

5.1 Design Proposal

5.1.1 The new Care Home is accessed from the existing vehicular access off Willian Road and the new entrance is positioned to address this access, providing visual prominence and security through overlooking and surveillance.

5.1.2 Guys House is perceived as a ‘standalone’ building set upon a plinth consisting of an access concourse to the main entrance, with a green wall to take up the difference between the concourse and lower garden level. The juxtaposition of Guys House and the new contemporary Care Home, separated by a Sculpture Garden, amplifies and illuminates the traditional form, mass, scale and architectural detailing of the original building in a manner which the original extensions failed to achieve.

5.1.3 The new building is designed in an ‘L’ form with protruding south-west gable, encapsulating a high-quality landscaped courtyard which preserves a mature, Atlantic Cedar. This forms a natural focal point for the building and creates a natural setting for the appreciation of residents, staff and visitors alike.

5.1.4 The original Car Park which was arranged around, and blighted, the Atlantic Cedar due to its proximity, has been relocated to the west and north portions of the site. It utilises the existing mature vegetation to screen it from surrounding properties and Willian Road.

5.1.5 Visitor Car Parking, Disabled Spaces and an Ambulance Bay are located immediately to the west of the main entrance. Staff car spaces are located to the North, with a dedicated service bay, screened by Guys House. Parking is therefore removed from the area immediately in front of the original house, which improves the setting of the new development and visual amenity from Willian Road.

A total of 27 car spaces are provided in accordance with North Hertfordshire Council Parking Standards as detailed in the supporting ‘Transport statement’ prepared by Intermodel Transportation Ltd. A comprehensive summary is provided in Section 6.11 of this report.



5.1.6 It was considered that with any proposed re-build, the new building should not detract from the amenity of the existing properties in Greenway, therefore the existing building line to the North has been maintained.

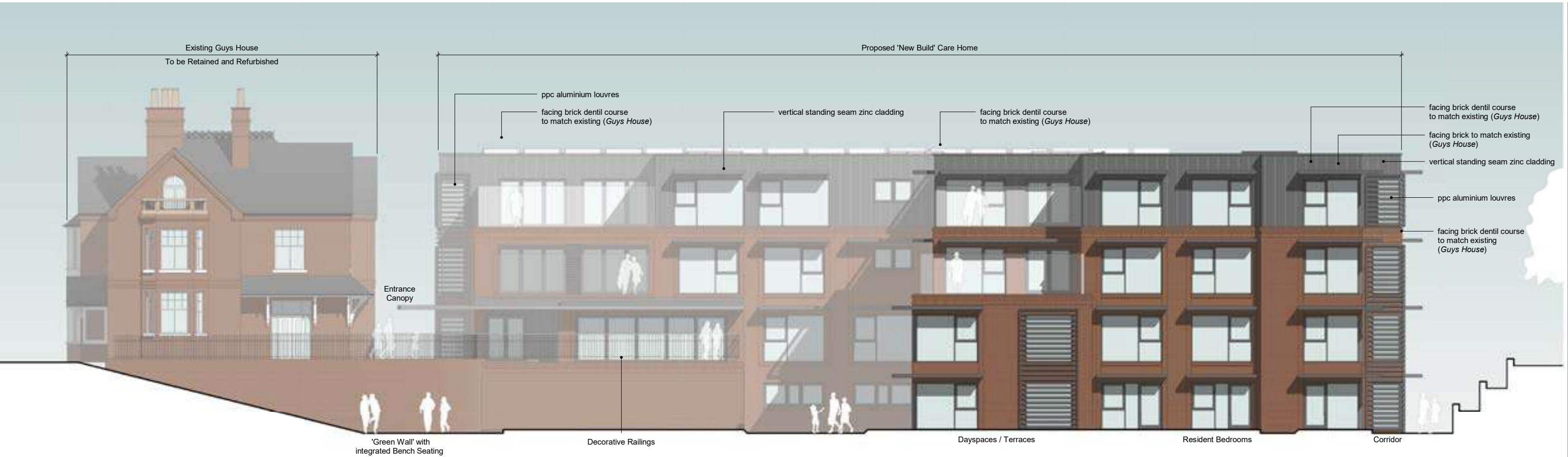
5.1.7 The opportunity also presented itself to reconsider the existing planting along the northern boundary to Greenway, which currently consists of a Cypress Hedge of poor quality, lopped and originally planted as a fast-growing hedge to screen the original building from the neighbouring houses. With the re-siting of the new building a more appropriate tree species has been proposed which shall reduce overshadowing to adjacent private gardens whilst still maintaining privacy for neighbours and residents alike. Further detail in respect to this matter in provided in the Specialist Landscape Proposals prepared by Fisher, Tomlin & Bowyer in support of this application.

5.1.8 In similar fashion to the original building, the new proposal runs parallel with the contours and takes account of the North-South fall across the site, with a Ground Floor Level to match the existing house. Similarly to the original design, the South Wing offers the opportunity to create a Basement/Lower Ground Floor to accommodate the main Kitchen, Laundry, Plant Room and Ancillary Accommodation, in addition to 12 bedrooms and associated Resident Dayspace, all with direct access to the landscaped gardens and walled garden to the east. Finally, a Garden Maintenance Store is discretely housed below the external terrace which ensures that sporadic structures are not required throughout the grounds which may detract from the purity of the contemporary and historic, design.

5.1.9 Detailed consideration has also been given to ensuring the new building is of a similar height, mass and scale to the existing. Generally, the building is no greater than 3 storeys in height with the South-West corner stepping down to 2 storeys when viewed from Willian Road. As discussed, open ‘cascading’ roof terraces have been incorporated to the southern projection to effectively reduce the overall mass/bulk, when viewed from Willian Road. A successful design feature duly acknowledged by NHDC Building Conservation Team.



Proposed South-West Elevation



Proposed South-East Elevation



External Perspective of New Care Home facing North-East towards Entrance Feature

5.1.10 The overall siting, massing, topography and orientation ensures that issues of overlooking and over-shadowing are not exacerbated. An interesting and varied roof-scape incorporating facing brick bays penetrating the roof-line, contemporary zinc cladding to the top floor level, visual relief created through solid and void and the introduction of brise soleil creates an ever-changing imagery which is domestic in scale and responds in a contemporary manner to the traditional architecture and detailing of the local area.

5.1.11 Further visual interest and variety is achieved through the creation of prominent architectural features including a streamlined zinc canopy above the Main Entrance, an extensive south facing Terrace which spills out from the Bistro, decorative metal railings, traditional brick detailing around all openings and a continuous brick Dentil Course at Second Floor Level which pays homage to the existing brick detailing of Guys House.

5.1.12 The uppermost storey is finished in a rich tapestry of Zinc Cladding, punctuated by large glazed areas, with decorative brick detailing introduced to feature bays to replicate the detailing and verticality of Guys House.

5.1.13 A wide variety of architectural styles and built form is evident within the locale. Not one single style prevails however, it is intended that the built form and contemporary appearance of the design proposal creates a distinctiveness which takes its influence from the many local examples of ‘Arts and Crafts’ design of the late nineteenth century, which are rich in their detailing and craftsmanship.

5.1.14 Internally the environment shall be light and spacious using generous amounts of glazing to allow natural daylight to filter deep into the plan form with views out to the landscaped gardens and countryside beyond. In addition, south facing integrated terraces allow residents on the upper floors to experience and enjoy fresh air and sunlight, which is of great significance in respect of elderly people’s well-being and their controlled intake of Vitamin D.



External Perspective facing North from Landscape Courtyard

5.2 Access

5.2.1 The philosophy for the design of an elderly Care Home is an inclusive approach for all, with particular care being taken to accommodate the needs and requirements of the resident. As the home is for frail, elderly residents, many of whom will suffer some form of physical impairment; it is intended to provide an encompassing safe and easily accessible environment within which residents can comfortably enjoy later life, maintaining their dignity, self esteem and earning self respect.

5.2.2 The ‘Transport Statement’ prepared by Intermodal Transportation Ltd. supports the Detailed Planning application and addresses the location of the site and associated access thereto by a variety of means.

5.2.3 Level access is provided to the building at all entry points including patios, terraces and balconies. The front entrance doors are powered and automatically operated by sensor which leads into a generous, protective entrance lobby. An audio link to the reception area is also provided.

5.2.4 Resident room sizes exceed the current National Care Standards and wider corridors and appropriately sized lifts provide excellent accessibility throughout to bedrooms and en-suites. Varying sized bedrooms are distributed around the home to give residents variety of choice depending upon an individuals mobility requirements.

5.2.5 The interior is designed to assist way finding and help those with visual impairment through audible and visual links and recognisable node points and features. For example, Memory Boxes are located out-with each bedroom to assist residents’ way finding. Unlike the existing Care Home, level access shall be provided throughout.

5.2.6 Staff call facilities are provided in all residents’ rooms and en-suite bathrooms, resident toilets and assisted bathrooms. Lighting in all public toilets and assisted bathrooms is PIR movement controlled on a suitable time delay.

