



FAO: Planning Department,
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

Ref: 6/2021/1177/FULL
Date: 04/06/2021

HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION ADVICE

Dear Sir / Madam,

RE: 52 & 54 Bridge Road, Welwyn Garden City, AL8 6UR

The application is for the erection of 2 x two-storey detached houses, associated parking and access, on the land to the rear of 52 & 54 Bridge Road.

The site is located within the Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area. Nos. 52 & 54 Bridge Road and the cottages at nos. 50 and 48 pre-date the construction of the Garden City, dating from the nineteenth century. Nos. 52 & 54 were built as estate workers cottages. They are considered to be “key buildings” within the WGC Conservation Area Appraisal and provide an understanding of the area prior to the establishment of the Garden City as well as being of architectural and aesthetic value due to their traditional form, detailing and materials. They are positive contributors to the significance of the Conservation Area. The public footpath to the rear of the site is the route of the former Luton and Dunstable Branch railway line and some of the large trees were likely part of Sherrardspark Wood located to the north of the former railway line.

The proposal is a slight improvement on the withdrawn scheme 6/2020/3306/FULL due to the removal of the crown roofs to the proposed houses, but it remains less sympathetic than the previously proposed single dwelling behind no. 54 (6/2020/1837/FULL). Concerns similar to the previous scheme are raised below.

Historically, the land to the rear of nos. 52 & 54 was undeveloped and the houses of the Garden City were laid out in a linear pattern along the northern side of Bridge Road. The proposed dwellings are at odds with the prevailing linear development and impact on the setting of nos. 52 & 54 by infilling the undeveloped land between them and the pre-Garden City features of the former railway line and Sherrardspark Wood. The proposed houses are also larger than nos. 52 & 54.

The proposed dwellings would also undermine the verdant appearance of this part of the Conservation Area by obscuring views of the trees at the rear of the site along the footpath in views from Bridge Road as well as down the proposed driveway.



The proposed dwellings do not preserve the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, contrary to Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The proposal undermines the appreciation of the group of nineteenth century buildings and features which pre-date the establishment of the Garden City. They are out of keeping with the linear development pattern as well as detracting from the verdant characteristics of the Conservation Area. The proposal is therefore considered to cause 'less than substantial harm' to the significance of the Conservation Area and paragraph 196 of the NPPF should be considered. Great weight should be afforded to the conservation of heritage assets as per paragraph 193 of the NPPF.

Yours sincerely

Maria Kitts BA (Hons) MA PGCert
Senior Built Heritage Consultant
Place Services

Note: This letter is advisory and should only be considered as the opinion formed by specialist staff in relation to this particular matter