units mixed use development structured in a sequence of streets and spaces with varying and contrasting characters.

The concept for the appearance of the scheme draws from a number of influences including the defensive characteristics of medieval hill towns in response to the environment conditions of the A3 corridor. The landscape vision for Tolworth focuses on the creation of a place that fosters sustainable and lasting social, physical and environmental connections with neighbouring communities and the wider townscape and landscape context.



London Road  
Location: Hounslow  
Client: Meyer Homes  
Status: Starting construction  
Composition: 300 Residential Units

BMD was commissioned in 2015 to prepare landscape and public realm design proposals for a residential development of c.350 contemporary duplexes, apartments and commercial retail on London Road in Hounslow.

This exciting scheme drew on Woonerf principles, encouraging the use of mews streets as social spaces through the introduction of shared surfacing, integrated play, trees and feature planting.

Mews streets were combined with a sequence of publicly accessible spaces and communal gardens at ground & podium level to deliver interconnected green space across the development.





## SAVILLS: PLANNING

Savills is one of the world's largest real estate firms, now having more than 30,000 employees and a network of over 600 offices and associates throughout Europe, the Americas, Asia Pacific, Africa and the Middle East. We offer a broad range of specialist advisory, management and transactional services to clients all over the world.

Our vision is to advise private, institutional and corporate clients seeking to acquire, manage, lease, develop or realise the value of prime residential and commercial property in the world's key locations.

We encourage collegiate working across divisions and seek to develop longstanding professional relationships.

We attract, recruit and retain the best in the property industry. In all areas across the property advisory spectrum, our clients benefit from the entrepreneurial edge and exceptional service that our people consistently demonstrate.

Planning is an integral part of Savills Development Services, which provides bespoke and fully-integrated services for landowners, developers, occupiers and investors across the development life-cycle. The Savills Planning Team is one of the country's leading planning and regeneration practices. We have considerable experience of advising on complex and challenging schemes across the UK and subscribe wholeheartedly to the 'can do' philosophy. In other words, if there is a problem to be solved, we will work very hard and use all our resourcefulness to solve it, however short the timescales or daunting the circumstances.

With over 290 leading planners, urban designers, transport, environmental and retail specialists in our network of offices throughout the UK, we are able to provide the highest quality professional planning service, under-pinned by a detailed knowledge of market conditions and an understanding of local and strategic issues



## ENTRAN: TRANSPORT, EIA

Entran is an independent environmental and transportation consultancy with specific abilities and expertise in traffic engineering, transportation planning, environmental impact assessment, air quality and noise assessments and monitoring. Entran was formed in 2005 on the premise of providing the highest quality advice, solutions and services to suit individual clients' needs and to provide high quality advice throughout the development lifecycle.

Entran has offices in Bristol and London and is the retained transport and environmental consultancy to numerous national firms and institutions operating across all sectors including, retail, residential, education, leisure, health, and energy.

Entran has specific experience in developing multi-modal access strategies and assessing the transport effects and traffic impacts, as well as the environmental effects of major new developments and regeneration projects.

Relevant recent projects include:

Bracklesham Bay (West Sussex) – 1,000 houses, new school, Park and Ride – Means of access/movement strategy to support LP allocation.

Keybridge House (LB Lambeth) – 590 dwellings, retail uses and new school – Transport Assessment and Travel Plans.

Medina Yard, Cowes (Isle of Wight) – Town centre regeneration comprising 535 dwellings plus 18,600m<sup>2</sup> non-residential uses (retail, food, museum, boat yard, employment) – Transport Assessment, Traffic Impact Assessment, Travel Plan.



## CITY DESIGNER: HERITAGE

Citydesigner provides independent heritage, townscape and architectural design advice, along with comprehensive and in-depth historical research for projects in the UK and Ireland. The consultancy's team of architects, urban designers, planners, and heritage experts, assists design teams and local authorities in achieving optimal planning outcomes for challenging or heritage sensitive developments.

The consultancy was founded in 1997 by Richard Coleman architect, after he had led national design review at the Royal Fine Art Commission (RFAC), the predecessor of CABE, for 13 years as its deputy secretary. Based in London and Brighton, Citydesigner apply their expertise on small and large development schemes seeking planning permission and listed building consent, where sensitive environments, World Heritage Sites, designated views, listed buildings, conservation areas and registered parks and gardens may be affected.

Citydesigner collaborate with architects throughout the design process, provide regular assessments of developing designs and strategic advice on projects, and assist landowners and investors in achieving optimum returns through high quality design in the context of sensitive environments

Relevant recent projects include:

- Tall buildings in the City of London and Canary Wharf, which have a direct effect on the Tower of London and Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Sites respectively.
- An extension to the Grade I listed Holburn Museum within the City of Bath World Heritage Site.
- Various schemes on the perimeter of the Grade I registered Hyde Park, visible above the treeline.
- The vertical extension to the Park Tower Hotel visible from the Grade I registered Hyde Park and from the Belgravia Conservation Area.

## 2. BACKGROUND

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WGC SOUTH SIDE



ColladoCollins Architects on behalf of  
Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing



# 2.1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

## GARDEN CITY PRINCIPLES

In 1898, the English reformer and urban planner Ebenezer Howard published To-morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform (re-printed in 1902 as Garden Cities of To-Morrow). The book described Howard’s vision for the ‘Garden City’: "to bring the best elements of both urban and rural life together into a new, revolutionary way of living". This concept is illustrated in Howard’s famous ‘Three Magnets’ diagram, which lists the perceived advantages and disadvantages of ‘Town’ and ‘Country’ – the traditional living environments depicted by two magnets. The third magnet, ‘Town–Country’ has all the combined benefits of the two traditional, yet diverse models of living, but none of their disadvantages (such as the overcrowded living conditions of towns or the poor social facilities and lack of job prospects of the country).

The intention of blending the best of both city and country into a new way of living was the basis of the Garden City, whose key characteristics, as formulated by Howard, included:

- A fair distribution to the community of the profits that result from new development, founded on land value capture and the control of core utilities;
- Strong political support and leadership, with firm commitment to a clear vision and community participation;
- A suitable body to manage community assets over the long term; Mixed-tenure homes and housing types, with the majority of homes genuinely affordable;
- A full range of employment opportunities within easy commuting distance of homes;
- Beautifully and imaginatively designed, high-quality homes with gardens, combining the best of town and country living to create healthy living environments;
- Development that enhances the natural environment, providing net biodiversity gains and using zero-carbon and energy-positive technology to ensure climate resilience;
- Strong cultural, recreational and shopping facilities in walkable, vibrant sociable neighbourhoods; and
- Integrated and accessible transport systems, with walking, cycling and public transport designed to be the most attractive forms of local transport.