5.2.7 Two dedicated Passenger Lifts are provided for the resident’s use, facilitating vertical movement and accessibility throughout the building at all times. The lifts are conveniently located at node points within the corridors and are provided with large buttons and Braille signage. In addition, a Service Lift is provided for ancillary use, located adjacent to the primary Service Entrance and ensuring the kitchen and laundry can service all levels of the Care Home.

5.2.8 Unlike the existing Care Home, all resident corridors are designed to a minimum width of 1800mm to provide ease of access for those with impaired mobility and wheelchair users. The increased width is an improvement on the Care Quality Inspectorate current regulations and guidelines. Circular, oak handrails are provided along both sides of all corridors to provide support for residents whilst navigating their way through the building.

5.2.9 All doors are installed to a minimum clear opening of 900mm, providing improved and clear access throughout the home. The fire strategy has been developed to minimise the need for fire doors across corridors and where necessary, corridor doors are designed as ‘hold open’ for the benefit of staff, residents and visitor, only closing in the event of fire alarm activation.

5.2.10 Accessible toilets are located close to main communal facilities for use by residents and visitors. An accessible toilet is also located in the main staff area.

5.2.11 The existing vehicular access from Willian Road is retained with associated visibility splays in accordance with Local Highway Authority guidelines/recommendations.

5.2.12 Deliveries to the site are generally provided by transit vans. Refuse is typically collected two or three times per week by a private company. Auto Track Swept Path Analysis is included in the supporting Transport Statement to demonstrate that a large refuse vehicle, ambulance and a fire tender can acceptably access, turn within and egress the site.

5.2.13 A dedicated service entrance to the building is provided adjacent to the service lay-by and shall provide access to all floors via a service lift. A covered and screened bin store shall also be provided in this area.

5.2.14 Pedestrian access will be provided from Willian Road and will also allow full disabled access to the building. A secure cycle store will be provided for visitors and staff to encourage use of the National Cycle Route (NCR) 12 which runs along the shared cycleway/footpath, located immediately to east of the site. This section of NCR 12 runs from Letchworth to Potters Bar and is 52km long.

5.2.15 Care Homes are low traffic generators particularly in the morning and evening peak periods. The age and frailty of the residents means that most, if not all, shall not be car owners. Therefore, travel to and from the site will be by staff, care professionals, visitors and service vehicles. Visitors are permitted to visit residents at any time during the day and, in practice, this results in low vehicle movements to the site as such movements are spread throughout the day.

5.2.16 The proposed development includes the provision of 18 Car Parking spaces for residents/visitors (including 2 dedicated Disabled Parking Spaces) and a further 9 spaces for staff in accordance with Local Highway Authority guidelines (0.25 spaces per resident and 1 space per 5 staff). There is also a dedicated Ambulance Bay suitably located adjacent to the Main Entrance of the building.

5.2.17 The supporting ‘Transport Statement’ identifies the additional vehicular trips during morning and afternoon peak hours created by the additional 19 bedrooms contained within the design proposal.



5.3 Sustainability + Energy

5.3.1 The Planning Application has been developed with the aim of positively contributing to the principles of sustainability.

5.3.2 To meet Local Policy principles, the client has incorporated a number of sustainable design features into the scheme.

5.3.3 The Care Home is designed to exceed current and anticipated future legislation. Accommodation, both resident rooms and communal spaces as well as service standards continue to be set well above the current National Minimum Care Standards. Foreseeable future improvements in these standards should not therefore affect the client, the new building or its residents.

5.3.4 This sustainable approach to this design will extend the life of the building and reduce the need for major alteration, extension or rebuilding construction work.

5.3.5 The works will be carefully planned and managed to ensure efficient delivery of the scheme. This will include the careful planning and consideration of the construction of the development.

5.3.6 Construction site impacts including energy and water consumption monitoring, pollution control, responsible sourcing of timber and transport materials measured and monitored under the Main Contractors EMS system, will be a requirement for the execution of the project.

5.3.7 All areas are provided with high levels of day light, with internal blinds and solar shading to provide adequate glare control to the large glazed areas which allow views out for building users. In the basement areas where opportunities for daylight are restricted, measures identified in Section 7.15 below shall be incorporated.

5.3.8 A thermal comfort and zoning control strategy shall be incorporated into the Technical Design process.

5.3.10 Safety and security shall be incorporated into the design process with consultation with the local Crime Prevention Officer.

5.3.11 Energy efficient design will be incorporated as far as is practicable into the building services design.

5.3.12 High levels of insulation are incorporated within the building to minimise heat loss and contribute to passive means of heating and ventilation within occupied spaces.

5.3.13 High efficiency gas fired boilers, underfloor heating and zone control valves for the different building zones shall be utilised to minimise energy consumption.

5.3.14 Energy efficient lighting will be used throughout with LED and high frequency compact fluorescent lamps specified, together with manual and automatic switching and dimming facilities.

5.3.15 A Building Management System (BMS) shall be provided. A sophisticated control strategy is essential to maintain good levels of service, comfort and safety in an energy efficient manner. It is appreciated that comfort to the residents is highly important therefore simple, user friendly, local control switching and thermostats will be located in the resident's suites.

5.3.16 In conjunction with the BMS, energy meters and sub-meters will be provided to ensure that 90% of the estimated annual energy consumption of each fuel is accounted for. These will include boilers, water heaters, kitchen equipment, commercial laundry equipment, heat pumps, motor control centres, lighting and electrical distribution boards.

5.3.17 Rainwater recovery is to be considered in co-ordination with the land drainage scheme around the building to allow rainwater harvesting for landscape watering.

5.3.18 All en-suite facilities will be fitted with low flow and water use fittings (i.e. showers, taps) and dual flush WCs to achieve reduction in water use.

5.3.19 Further detail information is provided in the supporting 'Energy Strategy Report' prepared by Harniss, as summarised in Section 6.19 of this report.



External Perspective of 'Guys House' facing North-East

6.0 Consultant Reports

6.1 Planning Statement

Woolf Bond Planning. were appointed by Caring Homes (The Applicant) to prepare a ‘Planning Statement’ in support of the Detailed Planning Application.

In respect to ‘Very Special Circumstances / Planning Balance’, the report provides the following summary:

It is evident that new Care Homes can deliver important positive outcomes, attracting significant/substantial weight that individually or collectively can amount to very special circumstances, clearly outweighing the substantial harm to the Green Belt and any other harms.

Accordingly, and in respect of this application, it is clear that:

- Address the existing inadequacies of Guysfield House Care Home by a replacement high quality, fit for purpose care home.
- Preventing an existing unviable and out of date care home facility from closing.
- Meets a need that is by its very nature an immediate one that cannot wait.
- Enhancing the quality of Care Home accommodation generally (in addition to the site) (where the current Care Home and general stock (supply) is poor and no longer fit for purpose);
- Meeting identified unmet Care Home need, in particular for nursing care and dementia residents, which government policy confirms is “critical”. The proposed Care Home will deliver much needed accommodation for dementia residents;
- Providing high-quality, purpose designed accommodation and care for an increasing proportion of the population suffering from dementia;
- A form of development that releases former homes of its new residents;
- Reducing social isolation for vulnerable elderly residents;
- Alleviating pressure on the NHS hospitals and services by treating residents on site; and
- Creating varied and additional employment opportunities in the Care Home and through supporting services/agencies.

In addition to these, and unique with this planning application, are the following additional circumstances:

- Securing a long-term optimal viable use of the non-designated heritage asset, a material consideration in itself (NPPF paragraph 203). Substantial weight in favour of the proposal is given to this consideration (moderate weight) (confirmed by the conservation officer pre application response dated 10/05/2024);
- Enhancement to the setting of Guysfield House through re-establishing its original detached form, and a new high-quality setting including a planned sculpture court and high quality landscaping (moderate weight) (confirmed by the conservation officer pre application response dated 10/05/2024);
- Enhanced planting to filter views of the replacement care home thereby adding to the rural character to Willian Road and its contribution to the conservation area (moderate weight) (confirmed by the conservation officer pre application response dated 10/05/2024);
- Continued use of Guysfield House to sustain its upkeep and condition (moderate weight) (confirmed by the conservation officer pre application response dated 10/05/2024);

Individually and collectively, these comprise very special circumstances. All of these considerations arise in this application. The evidence therefore supports this balancing exercise.



Very special circumstances are a matter of planning judgement. The courts (Basildon District Council v Secretary of State EWHC 2759 (admin)) have established that the case of very special circumstances is a two-stage process. The first is to determine whether any individual issue taken in isolation is sufficient to clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt.

The second stage is to determine whether some, or all, of the factors in combination outweigh the harm to the Green Belt. In Basildon it has been established that a number of factors may exist, but none of them are “very special” when considered in isolation but when combined together can amount to very special circumstances. The judgement went on to confirm that “there is no reason why a number of factors ordinarily in themselves cannot combine to create something very special”.

The identified considerations that arise from this scheme meet these tests.

