

Campus East Carpark - Bellway Homes

Application Reference 6/2022/2801/MAJ

I object to the plans in their current form. Welwyn Garden City residents deserve better than this, which both breaches the council's own policies and does not enhance our town nor provide the type of housing stock we desperately need.

Having attended the consultations and a meeting with Bellway Homes at Campus West it appears that they already had their plans and were not open to implementing the changes they discussed with us. For example they told us they had removed the sixth storey and they haven't.

I feel we have been betrayed and misled.

My objections

1. Planning application submitted by Bellway - lack of transparency which is in danger of hiding the issues

Firstly and most importantly I don't feel the planning application submitted by Bellway homes has been specific enough. For example there was a complete absence of any written details clarifying the heights of buildings, number of levels, or the proximity to existing homes. As residents we have had to trawl through an abundance of separate images and try and come to our own conclusions. Not only is this lack of transparency unacceptable it also serves as a 'smoke screen' behind which issues such as heights and density of buildings can be hidden from view. This is not in my view a fair nor transparent process.

2. Conservation area - design

These flats will be situated centrally right in the heart of Welwyn Garden City and within the conservation area. As residents already residing within this area we have tough restrictions when it comes to adapting/DIY our homes which is quite rightly in place to protect our heritage as a Garden City. So how can this proposed development with 'office style' buildings, metal balconies, and window frames which are not white Georgian style be permitted? What makes Bellway homes different to mine? And how can they even consider peaking at six storeys high? Peel Court managed to build blocks which were four storeys and used sensitive designs to blend in adjacent to this site so why can't Bellway also be held to account. It is in the very heart of town and in the conservation area and if it goes ahead in its current form it will be the nail in the coffin for our Garden City.

3. Existing homes on the boundary of the development - loss of privacy and light

As a resident with a little cluster house on the boundary of this development I am concerned. We have enjoyed the privacy of our communal gardens but these will be overlooked with a loss of privacy if these dwellings are built in their proposed form.

We will also sustain a massive loss of light. Greater consideration is needed here to actually work with residents to find an amicable solution rather than plonk a four/five storey block at the end of our

gardens which is at least 3 times the height of our existing homes. All blocks close to existing homes should be a maximum of three storeys high and further set back. The tree line which runs along the edge of the site by Gresley Close and parallel to the drainage ditch needs to remain insitu and to be improved to provide some much needed protection for residents.

4. Allocation of Parking

At an earlier stage Bellway homes proposed 292 flats and 219 parking spaces which was a ratio of parking spaces of 0.75%. They are now proposing 313 flats and 183 parking spaces which is 0.58%. The Gresley Close cluster houses have both allocated spaces and additional visitors bays. It is a myth that people will be happy to buy flats without parking spaces. We are endlessly approached by new residents who have moved to the area who are wanting to hire our parking spaces with demand outstripping supply here! The lack of adequate parking is a huge concern and will likely impact adjoining roads.

Cars will be needed by residents with children as they will likely have to drive miles to find schools with capacity. Our local bus services are woefully inadequate and unreliable. There is only one bus linking Welwyn Garden City with the Lister Hospital and this cannot be relied upon as I have discovered on the two occasions I tried to use it! Half a parking space per flat is woefully inadequate and will no doubt lead to neighbours disputes which has been seen on other new developments without enough parking.

6. Lack of social housing and family homes

I understand that none of the flats will be set aside for social housing, ie for those of the council housing waiting list. This is a shameful disgrace! The terms social, affordable OR Intermediate rent, are very misleading. But maybe the work OR enables this to happen. This land is owned by Welwyn Hatfield Council and leased to Bellway so should be an example and set a precedent.

Also it is inexcusable to have a 'poor door rich door' situation where those who buy on the open market at full price have one block with more parking while those renting are 'put' in another. I thought the days of such blatant inequality were over!

We are in need of 3 & 4 bedroom homes, indeed your own documents state this. We have an abundance of unsold one and two bedroom flats with inadequate parking. Surely we need to look at what is needed.

7. Density

The density of these blocks is unacceptable and will be vastly denser than any other flats built in Welwyn Garden City. It will be seen from the centre of town in all directions. Earlier consultations suggested in the region of 280 flats and this has now risen by a further 33 flats.