Howard’s vision for this new way of living attracted enough financial support to found Letchworth, the first Garden City. Construction work began in 1903 under the stewardship of Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker, whom Howard trusted to implement his vision.

After construction started in 1920, Welwyn Garden City was the second and last true Garden City to be built in England to this date. As was the case with Letchworth, Howard’s Garden City principles were implemented by another person – this time the architect Louis de Soissons.

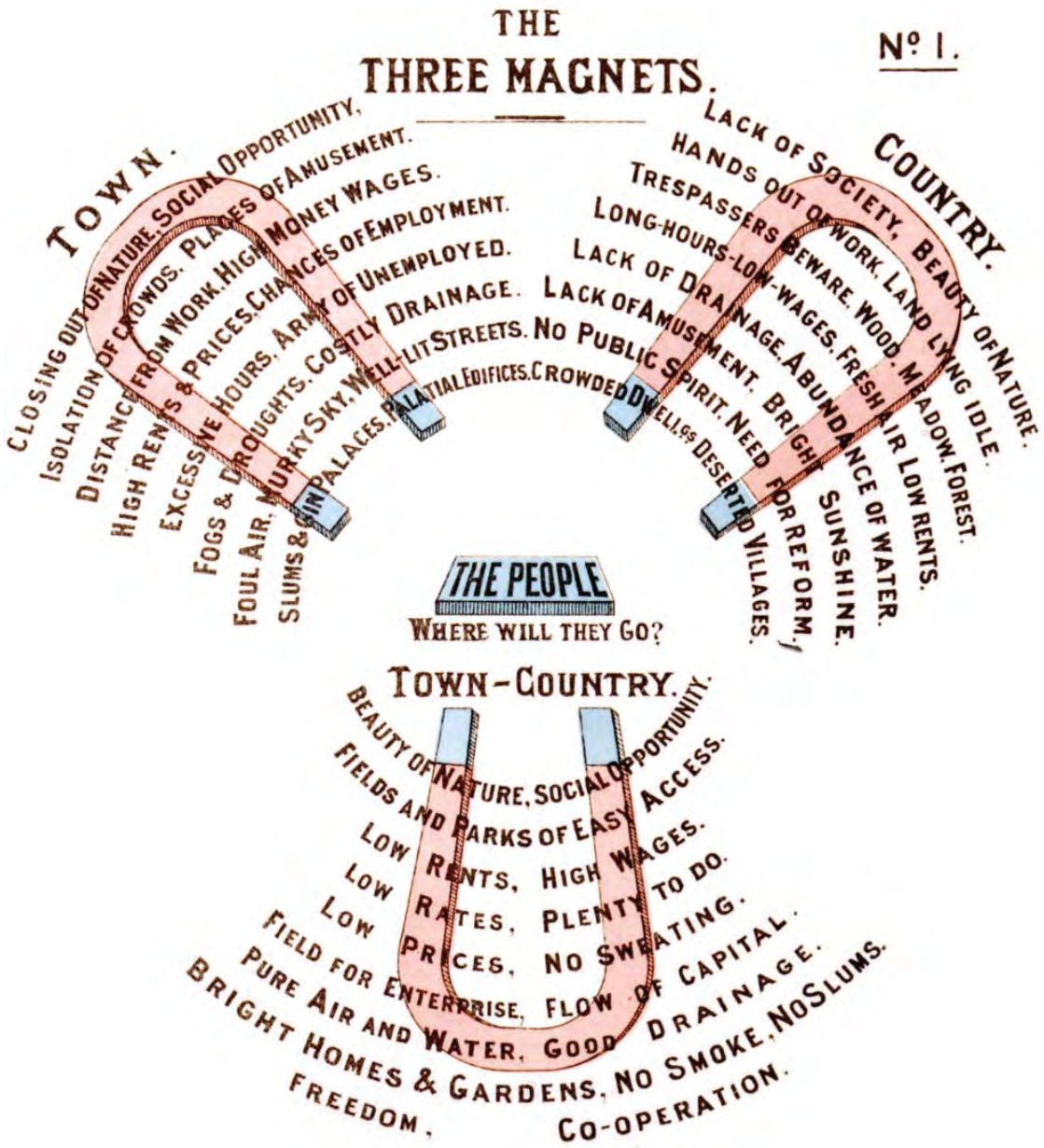


Diagram No.1: The Three Magnets (in Ebenezer Howard, To-morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform. 1898, Swan Sonnenschein & Co.)

# WELWYN GARDEN CITY PLANNING HISTORY

Louis de Soissons was born in French Canada in 1890. He trained at the Royal Academy and at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. In April 1920 he was appointed as the principal architect and planner for a new Garden City for 40-50,000 inhabitants.

His employer, Welwyn Garden City Limited, had been formally established as the owner and developer of an 2,378 acre estate in Hertfordshire.

Welwyn was de Soissons’s first major commission. To deliver it, he set up a practice – the Louis de Soissons Partnership – with George Grey Wornum, with whom he presented a master plan for the new city in June 1920.

Louis de Soissons and the partnership were actively involved in Welwyn Garden City’s planning, architectural design and growth for over 60 years. The development company – Welwyn Garden City Limited – allocated land for industrial and business purposes, as well as for privately owned houses, granting leases with restrictive covenants. De Soissons had total control of the plan of Welwyn Garden City – all plans of buildings had to be submitted to him under the provisions of the Building and Other Regulations in Force on the Welwyn Garden City Estate of 1923. Welwyn Garden City Limited successfully controlled the appearance of the town, and built about 40% of the buildings.