Accordingly, collectively, the application gives rise to a number of significant benefits. When looking at the proposal as a whole, the outcomes are extensive in number and in nature, with deep rooted and long-lasting benefits of significant magnitude. These collectively amount to very special circumstances that clearly out way the substantial weight given to the definitional Green Belt harm and the moderate harm to the openness of the Green Belt. As to and any other harms, the impact of a larger replacement Care Home on the Conservation Area and rural landscape are perceived as less than substantial harm and only moderate harm respectively.

Accordingly, having identified the harms and their weightings, the assessment now remains whether ‘other considerations’ individually or collectively clearly outweigh the harms identified such as to amount to very special circumstances necessary to justify the development. The analysis suggests that they clearly do. Consequently, very special circumstances exist, and the development is therefore justified such that planning permission can be granted.

6.2 Consultancy Advice Report

Christie & Co. were appointed by Caring Homes (The Applicant) to prepare a ‘Consultancy Advise Report’ in support of the Detailed Planning Application.

The report provides the following Executive Summary:

Guysfield is a residential care home which is presently registered for 51 residents (50no. bedrooms) It has been formed through the conversion of a Victorian building with an extension added in the 1980’s and the accommodation arranged over three floors.

The home is situated in Willian, a residential village on the southern outskirts of Letchworth Garden City. Letchworth has a high proportion of elderly residents with a notable proportion aged 85 years or above.

The existing building is materially compromised due to a specification that is obsolete and not fit for purpose relative to the needs of the client group. Specific deficiencies include a poor layout, narrow corridors, small bedrooms, the lack of any en suite wet rooms, narrow doorway widths, the lack of a stretcher lift and limited day space. Furthermore, the bedrooms on the top floor are not suitable for occupation by residents with the effective capacity of the home reduced to 42 residents as a consequence.



Due to a combination of the specification challenges, reduced capacity and associated operational issues, the business is non viable in its current format having been materially loss making for the last five years.

We concur fully with Caring Homes that due to the sheer scale/ complexity of the necessary improvement works required, the only practical solution is to contemplate replacement of the existing facility with a new build facility, such as the scheme proposed. The architects have prepared a viability scheme for a conversion scheme that only delivers 28 bedrooms, an unsustainable scale for a care home in this building.

The proposed development of a new 70 bedroom facility features a specification that aligns with key attributes of modern new build homes. Our research of new build homes dating from 2018 within the south of England shows that the average size of a new build home is 64 beds with the developments ranging from 60 – 80 bedrooms in size. Within a 30km radius, 25 homes have been built since 2015 with the average size being 68 beds. Finally, the best in class facilities constructed since 2018 in the more localised regional area show an average home size of 75 beds. We therefore concur fully that the proposed home at 70 beds is in line with market requirements

Bedroom sizes within the proposed scheme average around 16m2 plus en suite wet rooms. This is towards the lower end of the current new build range. We would not advocate constructing a home with average bedroom sizes falling below 16 sq m as this would be contrary to market benchmarks and design trends, potentially causing an adverse effect on value, marketability and competitive positioning.

We therefore have no hesitation in recommending the proposed scheme which will provide the local community with a much needed fit for purpose facility with a layout and configuration which is capable of accommodating residents with a wide range of higher acuity needs and mobility impairments.

In conclusion, Christie & Co. state the following:

Despite being situated in a strong location, the current facility is materially deficient with numerous shortcomings. It falls a long way short of being fit for purpose with the upper floor not suitable for occupation by residents. Other key issues include spatial constraints, an inefficient layout, the lack of en suite wet rooms and accessibility related issue.

We are therefore of the opinion that a compelling case can be made to support the proposed scheme in the format presently proposed. Equally, we conclude that given the sheer scale and complexity of the work required, it would not be commercially viable or practical to reconfigure the existing facility.

Given the above, we recommend that the proposed re-development of Guysfield is supported based on the design proposed. It will provide the local community with a much needed “fit for purpose” facility in a catchment where there is a significant and increasing elderly population. In the event that the development does not progress, there will be little or no commercial justification for Caring Homes to continue to provide financial support to the current facility given the quantum of trading losses currently being incurred resulting in the inevitable closure of the home.

In terms of commercial viability, the management accounts for Guysfield show that the business is non viable in its current format with the last full year accounts showing an EBITDA loss of over £426k before capex.This is due to a combination of issues caused by the specification challenges, the reduced capacity and other operational factors that can only be resolved via a brand new scheme being developed.

Analysis shows that there is a lack of suitable future fit provision within the catchment with the need analysis showing a material current shortfall in market standard beds, even after allowing for the increased capacity that would be provided by the development proposed. The need for the proposed development is compelling and we understand that the issue of need has been generally accepted by the council.

We have undertaken research to compare the specification of the proposed development with other recent new build facilities. The key features are entirely comparable, particularly in relation to the size of the scheme at 70 beds and an average bedroom size of 16m2. The other features provided by the proposed home will comprehensively address the deficiencies of the existing home whilst creating a product which embraces the latest building standards.

6.3 Planning Need Assessment

Carterwood were appointed by Caring Homes (The Applicant) to prepare a ‘Planning Need Assessment’ in support of the Detailed Planning Application.

The report provides the following Executive Summary:

Need Assessment:

Our assessment, based on 2027, the earliest the proposed redevelopment of Guysfield Care Home could be made available, indicates a net need for 194 full market standard care home bedrooms in the 5-mile market catchment and 124 in the North Hertfordshire Council local authority area.

In terms of care home bedrooms dedicated for dementia care, our assessment indicates a net need for 302 full market standard care bedrooms in the 5-mile market catchment and 229 in the North Hertfordshire Council local authority area. As these shortfalls are subsets of the total under-supply of care beds, based on 2027, they clearly indicate the requirement to increase the provision of dedicated dementia care bedrooms in both assessed catchment areas.

The proposed replacement care home would serve to reduce the number of minimum market standard care bedrooms by 42 in both the market catchment and local authority area, assist in meeting the need for full market standard supply and improve the average quality of care home accommodation across both assessed catchments.



Existing Supply:

In terms of existing supply, in the circa- 5 mile market catchment, 91 per cent of registered bedrooms are at minimum market standard and 66 per cent provide full market standard accommodation. The equivalent figures for the North Hertfordshire Council area are a little lower, at 87 per cent and 64 per cent, respectively.

While these figures compare favourably with the average for Great Britain (where 78 percent of bedrooms are of minimum market standard and 32 per cent are full market standard), there remain 36 per cent of care bedrooms in North Hertfordshire which do not provide full en-suite wetroom accommodation and therefore fall behind current market expectations.

Guysfield Care Home is therefore in this minority and, as such, its inadequacies reduce its appeal as a care home of choice for those seeking 24-hour residential and dementia care. The existing home’s operational longevity is therefore brought into question.

The Market Position Statement for Residential and Nursing Care for Older People states the Council’s ambition is ‘to ensure that the Hertfordshire care services are delivered in estate that meets best practice design standards for residential and nursing care’.

In response to a request by North Hertfordshire District Council, Hertfordshire County Council has also identified a minimum size of 65 bedrooms and an optimum size of 70-80 bedrooms to ensure viability, quality of care and fee affordability where places are local authority funded.

The three main areas of focus are in terms of ‘capacity’, ‘quality’ and ‘financial stability’. To improve capacity for dementia care (across both nursing and residential care homes), to improve the quality of service provision and to ensure care home providers are resilient and operating sustainably.

Planned Provision:

Even with 256 planned new care beds in the market catchment and 196 in the North Hertfordshire Council area, the shortfalls are expected to increase to 330 and 354 full market standard bedrooms in the two catchments, respectively, by 2037, reflecting the sustained and escalating nature of need.

Our analysis includes planned care homes and extensions both with extant planning permissions and those currently pending a decision. It therefore potentially overestimates planned supply that may be delivered by our year of analysis given that some of these planned care homes may not be developed. Furthermore, our analysis makes no allowance for the loss of any existing care home beds, assuming existing supply and prevalence remains constant.

Hertfordshire Adult Social Care Commissioning:

Hertfordshire County Council Commissioning identify key demand drivers for new care home beds, and the Market Position Statement states that residential and nursing care for older adults with a dementia-related need ‘will remain a very high priority for the medium to long term.’

The Hertfordshire Care Market Sustainability Plan advises that an estimated 14,515 people over 65 are living with dementia in the county and this is estimated to increase to 21,897 by 2030, approximately 14,134 being estimated to be living with severe dementia.

Hertfordshire County Council are focussing on care home provision to support older people living with dementia, short stay placements and ‘step-down’ care to enable rehabilitation for individuals moving from hospital back to the community.

It should be remembered that Hertfordshire County Council is funding around 49 per cent of those living within care homes that provide residential and dementia care, and therefore the strategic comments with regard to local authority-funded beds made within the commissioning documentation relate to that proportion of the local population only.

A significant number of those who would occupy the redeveloped care home would be self-funded and would make their own decision as to when to enter a care home setting.

