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 To: Planning
 Subject: Welwyn Hatfield Council Online Planning - Comment

PLANNING
 PERMITTING
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Application Number: N6/2013/1938/MA
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Comment Type: Object

Comment: I was amazed and appalled when I saw the artist's impression of the planned extension to Campus East in last week's Welwyn Hatfield Times. How could the borough council think an enormous hard-edged frontage of glass have any merit when tacked on to a building of completely opposite and historical design? It's more suited to company premises on a modern business park since it's completely out of keeping with the town centre.

And how can the council produce such a plan as this when it's sited within the conservation area? Indeed, if a member of the public or business were to have come up with such a wildly subversive design it would have been dismissed out of hand as being non-compliant with the garden city ethos the council is meant to be upholding. This is not a fair or justifiable exercise of power where certain rules apply to the public which can be ignored by the council.

If this monstrosity goes ahead it would set a precedent for all manner of applications. This can only lead to a degeneration in the universally appreciated standards of our unique town and the position it holds in town development.

This application seems to have all the hallmarks of a prepared rubberstamping operation. According to the papers on the website the plans have been received and validated on the same day. This sounds highly unlikely. Due to glaring errors picked up by the Welwyn Garden City Society (examples including reference to a Police Training School, St Albans City and District Council and improperly titled floor plans), one can only conclude that this application has been rushed through without regard to due care and diligence on a wing and a prayer.

There seems little understanding or appreciation of the fact that the original building received an award winning design. These plans present no indication that there is any intention to retain the essence of that achievement. Surely the council should be guardians of our town's achievements, not seeking to blindly erode them.

Normally, when applications from the public are sloppily presented and manifestly fail to achieve civic planning objectives the applicant is forced to amend and reapply. How has this application got this far? This can only be an abuse of the planning process.

All in all, given the council's woeful track record on recent expensive projects I strongly object to this application, especially as the council has not even seen fit to consult its residents. Had they have done so this project would most likely have been transformed to a far more acceptable and desirable end result. As it stands, these plans should be rejected.