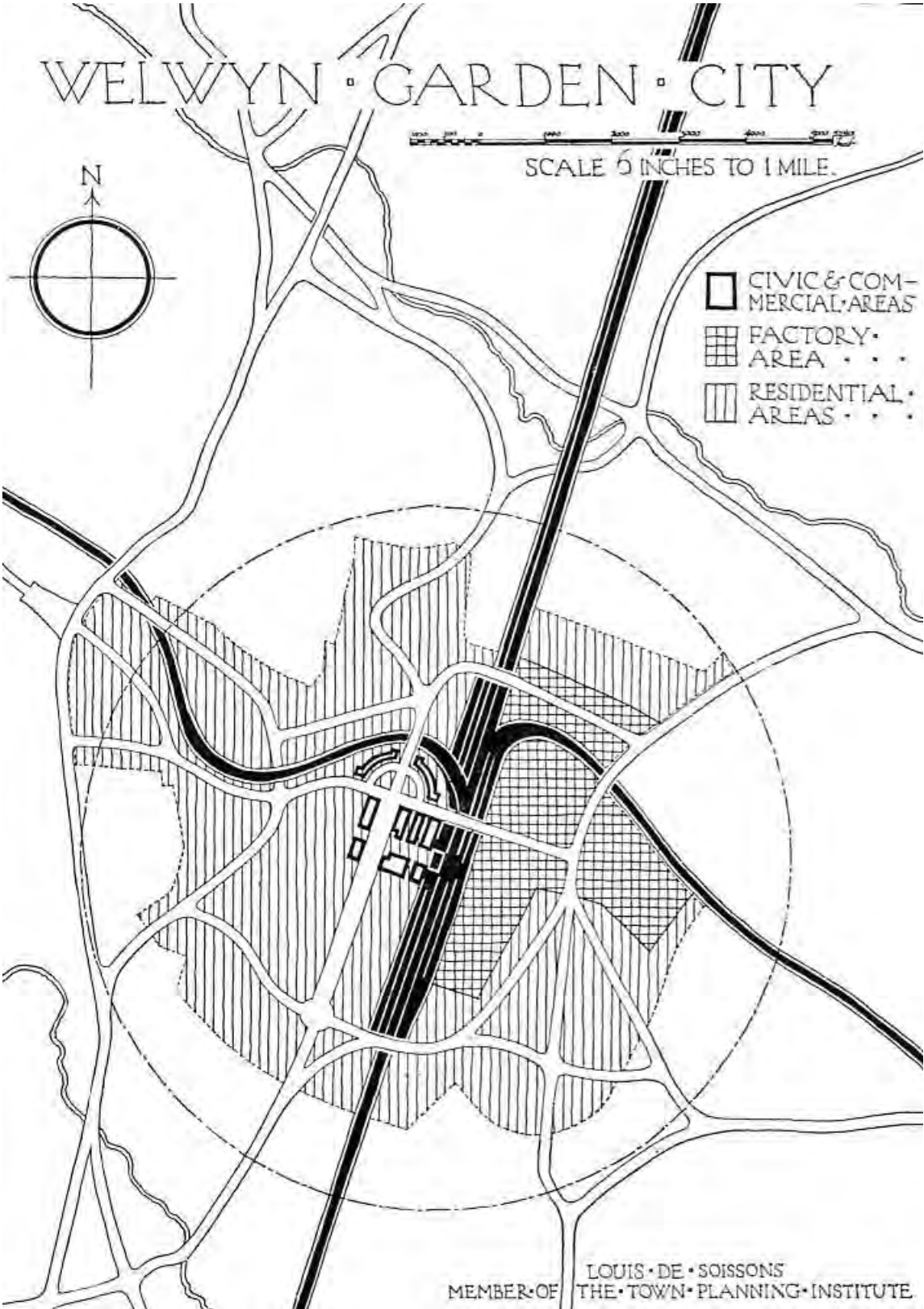
The new Garden City was to be self-sufficient – a carefully planned settlement combining industry and agriculture into a distinct whole; a self-contained community with an industrial area providing jobs in ‘clean’ manufacturing industries.

This self-containment was meant to prevent the town becoming merely a dormitory town for London. The limits on its growth were ultimately set by the surrounding green belt and any trees already in the landscape were retained in the initial plan. A follower of Garden City philosophy wrote in 1911: ‘The object of a Garden City is to draw away from overcrowded localities or to intercept the ever increasing flow from the country by establishing new industrial towns in the country: towns which shall always stand in their belt of agricultural land’ (Sir Ralph Neville, ‘Garden City and Garden Suburb’, in Garden Cities and Town Planning, n.s. Vol. 1, No. 1 (1911).

To the west and north of the town centre were residential districts, and to the east of the railway line were areas reserved for industry and business, beyond which were further areas of housing. The industrial area was beside the London and North Eastern Railway (LNER) and the branch line to Hertford which swept north-eastwards (now closed). The fairly level land close to the railway was recognised as the best site for industry. Most of the factories were eventually located along Broadwater Road, which stretched in the north-south direction.

Since the introduction of Permitted Development rights, Welwyn Garden City’s industrial area is undergoing an important transformation – from a predominantly industrial, commercial zone to a mixed use, active part of the town.

At the heart of this transformation, the former Shredded Wheat Factory site provides an opportunity for a new vibrant place east of the town centre.



Welwyn Garden City master plan. Drawing by Louis de Soissons.



2.2. WIDER CONTEXT

Welwyn Garden City today is a town with a population of 116,000 (ONS estimate mid-year 2014) and a strong commercial base. Companies such as Ocado, Roche, and Tesco are based there. HSBC has a high-security global data centre in Welwyn. The A1(M) motorway and the Great Northern railway provide fast connections to Central London (20-25 minutes to King’s Cross, for a 40km distance), as well as to Cambridge and the North. Other trains connect the town with local stations through the north London suburbs. London Luton Airport is 13 miles away, London Stansted 30 miles, and London Heathrow 33 miles away – all are easily accessible from Welwyn. Other local destinations for employment and housing – besides London – are within short distances, particularly St Albans and Stevenage.



Above: View of Howardsgate, one of the primary boulevards in the centre of Welwyn Garden City.  
Opposite page: Welwyn Garden City in the local Hertfordshire and Greater London context.





