



BioPark, Broadwater Road, Welwyn

Transport and Highways Summary Proof of  
Evidence of Neil Marshall

On Behalf of HG Group

Appeal Ref: APP/C1950/W/22/3294860

Date: 14 June 2022

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## Quality Management

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## Section 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 My evidence considers the highways and transport matters relating to Reason for Refusal 2 identified in Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council's (WHBC) Decision Notice dated 16<sup>th</sup> September 2021 for the planning application at the land at BioPark, Broadwater Road, Welwyn, Hertfordshire (Ref: 6/2020/3420/MAJ). The local highway authority (LHA) is Hertfordshire County Council (HCC).

1.1.2 The evidence that I have prepared and provide for the Appeal in this proof of evidence is true and has been prepared and is given in accordance with the guidance of my professional institutions and I can confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions.

### 1.2 Description of the Appeal Site and Surroundings

1.2.1 The Appeal site is bordered to the north by the Shredded Wheat Quarter development, the southern parcel of which is currently under construction for high density residential development. To the east, the site is adjacent to the recently completed residential development around Penn Way. To the south, the site is surrounded by the residential uses on Broadwater Crescent, and to the west, the site is adjacent to a lorry trailer park ancillary to the distribution centre to the northwest, and beyond the parking area, the railway lines on the approach to Welwyn Garden City railway station.

1.2.2 The site is surrounded by a high quality pedestrian network. At the Appeal site's boundary to Broadwater Road, wide footways (in excess of 3m) are located on both sides of the carriageway – the eastern side also provide cycle facilities. Dropped kerbs and tactile paving are provided across the majority of the minor accesses along Broadwater Road. A pelican crossing is provided across

Broadwater Road just north of the junction with Otto Road, to aid safe pedestrian passage.

- 1.2.3 There are bus stops directly outside the site's access to Broadwater Road, serving a twice hourly service, with additional services for routes across Welwyn and much of the county provided at bus stops on Peartree Lane and Bridge Road, within 800m of the site's access to Broadwater Road.
- 1.2.4 The nearest railway station is Welwyn Garden City station, situated less than 800m walk from the site access to Broadwater Road. It serves a number of destinations including two London terminals (Kings Cross and Moorgate) and other major towns and cities including Cambridge, with at least two services per hour.
- 1.2.5 An extensive range of existing local facilities accessible by non-car modes, are available in the immediate vicinity of the site. These include leisure, retail, health and employment destinations with the majority of the services located within a 10 minutes walk of the site. This provides real opportunities for future residents of the site to travel by sustainable modes and access key services without the need for access to a private vehicle.
- 1.2.6 In addition, the consented outline permission for the Wheat Quarter directly to the north of the Appeal site includes a civic building with space for a GP surgery, office and local retail spaces, and a creche/day nursery. This will all be available in a less than 800m walk from the Appeal site, or directly adjacent should the direct link for pedestrians be provided.

### 1.3 **Proposal**

- 1.3.1 The development will be accessed via the existing BioPark Drive access. The proposed access arrangements include modifications to the existing access to accommodate a residential development.

1.3.2 The proposed access arrangement has been designed with the following:

- 5.5m at the access, with the remainder of the access 4.8m wide with localised widening to 5.5m;
- 3.1m shared footway/cycleway on the northern side of the access road;
- Landscaped verge between the foot/cycleway and the carriageway with “breaks” in the landscape to enable wider vehicles to pass, and for emergency vehicles to utilise the shared foot/cycleway to bypass any obstructions that may occur in the main carriageway;
- Vehicular visibility splays of 2.4m X 43m at the access to Broadwater Road are provided in accordance with the posted speed limit;
- Pedestrian visibility splays of 25m along the access road (consistent with the 20mph design speed) are provided for those crossing the access road at Broadwater Road; and
- The access to Broadwater Road provides sufficient width to enable a large refuse vehicle to turn into the site without the body overhanging the footways at the access.

1.3.3 The proposal will also safeguard a potential pedestrian and cycle route to the north of the site to connect with the emerging Wheat Quarter development. This would provide future residents and visitors a more direct route (potentially up to 300m shorter) towards Welwyn Garden City railway station and Welwyn town centre for access to additional services and facilities.

1.3.4 The development proposal includes some 219 car parking spaces across the site for residents. This includes the following:

- 190 standard car parking spaces located as follows:
  - 148 – basement residents

- 22 – basement visitors; and
- 20 – surface level (including townhouse provision).
- 29 disabled parking spaces in the basement.

1.3.5 In addition, the proposal includes one car club space at the surface level and 15 motorcycle parking spaces within the basement. The proposal includes 22 spaces within the basement (including two disabled spaces) equipped with active charging provision and a further 22 spaces (including a further two disabled spaces) with passive provision. The Appeal site also includes cycle parking for all residential units.

1.3.6 The community hub includes six vehicular parking spaces at the ground floor, opposite the unit. This includes one disabled parking space.

1.3.7 All matters relating to the Appeal site's access and transport impacts have been thoroughly considered by HCC as the LHA. They have taken account of all matters relating to access to and from the site by all modes and parking, to come to a recommendation of no objection subject to conditions and obligations. This matter has not been considered lightly, and therefore considerable weight should be placed on their conclusion.

## 1.4 **WHBC's Case**

1.4.1 WHBC's Decision Notice dated 16<sup>th</sup> September 2021 sets out three Reasons for Refusal. The second of these relates to transport and highways, and the Appeal site's overall parking provision.

