



# Residents Statement

**Location:** 1 YMCA, 90 Peartree Lane, Welwyn Garden City, AL7 3UL

**Proposal:** Outline planning application for a hybrid application for demolition of existing hostel, development of a four storey 100 bed YMCA Hostel (All details submitted for determination) and a 2, 3 and 4 storey building providing up to 43 residential apartments (All details retained for future determination as reserved matters, except means of access) with associated car parking and landscaping.

**Application Number:** 6/2019/2714/OUTLINE

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## 1. Introduction

This statement has been prepared on behalf of the local residents of Peartree Lane and the surrounding area in response to the application by 1YMCA to redevelop the site 90 Peartree Lane to include the demolition of existing hostel, development of a four storey 100 bed YMCA Hostel and additionally 2, 3 and 4 storey buildings providing up to 43 residential apartments with associated car parking and landscaping. We wish it to be known that we **STRONGLY OBJECT** to this proposal. Please see Appendix A for details of the residents represented.

## 2. Site and Surroundings

The site is located in Peartree Lane, Welwyn Garden City. The existing YMCA buildings are 1 and 2 storeys in height. The building on Peartree Lane is single storey whilst the two storey building is set back from the street.

The residential area of Peartree Lane is to the east, west and north of the site. West of the site is Broadwater Road. The residential area in Peartree Lane adjoining the site is subject to and included within the Estate Management Scheme.

Peartree Farm is adjacent to the rear of the site. Peartree Farm is a collection of single storey light industrial units which includes a coach business (Welham Travel) and several car repair businesses. Access to Peartree Farm is from Hyde Way and Peartree Lane. The coach business stores its coaches within Peartree Farm.

Peartree Lane has a boulevard appearance consisting of a wide, tree-lined, road. The houses in Peartree Lane are two storeys with the houses at the north end being of chalet bungalow style (first floor within the pitched roof). Peartree School is a single storey building with a pitched roof. The chemist / post office building is single storey with storage in the pitched roof. The flats are two storeys with the exception of Regents Court which is three storeys however; it is set far back from the street and is not part of the street scene. Home Meadow (opposite the site) is a complex of two storey warden controlled flats for the elderly.

## 3. Pre-Application

Local residents were invited to a meeting in May 2019 where 1YMCA presented their proposal. Many residents expressed their concerns to the developers which include, but are not limited to the following:

- The hostel is excessively tall, it should be reduced to no more than three storeys;

- The residential scheme is out of scale with the neighbouring residential properties and will dominate the street scene;
- The residential scheme will have an adverse affect on local resident's amenity;
- The proposal includes insufficient parking, and is bound to lead to a large increase in traffic through Peartree Lane, Peartree Farm and Hyde Way;
- The residential scheme and the hostel will be overbearing on the flats in Peartree Close;
- The proposed finish to the hostel (black bricks and yellow windows) is hideously out of keeping with the existing residential area; and
- The residential flats should be no more than two storeys so as to maintain an acceptable balance with the existing street scene.

The applicant also sought pre-application advice from WHBC Development Management. The advice from the officer is summarised as follows:

- The development must satisfy S106 obligations;
- The development must satisfy applicable policies within the development plan such as design, residential amenity, affordable housing etc;
- The development must not have an adverse impact on the character of the surroundings;
- There are concerns that the proposed height and density of the buildings may conflict with design policies;
- The three storey apartment building to the front of the site would fail to respect the character and context of the area and that of neighbouring buildings (i.e. height, mass, scale);
- The three storey apartments along the front of the site would appear obtrusive and incongruous within the street scene;
- The apartments along the front of the site must be two storey;
- The developer should be cautious of the relationship between the north eastern boundary between the apartment and the residential dwelling adjacent;
- It is advised that the design of the tall building does not result in a clustering of existing/proposed tall buildings and its potential impacts on long distance view, skyline, built/natural environment and its interaction with the street;
- Due to the density of the scheme and lack of explanation for the small amount of parking proposed, it is clear that there is insufficient car parking in the scheme;
- Close-boarded fencing or brick walls, along development edges which are visible within the street scene would be objected to;
- It is recommended that the apartments to the front of the site reflect a traditional Garden City vernacular;