2.3. LOCAL CONTEXT

WELWYN GARDEN CITY AND THE APPLICATION SITE TODAY

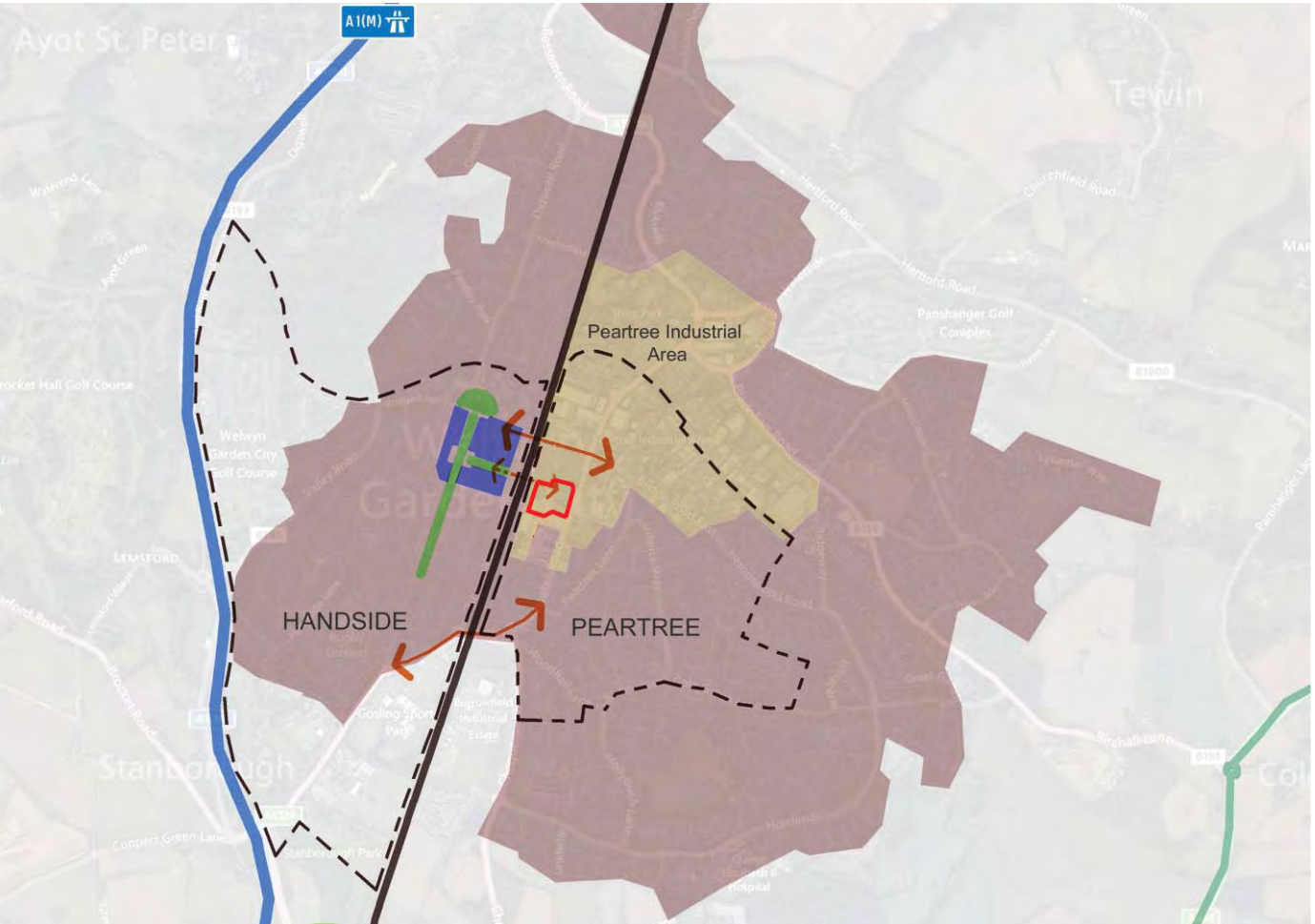
The South Side site, located to the east of Welwyn Garden City town centre and bound by Hydeway and the Wheat Quarter site to the North. North of Hydeway is the location of the former Shredded Wheat breakfast cereal factory; to the south of Hydeway the land was used for other factories and industrial facilities. The Former Shredded Wheat factory buildings (including the silos) are Grade II listed.

The surrounding area comprises of a variety of uses and building types, including low level industrial and commercial/business uses to the north and east, and Welwyn Garden City Train Station and Town Centre to the west. Further beyond the Site to the east lies the eastern half of Welwyn Garden City, largely comprising residential neighbourhoods and a large-scale employment area spanning over 100Ha.

Despite substantial growth around the industrial areas and the construction of the Howard Centre shopping mall in the 1980s, Louis de Soissons' master plan for Welwyn

Garden City can easily be recognised, especially in the city's commercial centre.

The original zoning also remains, with the railway still separating the industrial areas from the residential areas around the Parkway. This means that the Peartree neighbourhood, east of the railway, remains noticeably separated from the city centre and from the residential areas west of the railway. The application site lies just east of the railway – along the separation line – and so presents an opportunity to improve the connectivity between two currently separate parts of Welwyn Garden City.



THE APPLICATION SITE IN CONTEXT

The application boundary forms a key piece of the wider Wheat Quarter masterplan within the piece of land now owned by MTVH.

To the South of the application site is the first Phase of MTVH's residential development - blocks 10 and 11. The site is bound to the North by the Wheat Quarter development site and to the East by Broadwater Road. An existing footbridge provides a direct link between the wider masterplan and the station and the towncentre to the West

- Key
- Ownership Boundary
  - Planning Submission boundary
  - Masterplan Boundary





## CONSERVATION AREA AND LISTED BUILDINGS

Although the application site is not located within a conservation area, it is in close proximity to the Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area (see diagram on opposite page), which covers a large portion of the town centre (to the west of the Wheat Quarter site) and its residential hinterlands within the ward of Handside.

There is a wide separation between the development site and the conservation area, due to the railway lines with associated sidings, and the Howard Centre's large bulk, all of which sits between the Wheat Quarter site and the town centre. Nevertheless, the design team has considered the potential effects of the design proposal upon the conservation area – in particular through distant views. The potential effect of the proposed design on existing views from locations within the conservation area are assessed within BMD's Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment, under separate cover.

