

LAND NORTH OF BRADMORE WAY
THE BROOKMANS PARK ESTATE
BROOKMANS PARK
HERTFORDSHIRE

(BrP12a)

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

22 February 2022

GJHP

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	3
2	LEGISLATION, POLICY & GUIDANCE	4
3	THE SITE AND ITS HERITAGE CONTEXT	9
4	ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS & CONCLUSIONS	15

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Heritage Assessment has been prepared by GJHP in support of the planning application for the redevelopment of Land to the North of Bradmore Way, The Bookmans Park Estate, (the ‘Site’), Brookmans Park, Hertfordshire (BrP12a), in Welwyn and Hatfield Borough Council. GJHP is a consultancy that provides expert advice on heritage and townscape matters.
- 1.2 The Site does not lie in a conservation area, nor does it include any listed buildings or identified non-designated heritage assets. The assessment considers the effect of the proposed development (the ‘Proposed Development’) on the heritage significance of above ground heritage assets within a 800m radius of the centre of the Site.
- 1.3 The report sets out the following:
- Relevant statutory duties and national and local policy and guidance;
 - A description of the Site and its heritage context;
 - Statements of significance of the relevant heritage assets; and
 - An assessment of the effects of the Proposed Development and conclusions.
- 1.4 The report should be read in conjunction with the planning statement and illustrative masterplan submitted with the application.

2 LEGISLATION, POLICY & GUIDANCE

- 2.1 This section sets out the relevant statutory duties and national and local planning policies and guidance that are relevant to the consideration of heritage matters.

Statutory Duties

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Listed buildings

- 2.2 Section 66 (1) of the Act states, *‘in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.’*

National planning policy

The National Planning Policy Framework 2021

- 2.3 The Government issued the updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on 20 July 2021. The NPPF sets out planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

Heritage

- 2.4 Section 16 of the NPPF deals with conserving and enhancing the historic environment. It applies to plan-making, decision-taking and the heritage-related consent regimes under the 1990 Act.
- 2.5 Heritage assets are defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF as a *‘building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).’*
- 2.6 The NPPF notes, at paragraph 189, that heritage assets *‘should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.’*

- 2.7 The NPPF requires an applicant to describe the heritage significance of any heritage assets affected by a proposal, including any contribution made by their setting (para 194). It goes on to say that *'the level of detail should be proportionate to the heritage assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.'*
- 2.8 The NPPF identifies three key factors local authorities should take into account in determining applications:
- 'The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.'
- 2.9 Paragraph 199 states that in assessing impact, the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be given to its conservation. It notes that heritage significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or from development within its setting.
- 2.10 The setting of a heritage asset is defined in Annex 2 as *'the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.'*
- 2.11 The NPPF states, at paragraph 201, that where a proposed development would lead to *'substantial harm'* or total loss of heritage significance of a designated heritage asset, consent should be refused, *'...unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss'*, or all of a number of specified criteria apply, including that the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site.
- 2.12 Where a development proposal will lead to *'less than substantial'* harm to the heritage significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use (paragraph 202).

Planning Practice Guidance

- 2.13 The PPG includes a section called *'Historic environment'* which was updated on 23 July 2019. It explains which bodies are responsible for the designation of HAs and provides information on heritage consent processes.

- 2.14 The PPG considers the factors that should inform decision taking about developments that would affect HAs. It notes that *'HAs may be affected by direct physical change or by change in their setting. Being able to properly assess the nature, extent and importance of the significance of a HA, and the contribution of its setting, is very important to understanding the potential impact and acceptability of development proposals...'* (18a-007). It goes on to say *'understanding the significance of a heritage asset and its setting from an early stage in the design process can help to inform the development of proposals which avoid or minimise harm'* (18a-008). It states that in assessing proposal, where harm is found, the extent of harm should be *'clearly articulated' as either 'substantial' or 'less than substantial'* (18a-018).
- 2.15 The PPG notes that setting is defined in the NPPF and that *'all heritage assets have a setting, irrespective of the form in which they survive and whether they are designated or not. The setting of a heritage asset and the asset's curtilage may not have the same extent'* (18a-013). It goes on to say, *'the extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to the visual relationship between the asset and the proposed development and associated visual/physical considerations. Although views of or from an asset will play an important part in the assessment of impacts on setting, the way in which we experience an asset in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust, smell and vibration from other land uses in the vicinity, and by our understanding of the historic relationship between places. For example, buildings that are in close proximity but are not visible from each other may have a historic or aesthetic connection that amplifies the experience of the significance of each'* (18a-013).

