

## **Campus Park East (Bellway Homes)**

**Application Reference: /6/2022/2801/MAJ**

Having lived in Welwyn Garden City for 57 years, I recognise and appreciate that the town is both unique and special, in part because of its layout, but also because of the strict guidelines that have ensured consistency and control in any growth and development. The proposed construction on the former Campus East car park falls short of these standards as well as failing to meet the criteria set by policy. As a resident of Blakemere Road for 35 years, I have come to value what it means to live in a conservation area. The plans submitted by Bellway Homes contravene the factors that shape living in the heart of the town; the shortcomings will be highly visible from a number of viewpoints and will not enhance either the town or the lives of its residents.

Starting with the issue of visibility, the height of the buildings means they will be seen from a considerable distance. Not only does this breach the height stipulated for a conservation area, it will also significantly impact the neighbouring properties at the north end of the site: light, noise and privacy will be negatively impacted.

Furthermore, the five and six storey buildings will adversely affect the density of dwellings per hectare, particularly as the proposals are for 313 dwellings (and not the 290 homes allocated within the local plan). In addition, the type of dwelling proposed will have an impact on density. What has happened to the Council's policy stipulation that 62% of dwellings on new developments should have three or four bedrooms? Bellway Homes' proposals are designed to squeeze as many dwellings as possible into as small a space as possible.

Inevitably, this number of dwellings will mean an increase in vehicles using the roads in the vicinity of the development. Bellway Homes propose access to the properties from The Campus along College Way. Both sections of College Way are already difficult to navigate because of parked cars, with the section between Peel Court and the Council Offices being further congested because of Waitrose shoppers.

Then there is the problem of where all these additional cars will be parked during the day and overnight. Anyone living on the West Side of Welwyn Garden City will testify to added pressure on parking from those working in or visiting the town. The Covid years have taught us that commuting to London is no longer the norm, and with many people working from home, it seems implausible that an allocation of 0.58 parking spaces per dwelling, shrinking to 0.37 per 'affordable' home, will be adequate.

Planning has been remiss when considering infrastructure, but also facilities. My two children were born and grew up in Blakemere Road. They enjoyed green spaces on which to play and could walk to Templewood School. The physical and mental well-being of all children is paramount, yet the proposals for this development offer poor provision of open play space and it is unclear where these children will be educated. If children cannot walk or cycle to their local school, they will be climbing into a car, thus contributing to emissions and impacting their physical well-being.

The application on behalf of Bellway Homes is a dilution of the Garden City ethos. If permission is granted, we can safely say that the town's motto, "By wisdom and design", has been forgotten.