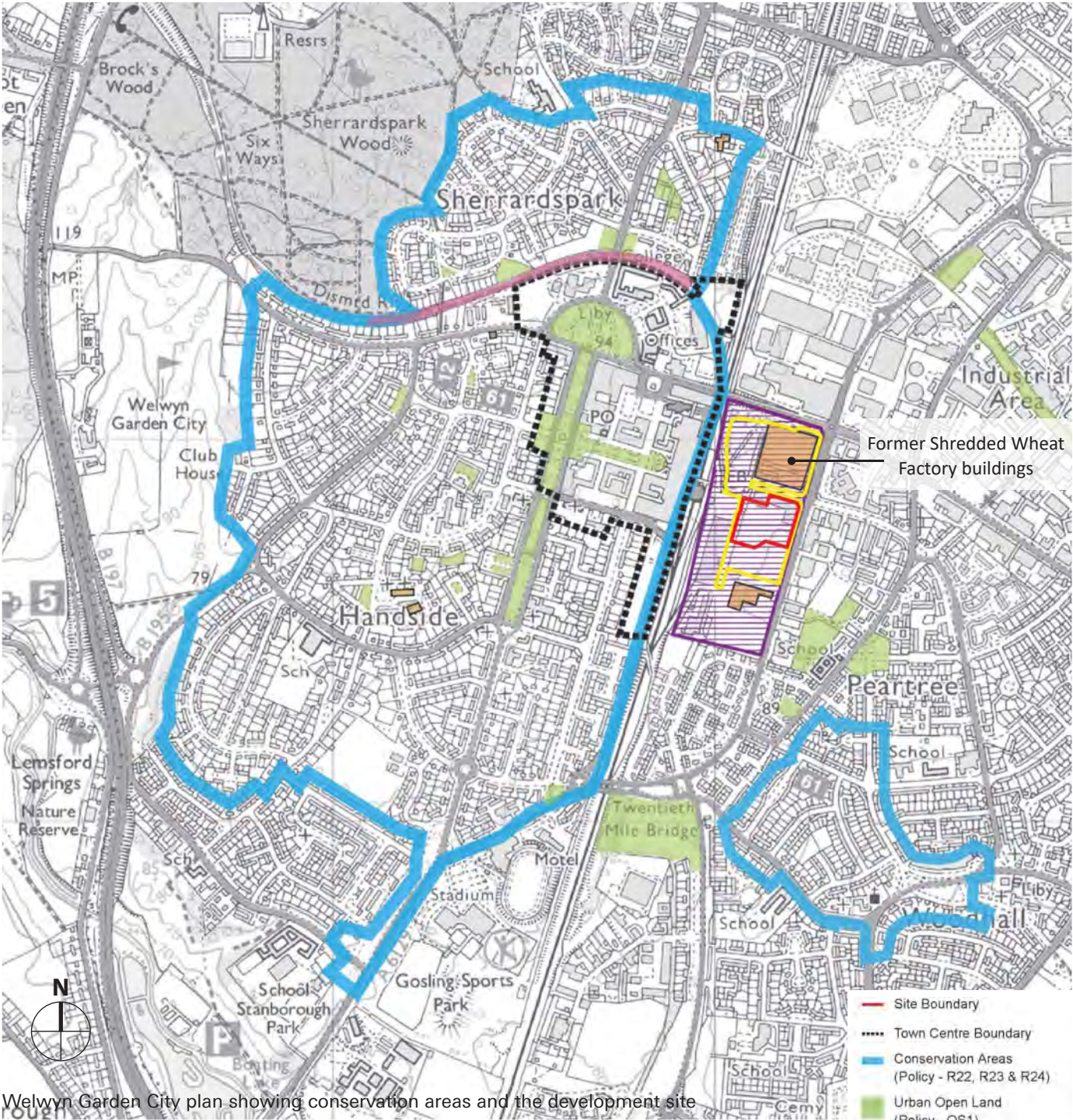
As illustrated by the plan on the opposite page, there are two groups of listed buildings located within the original masterplan boundary or in close proximity to the South Side site. The listed buildings to the North of the application site were commissioned by the American Shredded Wheat Company and designed by Louis de Soissons. They include the original Production Hall and the original cluster of wheat silos built in 1925, all of which have a Grade II Listing (as do the more recent buildings added during the 1930s and 1950s to support the factory's growth). All listed buildings have been vacant since the relocation of Cereal Partners UK in 2008.

Historic England List Entry Summary:  
Grade: II  
Date first listed: 16-Jan-1981

1925. Architect Louis de Soissons. Two concrete ranges, at right angles with links. Southern range consists of giant range of cylindrical concrete drums 15 bays long with flat oversailing capping with railings right over the whole top. Behind this is a plain attic storey with 28 plain windows with plain capping over. On one end elevation is a 3 bay projecting tower rising just above the main roof level.

At the west end of the range is a 2 bay wing with large windows, the southern bay of 3 storeys and the northern of 4. Flat roofs. Adjacent is a 7 bay, 4 storey block, with large windows divided by narrow piers and small scale structural divisions between the storeys, making it almost wholly glass. Flat oversailing capping at roof level.

Listing NGR: TL2417112968



Welwyn Garden City plan showing conservation areas and the development site



HISTORY OF THE APPLICATION SITE

The first company to occupy a site in Welwyn Garden City’s new "Factory Area" was Archibald D. Dawnay & Sons Ltd, construction engineers and structural steel fabricators, who took a site near Hunter’s Bridge (a bridge over the railway). They were soon followed by the American Shredded Wheat company, which leased seven acres just to the south in an excellent position, directly adjacent to the railway lines.

Amongst the first was Welwyn Studios, a film studio built in 1928 by British Instructional Films. The studio operated until 1950, producing a number of educational films, as well as some features, including The 39 Steps, Brighton Rock and two early Hitchcock films.

Shredded Wheat was attracted to the town for several reasons – the close proximity to London, without the ‘smoke, grime and fog, that London is apt to indulge in’; and the convenience of getting ‘suitable railway siding accommodation for receiving goods to other parts of the country’ (Hertford Local Studies Library, Industry Moves Out (n/d), p.19).

Equally important to the location near the railway was a healthy environment where the factory workers could profit from all the social and economic benefits of ‘the happy Shredded Wheat Family’. The company believed that ‘all food for human consumption should be manufactured under the most rigid sanitary conditions and amidst surroundings that are cleanly, healthy and pleasant’. Welwyn Garden City was chosen as ‘more nearly conforming to these ideals than any of the other sites offered’.

A little later and just south of the application site lies the former the Roche Products Factory (1940), designed by Swiss architect Otto Salvisberg in the international modernist style.



Aerial view of the original Shredded Wheat factory buildings and British Instructional Films studio circa 1928



Former Roche Factory Buildings



British Instructional Films studio later named Welwyn Studios

2.4. PLANNING CONTEXT

PLANNING HISTORY

Since 2010, a number of planning applications have been submitted proposing to redevelop the site.

A summary of the planning history for the site is provided below:

N6/2015/0294/PP

In August 2017, planning permission was granted for the comprehensive redevelopment of the former Shredded Wheat Factory site for mixed-use development, including the delivery of up to 850 residential units and office, retail and commercial floorspace. Detailed planning permission was granted for phase 1 which predominantly comprised the northern portion of the site, whilst phase 2 comprised the land south of Hydeway and was approved in outline.