Local policy and guidance

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan (April 2005)

- 2.16 Some of the policies from the 2005 Local Plan have been saved however none of these are relevant to this assessment.

The Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan (2016)

- 2.17 Following various rounds of consultation, the Local Plan was submitted for examination in May 2017. The independent examination was taking place at the time of drafting this report (February 2022). The Local Plan will shape the future of development in the borough's towns and villages between now and 2032 - new homes, new jobs and business premises, open spaces and community facilities for people to use and infrastructure such as roads, schools and healthcare. It is about supporting the growth of Welwyn Hatfield and maintaining a vibrant local economy.

- 2.18 Policy SADM 15 deals with Heritage. It states that proposals should respect the character, appearance and setting of an asset and the historic environment in terms of design, scale, materials and impact on key views. It goes on to say that proposals that result in less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset will be refused unless *'the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location significantly outweigh that harm and the desirability of preserving the asset, and all feasible solutions to avoid and mitigate that harm have been fully implemented'*.

Other guidance

Historic England: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (March 2015)

- 2.19 The purpose of this note is to provide information to assist local authorities, planning and other consultants, owners, applicants and other interested parties in implementing historic environment policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the related guidance given in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). These include assessing the significance of heritage assets, using appropriate expertise, historic environment records, recording and furthering understanding.
- 2.20 In terms of general advice on decision-taking, it notes at para 4 that, *'The first step for all applicants is to understand the significance of any affected heritage asset and, if relevant, the contribution of its setting to its significance'*. The guidance goes on to suggest a number of common steps in assessing significance.

The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic England: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition) December 2017

- 2.21 This guidance states that it provides *'information on good practice to assist local authorities, planning and other consultants, owners, applicants and other interested parties'* and that *'alternative approaches may be equally acceptable, provided they are demonstrably compliant with legislation, national policies and objectives.'*
- 2.22 At para 9 it states that *'Setting is not a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation, although land comprising a setting may itself be designated Its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset or the ability to appreciate that significance.'*
- 2.23 At para. 18 the guidance states that the *'Conserving or enhancing heritage assets by taking their settings into account need not prevent change; indeed change may be*

positive, for instance where the setting has been compromised by poor development.’ It goes on to say that ‘many places coincide with the setting of a heritage asset and are subject to some degree of change over time’.

Historic England Advice Note 12, Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets (2019)

- 2.24 Historic England issued Advice Note 12, Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets in October 2019. The note covers the NPPF requirement that heritage significance is described in order to help local authorities make decisions on the impact of proposals for change to heritage assets. It states, in paragraph 2 of the introduction, that *‘the level of detail in support of applications for planning permission and listed building consent should be no more than is necessary to reach an informed decision, and that activities to conserve the asset(s) need to be proportionate to the significance of the heritage asset(s) affected and the impact on that significance’*. It describes a statement of heritage significance as *‘an objective analysis of significance, an opportunity to describe what matters and why’*.
- 2.25 The advice note states that a staged approach to decision making, where the significance is assessed before the design of the proposal commences, is the best approach. It states in paragraph 29, under ‘proportionality’, that while *‘analysis should be as full as necessary to understand significance, the description provided to the LPA need be no more than sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on significance’*.

3 THE SITE AND ITS HERITAGE CONTEXT

Location

- 3.1 The Site lies in Brookmans Park, immediately adjacent to the existing urban area of that settlement and is contained by the East Coast Mainline railway to the west and by Peplins Wood to the west and the north. Brookmans Park golf course lies to the east of the site. Brookmans Park is one of four larger villages known as '*Larger Excluded Villages*' (as defined by Local Plan Policy SP3: Settlement Hierarchy), in acknowledgment of their relative sustainability to the borough's two towns at Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield. The village centre of Brookmans Park is approximately 400m to the west of the Site and Brookmans Park Railway Station lies some 650m to the south-west.
- 3.2 Brookmans Park lies in the parish of North Mymms which also comprises the village of Welham Green, the settlements of Bell Bar and Water End and the outlying community of Little Heath.

The Site

- 3.3 The Site comprises an area of green fields to the north of Bradmore Way, accessed from the northern end of Bradmore Way. It is bordered by the village of Brookmans Park to the south, woodland to the west and north, and the Brookmans Park Golf Course to the east.
- 3.4 Interwar and mid-century houses line the streets to the south. Brookmans Park Primary school is set within the block defined by Peplins Way to the north, west and south, and Bradmore Way to the east.
- 3.5 The Site does not lie within a conservation area, nor does it contain any above ground heritage assets.