In conclusion, Carterwood state the following:

The provision of a modern, well equipped care home enables residents to remain within their local community when they require 24-hour care.

The use of care home beds means a reduction in staffing requirements when compared to providing higher levels of domiciliary care to dispersed homes within the local community and it also allows the release of under-occupied local family homes back to the housing market.

The increasing dependency levels of those who require care in a care home mean that accommodation must be fit for purpose and flexible, to enable care to be provided effectively and safely. The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly highlighted the need for appropriately specified, flexible care home accommodation.

It should be re-iterated that the subject proposals at Guysfield Residential Care Home would mean the replacement of an operationally inefficient care home currently registered by the CQC to accommodate a maximum of 51 service users (with an effective capacity of just 42 bed-spaces) with bedrooms at minimum market standard only.

The proposed replacement home would provide modern, spacious, well-appointed care accommodation with 70 full market standard care bedrooms, albeit an increase of only 19 registered bed-spaces.

It is clear that Guysfield Residential Care Home currently falls below market expectations and does not meet with best practice design standards. The proposals would ensure the continued operation of the care home, providing much needed additional capacity and high quality accommodation to enable its future sustainable operation.



Planning Need Assessment
Elderly care home

**Guysfield Care Home,
Willian Road, Letchworth
Garden City, Hertfordshire,
SG6 2AB**

Prepared for:
Caring Homes Group Limited

Carterwood Report – May 2024

Prepared by:

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6.4 Heritage Statement

Purcell were appointed by Caring Homes (The Applicant) to prepare a ‘Heritage Statement’ in support of the Detailed Planning Application.

The report concludes with the following ‘Heritage Impact Assessment’:

Proposal

The proposal seeks to retain and refurbish the surviving 19th-century portion of Guysfield, and replace the 1980s/90s extensions with a new accommodation building comprising four storeys, the lowermost being sunk down below the plinth of the original house.

Previous iterations of the scheme sought the full demolition and redevelopment of the site. However, pre-application consultation and revision of the brief has enabled the retention of the original 1880s Guys building.

Impact on Heritage Assets

The proposals will retain the original ‘Guys’ house dating from 1884 and thereby also retain its positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Willian Conservation Area. Additional benefit is offered through the relocation of the car parking spaces on the south side of the house and repositioning of the garden closer to the building. The location of the main entrance to the new extension to the east of the 1884 building also helps reinstate some of its traditionally domestic character and enables a slight detachment from the new development that assists in being able to appreciate the older building in its own right.

The significant area of trees along the eastern edge of the site and several other planted belts/standalone trees will be retained, with additional planting and garden landscaping increasing the quality and visual amenity of the green open spaces which characterise the immediate setting of the historic village centre (and thereby the Conservation Area).

Suitability of the New Design

The extension follows the same L-shaped configuration as the existing modern blocks, but with increased massing on its eastern edge where there is existing tree cover to soften visibility. An L-shaped plan form has historic precedent on this site with the stable block originally occupying the northern corner of the triangular plot.

Whilst larger in footprint and massing than the existing modern development, the proposals reduce the amount of abutment with the historic building, which enables a better appreciation of its standalone heritage value. Design cues such as brickwork detailing and regular fenestration contextualise the new development and ensures that it harmonises with the historic building, with complimentary contrast offered by the judicious use of zinc cladding. This offers an improvement over the pastiche style of the existing 1980s and ‘90s extensions, which dilutes the architectural quality of the original building and disguises old from new in a manner that is not to the enhancement of the original house.

The increase in massing is mitigated to an extent by the stepped profile at its south-eastern corner, which occupies the forefront of localised views moving along Willian Road. The addition of more planting will decrease the current size of the gaps in the boundary and further reduce the degree to which the new development will be visible, in a manner that aligns with the Conservation Area’s rural character.

The relocation of the hard-standing currently facilitating car parking on the south side of the building to its west side will enhance the character of the Conservation Area to a small extent as the immediate setting of Guys will be more readily appreciable from the road as a green landscape, as it was historically.



Conclusion

Overall, the low significance of Guys will be enhanced by a small, but noteworthy, degree as a result of the reduced abutment of new development on its north eastern corner to better reveal its original footprint, the landscaping improvements to the south and general increase in the quality of the new architecture within its immediate setting.

Consistent with the Act and the NPPF (paragraph 205), when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, in this case the Willian Conservation Area, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation. In this regard, the proposed development has been sensitively designed and laid out and great weight given to ensure that the conservation area is being preserved or enhanced. The character of the William Conservation Area will not be materially altered by the proposal, but minor benefits is offered through the landscape scheme and replacement of modern development with architecture of a considerably higher quality that more than outweigh the larger building and its slight repositioning within the site. Therefore, our overall assessment of the scheme concludes a beneficial improvement to the conservation area.

The Planning statement in support of the application has noted this conclusion but also hypothesises on any perceived less than substantial harm to the conservation area. If such a conclusion was to be found by the Local Planning Authority, the degree of less than substantial harm would be very much at the lower end of this scale. In these circumstances, whilst great weight should be applied to that degree of harm, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal which the planning statement does.

GUYSFIELD, WILLIAN ROAD, LETCHWORTH
HERITAGE STATEMENT
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6.5 Arboricultural Report

Arb Consultancy Ltd. were appointed by Caring Homes (The Applicant) to prepare a ‘Arboricultural Planning Report’ in support of the Detailed Planning Application.

The report outlines the following:

Arboricultural Implications

The footprint of the proposed new building is not within the RPA of any of the retained trees so no specialist demolition or building works are proposed.

To the east of the site are to be some comprehensive re-levelling works including the installation of a retaining wall. The wall will be installed either outside or on the extreme periphery of the RPAs to the retained trees. This work should not significantly impact the trees physiological condition. Other than tree protection fencing no other protection measures are proposed.

This layout has been crafted to best retain the Blue Atlas Cedar (tree 1). Works include removing the majority of the existing hard surfacing within its RPA and returning it back to soft landscaping. The only exception will be the installation of a lightweight pedestrian path and some seating around the tree to fully incorporate it into the design. The existing hard surfacing and the installation of the new path will be done in a sensitive manner including the use of above soil surfacing, as detailed within the method statement.

To the western end of the site a woodland walkway is to be installed, this will consist of a peg and board bound path with a wood-chip base onto a geotextile fabric base. Given the very lightweight construction and the minimal incursions into the it will not have a significant impact on the adjacent trees

There are small incursions into the RPAs of trees T6, T9 & T13 from the proposed parking. Each area, as identified on the TPPs will be subject to supervised hand excavation to the required depth; root severance (if required) will be undertaken by the project arboriculturist only. If roots are found the installation of any foundations will incorporate a suitable membrane to protect surrounding soils and roots from potential concrete leaching.

Recommended Tree Works

A Schedule of the tree works is provide below:

Tree No.	Proposed Works	Reason for Works
T2, T3, T17, T18, T19, T20, G21, T25, T26, T27, T28, G29, T30, T43, T44, T51	Fell to ground level	To facilitate the proposed development and landscaping.

