

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Planning](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Application Reference: /6/2022/2801/MAJ Campus park east (Bellway Homes)
Date: 24 January 2023 10:06:57

You don't often get email from [REDACTED]. [Learn why this is important](#)

**** WARNING: This email originated outside the WHBC Network. Please be extra vigilant when opening attachments or clicking links ****

PLANNING OBJECTION

It's no secret that we need more housing and none of us want to see families etc to be homeless when they could have a roof over their heads. That aside this site is located in a part of town that is very visible and borders lots of other older, established buildings which are more akin to the architectural origins of the Garden City.

Unfortunately it plays to the developers desires to fit as many home as possible on the plot and not the needs of the people who will live there nor the lives of the current WGC inhabitants who will ultimately have to live alongside them - mainly further strain on the already fragile infrastructure - roads, public transport, schools, doctor, dentist, outpatients, social services.

1. Social Housing. Policy states that social housing allocation on this site should be 47 units, yet this application has 0% social allocation. On a site that the council owns and has leased to the developer, to have not helped one single person from the 3,000 on the waiting list is both disgraceful and against policy.
2. Affordable Housing. The current allocation of affordable housing is predominantly in one block. We have seen tangible evidence in local developments of this not working effectively. The affordable housing should be positioned around the development so as not to create a divide or stigma.
3. Dwelling Type. 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.
4. Density. The site is slightly over 2 hectares, meaning that there is a 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
5. Local Plan. The local plan has an allocation for a maximum of 290 homes, this application increases this by 8% without adequate or any justification.

Where are the homes with gardens? Where are the houses?

Time and time again the planning office allow developed to squeeze every plot to the max. No regard for quality of life, child safety, and infrastructure.

6. Height. The block(s) of 6 storeys is at odds with the council's policy town-wide policy of a maximum of 5 storeys. The 6-storey block is within the conservation area and this height limit must be adhered to. This is much higher than any other buildings on the west side of the town especially in that town centre area and will further erode the skyline, light etc.

7. Overlooking. The blocks at the north end of the site rise to 4/5 storeys at the point where they meet neighbouring properties. This gives rise to privacy and encroachment issues to those neighbours. Where the site borders lower properties the height should be limited to avoid these issues, On other masterplans (eg Birchall Garden suburb), heights are stepped up from existing houses, so 3 storeys would be more reasonable at the north end. This

should also be addressed and also potentially sent to the design review panel prior to being heard at DMC.

8. Parking Rate. The allocation of parking on the application is 0.58 per dwelling overall. Whilst this is a town centre site and can be deemed to be more sustainable than elsewhere, real and current evidence from the 2021 census shows that car ownership in the immediate area (Handside and Sherrards), is significantly higher. In fact, it shows clearly that at least 77% of homes have at least one vehicle, and average vehicle ownership is at least 1.2. (Source: 2021 Census).

9. Parking Split. While the owned homes will all have a parking space, the 'affordable' homes will only have 0.37 per home. This is clearly insufficient and there is no justification, rationale or supporting evidence for the assumption that those living in affordable homes have less requirement for a vehicle.

10. EV Charging. The allocation of spaces equipped with EV is at 50%, this is in contravention of building regulations Part S introduced in 2021. Whilst officers may state that this is a building regulation rather than planning regulation, it would be wholly negligent and remiss of any officer to recommend an application for approval, whilst being aware that it contravenes building regulations.

11. Play Space. This is really sad given we are a garden city and the benefits of children playing outdoors v's indoors staring at screens has been proven time and time again. Absence of space where older children could play ball games. While the area of open space is perhaps acceptable, it is punctuated by a large number of trees which would make ball games impossible. Local Areas of Play needed. Or does the applicant expect children to use The Campus, necessitating crossing a busy road and playing up to a busy road?

12. Design. There is a lack of continuity in the design between the block in the conservation and the blocks not within. The design does not utilise the accepted window style in the town centre design guide. The design does not widely utilise mansard roofs, which is the style of town centre dwellings.

13. Sustainability. Where is the cycle path that would be ideal to encourage sustainable vehicle use? There is a huge, missed opportunity to include cycle facilities to reduce the existing gap between the new cycle path on Hunters Bridge, to the Ayot Greenway. Simply reducing car park spaces, does not achieve sustainable transport use, as has been evidenced in other local developments. I suggest that at the very least a sizeable S106 contribution is made based on the recommendations from the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans team at HCC.


14. Education. Specifically, where will the children of the new residents go to school? Our current schools are in a poor state of repair, creaking at the seams and due to underinvestment over many decades this isn't going to improve any time soon, so why compound the issue? An S106 contribution towards schools does not magically create space for schools to expand both physically and in terms of class numbers. The county must ensure that adequate schools provision is in place in local schools that can be reached by sustainable transport, cycling and walking, prior to the development being approved.

15. Consultation. As a general note, it should be recorded that the consultation on this development appears to have been nothing more than a PR exercise. Having initially consulted and made changes to the plans, the application that has been submitted does not reflect the changes that were expected. Whilst it is not the council holding the consultation, WHBC should have guidelines so that as a minimum requirement consultations are a) Meaningful b) Given Adequate Notice c) Held at convenient times for the public d) Provide Adequate information to enable an informed opinion to be reached. It all feels very underhand and it's disappointing to see it went live during the Christmas holidays. This isn't the first time the Planning Dept have done this in recent years, I seem really remember a similar timeline for the Campus West car park!

16. Application Documents. The documents submitted by the applicant do not give residents or councillors adequate information on which to produce an informed opinion. There is a lack of rendered views from various aspects around the development e.g the

Campus. Scant details of screening around the car park areas, and I don't believe that anywhere other than on a technical drawing, does it refer to block A being 6 storeys tall. Once again, this is not conducive to an open and transparent consultation with affected stakeholders.

Again I draw parallels with the newly extended Campus West car park - it's an eyesore in a Conservation Area? How can this be allowed to happen again and again. What steps are being taken to assure the public that this new proposed site won't go the same well. Strict, detailed conditions need to be agreed with Bellway Homes that would show us how the development will look and be landscaped longer term so we don't have yet another white elephant in the town.


11 Roundwood Drive
Welwyn Garden City
AL8 7JZ