Listed building consent (ref: N6/2015/0293/LB) was also approved and secured permission for the demolition of buildings which has subsequently taken place.

2018/0171/MAJ

In February 2019, full planning permission was granted for:

“Creation of a mixed-use quarter comprising the erection of up to 1,340 residential dwellings including 414 (31%) affordable dwellings (Use Class C3); 114 extra car homes (Use Class C2); the erection of a civic building comprising 497sqm of health (Use Class D1), 497sqm of community use (Use Class D1), 883sqm of office (Use Class B1) and 590sqm of retail (Class A1/A2/A3/A4/A5); alterations, additions and change of use of Grade II Listed Building and retained Silos to provide 5,279sqm of flexible business floorspace (Use Class B1), 270sqm Combined Heat and Power (Use Class Sui Generis), 2,057sqm International Art Centre (Use Class D1), 1,235sqm Gymnasium (Use Class D2), 1,683sqm restaurant / coffee shop / bar (Use Class A1/ A3/A4/A5), Creche / Day Nursery (Use Class D1) of 671sqm as well as Network Rail TOC Building (Use Class B1) of 360sqm, plus associated car parking, access, landscaping, public art and other supporting infrastructure.”

MTVH has commenced works on phase 1 which comprises the southern-most part of the South Side site. Phase 1 will deliver 208 homes in a mix of affordable tenures and predominately 1 and 2 bed units. All pre-commencement conditions and relevant clauses of the Section 106 agreement have been satisfied and the planning permission has therefore been lawfully implemented.

There are a number of subsequent applications since the 2019 permission that relate to the site. This includes application ref 6/2019/1347/FULL for the creation of an

arts centre and improved site access for the original 1920's silos, production hall, grain store and boiler house, which was granted in March 2020.

An application for alterations to the 2019 extant planning permission was refused in December 2019. Application ref: 6/2019/1330/FULL proposed for alterations to the original 2019 permission in order to build a five-storey community bridge building (1,257m2) for flexible use (B1/D1/D2 Use Classes), incorporating a minimum of 338sqm of D2 Use Class floorspace, as well as the removal of the skate park. The decision was appealed but dismissed on 20 August 2020.

6/2021/0181/MAJ

The Wheat Quarter Ltd, owner of the 4.7 ha northern-most part (North Side) of the 2019 planning permission has recently submitted a hybrid planning application which seeks to delivery additional homes, an expanded residential care community and private rental sector (‘PRS’) housing on the site. The full development description is as follows:

“Hybrid planning application comprising: Detailed Planning Application for 399 Private Rented Sector (PRS) dwellings and 153 dwellings (Class C3), 250 units of residential care accommodation for the elderly (Use Class C2) with associated communal facilities, 15,247m2 of community and commercial hub (Use Classes E and F1) with associated cycling hub, car parking, access, landscaping, public art and other supporting infrastructure; and Outline Planning Application for up to 418 dwellings (Class C3) with all matters reserved except access.”

The revised proposals seek to deliver:  
126 dwelling reduction in traditional residential units;  
136 increase in C2 residential care units;  
+399 PRS units;  
1,884sqm increase in commercial / community / leisure floorspace;  
+47 car parking spaces; and  
Inclusion of a cycle hub.

Further information on the planning history for the Site is included in the Planning Statement.

DESIGN GUIDANCE

The redevelopment proposals for the site have taken account of relevant national and local planning policy and guidance.

The Development Plan for the site consists of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan (2005).

Regard has also been had to other material considerations and emerging policy documents including:

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019)  
The Broadwater Road West Supplementary Planning Document (2008)  
Welwyn Hatfield Supplementary Design Guidance (2006)  
The draft Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan Submission Version (2016)  
Secured by Design Homes (2019).

Adopted District Plan Policy EMP3 allocates the site for a mixed use development, consisting primarily of "employment, housing, leisure and rail-related uses" as part of the wider Broadwater Road West site allocation.

The Broadwater Road West Supplementary Planning Document (BRW SPD) subsequently provided a vision and strategy for the development of the Broadwater Road West allocation to:

"deliver an energetic and pioneering scheme of development which integrates 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."

- This vision is based on the following objectives:
- To create a sustainable neighbourhood with an appropriate mix of uses for its central location;
  - To establish strong connections between the east side of town, the Broadwater Road West site, and through to the town centre;
  - To use the industrial heritage as a cue for form, character and identity - re-use listed structures and ensure sympathetic development;
  - To explore innovative and sustainable uses drawing on the natural, infrastructure and spatial assets of the site;
  - To create urban grain capable of supporting appropriate uses while reflecting the town centre morphology;
  - To consider accommodating large scale uses which would best be located near the centre as the opportunity to do this is unlikely to arise again;
  - To support live-work proximity;
  - To define the amount of employment land/floor space that should be provided for;
  - To enhance biodiversity.

The draft Local Plan carries forward the adopted allocations for the wider Broadwater West Road site through Policy SP 17.

This Design and Access Statement aims to articulate a feasible vision and design for the application site, reflecting and building upon the vision and objectives set out in the BRW SPD masterplan.

The following documents have been taken into consideration for the design of the master plan and general layout of the residential and commercial elements: Welwyn Hatfield District Plan. Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005.  
Secured by Design. Homes, February 2016  
Welwyn Hatfield District Local Plan adopted 2005 and emerging Welwyn Hatfield District Local Plan 2017



2.5. WHEAT QUARTER - EMERGING CONTEXT

Since the original EPR Architects 2017 Consent by Tesco, MTVH and the Wheat Quarter obtained joined consent in 2019, the North site has since been developed further and a revised hybrid planning submission has been recently submitted for approval. 6/2021/0181/MAJ

This revised submission does not depart from the original overall strategy. It responds to changing needs of the site.

After the 2019 permission was approved, The Wheat Quarter Ltd began a detailed review of the scheme focusing on delivery of the northern site, testing the strength of the housing market and looking again at the proposals and associated costs for transforming the Listed Buildings. It became apparent during this period that the housing market had weakened and was continuing to weaken, perhaps due to the threats associated with Brexit, whilst simultaneously, the true scale of the costs associated with transforming the Listed Buildings became apparent.

