

Sent: 30 October 2010 10:00  
 To: Planning  
 Subject: Welwyn Hatfield Council Online Planning - Comment

Application Number: N6/2010/2055/MA

Name: [REDACTED]

Address: 51, Sherrardspark Road,  
 Welwyn Garden City  
 AL8 7LD

Comment Type: Object

Comment: I wish to object to this proposed development on the grounds proposals are contrary to the aims of the agreed local development plans and generally form an un-necessary duplication of already adequate facilities.

When I first moved to this area almost 50 years ago, WGC was served by a small Sainsbury's store and a small Fine Fare store, plus a few traditional counter service food stores. The Sainsbury's store was replaced by their larger store, which is again being further enlarged and the Fine Fare store is now Iceland. In recent times Marks and Spencer have opened a food store and the Waitrose store has been opened and later enlarged. Apart from Simmonds bakery, the counter service stores have all disappeared.

This amounts to at least a tripling of food store floor area in the town centre over the last 50 years. far in excess of the population growth in the town, even if the Morrisons and Oldings Corner Tesco stores are ignored.

There is clearly no justification for another food store anywhere in the WGC area and especially not so close to the town centre where it will do nothing but dilute the efficient density of the existing shopping area. Since the opening of the Howard Centre, WGC is already over provided with shopping space, as is amply demonstrated by the number of empty units, charity shops and coffee shops. Expanding the shopping area further (even if the totally inadequate bridge across the station is considered a viable link) will seriously damage the prosperity of the existing shops in the town centre whatever they sell, resulting in more business closures. WGC's big advantage is the high density of genuinely useful shops, which is only sustainable if the town centre is kept compact.

The proposed development also offers a number of 'softeners', but most of these are barely required, or inappropriate for the location. There are already sufficient doctors surgeries, pharmacies, offices in the area. There is possibly a need for an hotel, but not squashed into the noisiest possible corner of the site. A swimming pool would be useful, but far better if located at the more extensive Gosling sports centre. Sheltered housing could again be useful, but not in what promises to be a noisy, brash environment.

I believe the site would be best used solely for housing, where together with a vastly improved footbridge over the station, it would serve to increase the viability of the already struggling town centre. Provision of a considerable amount of additional shopping area instead would undoubtedly do exactly the opposite and result in serious decline of the existing town centre.

