

Attn: Welwyn-Hatfield Council
Council Offices
The Campus
Welwyn Garden City
Hertfordshire
AL8 6AE

61 The Wade,
Welwyn Garden City
HERTS.
AL7 4LG
UK

Thursday, 31 May 2018

Ref: Shredded Wheat Factory ‘ReDevelopment’

Dear Councillors,

After making my original submission I have written many letters, prepared presentations, arranged meetings and made many other attempts to discuss the matter of the Shredded Wheat Factory ‘ReDevelopment’

This project is a disaster for the people of Welwyn Garden City both present and future and represents a lost opportunity for the UK more broadly. Driven only by the need of Tesco to recover what it has invested in a failed attempt to put a store in the town centre and of a developer and supporting contractors to make profit this development is short-sighted and minimalist, focused on meeting minimum standards and avoiding public resistance while maximizing returns. It completely lacks vision and imagination or any recognition of the present and evolving state of modern communities and the infrastructural needs of towns and cities. It is utterly indifferent to the specific community and infrastructural needs of WGC. It will serve as a major impediment to future efforts to address those needs due to the greater difficulty of making such improvements and corrections in the context of what is already there as should be already obvious with the difficulties of the rail system.

WGC has major problems with over-dependence on motor vehicles and inadequate infrastructure to support it. It has an east-west physical and social divide due to the railway line and the world’s ugliest wrought-iron pedestrian bridge, neither of which are considered as anything other than ‘givens’ in this project. In addition to an obsolete and ugly rail shunting yard WGC suffers the absurdity of a distribution centre (PWGates) with a dedicated access road, which together occupy an area larger than the present town centre itself right in the middle of the town. It’s outrageous!

The UK has a housing crisis and an aversion to high-density living that will be further exacerbated when this present development, built to minimum standards and to receive people desperate to get onto the bottom rung of a ‘housing ladder’ turns into a modern slum. The UK also has an infrastructure problem because the people needed to work in and maintain London can’t afford to live there, yet WGC (midway between London and Cambridge and a 30 minute commute from the city centre) is engaged in this minimalist, narrow-minded development. Clearly, this project needed greater involvement of stakeholders and a more comprehensive vision and the situation only points to the complete failure of the present process of Urban Planning and Development which is an obvious encumbrance blighting real needs.

As Britain navigates its way through the BREXIT negotiations with this same sort narrow-mindedness and lack of vision plaguing the process, it is clear that a Post-BREXIT Britain will not have the community and economic infrastructure required to maintain its status as a prominent international player in the 21st Century. It seems to me that the future is bleak until this problem is recognized and addressed. Why not address it now while there is opportunity?

There is great potential for this development in WGC to be halted, reconsidered and turned around as a substantial, nationally-oriented project that can not only contribute great value to solving present major problems but also serve as an example of what can be achieved in a more integrated, thoughtful and intelligent approach to urban planning and development.

Yours Sincerely,

Allen L. Jasson