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WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
Planning Development Control
Council Offices
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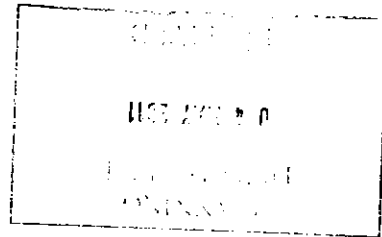


3 May 2011

Your ref: N6/2010/2055/MA

FAO Mr Richard Aston

**BROADWATER ROAD WEST
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT
VISUAL AMENITY AND ARCHITECTURE**



Dear Mr Aston,

Now that the Visual Amenity and Architecture section of the Assessment has been made available, I have been able to have a look and have just a few comments.

The general description of the proposals and of the arrangement and treatment sound very reasonable on paper. This section even refers to the "highest design standards". But these are just words. How can a high quality development actually be assured?

The reference to a large central linear park together with a number of courtyards seems appropriate. So too does the reference to a "clearly legible grid of streets, public, semi-public and private spaces". But the layout proposed is far too rigid – all straight lines. The park is too formal and the courtyards too regular. Louis de Soissons's closes and courtyards are all different, each with its own character. Apart from building height, this proposal shows no variation at all. It needs a freer approach, as in existing Garden City housing. I also note that there is a long line of apartments along the noisy Broadwater Road. This would need careful attention.

In spite of its title, this document makes little reference to architectural style and appearance. Such elevations as are shown, of commercial, community and residential buildings, are banal in the extreme. I assume they are just diagrammatic. Far more detail is required, and the Council would need to approve the final designs. Some recent WGC housing is disappointingly mundane. With a shortage of internal architectural staff, I suggest that the Council needs an independent (RIBA?) design review panel to advise on design quality and ensure the high standard promised.

Yours sincerely,

