

(RA)

SD

[Redacted]

Sent: 18 November 2013 13:37  
To: Michel Saminaden  
Cc: [Redacted] lenlewis, [Redacted] shaun.oreilly, [Redacted] Tony Skottowe; Alan Franey; Dom Cox; Planning  
Subject: Amended Plans Council Office extension

18<sup>th</sup> November 2013

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
19 NOV 2013  
RECEIVED

Re: N6/2013/1938/MA  
Proposed Council Office Extension – Amended

Further to my Email to you dated 4<sup>th</sup> October 2013, in which I wrote of my objection to the above proposal, I have seen the amended elevation which retains the infill on each side but changed to match the existing brickwork and windows. This immediately shows how easy and “in keeping” it can be to extend the existing materials and character and scale around the whole of the proposed extension, with a skilled and sympathetic architect being able to design such adaptation as necessary to, for example, introduce maximum daylight into the first floor area by the careful choice of brickwork and windows. The second floor daylight requirement would be no problem because roof lights can be of any size on the flat roof behind the dormer window slope.

The new elevation drawing has me puzzled in respect of showing a wide formal paved approach with seats, hedging, trees, lawns and tall lamp posts. On visiting the site, the paving leads to where I stood behind the brick wall of Waitrose store to look across the car park to the extension facade. Inevitably I wonder if the present designer has visited the site, or whether something odd is to take place with this becoming the main entrance and reception or perhaps the entry for the public letting of the new Council Chamber? However, it does confirm that the car park area is available, and thus may I suggest that the present very tight internal planning could be relieved by extending the central all glass area some distance forward but in the “in keeping” character of the existing building, or by extending in a different way.

Meanwhile, I continue to object to the present amended proposal on the same grounds as previously expressed.

My interest in mentioning your administration of the Management Scheme is partly because the passage of time inevitably means that there will be no Council Officers who ever worked with, or spoke with, anyone from the earlier days of the design and creation of the town, such as Kirkland Robertson. Until I retired, some 15 years ago, you had at least one officer who was most helpful in my development of designs in various areas of the town, in respect of that part of the inheritance from the original company that involves design. I recall expressing my concern on this matter to Maurice de Soissons when he was writing his book on the history of the town as commissioned by the Council at the time. I could not see any alternative to having a specialist individual dealing with these Management matters as a part time or full time employee of the Council, but totally independent of the Planning Department, who have their own national legal obligations. However, I wonder how things are now arranged and how the appointment of new staff can guarantee their sympathy, skill and historic knowledge in respect of those that deal with Welwyn Garden City as distinct from all the other areas in the Borough? Plus of course the arrangements to deal separately with Management design and legal matters. This relates to the present application and the input of such concerns.

Yours sincerely,  
David Sutcliffe

P.S. I note that it is said that a number of your relocated staff will be working from home. I trust you have experience of this because I know from my several years at home, even as self-employed in my own business, that various difficulties and even family tensions can arise. And that extensions and adaptations of the home may be necessary, which will incur costs for someone!

I also recall that in the past the County Council had a planning officer with a small group who specialised in advising on historic buildings in the County and who your planners requested me to check with, for example, in the final design to replace Sherrardswood School on Digswell Road. Does such an advisory system still exist?

Lastly I have read of some recent research that claims that large "open plan" office space produces less efficiency from staff than from small groupings, and I am informed that some employers in the USA are abandoning the "open plan" concept; although of course the creation of small groups within a large open space by introducing screens and planting can ease the problems.

Cc Dennis Lewis. Shaun O'Reilly  
Councillors: Tony Scottowe. Alan Franey. Dom Cox.  
planning@welhat.gov.uk

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