Dear Sir/Madam,

I write to formally object to planning application 6/2015/1997/MAJ which proposes a significant development of the Comet Roundabout site in Hatfield.

There are a number of aspects that I would wish to draw your attention to:

1. The number of parking spaces is insufficient for the development. It would appear the developer has provided insufficient spaces to comply with Welwyn Hatfield’s policy on parking spaces for this type of development. Whilst there may be structures to allow the DMC to vary the number of places provided, I do not believe this would be appropriate in this case given the dearth of alternative parking in the surrounding area.
2. The impact of the student development on the setting and significance of the listed building. The listed building would be dominated by the multi-storey blocks of student accommodation. The setting and significance would, in my opinion, be harmed substantially, with no significant justification to offset such harm. This development should therefore be rejected as not compliant with the heritage safeguards in the NPPF and the policies of WHBC that reinforce the NPPF.
3. The scale and size of the blocks is inappropriate in the context of the surrounding development. The blocks will be significantly higher and therefore visible than any of the surrounding development. Whilst the Business Park and Galleria are clearly multiple storeys, no development south of St Albans Rd West/Cavendish Way is more than two storeys tall. The listed part of the Comet Hotel is also of these dimensions. Allowing multi-storey development south of this clear urban boundary, separating largely residential (apart from the hotel) and largely commercial/business areas sets a dangerous development precedent as there are no other clear geographic boundaries to a commercial development area.

Development of the residential fringe of Ellenbrook with multi-storey commercial properties replacing residential could clearly be expected if this development is permitted. This should be prevented.

Application 6/2015/1997/MAJ for student accommodation blocks of similar dimensions albeit along College Lane was partially refused because of the inappropriateness in the context of surrounding development. I would argue this development is of a very similar nature in a very similar location and should also be refused for very much the same reasons.

1. Loss of amenity for local residents. Overlooking and the clearly expected noise issues from such blocks is detrimental to the amenity of local residents.

The development is close up against the curtilage of the site, meaning multi-storey blocks immediately adjacent to current residents gardens and the rear of their properties. Overlooking is clearly a significant risk that a planting plan does not address. It fails to address the issue as overlooking through broadleaf trees is clearly possible throughout winter and there is no clear structure to ensure the trees prosper and thrive, meaning their blocking nature cannot and should not be relied upon to provide current residents with their privacy and peace.

On a final, personal, note, there is already very significant numbers of student flats being built at College Lane. It is not clear there is even a market for such flats, let alone a viable business that can utilise these properties into the future. The development rationale is therefore suspect and it is unclear why the developer believes this is a viable development. I really do think they should reconsider.

Yours Sincerely,

County Councillor Paul Zukowskyj