1.4.2 Transport and highways matters for the Appeal Scheme have been thoroughly scrutinised and found acceptable by HCC as the LHA, i.e. the statutory consultee appropriately qualified to comment on such matters. HCC has no objection to the Appeal Scheme.

1.4.3 Similarly, despite the reason for refusal alleging insufficiencies in the details of the submitted Transport Assessment, it has been agreed with WHBC in the topic specific Statement of Common Ground that the only matter being defended by WHBC relates to car parking provision.

## 1.5 My Evidence

1.5.1 My evidence considers the Council's second Reason for Refusal, on parking matters, as set out in the following.

1.5.2 The quantum of residential car parking is suitable given:

- The provision is provided in accordance with local standards, which allow for a reduction in sustainable locations;
- The Manual for Streets (MfS) states that a reduced parking provision can work successfully when it is possible for residents to reach day-to-day destinations, such as jobs, schools and shops, without the use of a car.
- MfS goes on to state that this will normally be in town and city centres where "there will be good public transport and places that can be accessed easily on foot and by cycle. For residents who choose not to own a car, living in such an area may be an attractive proposition";
- The site is located 750m (equivalent to a 10 minute walk) from Welwyn Garden City rail station and less than 100m (equivalent to a two minute walk) from the closest bus stops which provide two services per hour – additional services are available less than 500m east on Peartree Lane and 800m to the north on Bridge Road;
- The site is extremely well located to a number of everyday services and facilities within Welwyn town centre as confirmed in the WHBC Officer's report to planning committee;



- The 2011 Census car ownership data demonstrates 49% of local residents in flats do not own a car (applying this to the development proposal would equate to 142 units living 'car free');
- The average car ownership per flatted unit in the local area, taken from the 2011 Census is 0.62 cars per unit and as such illustrates a demand of less than one car parking space per unit;
- Parking permits will be available to all flats via a 'first come, first served' basis with a maximum of one car parking permit will be issued to each unit. Those units without car parking will not be issued with a vehicle garage fob;
- Future residents will be made fully aware during the sales process if the unit has allocated parking; and
- All units will be provided with a residential travel information pack which sets out local walking and cycling maps of the area, public transport information and details of the local car parking charges and information.

1.5.3 Applying the census car ownership data to the development, 142 units would be car free, 124 would own one car, and 23 would own two or more cars (52 cars). This equates to a total car ownership demand of 176 cars.

1.5.4 The Appeal site actually provides 197 car parking spaces for resident permit holders, and 22 for visitors. There are therefore more spaces than local car ownership data would suggest is necessary.

1.5.5 Even allowing for a 6% growth, as alleged is necessary in the WHBC Statement of Case, would only result in a demand of 187 cars and therefore again, the 197 parking spaces provided would exceed the anticipated ownership demand.

## 1.6 Conclusion

### 1.6.1 My evidence demonstrates that:

- WHBC parking standards are guidelines, with actual provision to be determined by the assessment in the application, based on anticipated demand and overall accessibility;
- The site is in a sustainable location, with many bus and rail services within a 10 minutes walk, as well as a full variety of everyday services and facilities being within a reasonable walking and cycling distance, therefore removing the need for car usage and ownership;
- The development provides for a car club, to reduce the need to own a car;
- HCC, as the LHA, concluded, after significant review, that the level of parking proposed is appropriate for the form and location of development, and therefore will not lead to impact on local highway safety or capacity;
- WHBC's own parking services team leader concluded that the level of car parking is appropriate, after their own case officer clarified the policy position to be followed;
- Parking provision is in excess of the likely demand based on 2011 Census data, and any potential extrapolated growth to 2021 levels; and
- A residents controlled parking zone is to be introduced into local roads in the near future, which would prohibit any overspill parking occurring.

1.6.2 Referencing the Reason for Refusal, which alleges failure to conform with policy SADM2, it has been clearly demonstrated that the proposal provides satisfactory and suitable levels of parking, and therefore development should be permitted. The policy document emphasises that the '**...onus is on developers to**

***demonstrate through transport information submitted alongside their planning applications that a greater or lesser level of car parking provision is appropriate***. It is clear that the documents submitted as part of the application throughout demonstrated why a lesser level of parking provision is appropriate at this location. This was agreed by officers at both HCC and WHBC, with only the elected Committee Members raising an objection on these grounds.

1.6.3 The quantity of parking has been demonstrated to meet the anticipated demand, based on the parking standards' guidance levels, the evidenced car ownership levels in the vicinity (even allowing for future growth), and the site's highly sustainable location ensure that all journey purposes can be met by walking, cycling, and public transport, therefore ensuring car ownership is not necessary. Full compliance with policy SADM12 is therefore also met.

1.6.4 It is therefore clear that the Appeal site will meet all of the policy tests in relation to parking provision in sustainable locations, that it is alleged to have failed at the second reason for refusal as follows:

- It has demonstrated that it provides appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes (including walking) given the type of development and its location and that safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users in compliance with paragraph 110 of the NPPF.
- The development provides adequate levels of car parking based on its sustainable location, in accordance with WHBC emerging Local Plan Policies SADM2 and SADM12.
- There is no residual severe impact on highway safety or operation as a result of the Appeal site proceeding.

- 1.6.5 It is therefore concluded that the Appeal site fully accords with the relevant transport policy requirements, and there is no evidence in front of me to suggest any breach by the Appeal scheme to WHBC's policies in relation to car parking, therefore this element of the reason for refusal is unsound.
- 1.6.6 I therefore conclude that in the absence of any robust technical evidence to the contrary, there are no sound transport or highway reasons to preclude the development from proceeding. Accordingly, I respectfully ask the Inspector that the Appeal should be upheld.