History of the Brookman Estate

- 3.6 The book 'A Modern History of Brookmans Park, 1700-1950', by the late president of the North Mymms Local History Society, Peter Kingsford, sets out a detailed history of Brookmans Park which has been summarised below.
- 3.7 The modern history of Brookmans Park starts with the arrival of the Gausson family in 1786 and it is on their estate that Brookmans Park was developed. Successive members of the family were lords of the manor at Brookmans, living there for nearly 140 years. In 1891 the Brookmans manor house was destroyed by fire and never rebuilt.

- 3.8 Peter Gausson the Younger, started his family's ownership of Brookmans and had a dominant influence over the whole parish of North Mymms. Brookmans was already a significant part of North Mymms, the estate being nearly an eighth of the total area of the parish.
- 3.9 Following this Robert William Gausson, was in possession of Brookmans for a long period of 64 years. It is during his early life that a great expansion of the estate likely took place. By 1844 the property had grown to no less than 2,068 acres, about two fifths of the whole parish. Brookmans Estate had now nearly reached its maximum. Gausson died in 1880 and handed on the estate to his son Robert George. The next period in the history of Brookmans was one of greater change. While the family were cruising off the Dutch coast in 1891 the mansion was totally destroyed by fire with the loss of the 17th century mansion. Mr. and Mrs. Tottenham Gausson continued at Brookmans in the stable block which was converted into a residence with servants' quarters.
- 3.10 After ownership for 130 years the Gausson family sold the estate to a syndicate in 1923. This comprised of John White, a Birmingham contractor, J. J. Calder of Allsop brewery, Burton on Trent, solicitor J. A. Hattrell and ex army officer Major Burton. The syndicate went on to form Brookmans Park (Hatfield) Ltd. Brookmans Park Golf Club was also founded.
- 3.11 Peter Kingsford book notes, *'A complete transformation took place. No one who left Brookmans Park in 1918 would have recognised it on his return twenty years later. A few old landmarks had remained, Moffats and Moffats farmhouse, Folly Arch, some dwellings in Bell Bar, the lodges at the junction of the Drive and the Great North Road and at the entrance to Gobions. But nearly all the rest, parkland, meadows and fields had been submerged in a tide of bricks and mortar.'*
- 3.12 The company's first scheme followed the then fashion for garden cities but this was soon abandoned as it was too ambitious. By 1924 the declared intention was to build 2,500 houses. Brookmans Park Railway Station was opened by the London and North Eastern Railway (LNER) on 19 July 1926, with services to London Kings Cross and the local towns of Potters Bar, Hatfield and Welwyn Garden City, which helped encourage and support the development of Brookmans Park.
- 3.13 A masterplan of 1926 (Figure 1) identifies 5 areas for residential development in the new village of Brookmans Park including the land immediately south of the Site. Early in 1927 a dozen new houses on the estate were occupied. In the same year the District Council approved plans for 30 houses; in 1928 for 20 houses; and in 1929 for 40 houses.
- 3.14 The BBC arrived in 1928. The newly formed corporation, looking for a site for a new transmitting station, selected an area on the north east side of the Great North

Road. This was the property of the estate company from whom the corporation bought 36 acres and took an option for a further 24 acres adjoining. The station was built quickly and completed in 1929. The great masts were a seven day wonder for local residents.

