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Sent: 04 October 2013 10:43
To: Planning
Cc: Fiona Thomson; Tony Skottowe; Helen Bromley
Subject: Council Office Extension: N6/2013/1938/MA - Objection

47 Brockswood Lane
Welwyn Garden City
AL8 7BE

3 October 2013

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to object to the above planning application which I have just looked at on the Council's website.

It strikes me that the chief reason why the Garden City is so well loved and respected locally, nationally and internationally, is the harmony of its design. There are no standout, iconic structures, but a multiplicity of carefully designed and laid-out buildings, each harmoniously reflecting the values of the others and contributing to the whole. Whatever quibbles one may have about the new Sainsbury's and Peel Court developments, they 'fit in'. The proposed extension to the Council Offices does not.

The plans seem to betray a complete lack of understanding and respect on the part of the Council for the Garden City's design, heritage and conservation area. The appearance is that of a standard design used in many city centres, adapted and dropped in to fit the appropriate footprint. On its own, the proposed extension might not look out of place on Shire Park, but it certainly would in WGC's town centre. In summary, it appears little or no attempt has been made to achieve harmony.

I would also add that I am a member of the Town Centre Partnership which, as far as I am aware, has not been consulted about the application despite the fact that the Council proactively supports its aims and objectives, a major one being: "To build on the heritage of the Garden City to promote the town as a destination to a wider catchment area." Should the proposed design be granted planning consent, might it not encourage other developers to play fast and loose with that heritage and point to the Council's own folly in justification?

Yours faithfully,

John Beech