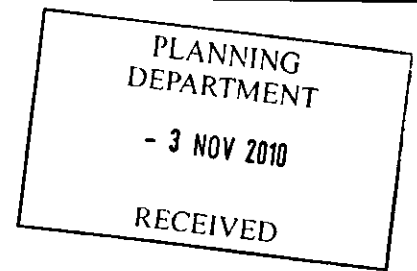


Sent: 02 November 2010 16:33
 To: Planning
 Subject: Welwyn Hatfield Council Online Planning - Comment



Application Number: N6/2010/2055/MA

Name: [REDACTED]

Address: 78 Parkway

Welwyn Garden City

Hertfordshire

AL8 6HL

Comment Type: Object

Comment: We object to the proposed development of the Shredded Wheat factory complex and land adjoining at Broadwater Road West, for the following reasons:

The proposed new development not only has a large superstore but has additional retail space for individual units. This retail-led development, with ample dedicated parking, would undoubtedly draw shoppers from the existing town centre. This would certainly have an adverse effect on the viability and subsequent sustainability of the existing town centre. It would also have a similarly adverse effect on the local shops on the east side of Welwyn Garden City, resulting in empty units and degradation of these centres of community.

As residents of Parkway, we are currently able to walk to the town centre and do so almost daily. More than 90% of our weekly shopping is done in town centre shops.

In the event that it is not considered detrimental to the existing town centre to have a new retail development on the east side of the railway tracks (a view which we obviously do not hold), then it is absolutely essential that the new development be well linked to the existing town centre to encourage pedestrians to traverse between the two retail centres and therefore maintain the unity of the town centre. The current pedestrian access from the town centre to the east side is already unsatisfactory, and any increase in traffic would cause congestion and be unsafe. The proposed development plans do not adequately address this problem.

Although we are not Planning experts, we understand that the proposed development does not conform to the Council's agreed and adopted Supplementary Planning Document on Broadwater Road. To the best of our knowledge, the area is not zoned for retail, nor is it suitable. To grant Planning Permission to the proposed Tesco development would therefore undermine the key principles of the Supplementary Planning Document and master plan.

In this respect, we recognise that there is a need for more housing in the Borough. This site should therefore be developed with housing as its primary aim and light industrial as its secondary use, for which it is zoned.

The new development would attract a significant increase in traffic, both cars and lorries, affecting the junction to the site and the routes to Broadwater Road. This junction and these routes are already congested and there would have to be a previously agreed and enforceable Section 106 Planning Agreement to provide for an appropriate upgrade of the infrastructure and utilities, also of amenity space, education facilities and other services. This has not yet been provided.

We understand that although Tesco is making the Planning Application, it is not their intention to carry out all of the development themselves. Whilst the retail development, or more specifically the superstore, would be progressed, there does not seem to be any guarantee that the other parts of the development would be delivered in the proposed form. Furthermore, Tesco have made it clear that they will not be managing the proposed amenities which, in particular in the case of the wet leisure centre, are unlikely to be financially viable. There is therefore a significant doubt whether these would ever get built and, if they did, whether they would be maintained properly.

There is no need for further retail development in the town. There is already a Tesco superstore at Oldings Corner, only a few minutes drive away from the proposed new superstore. In addition to smaller outlets, there is an existing Waitrose supermarket in the town centre, and the long-established Sainsburys supermarket, also in the town centre, is currently being redeveloped. There is no evidence that the area needs another supermarket or superstore, in particular another Tesco superstore.

To allow this development risks harming the established character and appearance of Welwyn Garden City, in particular the town centre, and adversely affecting the setting of the nearby Conservation Area.