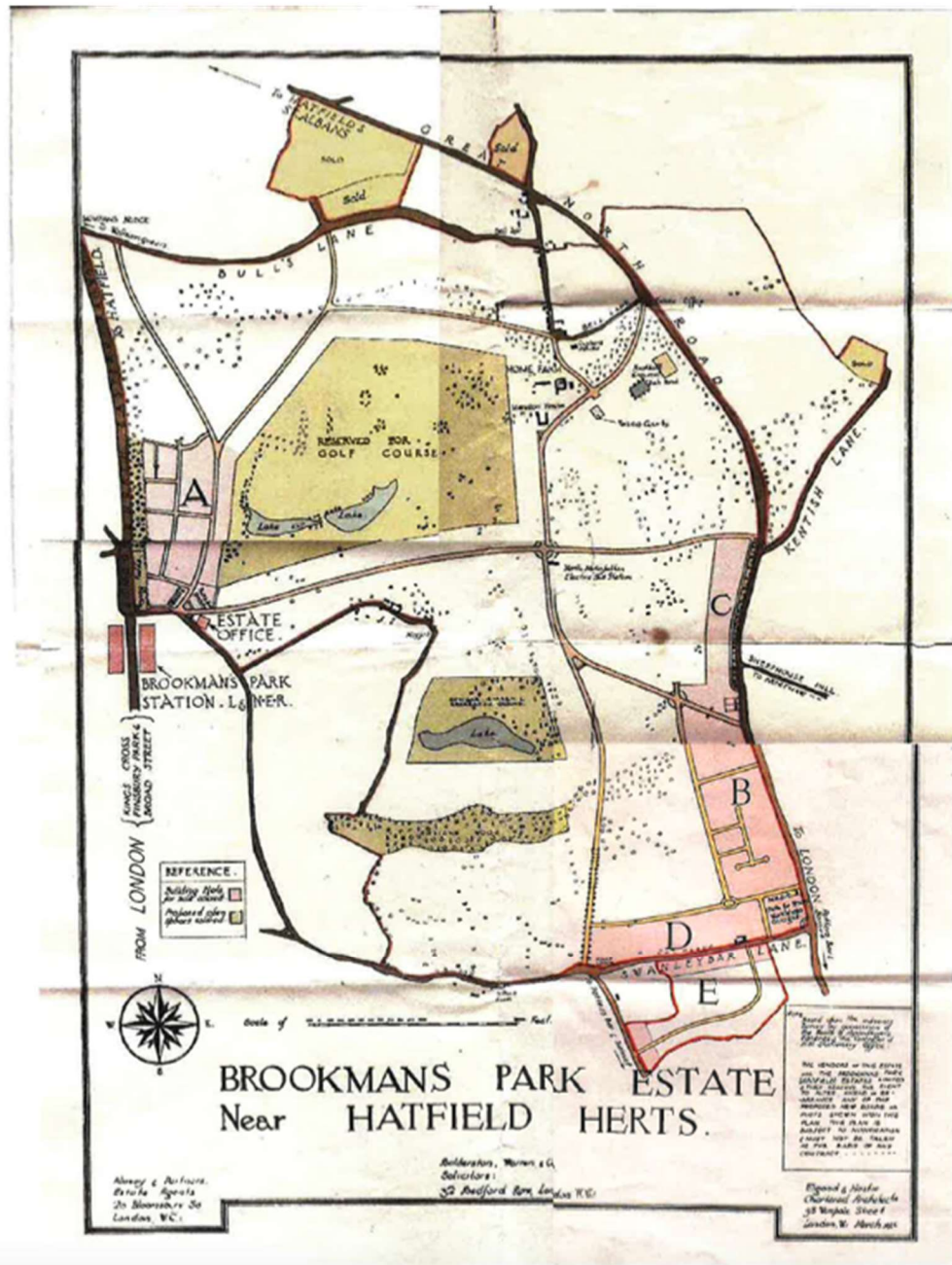


Figure 1: Masterplan for Brookmans Park Estate, 1926

3.15 The next decade got off to a good start with 46 house plans approved in 1930. In the whole of 1931 however, builders submitted only 11 plans to the District Council (in Brookmans Avenue, Bradmore Way and the Great North Road). This was the year of

financial and political crisis and the company went into voluntary liquidation in 1933. At this point the estimate of the number of houses on the estate is about 200.

