

# GREEN AND AMENITY SPACES IN WELWYN GARDEN CITY

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Image by CAP Studios

## **Prepared by:**

Rule 6 Parties: WGC Heritage Trust  
and Keep the G in WGC

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# Welwyn Garden City: green community spaces

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A driving aspiration of the garden city movement is healthy living, achieved through a mix of factors including the marrying together of the built and natural environment to create breathing spaces and a unique sense of place.

The treatment and incorporation of green open spaces demonstrates the extent to which the development follows the principles and ethos of the Garden City. Green open spaces should therefore be at the heart of any development that proports to follow the principles and ethos of the garden city movement, demonstrated at all levels: integration and connectivity with the town as a whole, forming an integral part of the development itself

(offering a high level of local amenity) and within individual homes in the form of gardens.

From the beginning Louis de Soissons used open green spaces in his design for the town both as a way of introducing the countryside element of Howard's "marriage of town and country", and as a way of providing community space to be used by all.

These green spaces offering long views and expansive vistas of the Parkway axis, green verges and the intimate amenity spaces around housing, were prioritised and designed with as much thought and consideration as the built environment.



**Shortlands Green (1939). 39 houses. Cul de sac with large open green centre, part enclosed younger childrens' play area with equipment and part wild flower meadow.**

This practice has been followed throughout the town's development from the 1920's onwards.

Examples identified within this document show green areas in cul de sacs with houses around and designated play areas, often hidden behind groups of houses.

This serves to illustrate that this principle was carried through in later developments over the decades, reinforcing the intimate connection the town has with the landscape and contributing to the quality of life and sense of wellbeing of the whole.



**Barleycroft Green (1930s)** A cul de sac of 17 housing with a central green space measuring approx 45m x27m



**Little Rivers, (1970s).** Large open space suitable for football which has also ten different pieces of play equipment for both older and younger children.



**Guessens Road (1970s).** Incorporated into the redesign of Guessens Road. 11 pieces of play equipment for younger children. Well used. One mum commented that she much preferred it to Stanborough Park which tends to get crowded in the summer, making it much easier to lose sight of a child. 54m x 34m.



**Moss Green (1970s). 40 bungalows originally built for pensioners with a feature tree and a green area approx 33m x 40m not counting the considerable green area in front gardens and a small side green.**



**Furzefield Road (1930s). 62 houses and flats. Open play space suitable for football approx 45m x 45m with a narrow entrance off Furzefield Road.**

# The BioPark Development

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The proposed development is 1.24 Hectares and offers 3,023sqm of open space at ground level. Within this, are three doorstep play areas totalling 260m<sup>2</sup> of formal play space.

Roof terraces provide 800sqm of communal amenity space for residents in addition to internal balconies and terraces (see Sheet 1 and 2 BMD.20.044.DR.P101C Detailed GA).



Our assertion is that the quality, design and extent of open space within the development does not embrace the garden city principles and ethos.



There is concern that roof terraces on nine storey high tower blocks will not be considered safe play areas for small children. They do not offer the same easy access for residents as stepping out into a garden or open space at ground level for example. It is also likely that amenity value would be further impacted on windy days. Most of these are also shared with solar panels.



**In the BioPark scheme , fragments of green open space suggest they have been worked into the leftover spaces as an afterthought**

Peartree is deficient in public open/play space, in a ward that is one of the most deprived in the county. Introduction of usable green space for playing ball games and other informal sports would be highly beneficial to this area.

The space provided at ground level is made up of boundary treatments and several small patches with a combination of landscaping treatments. There is one small lawn area which is described as a 'lawn area'.

The total of 3,023 sqm of space is considerably less than half a football pitch and this is not a single or even connected green space, but scattered across the appeal site on a backcloth of hard landscaping. The enjoyment value and amenity of these spaces therefore comes into question.

Importantly, the limited provision and design and layout do not demonstrate that green open spaces constitute a high priority or an integral part of the thinking behind the scheme and is therefore not in the spirit of the garden city and WGC tradition.

The layout neither reflects the formality of the magnificent Parkway axis, nor the informality of the green spaces typically designed for recreation and play as part of residential development.



**Mirage Development  
Broadwater Road (2011).  
Approx 200 homes. Mix of flats  
and houses with two central  
play spaces for different age  
groups.**