

**COPY OF LETTER SUBMITTED BY EMAIL**

29 Blakemere Road,  
Welwyn Garden City,  
AL87PQ  
21.1.202

Dear Sir/ Madam,

**Campus Park East (Bellway Homes)**  
**Application Reference: /6/2022/2801/MAJ**

I am writing to **object** to the above planning application.

Firstly, may I say that I am very pleased to see this land developed for much-needed housing - it has long been under-used as a car park. And I'm glad that the developer proposes to retain the trees and grass alongside College Way, between Waitrose and the College. Having said that, there is much to feel concerned about in this proposal, and I would like to register my **objection to the scheme** for the following reasons.

### **Density**

The scheme is far too big for the site. The blocks are crammed into a site of just over 2 hectares, which means that the development has a density of 150 dwellings per hectare. No other site in the town centre has anywhere near this density, and even the Broadwater Road Supplementary Planning Document stipulates a density just half as great as this. The draft local plan allocates 290 homes (maximum) to this site. This proposal exceeds this figure by 8%. Living cheek by jowl with inadequate green space and insufficient parking would be bad for residents and would impact deleteriously on our town centre and on the West Side Conservation Area.

### **Height**

The buildings are too tall. The Council's town-wide policy of a maximum of five storeys must be upheld. The six-storey block is moreover within the Conservation Area. The height of the proposed scheme would have a most detrimental impact on Blakemere Road and Gresley Close, where even the three storeys of blocks C and D would overlook neighbouring gardens. Residents in the houses nearest to the development would find their privacy compromised, whilst everyone living in the neighbourhood would have their views impaired. Even for the residents of the proposed scheme a height of six storeys in block A would, for much of the year, create a gloomy sunless outlook from the lower windows overlooking the central courtyard.

### **Architectural design**

This site is partly within and partly abutting the West Side Conservation Area, and the design of any new buildings must respect the architectural quality and the character of the area. The elevation drawings for this scheme reveal a sadly undistinguished design, where the only effort to recognise the character of the Conservation Area has been to propose a red brick

finish. The design doesn't employ the accepted window style in the town centre design guide, nor does it use many mansard roofs, which are the norm for town centre dwellings. In short it's a humdrum design that could be found anywhere. It would only detract from its surroundings, and is utterly unworthy of the town centre and the Conservation Area.

### **Types of Dwelling**

Council policy states that 62% of dwellings on new developments should have three and four bedrooms. There are no four bedroom properties at all in this scheme, and only 4.6% have three bedrooms - a massive shortfall. Importantly, Council policy stipulates that social housing allocation on this site should be 47 units, yet this application has 0% social allocation. This is surely a heinous omission. The Council housing waiting list numbers around 3,000 people, and this development must comply with the policy and create the required number of social housing units. The developers do boast of providing affordable housing, but according to the designs, most of these flats would be located in a single block. Would this not create a social divide which would mitigate against community development?

### **Green space**

Due to the excessive density there is little green space between the buildings. This would have a negative impact on the living conditions of the residents, and is completely out of character with the town centre and the Conservation Area, which are distinguished by (indeed famous for) their spacious landscaping. Reducing density should involve not simply decreasing the height of blocks, but the footprint of the buildings should also be reduced.

### **Parking**

The plans show inadequate parking spaces for the number of flats proposed. Even though we might like residents of town centre apartments to live without cars, the reality is unfortunately different. This scheme doesn't even provide one space per flat, let alone any visitor parking. The inevitable outcome would be that the residents would be driven to seek parking in the surrounding roads. Blakemere Road and Gresley Close would be plagued by overnight parking and a consequent unwelcome increase in traffic. Furthermore, whilst the owned flats would all have a parking space, the 'affordable' homes would only be allocated 0.37 per home. This seems grossly inequitable, and I wonder what the supporting evidence for this allocation was. Finally, only 50% of parking spaces would be equipped with electric vehicle charging, which contravenes building regulations Part S, introduced in 2021. Surely a new housing scheme should be equipping residents with the infrastructure they will need when electric cars become the norm?

### **Supporting infrastructure**

A sizeable new community would be created by a development of this size, and there would be a need for school places for the children of residents. Have new school places been considered by the County Council?

