

The Welwyn Garden Heritage Trust

Promoting The Architecture and Planning of Welwyn Garden City

www.welwyngarden-heritage.org

Please reply to:

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The Planning Department
Welwyn Hatfield Council
Welwyn Garden City
AL8 6AE

PLANNING
DEPARTMENT

7 3 DEC 2011

RECEIVED

For the attention of Mr Richard Aston

22nd December 2011

Dear Sirs

Tesco planning application

Following the publication of the Trust's statement on its opposition to the application by Tesco/Spenhill for a supermarket in Broadwater Road, a copy of which is attached to this letter, the Trustees have been assessing comments received from our friends and supporters. In the light of these comments it is felt that, while the statement is clear, a remark in the report by the Welwyn Hatfield Times regarding the future could lead to confusion.

The Trustees wish to make it absolutely clear that whatever the eventual outcome of the application the Trust will not take up any offer from Tesco/Spenhill connected with it. There is, therefore, no question of negotiations with Tesco/Spenhill under any circumstances now or in the future.

In light of the application's reference to the provision of a 'Heritage Centre' it was seen as important that the position of the Trust be made clear to the planning department as it may be a material consideration.

Should you require any further comment from the Trust please let us know.

Yours faithfully



On behalf of The Welwyn Garden Heritage Trust

" Taking The Past Into The Future "

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A statement from The Welwyn Garden Heritage Trust on why it opposes the proposals by Tesco for Broadwater Road.

The Welwyn Garden Heritage Trust is dedicated to promoting the heritage of Welwyn Garden City and its worldwide importance as an icon of town planning. As such, it needs to give very careful consideration to an offer of space for a heritage centre and financial support for its on-going activities. This is the position the Trust has taken since the verbal offer by Tesco was made nearly two years ago.. However, the benefits that might come from such an offer had to be set against the overall impact on the very town we are trying to celebrate and protect. Full details of the Tesco proposals have reached their final stage and so it is now possible for us to make a considered judgement on the pros and cons of the plans.

The conclusion the Trustees have reached is that the negative impacts of the proposals are so far reaching that they would, if approved, severely damage the very town and the heritage to which the Trust is dedicated. The Trust will, therefore, actively oppose the application and seek to have it refused by the council's Planning Control Committee.

What we find particularly disappointing is that a company which has been associated with the town for so many years, and which purports to have its interests at heart, could actually put forward such a destructive proposal.

Welwyn Garden City is held up as one of the best examples of enlightened and effective town planning anywhere in the world. Its fame has spread to China and Japan and students of planning are advised to visit it. A major feature of the town is the relative calm and beauty.

The Trust believes that the plans put forward by Tesco would destroy the vision for the town by Ebenezer Howard and Louis de Soissons. The loss of these ideals might not be immediately obvious but the impact of the traffic certainly would! Any organisation that is willing to choke the life out of the town in pursuit of its commercial interests cannot, as it claims, have the best interests of Welwyn Garden City at heart.

If the negative impact on both the town centre shops and those in the surrounding neighbourhoods, quite possibly a number will be forced out of business, is added to the traffic it is clear that Welwyn Garden City will be changed out of all recognition – it will become just another new town.

There are numerous other reasons to object to the bid which our friends in the WGC Society, and others have highlighted and we shall be supporting their efforts as far as we can.

For the record, the offer made to the Trust by Tesco/Spenhill of a location and funding of a heritage centre was entirely verbal and informal. It was *not* sought by the Trustees nor did the Trust at any stage commit to accepting the offer. Our response to the offer was '*Should the application be successful the Trust would be willing to discuss the offer with Tesco to determine whether it was viable and appropriate*'. Any claim that the proposed heritage centre is being 'built for the Trust' is without foundation and should not be seen as in any way supporting the planning application.

[Ends]