

Broadwater Gardens, Welwyn Garden City
February 2021



BROADWATER GARDENS, WELWYN GARDEN CITY

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Heritage, Townscape and Visual Impact Addendum has been prepared by Bidwells on behalf of HG Group to provide additional assessment of the potential impacts of the proposed Broadwater Gardens upon the significance of two listed buildings and a Registered Park and Garden.
- 1.2 Further clarity was requested by the local authority and Historic England in order to determine the impact to long range views from Hatfield House and Hatfield Park and Garden, both Grade I listed as well as an additional winter view taking in the Former Roche Office Building on Broadwater Road, Grade II listed. The following view points were agreed with Historic England, and a site visit undertaken on the 16th of February. As such the views are representative of a winter context, with the minimal expected screening from surrounding vegetation.
- 1.3 This Addendum should be read with the full Heritage, Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (HTVIA) which provides a complete assessment of the significance of the assets identified above, as well as the existing contribution of the site.

View from Hatfield House Roof



Figure 1. View from Hatfield House Roof, Existing massing within the site shown in blue, proposed shown in red. Inset: Position of view point in relation to the site, indicated by the red arrow and yellow transparency respectively.

- 1.4 The site is located over 4km from the house, and is just perceptible below the horizon line when viewed from the roof of the building. The distance to the site is such that the quality of the buildings within the site are not appreciable and only partially visible, filtered by vegetation as well as the undulating quality of the land. However the use of light coloured and reflective cladding to the existing structures within the site, as well as the large areas of glazing enable to location of the site to be identified. Similarly the Shredded Wheat Factory is also visible to the right of the Site for this reason. The view takes in the surrounding townscape of Welwyn Garden City as well as Hatfield to the west and will include the extent of the consented redevelopment surrounding the Shredded Wheat Factory.
- 1.5 These areas of development are visible at a distance beyond the expansive park which surrounds the house. The quality of these views are therefore predominately characterised by that of the formal gardens and woodland, including a lengthy avenue beyond which later twentieth century development at Welwyn Garden City is apparent at an extreme distance.

- 1.6 The wireline shows the proposed development to appear lower than the existing structure. Whilst the proposals include an increase in the horizontal mass, the proposed material pallet which comprises a mixture of brick and render ensures the overall volume of the scheme will appear broken up, consequently less intrusive in this distant view. It is also noted that just as with the existing structure a large portion of the development will be screen by vegetation as demonstrated within this viewpoint. Therefore due to the considerable distance from the house to the site, the site's development centuries after the enclosure of the parkland and the location of the site within a wider band of visible twentieth century development far beyond the historic boundaries of the surrounding parkland associated with Hatfield Estate, the current contribution of the site to the setting and significance of the listed building is thought to be **negligible**, and this contribution will remain unchanged in view of the proposed development resulting in an overall **neutral** impact as perceived in this view.
- 1.7 It should be noted that the site is not visible from the House at ground level and this view point represents an elevated view not accessible by the public.

View from Hatfield House First Floor



Figure 2. View from the first floor towards the Site. The site as existing is indicated by the blue line and the site as proposed is shown in red. Inset: location of the viewpoint indicated by the red arrow and the Site highlighted by the yellow transparency.

- 1.8 This viewpoint is taken from the first floor of the house, overlooking the avenue that extends to the north beyond the house. The overall quality of the view is of the formal parkscape that surrounds the house, with an overall rural character. The site is only partially visible, seen below the horizon line and perceived in glimpsed views, screened by the tree line which surrounds the avenue that extends from the north of the house. The proposals similarly will only be partially visible, also screened by the surrounding vegetation and perceived below the horizon line. While the massing of the proposals increases in terms of width, as above, the use of a mixed material pallet will break up silhouette of the new structure. This is considered to improve the present stark appearance of the Site which is easily identifiable due to the light colour of the existing exterior walls and rectangular solid massing. It is also acknowledged that as with the existing view, the site itself is largely screened from view. As such, the proposals are considered to have a **neutral** impact upon the significance and setting of Hatfield House and Park and Garden, unchanging the present **negligible** contribution as perceived in this view.



Figure 3. View from the southern approach within Hatfield House Park and Garden, looking towards the site over the house from a slight incline. The blue line indicates the existing building while the red line shows the proposed. Inset: viewpoint indicated by the red arrow while the site is highlighted in yellow.



Figure 4. Magnified view of Hatfield House from the Southern Approach, with the existing massing of the site shown in Blue and Proposals shown in red.

1.9 This view takes in the open lawn located either side of the southern approach within the Park, which reflects the historic entrance way towards the main house. The quality of the view is primarily open, with a tree line framing the main house, seen centrally terminating views north along a gravelled lane. The viewpoint is positioned on a slight incline so that the wider built extent of Welwyn Garden City can be seen above the parapet line of the house in the distance. These views disappear as the house is approached and the land falls gently down. The current view includes the buildings within the Site as well as the Shredded Wheat buildings seen to the right, as well as the town centre of Welwyn Garden City. As such the existing buildings within the site are just about perceptible, seen above the parapet of Hatfield House within the wider context of Welwyn Garden City, perceived at a distance and partially obscured by the tree line beyond the house. For the purposes of clarity an expanded view has been included at Figure 4, but it should be noted that as the house is approached views of the site disappear due to the fall in the land, Figure 3 is therefore representative of the visual impact of the proposals and the assessment should be understood in this context.