The Wheat Quarter held discussions with prospective housing delivery partners from all sections of the housing industry, spanning national volume housebuilders, local and regional housebuilders, specialist mixed-use developers, a variety of retirement living and care operators, as well as PRS specialists. Given the size of the Wheat Quarter site, scope exists to have different housing products being delivered across the Wheat Quarter site simultaneously to deliver the regeneration project and boost housing delivery in the Borough to help maintain a 5 year land supply.



Extant consent 3D view

After testing the market over this period, the Wheat Quarter has reached an agreement with a leading PRS operator to deliver circa. 400 PRS homes on Block 7 within the eastern part of the Wheat Quarter north site.

In parallel an agreement has been reached to enable a further 250 later living C2 units and ancillary amenities within Block 6, whilst an agreement for the phased redevelopment of the western side of the Wheat Quarter site has been agreed with a well known house builder with the ambition to start construction work on Block 1 which will form part of the detailed submission. A first residential phase of 802 homes could be delivered within a two year period from start of construction.

The remainder of the residential areas within the Wheat Quarter north site (Blocks 2, 3 and 6E) are likely to be brought forward as a second phase of development. Given the current state of the housing market, it is considered that delivery of the remainder of the Wheat Quarter site would ultimately be best and most quickly secured through



Extant consent plan diagram

an outline planning permission that enables developers to quickly advance Reserved Matters applications to secure a suitable housing form and layout that is compatible with their housing model. Accordingly, the area of the Wheat Quarter site currently intended for Blocks 2 and 3 would form the outline element of a hybrid planning application spanning the Wheat Quarter site.

Both the permitted site and revised proposals for the North site have been considered in the development of the revised proposals for the South Side.



Revised application 3D view



Revised application plan diagram

## 3. INVOLVEMENT

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WGC SOUTH SIDE



ColladoCollins Architects on behalf of  
Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing



3.1. CONSULTATION PROCESS

SUMMARY

The design team have been through a rigorous pre-application meeting with Welwyn Hatfield council. In addition to four pre-application meetings there have also been additional workshops with the council which focused around the architectural expression of the scheme. This process has informed and shaped the submitted proposals.

Meeting Type	Date	
Pre-application Meeting 1	October 2019	Discussion about the proposed strategy, phasing, affordable offer and inclusion of compact living.
Pre-application Meeting 2	January 2020	Further development work presented. Discussion on massing, density.
Pre-application Meeting 3	June 2020	Heritage and townscape discussions as well as presentation of emerging proposals.
Design Workshop 1	August 2020	Review of proposed elevation strategy and detailing.
Design Workshop	September 2020	Review of prominent gateway elements within the scheme and long views.
Public Consultation	September 2020	Wider consultation on the emerging proposals.
Pre-application Meeting 4	October 2020	Proposed scheme presented for final comments on massing, content, heritage

3.2. PRE-APPLICATION MEETING 1

The first pre-application looked to discuss the key principles of the submission. The conversation focused on the split of the phases, affordable strategy, inclusion of compact units, additional height and impact of the increased density.



Massing view extracted from presentation document



### 3.3. PRE-APPLICATION MEETING 2

Following the first meeting the proposed massing and residential layouts was developed further. The revisions proposed looked to maximise the plan as well as the potential heights. The resulting massing is shown in the diagram below.

This scheme looked to create two gateway elements at the Northern corners of the site with the remaining massing stepping down towards the South of the site. Gaps towards the South of each block are designed to allow sunlight into the central podium.

A series of views and visuals were presented to the council at this time which showed how the emerging proposals sat within the context.



Massing view extracted from presentation document  
44 · WGC South Side

### 3.4. PRE-APPLICATION MEETING 3

In response to the comments from the previous pre-application meeting, the scheme was developed and refined further. This revised massing had the tallest point reduced to a maximum of 12 floors in height. In response to the comments on the expressing of a gateway to the North West, this element was raised by one floor. In addition to the changes in massing, indicative architectural treatments were presented for discussion.



View extracted from presentation document



Weave view extracted from presentation document



3.5. DESIGN WORKSHOP 1

In addition to the Pre-application meetings with the council there were design workshops which focused on reviewing in detail the massing and architectural expression of the developing proposals. These workshops looked at responding to specific concerns or comments made during the pre-application meetings relating to the external appearance of the revised proposals.

Further research and development relating to the architectural expression was presented and discussed.

In response to the comments from the previous pre-application meeting an additional gateway element was added to the scheme to mark the station. The elevations were developed in response to the comments received and the context analysis work.



Broadwater Road view prior to comments



Broadwater road view revised in response to comments



Weave view of Phase 3 prior to comments



Weave view of Phase 3 revised in response to comments

3.6. DESIGN WORKSHOP 2

The second design workshop focused around the remaining design issues. The key discussion focuses around the expression of the gateway elements. The previous design solution was considered too subtle. A revised design was presented which drew inspiration from the silos. Curved negative recesses on the upper two floors represent an imprint of the silos into the form of the building and create interesting focal points.





3.7. PRE-APPLICATION MEETING 4

The final meeting presented the work from the design workshops as well as looking at the wider issues beyond the massing and expression of the building.



Key view showing western gateway detail at 11 storeys.

3.8. RESPONSE

The final scheme has reacted and responded to the various comments and discussions throughout the pre-application process. Some of the key ways in which the final proposals has responded are listed below.

Height and Massing

The proposed height and massing for the scheme has been shaped through the discussions with the planners. This has developed throughout the process and evaluated from key views at each stage. The impact on the listed building has been considered and assessed. Please refer to the Townscape and Heritage document which accompanies this application.

Gateway elements

In response to the comments the proposal contains two gateway elements which mark key access routes. The height and design of these elements were a key topic of discussion throughout the pre-application process and design workshops. The initial design response was considered too subtle and so a bolder more referential feature was developed.

*In dealing with the overall impact of height through design detailing, the use of the double height treatment to the upper two storeys is welcomed as it adds interest but does not add to the perception of ‘bulk’ on the upper storeys, alongside the introduction of the ‘scallop’ shaped detail reflecting the silos on the northern site. This is also considered to be a subtle way of referencing the history of the site which is much more place specific than the previous iteration, utilising design patterns and features in a unique way which is not immediately obvious.*

Key views showing how these gateway elements work within their context are contained within this document.

