

Planning Application Reference 6/2022/2801/MAJ development of Campus East Welwyn Garden City by Bellway Homes (North London)Ltd

Objection the currently proposed scheme. **Basis of objection over development and massing density too great for the site.**

The proposed development of 313 new residential properties on the brown field site that is Campus East has much to commend it. When you cut through the “word soup” of weaknesses and constraints and strengths and opportunities which are largely unrelated to the proposed construction it’s clear that the design of the site has been given considerable thought and reference to the surrounding architectural styles.

The site is a valuable community asset and it should be used to the maximum benefit of the community and unfortunately it is in this area and in respect of the integration into the current infrastructure that the development has in my view fallen short. It appears that the maximum benefit is to the commercial property developer at the expense of the community.

The development provides accommodation for 999 persons.

However the site provides only 183 car parking spaces all with the exception of a community car club space and a small percentage of visitors spaces, will be allocated to the privately owned properties.

The development includes 28 properties which will be designated as Shared Ownership and 66 properties which will be Affordable Rent and presumably for the benefit of those on the housing list of Welwyn Hatfield Council.

It seems inherently unfair to assume that the Shared Ownership and Affordable Rent residents currently on the local authorities housing list will not have a car and more particularly that their car ownership will potentially preclude their qualification for securing a new home in the town.

Residents in the community currently using a car to access their employment in the surrounding towns who are perhaps living with parents or in shared or privately rented property should not be deprived of the opportunity to benefit from the community asset that is the Campus East site and discriminated against in favour of a private purchased property. The tenure “blind” aspects of the development should extend to the car parking arrangements.

The site clearly has insufficient car parking spaces as a result of the over development of the site.

Further evidence of the over development can be found in the comments of the Architect in relation to the Block and Site Character.

The Architect notes “The site isn’t large enough to create a traditional variation of character between blocks “

The obvious solution to this problem is not that which is proposed of “slight change of character through the variation of massing detailing and material between blocks “ but is a significant reduction in the massing by the removal of a complete storey from blocks A & B at the front of the site and including B4.

This will bring the development more into line with the Architect's comments noted in the Facade study which accurately confirms that the surrounding architectural "storey heights fluctuate between 2-4 storeys with higher built form predominantly positioned at the key corners".

The propose amendments would leave the higher built blocks along the railway line side of the site and create a better balance from front to back of the site and address the car parking spaces imbalance giving fairer benefit of the community asset. The lower storey heights at the front will also allow more light into the landscaped area promoting tree growth.

The interaction between the traffic, be it pedestrian, cyclists or motor vehicle and the popular Waitrose store adjacent to the development will potentially cause congestion and frustration to everyone if the scale of the scheme is not reduced.

The potential for residents of the scheme, be they private or council or visitors to the development to park in either the Waitrose customer car park for an hour or in the surrounding streets is immense with the currently proposed density. Waitrose customers will desert the store if it becomes too difficult to access and park in the customer car park resulting potentially in the loss of a significant local amenity and council tax to Welwyn Hatfield Council.

Summary

The development is a high quality design and specification scheme making good use of a brown field site.

The scale of the development is however too large for the site and cannot reasonably be integrated into the surrounding infrastructure and the community receives too little benefit from this community asset.

Please negotiate with the developer a reduction in the numbers of dwellings and a better balance between private and community residential parking.