- 3.16 In the financial reorganisation of 1933 two of the chief shareholders, John White and J. J. Calder, each formed a private company and between them divided the estate. White took the area approximately northward from Brookmans Avenue and George's Wood Road, while Calder had the southern half. Brookmans Park Golf Course was sited in the middle of the two housing development areas.
- 3.17 During the late 1930s the private building boom continued and the estate was developed at a better rate. Now, however, more regulations had to be observed under the Town Planning Act of 1932. The number of houses and plots approved by the District Council rose steadily from 24 in 1933 and 41 in 1934 to 55 in 1935 (which was slightly higher than the pre-slump level). The Council approved plans for about 55 houses in 1936 and about 60 in 1937. Planning disputes arose at this time with concerns by existing house owners that bungalows would lower home values. Building materials also came under the Council's eye. In Brookmans Avenue, the Great North Road and elsewhere, it insisted that *'all half timbering is to be constructed and not just planted on the face of the brickwork'*.
- 3.18 In the last two years of the decade, 1938 and 1939, development came to a peak. A record number of 106 houses received planning permission in 1938 and 52 in the first half of 1939.
- 3.19 The new village of Brookmans Park, did not escape the effects of war. It was both a reception area for evacuees from London and a place where some bombs fell.
- 3.20 In 1943 the new Ministry of Town and Country Planning appeared and in the same year a new Planning Act. Professor Abercrombie was working on the Greater London Plan, which embraced Hertfordshire. In its submission to the Plan the District Council put the existing population of Brookmans Park at 2,300, but its ultimate one at 7,500. This was ambitious. When the Plan appeared it limited the population to 2,500. However, the District Council was of the view it was quite possible to expand Brookmans Park further.
- 3.21 The Peter Kingsford book concludes, *'Times had changed, and with them the ownership of Brookmans Park from one person to several thousands. The two great houses, Brookmans and Gobions, the one destroyed by accident, the other by design, with their parklands, meadows and fields, their society of landowners, farmers, labourers and servants, had given way to a pleasant, residential village.'*
- 3.22 It is interesting to note that the size and capacity of the new railway station, built in 1926, and the scale and range of shops and facilities in the village centre of Brookmans Park, clearly envisaged a much larger settlement than was actually built. In fact, since the 1960's very little new housing has been provided in Brookmans

Park compared to the significant growth in other parts of the Welwyn Hatfield Borough.

- 3.23 The 1926 masterplan vision for Brookmans Park, comprising a population of approximately 7,500 was never fully realised. In fact, the population of Brookmans Park in 2011 was circa 3,561. This was largely due to the introduction of the Green Belt which curtailed the planned growth of Brookmans Park to the north of Bradmore Way (see Figure 1).

Heritage context

- 3.24 The Site does not lie within a conservation area, nor does it include any listed buildings. There are no heritage assets close to the Site. There are a number of listed buildings and two Registered Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest (RPGSHI) within or close to a 1km radius of the centre of the Site. The closest are the grade II listed walled gardens and adjoining house at Potterells, Station Road which lie some 600m to the west.
- 3.25 **The walled gardens and adjoining house at Potterells, Station Road** were listed grade II on 9 December 1983. This is a C18th walled garden, on the south-east side of Potterells, comprising 3-4 metres high red brick walling.
- 3.26 **Nos. 42, 44, 46, 48 Station Road, Welham Green** (The Crawford Cottages) were listed grade II on 8 September 1981. This is a C17th cottage range. They comprise a timber frame faced with roughcast and have plain tile steep pitched roofs.
- 3.27 **No. 31 Station Road, Welham Green**, was listed grade II on 9 December 1983. This is a small C17 (or earlier) timber frame house, converted to two cottages in the C18, now one house. It is roughcast with a plain tile roof with 2 gabled dormers.
- 3.28 **No. 27 Station Road, Woodbine Cottage, Welham Green**, was listed grade II on 9 December 1983. This is a small C17 (or earlier) timber frame house. It is roughcast and has a plain tile roof with heightened eaves (probably refloored in C18th).
- 3.29 **Skimpans Farm, Bulls Lane, Welham Green**, was listed grade II on 6 February 1952. This C17th farmhouse (now house) was extended in the C19th. It is built of painted red brick and roughcast with a plain tile and slate roof.
- 3.30 **The granary at Skimpans Farm, Bulls Lane, Welham Green**, was listed grade II on 9 December 1983. This is a late C18th or early C19th granary built of red brick with an exposed timber frame. It is a small square building with a plank pyramid roof.

