

Sent: 02 November 2010 21:14
 To: Planning
 Subject: Welwyn Hatfield Council Online Planning - Comment

PLANNING
DEPARTMENT

- 3 NOV 2010

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Application Number: N6/2010/2055/MA

Name: [REDACTED]

Address: 6 Farm Close

Welwyn Garden City

Herts

AL8 6RP

Comment Type: Object

Comment: I wish to register an objection to both planning applications 2010/2055/MA and 2010/2060/LB for the redevelopment of the site on Broadwater Road.

While I fully support the regeneration of this area the current proposals do not appear appropriate for the site and the location and are not inline with the Supplementary Planning Guidance for Broadwater Road West dated December 2008.

In particular I would like to object to the following aspects:

Retail (A1 Usage) & Proposed Tesco Store:

The SPG does not indicate that this site is suitable for retail use and therefore the application should be rejected on this basis. The proposed superstore would appear to be incompatible with the existing A1 (food) premises available in close proximity to the site. The town centre and local area are already served by a large range of varying sized food retailers and a 3rd large supermarket in close proximity of the town would likely to be detrimental to the existing provisions provided.

Due to the size and nature of the store the majority of shoppers are likely to require the use of the car. The SPG specifically indicates that the development should reduce the need to travel by car however by the nature and size of this proposed retail unit the reverse will be applicable. The traffic studies undertaken in this area already indicate difficulties with the current vehicular movement and this will only add to an already congested local road network.

Retail (A3 & A5 usage)

As above the SPG does not allow for this type of retail use and any provided should be kept to a minimum and have opening hours restricted to ensure that this does not detract from the usage in the town centre.

Any splitting of the Town should be avoided to ensure that the main centre does not become unviable for current retailers.

Pedestrian Bridge:

The current SPG indicates that the reconstruction and enhancement of the pedestrian bridge over the rail lines is a priority;

The application drawings indicate that the actual bridge is to be retained in its current condition with the narrowing bars remaining. Given the potential increase in pedestrian flows through this route this would not appear to be an acceptable solution or in line with the guidance in the SPG. The minimum clear pedestrian route that should be provided to enable 2 wheelchair users to comfortably pass each other is 1800mm wide (see BS8300:2009) and this should be required as a minimum. There are clearly already some structural issues with this bridge as its width was reduced 5+ years ago so it cannot be considered a suitable structure to provide adequate pedestrian access to the town centre.

The drawings also indicate a lift to be added to the structure however this does not contain a 1500 x 1500mm clear landing space at the upper level of the pedestrian route and should therefore be redesigned to ensure it meets current guidance.

Pedestrian routes:

The main pedestrian route into the site appears to be between Plots F & J, this road also serves as the access and egress for all vehicles to the basement parking. The applicant has indicated within their proposal that pedestrian access will be a priority however this two uses would appear incompatible in this location due to potential volume of vehicular traffic.

Shared surfaces are proposed within residential roads however these should be avoided as there is

currently no suitable tactile paving recognised for this situation to ensure that disabled people, and in particular people with a visual impairments, are able to safely use and navigate through these schemes. There is significant research against this type of design from both Guide Dogs and the PAMELA research lab and no such scheme should be given permission until the research and conclusions on how to make these schemes inclusive to all have been drawn.

Shared pedestrian/cycle routes are proposed and as above these should be avoided as they cause difficulty for pedestrians and in particular disabled people and children.

Outline details

As outline planning is submitted for part of the site it is difficult to comment and take this into consideration. Full planning should be sought so the proposals can be assessed in full and in context.

If planning permission is granted on this site then the Section 106 must seek to ensure that the aspects of the development which are the most important to the Council are delivered first i.e. the pedestrian bridge and affordable housing before private housing and retail usages. In addition financial contributions which secure the viability of a Council run sports facility and heritage centre should be sought.