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Planning Department  
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AL8 6AE

**FAO: Ms Louise Sahlke**

Sent via e-mail only to: [l.sahlke@welhat.gov.uk](mailto:l.sahlke@welhat.gov.uk)

Date: 10<sup>th</sup> June 2022

Dear Ms Sahlke

**Planning Application Reference: 6/2022/1106/FULL**

Thank you for your letter dated 20th May 2022, the content of which we have considered carefully along with copies of the above application online.

We have some concerns associated with this application and wish to object on the grounds set out below;

- 1) Character and Appearance – The proposals do not respect the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The poor quality design along with the height (3.5 storeys), massing and scale of the proposed apartment block building do not enhance the character of the area and it is not in keeping, being significantly taller than neighbouring buildings in the immediate area. This is contrary to policy D2: Character and Context in the 2005 Welwyn Hatfield District Plan.
  - 2) Loss of Residential Amenity – The proposals are not well sited and will have a significant adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties at both 3 and 4 Longcroft Green. The impact on residential amenity includes the loss of privacy, loss of light and an overbearing sense of enclosure. This is contrary to policy D1: Quality of Design in the 2005 Welwyn Hatfield District Plan
  - 3) Landscaping and trees – It is proposed that existing trees and shrubs/hedgerow, at both the front and back of our property, be removed. The proposals do not show
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plans to adequately replace these with mature alternatives, particularly with regards the shrub/hedgerow at the front and side of our property. The Proposed Site Plan on page 9 of the RM Architects Design and Access Statement states that there is an "existing closeboard fence" running along the entirety of that boundary when in fact there is not. Loss of this shrub/hedgerow, with no proposed replacement, would further impact on our loss of privacy and significantly expose the front of numbers [REDACTED] Longcroft Green to the main road. This is contrary to policy D8: Landscaping in the 2005 Welwyn Hatfield District Plan.

- 4) The siting and proximity of the proposed development, and of the proposed apartment block in particular, will result in a significant increase in traffic of both vehicles and people to the rear of both numbers [REDACTED] Longcroft Green, which is presently closed off to the public. Coupled with the removal of many mature trees which currently provide some screening, this will inevitably increase noise levels to an unacceptable level and will be incapable of being controlled. This is contrary to policy R19: Noise and Vibration Pollution in the 2005 Welwyn Hatfield District Plan.

Further to the above, the application contains some inaccuracies which I will seek to provide some clarity on.

- 5) The Ecological Appraisal states that there are no slow-worms located at or near the site, with the last sighting apparently having taken place some 350m away and as far back as 2015. This is not correct; we can evidence slow-worms within the boundary of our property, approximately 1m from the application site, as recently as 15th August 2021.

Slow-worms (*Anguis fragilis*) are protected reptiles under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and as such any development that adversely impact them is contrary to policy R16 - Protection of Species in the 2005 Welwyn Hatfield District Plan.

- 6) The Constraint Plan on page 7 of the RM Architects Design and Access Statement states that our garden at [REDACTED] Longcroft Green is already overlooked, presumably by a window on the side of [REDACTED] Longcroft Green (see image 1 below), however this is not correct as there is no window on that side of the house at number [REDACTED] (see image 2 below) meaning that our rear garden is currently not overlooked from any direction.
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Image 1 - From the Constraint Plan (green circle added)



Image 2 - Showing no overlooking window.

The upper windows and balconies, on the south and east elevations respectively, of the proposed apartment block would significantly overlook our garden and bedroom at number ■ Longcroft Green. Anyone standing on the east elevation balconies and looking to their right would have an unobstructed view into our main bedroom. This is contrary to policy D1: Quality of Design in the 2005 Welwyn Hatfield District Plan.

Further, guidance contained at paragraph 5.7 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan Supplementary Design Guidance states *"The Council expect all new residential development, whether extensions or new units to be designed, orientated and positioned in such a way to minimise overlooking between dwellings, which would affect their internal living areas and their private rear gardens or amenity areas"*

- 7) Paragraphs 3.5.4 and 3.5.5, "Improved Grassland" and "Amenity Grassland" respectively, on pages 19 and 20 of the Ecological Appraisal are based on a large proportion of the land being "intensively mown", however this is not normally the case and is usually high vegetation with a mix of wild plants and tall grasses. We would question whether the survey as properly taken this into account when considering the diverse habitat for wildlife that may be lost if the application was granted.
- 8) Taken together, the points set out at paragraphs 1 and 6 above should be considered alongside NPPF paragraph 134, which states;

*"Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes"*

As already set out, the development fails to take into account the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan Supplementary Design Guidance and is not in keeping with the surrounding buildings in either appearance or height.

For the reasons stated above, we would respectfully request that application reference 6/2022/1106/FULL be refused.

Yours sincerely