- 3.31 **No. 65 Moffats Lane, Moffats Farmhouse, Brookmans Park**, was listed grade II* on the 30 March 1966. This former farmhouse (now home) comprises an earlier C15th open hall, floored over in C16/17th and a C15th or C16th right gabled cross wing and earlier C17th left gabled cross wing and rear staircase tower. It was renovated in the mid-1960s.
- 3.32 **No. 65 Moffats Lane, granary at Moffats Farmhouse, Brookmans Park**, was listed grade II on the 9 December 1983. This former granary, now storehouse, dates from the mid C19th. It is weatherboarded and has a pyramid plain tile roof with terracotta ridge tiles.
- 3.33 **Nos. 64 and 62 Moffats Lane, Moffats and the White House, Brookmans Park**, was listed grade II on the 22 August 1972. This is a 2 storey large house of late C17th origin, now 2 properties (formerly a school). It is built of red brick to the left side (Moffats), and painted brick to the right (The White House).
- 3.34 **No. 56 Bell Lane, Bell Bar**, was listed grade II on the 9 December 1983 (almost 10 years after no. 2 Bell Lane to the north, see below). This house, formerly known as Elm Tree Farmhouse, is early to mid C18th in date and was heightened and extended at the rear in the early C19th.
- 3.35 **No. 48 Bell Lane, , Bell Bar (Carpenter's Cottage)** was listed grade II on 9 December 1983 This is an earlier C17th timber framed house.
- 3.36 **No. 2 Bell Lane, Bell Bar (Lower Farm Farmhouse)** was listed grade II on 6 November 1974. This Farmhouse has a c.1600 front range and a back parallel range on the left from the C17th. It is timber framed with brick infill.
- 3.37 **Gobions (Gubbins) Park and Garden, Brookmans Park** is a grade II RPGSHI added to the register on 11 June 1987. It comprises the remains of an C18 pleasure ground laid out by Charles Bridgeman in the 1730s, surrounded by a landscape park developed during the later C18 and early C19. The house was demolished c.1838.
- 'In 1836 Robert William Gaussen (d 1880) of Brookmans Park, a director and Governor of the Bank of England, bought Gobions (to which the name had reverted in the late C18/early C19), combining the two estates and pulling down Gobions House c 1838. Gaussen carried out planting in the area of woodland west of Bridgeman's work, which became increasingly neglected. In 1923 the Gaussen family sold the Brookmans and Gobions estates to developers, and houses were built along the north and east boundaries of the Gobions parkland. The remaining Gobions land, approximately one third of which is in public ownership and open to the public, is now (1999) in divided ownership.'*
- 3.38 Gobions lies 2km north of the centre of Potters Bar and 4km south-east of Hatfield. The c. 90ha park is bounded to the north and east by mid to late C20 housing,

separating the park from its former eastern boundary, the Great North Road, and former northern boundary, the remains of the parkland of the former Brookmans Park. To the north of the C20 Brookmans Park development lies the former parkland of the Brookmans Park estate, now (1999) a golf course, with which the Gobions parkland was joined in the mid C19 by Robert William Gausson. The immediate setting to the south, west and east is rural, with, to the north, the C20 Brookmans Park housing development. To the east lies Leggatts Park, also part of the Brookmans Park estate in the C19.

- 3.39 **Hatfield House** is a grade I RPGSHI added to the register on 11 June 1987. It is an early C17th country mansion surrounded by extensive and complex gardens and park, created from the medieval parks of Hatfield. Robert Cecil's formal, early C17th gardens were created with input from designers including Thomas Chaundler and Salomon de Caus, and planted by John Tradescant the elder, at that time the head gardener. The gardens were landscaped in the C18th, but then remodelled and extended in the C19th and C20th.

4 ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS & CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 This section assesses the effects of the Proposed Development on heritage significance. It assesses the Proposed Development as relevant to the consideration of effects on heritage significance and goes on to assess the effect of the Proposed Development on the setting of the listed buildings and RPGSHI identified in the surrounding area in section 3.
- 4.2 Reference should be made to the DAS, masterplan, and planning statement accompanying the application, which set out the Proposed Development.

The Proposed Development

- 4.3 The Proposed Development will comprise 125 dwellings, a c60 unit care home and a scout hut, and be no higher than 2.5 storeys. The Site, Brookmans Park (BrP12a), has been recommended for allocation for housing development and the type, scale and character of development proposed is similar to that found in the existing Brookmans Park village to the south.
- 4.4 There are no heritage assets close to the Site and those in the wider area have been identified above. The Site is surrounded by treed areas to the west and north, and adjoins the Brookmans Park Golf Club to the east, which has a well treed edge to the north-east.
- 4.5 The Proposed Development will sit as a natural extension to the suburban development of Brookmans Park to the south, continuing the existing pattern and scale of development. The scale of development proposed, nature of the surrounding treed landscape and distance of heritage assets from the Site means that there will be no effect on any element of setting that contributes to the significance of any designated heritage asset.

Conclusions

- 4.6 The Proposed Development is a carefully considered response to the Site and its wider heritage context. In respect of the illustrative masterplan considered in its own right, and the relationship between it and its heritage context, the proposals are entirely sensitive and appropriate, and there will be no harmful effects. The Proposed Development is in line with relevant legislation, the policies and guidance on heritage set out in the NPPF and PPG; London Plan policies; Local Plan policies; relevant SPDs; and HE guidance.

Gareth Jones Heritage Planning
22 February 2022