Tree Protection Measures

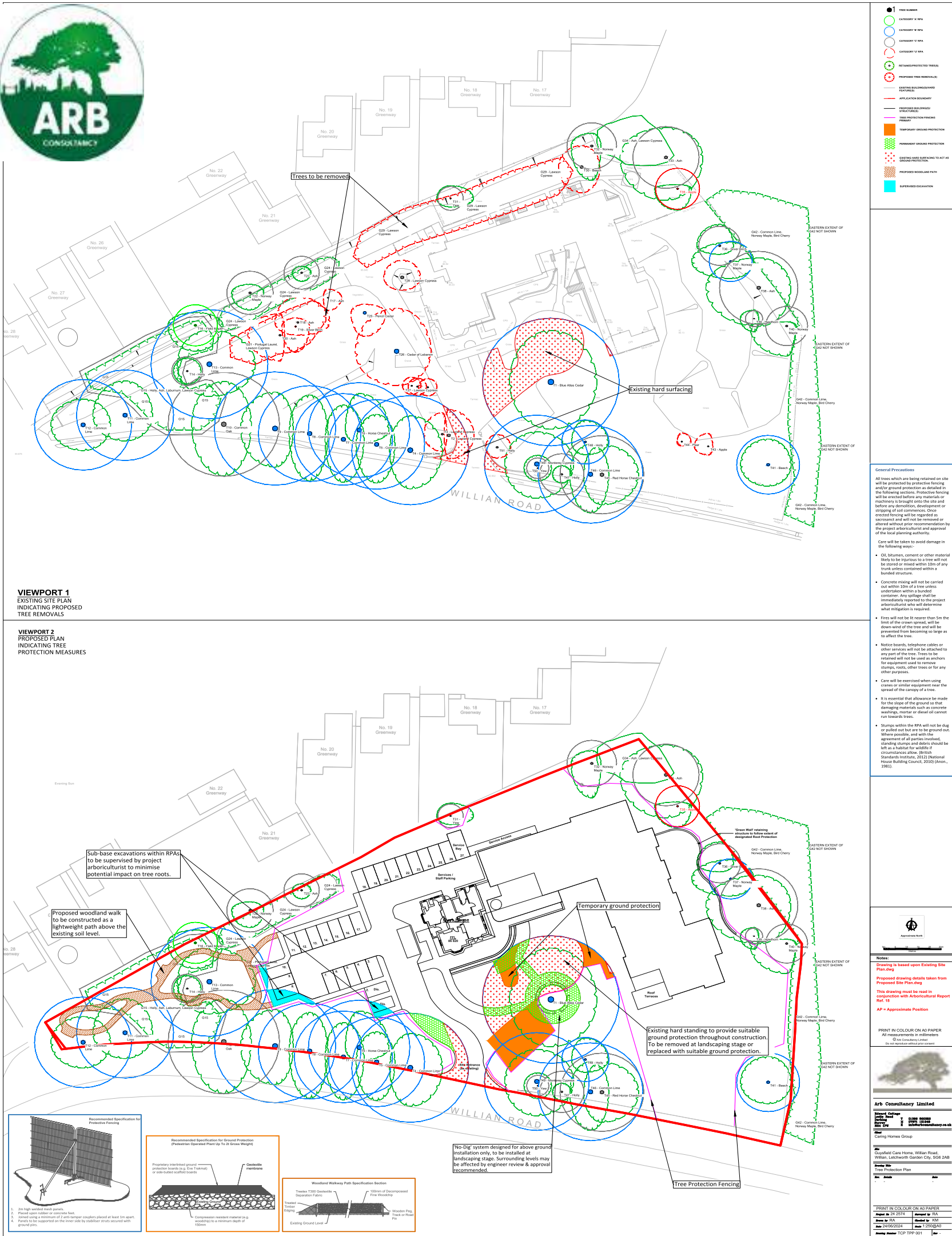
The principle of permitting temporary construction access within the RPA is established in BS 5837 clause 6.2.3. Where the requirement for access is justified then this may be achieved through the setting back of the protective fencing and the use of ground protection measures to protect the underlying soil.

All retained trees will be robustly protected in accordance with BS 5837. Full details of the necessary tree protection measures are provided within the Arboricultural Method Statement which can be found on page 13 of this report. These issues include:

- Arboricultural Monitoring and Supervision
- General Precautions
- Tree Surgery
- Tree Protection Fencing
- Ground Protection
- Removal of Hard Surfacing
- New Hard Surfacing
- Replacement Hard Surfacing
- New Underground Services
- Fencing
- Soft Landscaping – General Precautions within RPA's
- New Underground Services
- Fencing
- Soft Landscaping – General Precautions within RPA's

Conclusion

Subject to full compliance with this report and the TPP, I believe that all retained trees can be adequately protected and will be safeguarded in a sustainable manner
Having considered the arboricultural implications associated with this site and with further consideration to the proposed tree planting within the landscaping scheme, I believe the proposal to be arboriculturally sound.



6.6 Ecological Impact Assessment

Sweco were appointed by Caring Homes (The Applicant) to prepare a ‘Ecological Impact Assessment’ in support of the Detailed Planning Application.

The report provides the following summary and conclusions:

Ecological surveys conducted at the existing Guysfield Care Home in Willian, Letchworth, have included a desk study for designated sites, UK Habitat Classification survey, preliminary roost assessment survey for bats, habitat suitability index assessment and eDNA survey of ponds for great crested newt, and subsequent bat emergence surveys and badger monitoring.

Surveys have found that five locally designated sites exist within the search area used, and none are anticipated to be significantly impacted by the proposed redevelopment scheme.

The site comprises the existing care home building, areas of developed sealed surface (access and car parking), modified grassland and ruderal habitat, boundary woodland belts, and small areas of scrub and an ornamental hedgerow. Habitats on site have potential to support widespread invertebrates, amphibians, reptiles, roosting and foraging bats, nesting birds, badger, and hedgehog.

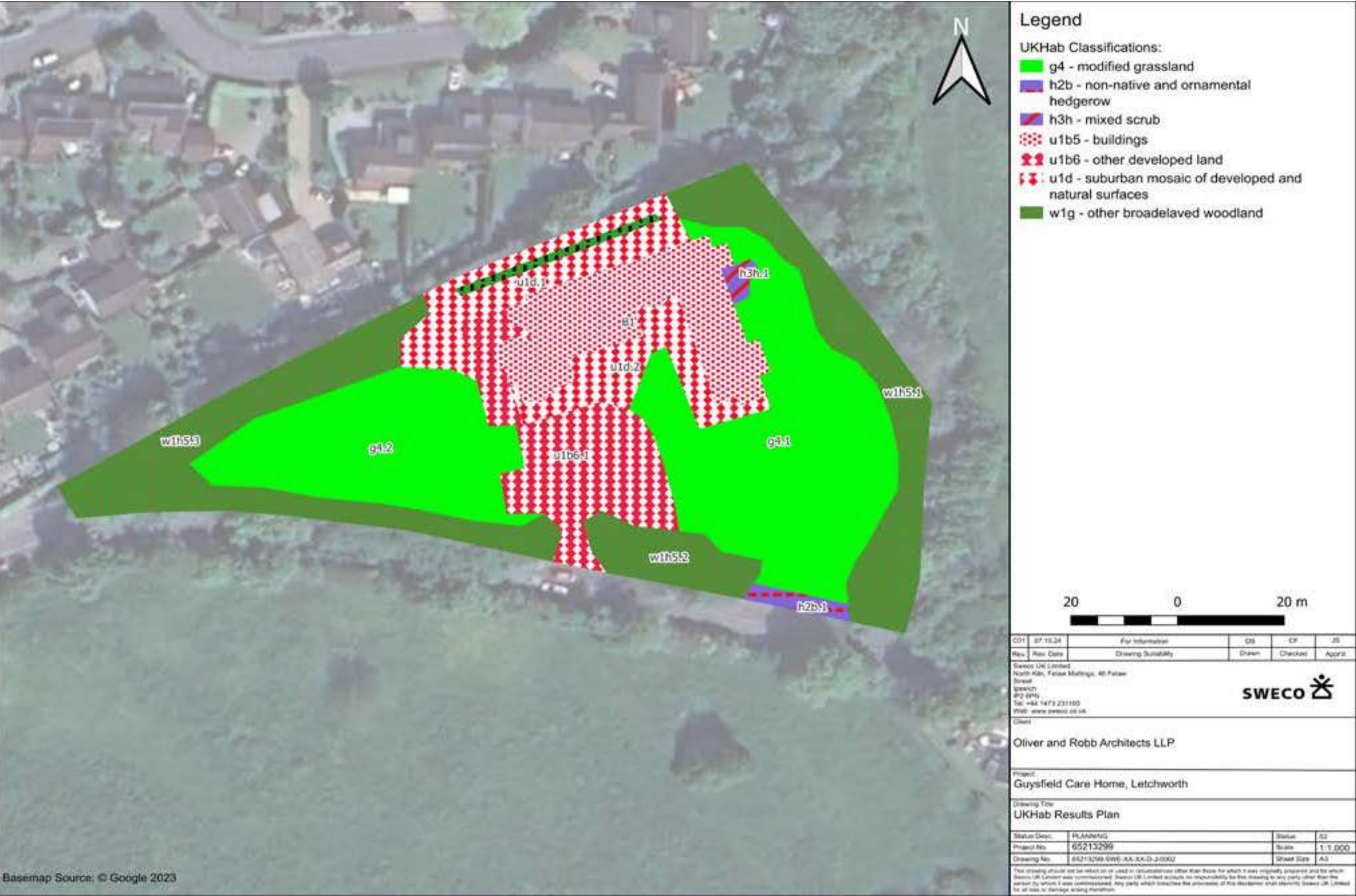
Great crested newt surveys of ponds found two ponds within the survey area, one of which was dry, and the other subject to eDNA testing which was returned negative. As such great crested newt are not anticipated to be present on site.

Bat roost assessment and emergence surveys did not find any roosting bats. However, as roosting bats were recorded within the building during surveys undertaken in 2018, a precautionary non-licenced methodology has been recommended with proportional mitigation to be implemented, including timing and ecologist support during demolition.

Badger monitoring found activity around a sett on the east boundary over the monitoring period and precautionary mitigation in the form of exclusion buffers has been recommended. If the exclusion buffers are not compatible with the required works, a mitigation licence from Natural England may be required.

To guide non-licensed mitigation for roosting bats and badger, a Biodiversity Method Statement or Precautionary Method of Works document should be produced. Other mitigation measures for widespread amphibians, reptiles, nesting birds, foraging bats, badger, and hedgehog have also been recommended.

With implementation of recommended mitigation, no significant residual effects are predicted to occur. Ecological enhancement measures including use of native species rich planting and seed mixtures in landscaping, installation of bat roost boxes, and installation of bird nesting boxes have also been recommended.