Elevational Design

The elevational strategy has been developed throughout the discussions and was looked at in detail during the design workshops. Each building contains a base element which grounds the scheme. On the buildings within phase 2 this is on the ground floor element only and on Phase 3 this is over the lower two floors. Set backs, and variations within the brickwork have also been incorporated into the scheme in order to break up the wider elevations in response to discussion. Referential elements such as the weave patterning on the balconies, expressed entrance details, corner brickwork detailing, and arched elements have been incorporated into the designs. Further information on the elevations can be found within the relevant section of this document and in the accompanying Design Code for Phase 3.

Heritage

In order to discuss the impact on the local heritage assets in a meaningful way, key views of the emerging proposals were presented throughout the process. The proposed massing and elevations have been amended in response to these views.

During the process the tallest element of the scheme reduced from 13 floors down to 10 in response to the listed silos, and views from Hatfield house. Views along the weave towards the silos were also assessed and massing reduced to improve the long views towards the listed building.

Residential Offer

The proposed mix, density and quality of the residential offer have been reviewed throughout the process. These have also changed in response to comments on the design and massing.

Access

*"You should ensure entrances to all blocks that front onto the Weave are located facing onto this public space. This will help provide a high level of activity within the space itself and encourage its use as an attractive route to and from the town centre and station."*  
Within the final proposal access to all the residential blocks is from either the central weave, Broadwater Road or western road to ensure these spaces are activated. Please refer to the access section of this document.

Parking

Volume of parking was discussed throughout the design process. Additional on street parking was introduced. The parameters for Phase 3 assume two levels of undercroft parking. Please refer to the Transport Assessment for further information on the parking provision.

Landscaping and Amenity

The landscape strategy has developed from the extant consent. Additional terraces have been introduced in response to the uplift of unit numbers. Please refer to the Landscape Design Statement for further information.

*"As for landscaping, the provision of well landscaped open space and planting is intrinsic to the character of Welwyn Garden City. The Landscape Strategy includes similar principles to the extant scheme, such as the Weave, Green Streets and avenue planting along Broadwater Road retained. These elements are therefore supported."*



## 4. KEY PRINCIPLES

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WGC SOUTH SIDE

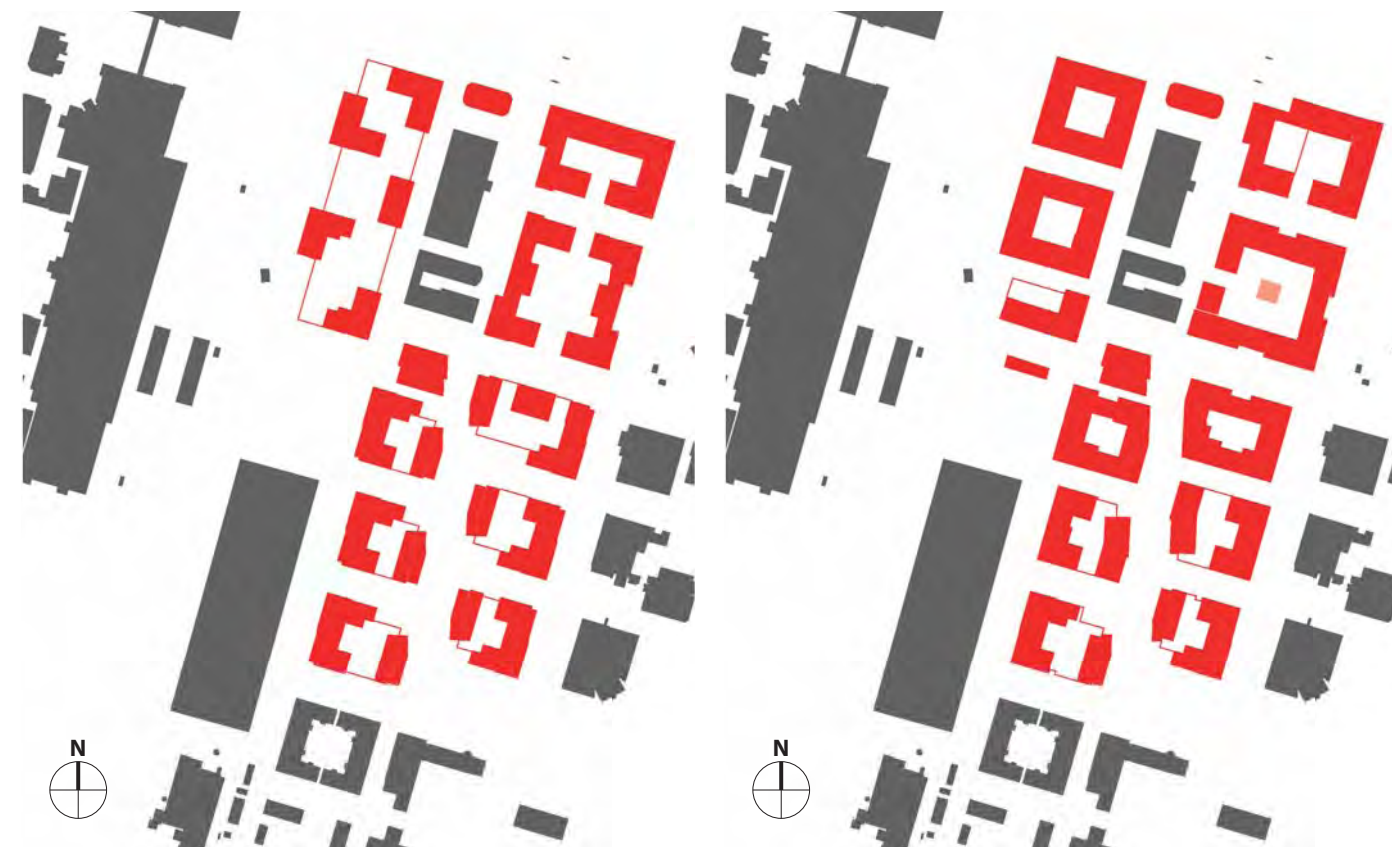




## 4.1. INTERACTION WITH WIDER MASTERPLAN

The site needs to connect and interact with surrounding masterplan. To the South are the two buildings - blocks 10 and 11 which are currently under construction by MTVH. The proposals within Phases 2 and 3 need to work with these blocks and continue the overarching principals which defines this portion of the masterplan - such as the definition of the central weave.

To the North is the Wheat Quarter. The proposal considers the connection to both the extant consent and the emerging proposals.



Consented scheme (2019)  
52 · 18009.1 South Side

Proposed scheme (2021)

