

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Planning Comments \(Shared Mailbox\)](#)
Subject: Re: Application 6/2022/2801/MAJ - OBJECTION
Date: 21 January 2023 13:25:10

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I have just realised the below objection may not be included as it doesn't have my address. Therefore please note my address is 59 Blakemere Road, Welwyn Garden City, AL8 7PQ.

Please can you confirm that my objection has been received.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

On Thu, 19 Jan 2023, 17:19 [REDACTED] wrote:

To The Planning Department at Welwyn & Hatfield Council,

I am writing to put forward my objections & comments regarding the proposal from Bellway Homes to develop Campus East Car Park into 313 Flats under Application 6/2022/2801/MA.

For ease I have listed & grouped these below but overall I am in disbelief that the Council find it appropriate to sell their land for £18m on a 250 year lease to a company that has designed a development that doesn't meet ANY of the Council's policy targets, goes against the conservation regulations and is not in keeping with everything promoted by the Council in Welwyn **Garden** City's Centenary year. All this project should do is make Bellway Homes a healthy profit, assuming they can sell the properties (addressed below).

1 - Conservation Area

The site is part of the conservation area and as such falls under the Council's Policy town-wide for a maximum of 5 storeys. This development has 6 storey blocks included within it, which contravenes the Council's own policy. The other adjoining / nearby properties (e.g. Peel Court, the Council offices & Oaklands College) are all 4 stories or less. Peel Court is the most recently developed residential property in close proximity to the site and it has a maximum of 4 stories and therefore there is precedent in this area for 4 floors.

In addition to this the design of the blocks is not in keeping with the conservation area and the town design - particularly the window style used compared to those

in the town centre design guide and the use of mansard roofs, as used in many Welwyn Garden City town centre buildings. The Council were very happy to promote the Centenary year in 2020 and how great the town is, its heritage and what Ebenezer Howard designed and delivered and this proposal goes against that completely.

2 - Number & type of dwellings:

Based on the size of the land this development will be c.150 dwellings per hectare - which is double the Broadwater Road Supplementary Planning Document and significantly more than any of the other town centre properties. This is not appropriate, particularly given the other properties in the area (Peel Court, Blakemere Road, Walden Road & Gresley Close) and the pressures this is going to have on water supplies, council services, the road & rail network, schooling (discussed further later) and health facilities.

The original plan that was presented to residents in the Howard Centre last year was for 280 flats, the general feedback that was available publicly was that there were too many properties on the plot, however this has now increased to 313, almost 10% more than the number allocated in the Local Plan, without any reasoning. Why is this, other than for the builder to generate higher profits!

In addition the high density is due to the development being ALL FLATS - The Council's own policy states that 62% of dwellings on new developments should be 3 or 4 bedroom properties - less than 5% of the properties on this plan are 3 bed & there are no 4 bed.

Another major factor linked to this is that following the Coronavirus Pandemic there is a desire for people to live in houses & have some personal outside space and flats are in much lower demand, This can be seen locally by the abundance of flats currently available in WGC and the surrounding towns before the already approved new developments are built (e.g. the flats above Debenhams that aren't all sold) and a number of these newer developments that are open are falling into disrepair & disrepute because there isn't the demand and they aren't being looked after properly (e.g. Time Square).

3 - Privacy & Light:

The development is surrounded on 2 or 3 sides by existing residential properties - Peel Court, Blakemere Road, Walden Road & Gresley Close - due to the height of the designs that have been submitted there will be privacy issues for the residents bordering this property. In addition to this the height of the properties will impact their access to light - meaning this development will negatively impact the quality of life of these existing residents, particularly at the end of Gresley Close and the 6 storey building overlooking Peel Court, surely we want to be taking care of the elderly & vulnerable and shouldn't be putting them in the middle of a building site for many years and then subjecting them to additional traffic at all times of day and night. As a car park for the Council and

college the cars currently arrive in the morning and leave in the evening and are not really coming and going all day. If the height of the buildings were limited to 3 or 4 stories this impact would be removed as people would still have light and privacy and the number of vehicles on the property would be fewer as there would be fewer homes.

Also it is difficult to determine the exact impact the development will have on both these issues as the documents submitted to planning were not sufficient to be able to demonstrate this, as they haven't shown the area with the trees removed etc, although these will have been produced for internal reviews.

4 - Parking:

The parking consideration is inadequate as they have only allocated 0.58 parking spaces per dwelling overall - which is significantly lower than the real and current evidence from the 2021 census that shows car ownership in the immediate area (Handside and Sherrards), is significantly higher with >77% of homes having at least one vehicle, and the average vehicle ownership being at least 1.2 (Source: 2021 Census). The slit of this 0.58 also needs to be challenged as the owned homes will have 1 parking space per home whereas the "affordable" homes will have 0.37 per home - this is discriminatory particularly as there is no explanation or supporting evidence for this.

These parking challenges are before any consideration is taken for guest / visitor spaces.

Just because there are not the spaces will not prevent people from owning cars and they will end up parking on the verges and road network near the development, particularly the streets already mentioned above, putting undue pressure on these roads. There is proof of this already with the Time Square residents using all of the parking spaces at the Post Office and around that roundabout.

Given the decrease in the number of parking spaces and the desire of the Council to travel more sustainably I would have expected the development to include a provision for bike parking but this is not included either.

Finally, on parking only 50% of spaces have been equipped for electric vehicles - this is in contravention of building regulations Part S introduced in 2021. I understand this is a building regulation rather than planning regulation, but how can the council be deemed to be unbiased and fair if the application is approved with you knowing it breeches building regulations.

5 - Children:

The plan says there will be areas for children to play, suggesting the development will be for families not just adults. It is worth noting that the only primary school within 1km of the site is only a one form year and is already full. This school is also Grade 2 listed so can't be extended. Therefore where will the

children go to school and if it is further away then 1km this will mean more of the houses will need cars to get their children to and from school, as the local transport systems are not good enough. There are also issues with the number of secondary schools locally as well. It is therefore essential that the county ensures that adequate schools provision is in place in local schools that can be reached by sustainable transport, cycling and walking, prior to the approval of this development.

In addition to this the plan suggests an area for children to play outside, however all of the images show these areas being covered with trees, flower beds etc making it impossible for children to play. There is The Campus nearby but this could be dangerous as it is in the middle of the very busy roundabout.

6: Social / Affordable Housing:

The Council currently have 3,000 families / people on the waiting list for social housing and given this is land owned by the Council it is appalling that a proposal can be submitted without there being any consideration for this (0 homes for social housing!), not least because policy states that the social housing allocation on this site should be 47 units. In addition the current allocation for "affordable housing" is mainly in one block and it is known that this won't work effectively as it discriminates and causes a divide, as has been seen throughout the UK on new developments.

Is this site really what you want to be remembered for as it makes me very sad and ashamed to be a resident in this town.

Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]