6.7 Archaeological Assessment

RPS were appointed by Caring Homes (The Applicant) to prepare a ‘Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment’ in support of the Detailed Planning Application.

The report provides the following summary and conclusions:

Guysfield Care Home, Willian Road, Letchworth, SG6 2AB has been assessed for its below ground archaeological potential.

In terms of designated heritage assets, no World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Battlefield or Historic Wreck sites are identified within the study site or the 1km search area.

The eastern half of the study site is located within an Area of Archaeological Significance (AAS) 99, which defines the Medieval settlement of Willian. However, later cartographic evidence shows that the study site lay within agricultural land outside the built limits of the village.

The whole of the study site is located within the Willian Conservation Area as defined by North Hertfordshire District Council.

The study site is considered to have a moderate potential for the Medieval period, a low-moderate potential for the Bronze Age and Roman periods with a low potential for all remaining past phases of human activity.

The study site is currently occupied by Guysfield Care Home. This was originally a private residence constructed in 1884 before being converted into a care home 1986. The house has been the subject of a series of ill-conceived extensions that do not suite the requirements of the current residence.

Prior to the construction of the 1884 residence the study site lay within an area of open land to the west of the village of Willian. It is likely to have formed part of the Medieval village of Willian and fallen within agricultural land prior to this.

The proposals involve the redevelopment of the existing care home which comprises the retention of the original part of the care home known as ‘Guys House’, the demolition of the associated extensions and erection of a detached 3 to 4-storey building in its place to create a 70-bed residential care home with associated parking, landscaping and amenities.

The local planning policy sets out that for Areas of Archaeological Significance, a preliminary evaluation will be required as part of the application for development which could disturb any possible archaeological remains.

However, topographic evidence demonstrates that significant landforming was undertaken in advance of the construction of the care home extension in the 1990s. As a result of the earthmoving and the construction of the existing extension the archaeological potential within the footprint of the proposed extension has been significantly reduced, if not removed.

Given the levels of past disturbance, and the later cartographic evidence which suggests the site probably lay beyond the historic core of Willian, it is considered that if any further archaeological investigation is required this could follow the granting of consent secured by an appropriately worded archaeological planning condition.



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6.8 Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment

Fisher & Tomlin & Bowyer were appointed by Caring Homes (The Applicant) to prepare a ‘Land & Visual Impact Assessment’ in support of the Detailed Planning Application.

The report provides the following conclusions:

Construction Stage

The introduction of construction features and facilities, construction lighting, together with general construction activities for large scale projects will not be unfamiliar or uncommon features in the local landscape.

With the introduction of all these construction activities, given that the scheme would occur over a relatively short period, it would result in a medium magnitude of change.

The large majority of visual receptors in closest proximity to the proposed construction activities can be classified as moderate in that in the main they will be only passing by. Consequently, with a generally moderate receptor sensitivity set against a generally moderate to low magnitude of visual change, the temporary visual effect during the construction period would, as a worst case, result in a significance of effect that can be assessed as Moderate.

Operational Stage

The visual impact assessment has identified generally good existing visual barriers created by topographical and vegetation features and these would in the main be retained.

For the majority of the receptors the assessment has found that while parts of the development are visible such views are glimpsed and would not have significant visual effects.

Residual Significance of Landscape Effects

With heights of the new building along the Northern ‘wing’ remaining much the same as the existing building the existing vegetation along with new planting will provide visual barriers to the majority of the site. On this basis the residual impact assessment is expected, as a worst case, to have low visual effects.

When seen within the context of the wider landscape, from most viewpoints, the proposals offer a similar impact to the existing building in the main and would actually prove to be less noticeable from the residential development that are the only classification of high sensitivity. Therefore the visual effects are considered to be low.

However, from nearby views, some of the site would remain noticeable, especially in the winter with little visual barrier effect. This is where the new evergreen vegetation and tree planting will be essential.



6.9 Energy Strategy Report

Harniss were appointed by Caring Homes (The Applicant) to prepare a ‘Energy Strategy Report’ in support of the Detailed Planning Application.

The report provides the following summary and conclusions:

- Informs the built form and orientation of the buildings to respond to daylight and indoor comfort levels;
- Includes optimal building fabric standards, energy efficient design of building services and energy efficient appliances;
- Complies with Part L 2021 Building Regulations;
- Includes a site-wide heating network with ASHPs to supply hot water and space heating throughout; and
- Achieves and exceed the 20% regulated energy CO2 emissions reduction requirement on-site



9.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

- 9.1** The Energy Strategy for the development has been formulated following the Energy Hierarchy: Be Lean, Be Clean and Be Green. The overarching objective in the formulation of the strategy is to maximise the reductions in total CO2 emissions through the application of this hierarchy with a cost-effective and technically appropriate approach and to minimise the emission of other pollutants. The energy strategy measures are summarised and presented in Table 9.1 below.

Energy Hierarchy	Energy Strategy Measures
Be Lean	Passive design Compact building form, efficient layout Optimised design to enable controlled solar gain and improved direct and indirect natural lighting. Incorporation of balconies into the design to provide shading. Building Fabric Use of high efficiency building fabric standards. Designed with low air permeability rates Energy Efficiency Energy efficient lighting and appropriate controls Variable speed heating system with high delta T and low return temperatures High efficiency motors and variable speed pumps for heating and ventilation systems High efficiency heating plant and auxiliary equipment Appropriate controls for heating system Appropriate temperature and time zoning Appropriate insulation of heating distribution system
Be Clean	Energy efficient energy supply Site-wide heating network to supply hot water and space heating to entire development.

Be Green	Renewable energy ASHP system to supply heating and hot water to the site-wide heating network PV array.
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Table 9.1 – Summary of Energy strategy measures applied.

- 9.2** The summary of the overall reduction in the developments CO₂ emissions after each stage of the energy hierarchy is presented in Table 9.2.

	(kgCO ₂ /m ² /year)	CO ₂ emissions (tonnes/year)
Development Baseline	11.81	40.10
After energy demand reduction (Be Lean)	10.27	34.88
After Heat network (Be Clean)	9.11	30.94
After use of renewables (Be Green)	8.01	27.20

Table 9.2 – Overall CO₂ emissions for the development

- 9.3** The regulated CO2 savings for the entire development expressed in terms of actual and percentage reduction after each stage of the energy hierarchy are presented in Table 9.3.
- 9.4** The energy strategy shows that the overall CO2 emissions from both regulated and unregulated energy can be reduced by circa 12.9 tCO2 per annum which is equivalent to circa 32% reduction.

	Energy CO ₂ Savings	
	Tonnes per annum	%
Development Baseline	11.81	N/A
Savings from energy demand reduction	1.54	13
Saving from Heat Network	1.16	11
Savings from renewable energy	1.1	12
Total cumulative savings	3.8	36

Table 9.3 – Overall CO₂ emissions savings

- 9.5** Table 9.3 shows that the proposed strategy can achieve regulated CO2 savings of circa 12.9 tCO2 which is equivalent to circa 32% reduction when compared to the baseline.

6.10 Acoustic Design Statement

Sound Solution Consultants were appointed by Caring Homes (The Applicant) to prepare a ‘Acoustic Design Statement’ in support of the Detailed Planning Application.

The reports provides the following conclusions:

An assessment of environmental sound levels has been carried out for a proposed development at Guysfield Care Home, Willian Rd, Willian, Letchworth Garden City SG6 2AB. Environmental sound levels have been taken from a site survey at the boundary of the development site.

Stage 1 assessment in accordance with ProPG Planning and Noise: New Residential Development has provided that the site is influenced by dominant road transport noise, where the initial site noise risk assessment has been categorised as ‘medium’ on the future occupants of the new noise sensitive development.

The Site has been appraised in terms of design and mitigation, for all habitable windows at the development, based upon site survey measurements and the results of 3D predictive noise modelling (IMMITM v2023).

Stage 2 assessments in accordance with ProPG have reviewed a good acoustic design process, internal ambient noise levels, external amenity areas and other matters. Commensurate design specifications have been established considering latest industry guidance.

On the basis that design specifications within this report have been adopted, it follows that any significant adverse noise impacts will be avoided in the finished development as to accord with overarching planning requirements for new residential development.

A noise impact assessment has also been carried out to address the potential noise generation from the proposed development, in line with BS 4142 methodology. In the absence of detailed proposals for external mechanical services equipment, a cumulative plant noise limit for undefined external plant has been set in Section 6. An indicative assessment has shown that the proposed rating noise limit can be met through careful plant selection and attenuation.

Proposed Residential Development

Guysfield Care Home, Willian Road, Willian,
Letchworth Garden City SG6 2AB

soundsolution
CONSULTANTS

Acoustic Design Statement

TECHNICAL REPORT

41005-R2

A brief description of the measurement positions has been provided below:

Position L1) Microphone set at approximately 7.5m AGL in a free-field location out of the window of the south façade of ‘Guys House’. Incident sound was observed predominantly from road traffic noise.



Figure D1 – Photo highlighting Measurement Position L1.