1.10 As with the view points above, the building's within the site are currently identifiable by virtue of the light colour of the exterior walls. The proposals appear comparatively lower in the skyline, partially hidden behind the parapet line of the house. While there is a change in the overall

massing, with an increase in the horizontal extent of visible structure, as with the view points above, any perception of increase will be broken up by the varied material pallet selected, avoiding the appearance of a solid mass such as is presently visible. While just about perceptible, the proposals will be seen in context with the wider views of Welwyn Garden City town centre which presently is seen just about the parapet line. As such the impact of the proposals as perceived in this view is considered to be **neutral**, maintaining the existing **negligible** contribution of the site to the setting and significance of the building.

View from Broadwater Gardens looking towards the Former Roche Office Building.

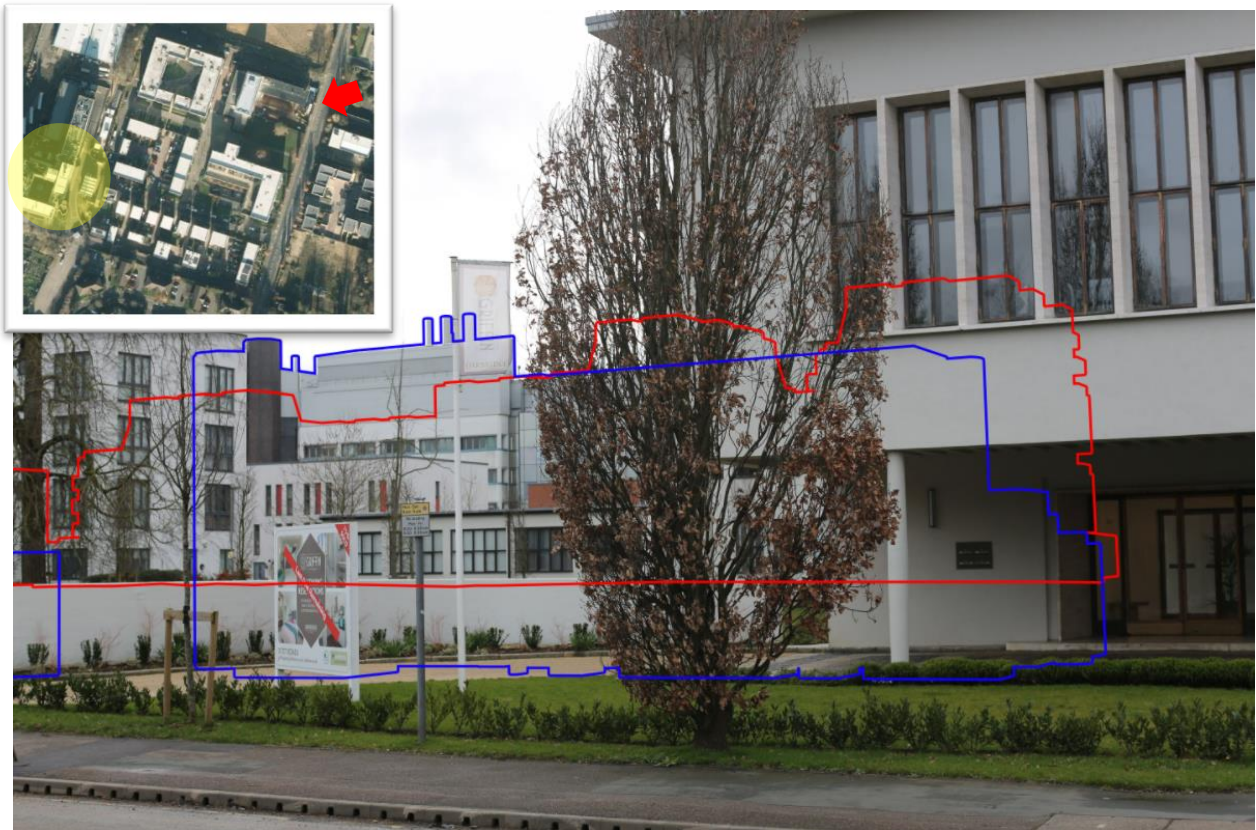


Figure 5. View from Broadwater Gardens, looking south west towards the site. The existing building is highlighted in blue, and the proposals are highlighted in red. Inset: Red arrow indicated viewpoint, the site indicated by a yellow transparency.

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This view takes in the layered built character of the area to the west of Broadwater Road, including new residential development as well as the Grade II listed Former Roche Office building. The site can be seen within the background, visible in partial views between the new residential buildings. The industrial quality of the buildings within the site and their indifferent architectural character is evident in this view. The site as existing bears no relationship with that of the listed building and appears to detract from the consideration to architectural detail apparent in the foreground. The existing buildings within the site also rise considerably over that of the buildings in the foreground, appearing dominant in medium distant views, which amplifies their existing negative quality. The proposals see the replacement of the existing buildings with a series of lower structures that are more in keeping with the heights seen within the foreground. The domestic character of the proposals are also viewed as an appropriate addition when seen in context with the existing contemporary redevelopment surrounding the site to the east. As such the proposals are seen to create a **minor beneficial** impact to the setting and significance of the Former Roche Office building, preserving direct sight lines to this structure from the road, and improving on the existing negative contribution.

Summary

- 1.12 This addendum has provided updated visuals from four view points, that of Hatfield House roof, Hatfield House first floor, the southern approach to Hatfield House from the registered park and garden as well as views south west from Broadwater Road, taking in the Former Roche Office Building. These viewpoints have shown the existing and proposed massing within the site, shown within a winter context, where seclusion of the site through leaf cover can be understood to be at a minimum. The assessment has found no change to the conclusions of the HTVIA submitted as part of the formal application, determining a **neutral** impact to the setting and significance of Hatfield House and Hatfield House Park and Garden and a **minor beneficial** impact to the setting and significance of the Former Roche Office Building.



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