

The proposed development is cited within a prominent area in Welwyn Garden City's conservation area and the size of the development will significantly impact on residents, particularly in Handside and Sherrards wards. As it stands, the application submitted does not meet the needs of residents it is designed for, it negatively impacts residents living in the surrounding area and does nothing to support the housing needs of Welwyn Garden City. In addition to this the design is not sympathetic to the town centre design which is unique to the Garden City.

Whilst the proposal shows that it has an allocation of affordable housing at around 30%, it has no allocation for social housing. It is concerning that this development will not assist anyone currently on the council housing waiting list which is presently in the thousands.

There is already a significant pressure on primary school places in Handside ward, and there is no consideration for education provision with an extra 313 dwellings. A S106 contribution towards education does not go far enough.

The 2021 census shows that Handside ward has a high car ownership; and modelling for this development does not reflect this. There is a risk that this will increase the pressure on residential roads which are already feeling the squeeze from existing blocks of flats in the towns centre. I do champion sustainable transport methods, and if this application had strong sustainable transport credentials, then the car parking space allocation would be somewhat understandable. However, this application only has electric vehicle charging points at 50% of the spaces and does not make use or link to any existing cycle paths.

The design of the site is not in keeping with the current town centre design, for example the use of mansard roofs. The tallest block is to sit at six storey's which is not in keeping with the area or the council's own policy of maximum five storeys. To the north of the site there is a risk of the development overlooking neighbouring properties. The development exceeds the local plan allocation of 290 dwellings and there is no good reason for this increase.

The development of Campus East is an opportunity to continue the ethos of the garden city and as the application stands it falls short of this standard.

Councillor Gemma Moore
Handside Ward