


11 Gresley Close
Welwyn Garden City
AL8 7QA
23 January 2023

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
The Campus,
Welwyn Garden City
AL8 6AE

Sent by email to: p.comments@welhat.gov.uk

Dear Sir / Madam,

Subject: Application 6/2022/2801/MAJ

I am writing to object in the strongest possible terms to this planning application. There has been extensive housing development in the local area (namely Broadwater Road, Bessemer Road and the Town Centre itself e.g. the former Debenhams site) in recent years and this is now going to far.

The proposed site is in a highly visible space within the conservation area. The application **does not** meet the criteria set under the policies documented in the local plan. In actual fact, it falls short in a number of areas:

Concerns on the current plans

1. 6 storeys is inconsistent with the council's policy town-wide policy of a maximum of 5 storeys. The 6-storey block is within the conservation area and therefore this height limit must be adhered to.
2. The blocks at the north end of the site rise to 4/5 storeys where they meet neighbouring properties. This gives rise to privacy and encroachment issues and should be reviewed to avoid concerns for the existing residents of Gresley Close.
3. There is a lack of continuity in the design between the block in the conservation and the blocks not within. The design does not the accepted window and roof styles in the town centre design guide.
4. There is a proposed density of 150 dwellings per hectare. This is vastly greater than any other site in the town centre and twice the desired density in the Broadwater Road Supplementary Planning Document. This needs to be reviewed as a matter of urgency
5. Council policy states that 62% of dwellings on new developments should be 3 and 4 bedrooms. This application fails as only 4.6% are 3 bed and 0% are 4 bed. This is a shortfall of 182 properties.
6. Serious concerns around the proposed allocation of affordable housing which is predominantly in one block. Affordable housing should be positioned around the development so as not to create a social divide across the development.

Parking Concerns

1. Allocation of parking is 0.58 per dwelling. The 2021 census shows that car ownership in the immediate area (namely Sherrards and Handisde), is significantly higher, at least 77% of homes have at least one vehicle, and average vehicle ownership is at least 1.2. While the owned homes will all have a parking space, the 'affordable' homes will only have 0.37 per home. What is the evidence to support this assumption that those living in affordable homes have less requirement for a vehicle.
2. The allocation of spaces equipped with electric vehicle charging is at 50%. This is in direct contravention of building regulations Part S introduced in 2021.

Other Concerns

1. There is a distinct absence of play space for children residing at the development. This would present an opportunity to provide such facilities and this increasing the greenery in and around the development. Without adequate space, the risk is that there will be a build up of anti-social behaviour around the area or children will be forced across to the Campus which will mean crossing a busy road.
2. Given the expense being incurred to create a cycle super highway around the town centre why is there no consideration for a dedicated cycle route to connect to the path recently created on Hunters Bridge?
3. No provision has been considered to increase the local facilities in terms of:
 - a. Additional educational needs – where are the new children that will become residents expected to go to school given the current options are already at or close to full capacity.
 - b. Access to healthcare e.g. doctors and nhs dentists which already over subscribed. How will this be addressed?
 - c. The road facilities have been reduced due to the introduction of cycle lanes meaning the traffic congestion around the area at peak times will increase bringing with it all the harmful polluting elements that globally are trying to be reduced. This will do the complete opposite.

Finally, given the council has already done a deal to sell the land to the developer, I would like to understand how we can be provided with reassurance that this application will be managed with integrity and all decisions are clear and transparent.

I have a very serious concern that this seems to be money making exercise for the council to collect their £18M from Bellway given there is no provision at all for Social Housing on the site despite the fact that this goes entirely against local policy and given there are over 3,000 residents on the current waiting list for a property who could now benefit from the sale council land.

Yours faithfully,