Position L2) Microphone set at 4.5 m AGL at the northern boundary of the development site, representative of the nearest noise sensitive receptors. Incident sound was observed predominantly from road traffic noise.

6.11 Transport Statement

Intermodal Transportation Ltd. were appointed by Caring Homes (The Applicant) to prepare a ‘Acoustic Design Statement’ in support of the Detailed Planning Application.

The reports provides the following conclusions:

The existing Guysfield Care Home currently provides 50 bedrooms. The proposal seeks to retain the original building known as ‘Guys House’ located at the western end of the care home and demolish the building extensions. A standalone new care home building consisting 70 bedrooms, would then be built. Hence, there would be a net increase of 20 bedrooms only as a result of the proposal.

A previous scheme (application 20/02219/FP) involved a net increase of 9 bedrooms and ITL were involved in the production of a TS report (IT2063_TS_22.04.20_Issued) for the previous scheme.

As was proposed with the previous scheme, vehicular access to the redeveloped site would be achieved via the existing site access. The existing access, including the visibility splays achievable at the junction, were accepted to serve the proposed development at the time of the previous application. As such, it is considered that the access should also be regarded as acceptable to serve the revised proposal.

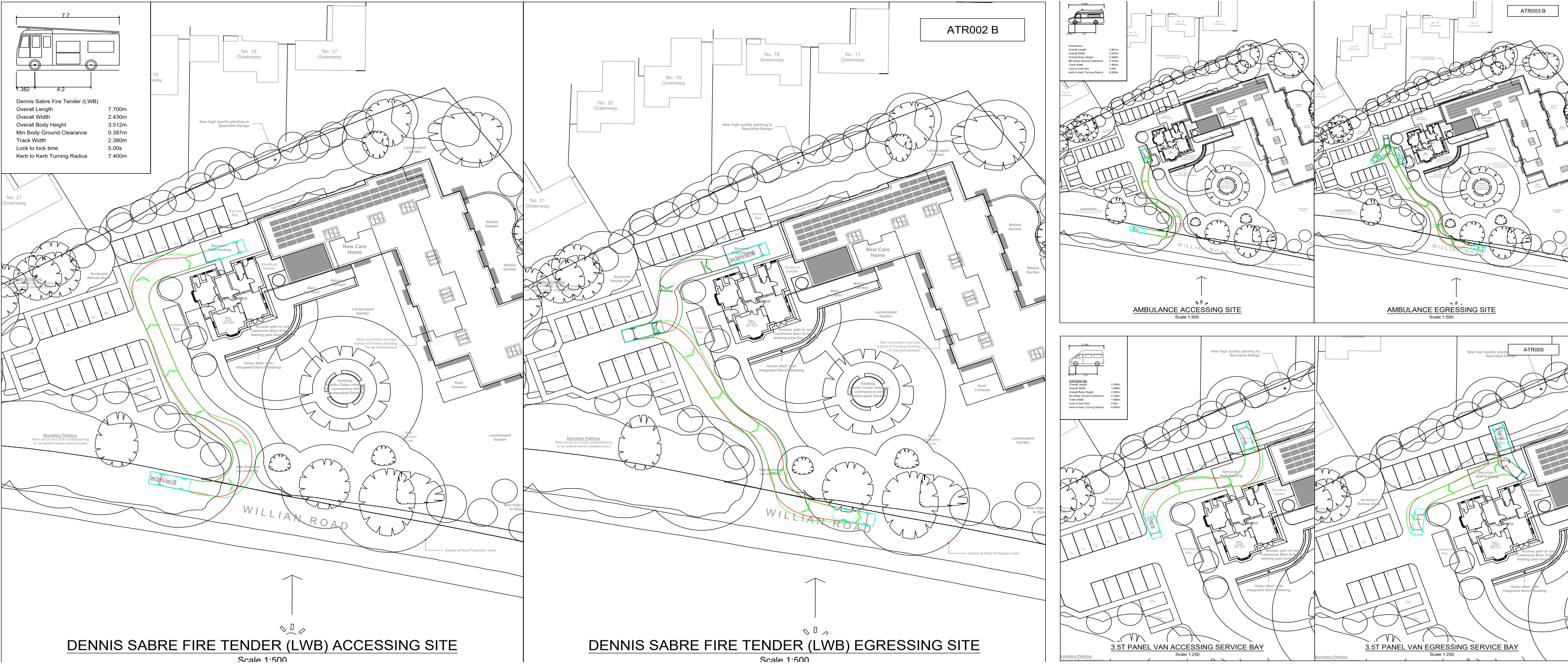
Some local facilities and a reasonable number of residential dwellings are located within walking and cycling distance from the site. The closest bus stop to the site is within 750m from the site and is served by bus service 53, which also calls at the town centre and the railway station. Further bus services could be accessed at the town centre, which provide links to Royston, Hitchin, Stevenage and Bishop’s Stortford, which represent some of the main towns close to the site. Service frequencies at Letchworth railway station are good and connections are available to London and the surrounding regions.



It is demonstrated that the proposal would lead to only 5 additional vehicular trips during the typical weekday road network AM peak hour and only 1 additional vehicular trip during the typical weekday road network PM peak hour, which would represent minor increases only in the level of traffic using the access junction. It is considered that the re-use of the existing access junction, which has been demonstrated within this report to provide adequate levels of visibility, should be regarded as acceptable. As previously indicated, the re-use of the existing access junction was accepted by HCC at the time of the previous application at the site.

The proposed development includes a total of 27 vehicle parking spaces. Nine of the 27 parking bays would be provided for exclusive staff use with 18 for resident / visitor use. Two of the spaces would be disabled parking spaces, additionally 1 of the bays would be for the use of service vehicles and there would be 1 separate ambulance parking bay that is not included in the 27. It is considered that the proposed parking provision should be regarded as acceptable in the context of North Hertfordshire District Council parking standards.

It is therefore concluded that the creation of the private access road to Sheepcotes Hangar should be regarded as acceptable from a highways and transportation perspective. Furthermore, it is considered that in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF) paragraph 115 (page 33) which indicates that “Development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.”, the development proposal should be considered as acceptable.



6.12 Flood Risk Assessment & Drainage Strategy

Canham Consulting were appointed by Caring Homes (The Applicant) to prepare a ‘Flood Risk Assessment & Drainage Strategy’ in support of the Detailed Planning Application.

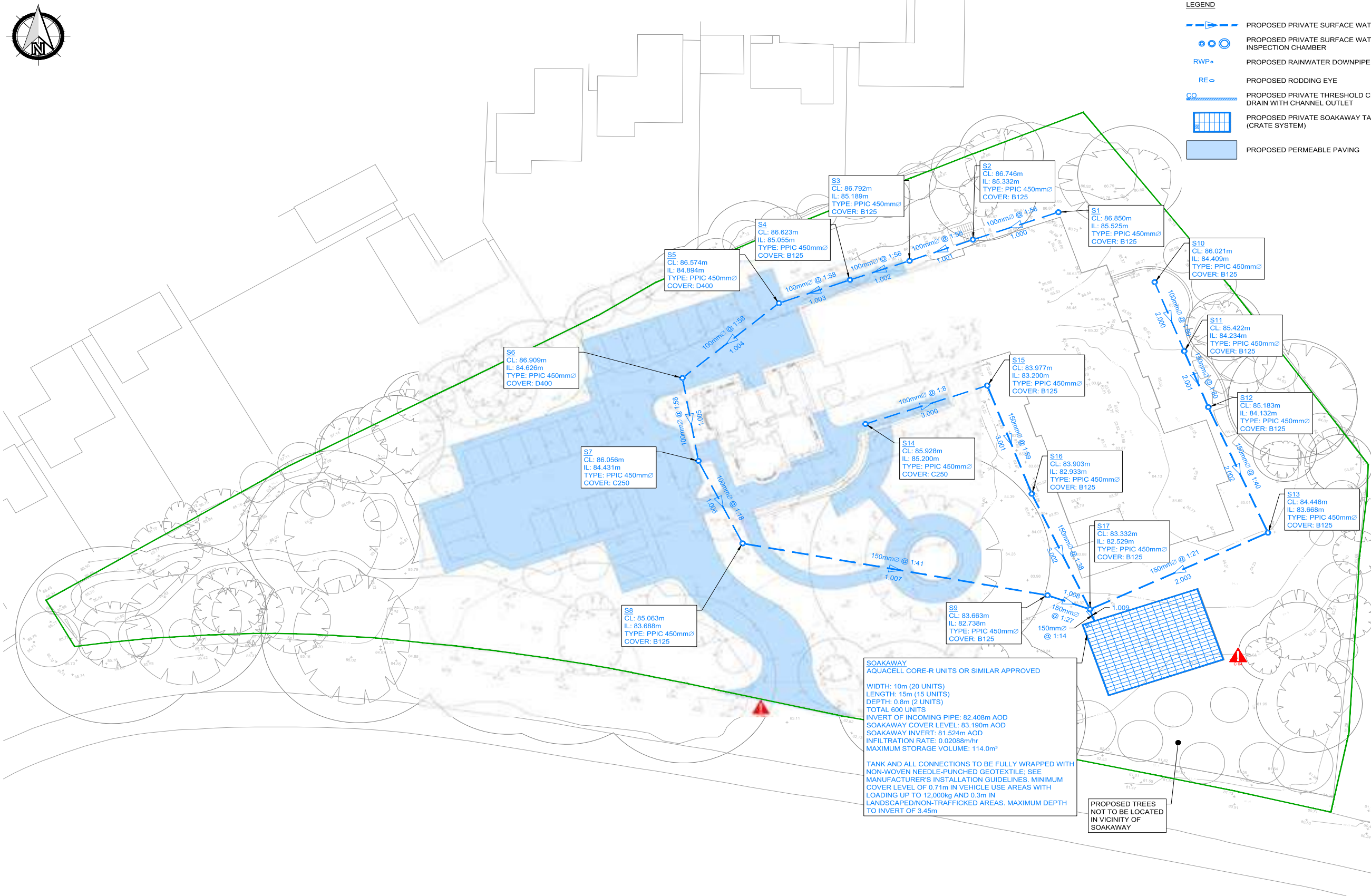
The reports provides the following conclusions:

The proposed development is for the demolition of an existing care home and the construction of a new care home alongside retention of Guys House (part of the current care home function) which will be refurbished.

The site is at a low risk of flooding from most sources, with the most significant risk of flooding being from surface water. The sequential test determines that the site is suitable from a flood risk perspective.

The suitability of infiltration onsite requires further investigation. During the recent site investigation, two of the three infiltration tests failed, with only one shallow test providing a usable rate. It has been confirmed that the site currently infiltrates and therefore an infiltration scheme should be available to the proposed development. Calculations demonstrating the size of storage required for an infiltration scheme have been undertaken, as well as an attenuation option. If infiltration is feasible, the impermeable area will reduce onsite with the proposed development.

Should infiltration be demonstrated to be unsuitable, it is proposed that the site discharges surface water to the public sewer which has been accepted by Anglian Water. Calculations have been undertaken to demonstrate the volume of attenuation that would be required to support a discharge to the public sewer option. Overall, it is determined that the site is suitable for development from a flood risk perspective and that options are available to the proposed development in regard to its surface water drainage.



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- PRIVATE DRAINAGE NOTES:**
1. ALL PIPES BELOW GROUND TO BE 100mm DIAMETER (UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE).
 2. ALL FOUL DRAINS BELOW FLOOR SLABS TO BE 100mm DIAMETER AND LAID AT MINIMUM GRADIENT OF 1:40 (UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE).
 3. ANY DRAIN BRANCH CONNECTED TO A W.C. WITH NO SVP IS TO BE FITTED WITH A DUGRO VALVE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE MANUFACTURER'S RECOMMENDATIONS.
 4. ALL PIPE GRADIENTS TO BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE BUILDING REGULATIONS APPROVED DOCUMENT H.
 5. ALL MATERIALS, WORKMANSHIP, ETC, TO COMPLY WITH BUILDING REGULATIONS.
 6. INSPECTION CHAMBERS TO BE W41V 450 IC RANGE, OR SIMILAR APPROVED.
 7. THE LOCATION, NUMBER AND SIZES OF ALL SOIL VENT PIPES, STUB STACKS & RAINWATER DOWNPIPES ARE TO BE CONFIRMED BY OLIVER + ROBB ARCHITECTS.
 8. PRIVATE CONNECTIONS TO THE ADAPTABLE SEWERS TO BE LAID SOFFIT TO SOFFIT. NO PLASTIC PIPES ARE TO BE CONNECTED TO ADAPTABLE MANHOLES. ALL CONNECTIONS TO THE PUBLIC SEWER MUST BE CONSTRUCTED IN VITRIFIED CLAY PIPES.

P02	21.06.24	REVISED IN LINE WITH DESIGN DEVELOPMENTS	GPC	MH
P01	30.09.19	PRELIMINARY ISSUE	MH	MR
no.	date	details	drawn	checked



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Client: CARING HOMES GROUP

Architect: OLIVER + ROBB ARCHITECTS

Project: GUYSFIELD CARE HOME, WILLIAN ROAD, WILLIAN

Sheet: PROPOSED SURFACE WATER DRAINAGE LAYOUT

CCL ref	drawn	design	checked	scale	size	date
213952	MJWH	MH	MR	1:250	A1 (L)	30.09.2019

Sheet: S3 - SUITABLE FOR REVIEW & COMMENT

Drawing number: GCH-CCL-XX-XX-DR-C-0001 Revision: P02

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SCALE 1:250m
SCALE BAR FOR INFORMATION ONLY

7.0 Conclusion

7.1 An exciting opportunity exists to redevelop Guysfield House to provide specialist care for up to 70 elderly residents with frail and special needs, all within a bespoke, fully compliant, comfortable, stimulating and high-quality environment.

7.2 This Pre-Application submission proves this can be achieved without detriment to the existing Metropolitan Green Belt and Willian Conservation Area through a design proposal which is striking, imaginative, of high quality and carefully detailed to incorporate attractive, contemporary features throughout.

7.3 The retention of Guys House and juxtaposition of new and old makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Willian Conservation Area. A high-quality replacement building of an appropriate scale, mass and aesthetic, with carefully considered arboricultural and landscape strategy principles are employed to create a unified approach to the re-development of the site.

7.4 The proposed supporting documents shall demonstrate compliance with policy objectives related to arboricultural, archaeological, ecological, access, transportation, residential amenity and need interests.

7.5 The proposed development shall generate job opportunities, both during the construction period and when operational, shall support the local community and provide modern specialist health care in a modern environment.

7.6 In achieving improved use of the land, adopting modern construction methods and technology and providing improved standards of accommodation and care, the proposal shall fulfil the national aim for sustainable development and care for the elderly.

7.7 Importantly, the juxtaposition of traditional and contemporary design, separated by a sculpture garden with Guys House proudly sitting upon a raised plinth incorporating a living wall, ensures that the architecture and detailing of the former building is illuminated and restored to its former glory and is no longer diluted by inappropriate and pastiche 20th century additions.

7.8 The re-development, which comprises the retention and restoration of Guys House, in tandem with a high quality and contemporary Care Home, shall achieve the requirement to cause less than substantial harm to the Conservation Area and Metropolitan Green Belt.

7.9 The re-development proposals now have “in-principle” support from Letchworth Heritage Foundation. (Refer Appendix 1).

7.10 Most importantly the dignity, self-esteem, self respect and independence of residents shall be sustained in later life through the creation of a modern facility providing appropriate and excellent levels of care and comfort in a fitting environment underpinning this objective.



External Perspective facing North-East over Landscaped Gardens



Appendix 1.

Lethworth Heritage Foundation E-mail (dated 25th July 2023).

From: Claire Pudney [REDACTED]
Sent: 25 July 2023 11:31
To: Brian Robb
Subject: RE: HAC meeting 21st July 2023

Dear Brian

Thank you for coming along to attend the meeting on Friday.

The Committee were very pleased with the progress that has been made on the original concept proposals. Please see bullet points below –

- The Committee felt the latest proposals to be an improvement
- The Committee welcomed the contemporary nature of the proposal and the complementary contrast with the host building.
- The Committee discussed the massing, concerns were still voiced but it was understood that the requirements for the new home would require a larger footprint and that the building had been significantly pulled back from earlier iterations. More detailed worked up drawings will help to address these concerns.
- The Committee raised concerns with the entrance area and the proposed glass balustrade and felt that railings may be more appropriate.
- The Committee agreed that the design of the side and rear elevations of the original house will need to be provided.
- The Committee discussed proposed signage and would be interested in the proposals.
- The Committee felt that there should be further discussions around the specific detailing, namely the brise soleil, the bays, brick detailing and detailing of the zinc roof as well as the fenestration. The Committee were made aware that such detailing will form part of further worked up proposals.
- The Committee strongly agreed with the importance of the view from Willian.
- The Committee felt that the proposed garage storage door/s should be concealed. The proposed landscaping scheme with the green wall had been well thought out and it was felt that the storage doors weakened the impact of the landscape works.
- The Committee agreed that the rear element boundary with Greenway should be further reviewed, namely the concerns with the tree removal and introduction of car parking. This again would form part of further detailed proposals
- The Committee felt that an informal design of the proposed future link from Guysfield House to the residential area would be beneficial. They accepted that this would not form part of the formal application.
- The Committee welcomed your intention to provide a landscape and visual impact assessment, to determine any impact on the residents within Willian village and that there may also be an opportunity to carry out a public consultation.

The Committee as such are happy to support the proposals and I look forward to working with you more closely as the design is progressed. Please do not hesitate to contact me, if you have any queries.

Kind regards

Claire

Claire Pudney | Heritage Advice Service Manager

Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation, One Garden City, Broadway, Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire, SG6 3BF