- The principle characteristics of the Garden City are the formality of its layout and architecture and the complete integration of its landscape within the built form. In addition to this, architectural details such as brickwork (including Flemish bonding), and materials including red brick and white fenestrations all contribute to the Garden City appearance, which I would expect to see within any scheme submitted. A modern design of the five storey hostel may be able to be supported, however it should incorporate materials and characteristics that are identified within Welwyn Garden City, thus complementing the apartments to the front of the site;
- There is concern regarding the density of the overall scheme, resulting in a development which is not in keeping with the character of the area, particularly regarding the apartments
- There is concern regarding the scale and height to the front of the site, and the lack of adequate car parking provision;
- Careful attention should also be afforded towards the siting of the 3 storey private apartments, which are adjacent to the existing residential houses. As previously mentioned, there is concern that 3 storey apartments to the front of the site will appear out of keeping with the surrounding locality. Due to the proximity of the neighbouring properties, it is essential that the siting, design and scale of these buildings does not result in adverse impact upon neighbouring occupiers by way of overbearing structures, infringement of privacy and a loss of light. Further to this, care should also be taken regarding the positioning of windows to ensure existing and future occupiers' privacy is maintained and natural surveillance is achieved of outdoor spaces;
- The lack of residential parking and density proposed, would also suggest that there are too many residential units proposed on the site;
- 30% of affordable housing would be sought on the 43 private residential apartments only; and
- Concerns remain regarding the scale and car parking provision, due to the density of the scheme proposed.

#### 4. Consultee Comments

**WHBC Parking Services** - Looking at the application for the Hostel development I understand a study was carried out but this was during school holidays which we would advocate against and during the bank holiday week which would imply that people may be on holiday during this period and we would have recommended a survey to be carried out for at least a week and outside of the school holidays. I am not sure the data would reflect current car parking usage and suggested expected car parking provision. Also, it is mentioned in the report that current car ownership in the area is 0.94, one would expect this to factor into the number of parking spaces made available in the residential element of the development, I do not feel that adequate parking provision is available overall.

**HCC Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)** - We understand this is an outline planning application for a hybrid application. However, it is important at this stage to secure major scheme details to establish if the proposed development is feasible.

The applicant can overcome our objection by submitting information which covers the deficiencies highlighted above and demonstrates that the development will not increase risk elsewhere and where possible reduces flood risk overall, and gives priority to the use of sustainable drainage methods.

If this cannot be achieved we are likely to maintain our objection to the application. We ask to be re-consulted when the amended surface drainage assessment will be submitted. We will provide you with bespoke comments within 21 days of receiving formal re-consultation. Our objection will be maintained until an adequate surface water management scheme has been submitted.

## **5. Planning Policy**

### **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF (2019))**

**127. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:**  
**c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.**

The proposed development is not sympathetic to the local residential area.

**130. Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards or style guides in plans or supplementary planning documents.**

The proposal will not improve the character and quality of the area and will diminish the functionality of the local area.

### **Planning and flood risk**

The proposal fails to provide details of how surface water arising from the development is to be managed as required under the NPPF for all Major Planning Applications as amended within the NPPG from the 6 April 2015.

### **Welwyn Hatfield District Plan (2005)**

Policy D1 - Quality of Design

**The Council will require the standard of design in all new development to be of a high quality. The design of new development should incorporate the design principles and policies in the Plan and the guidance contained in the Supplementary Design Guidance.**

The proposed development fails to respect and relate to the area in which it is proposed.

The design is not of a similar scale and massing to the existing residential area and does not enhance the character of the area.

The proposed hostel is black brick and yellow fenestration and will not match the surrounding residential area nor the proposed apartment building.

Policy D2: Character and Context

**The Council will require all new development to respect and relate to the character and context of the area in which it is proposed. Development proposals should as a minimum maintain, and where possible, should enhance or improve the character of the existing area.**

The proposed development will not relate to the line of the buildings in the street and will not provide a continuous street frontage.

Policy H7 - Affordable Housing

**Within the towns and specified settlements, the Council will expect all proposals for residential development on sites of 1ha or more, or with 25 units or more, to include the provision of affordable housing to meet the needs of local people who cannot afford to occupy dwellings generally available on the open market. The Council will therefore seek through negotiation a proportion of affordable housing, which as a minimum should comprise 30% subsidised housing, on each suitable site. The proportion, type and mix of affordable housing will be based on information in the latest housing needs survey and the criteria in Section 10 of Circular 6/98.**

There is no affordable housing in the proposal.

**Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Draft Local Plan (2016)**

Policy SP9 – Place Making and High Quality Design

**Proposals have been informed by an analysis of the site's character and context so that they relate well to their surroundings and local distinctiveness, including the wider townscape and landscape, and enhance the sense of place.**

The proposed development does not relate well to the surroundings and local distinctiveness.

Policy SP9 - Building function and form

- **Development proposals respect neighbouring buildings and the surrounding context in terms of height, mass and scale.**

- **Development proposals are of a high quality architectural design that creates coherent and attractive forms and elevations and uses high quality materials.**
- **Alterations to buildings relate well to the character and proportions of the existing building and its curtilage, the surrounding context and the street scene in terms of their siting, height, mass, scale, detailed design and materials.**

The proposal fails to meet the above in terms of height, mass and scale.

#### Policy SP9 – Taller buildings

- **In addition to other design principles and criteria set out within the Local Plan, proposals for taller buildings should positively respond to the following matters within their design solution:**
- **Clustering with other existing or proposed taller buildings within the immediate and wider area.**
- **Long distance views. Impact on skyline, townscape, historic assets and landscape.**
- **Shadowing. Micro-climate and wind tunnelling.**
- **Relationship and interaction with the street and human scale**

The proposal at 4 storeys will tower above all of the surrounding residential houses, shops, school and Doctors surgery.

#### Policy SADM 11- Amenity and Layout

- e. **New development is not overbearing upon existing buildings and open spaces.**
- f. **The outlook and visual amenity afforded from within buildings and private/communal garden areas should be satisfactory, taking account of the relationship with neighbouring buildings and the wider street scene, including the design of parking, boundary treatments and landscaping.**

The proposed development will be overbearing and does not take into account the neighbouring buildings or the street scene.

#### Policy SP 10 Sustainable design and construction

##### **Water sensitive design**

**Water sensitive design principles and practices are integrated into development proposals to sustainably address water supply, consumption and quality, extreme rainfall, drainage and flood risk in a holistic way that supports other design aims and objectives.**

Hertfordshire County Council Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) has strongly objected to the submitted proposal on the drainage strategy.



## Supplementary Design Guidance (2005)

### Overlooking and Privacy

**5.7 This section supplements Policy D1 Quality of Design in the District Plan. The Council expect all new residential development, whether extensions or new units to be designed, orientated and positioned in such a way to minimise overlooking between dwellings, which would affect their internal living areas and their private rear gardens or amenity areas.**

The immediate neighbours in Peartree Close and Peartree Lane will be overlooked by the proposed development.

### 6. Design Principles

The current YMCA hostel is two storeys in height. The proposed hostel will be four storeys in height. The proposed residential apartments will be between two and four storeys. The apartments facing Peartree Lane will be 3 storeys whilst the apartments adjacent to Peartree Close will be four storeys. All residential and commercial buildings in Peartree Lane are two storeys

The proposed hostel will be black brick construction with yellow fenestration. All of the residential and commercial buildings in Peartree Lane are red brick with white fenestration.

### 7. Conclusion

In conclusion we strongly object to this proposal for the following reasons:

- The proposed height and density of the buildings conflicts with design policies.
- The introduction of the three-storey apartment building to the front of the site fails to respect the character and context of the area and that of neighbouring buildings (height, mass, scale) including the adjacent Peartree Close.
- The proposal of having three story apartments along the front of the site will appear obtrusive and incongruous within the street scene.
- There is insufficient parking (confirmed by the Consultee Response from Parking Services WHBC).
- The black brick / yellow fenestration appearance of the hostel building does not compliment the apartment building and will adversely affect local amenity.
- There is no affordable housing.

Local residents shared the above concerns with the developer during the consultation phase and WHBC Planning Management also provided advice regarding the proposed development. It would appear that the developer has not taken any of this into consideration. We strongly request that planning permission for this application be **REFUSED**.

## Appendix A – Residents Represented

We the undersigned **STRONGLY OBJECT** to the following planning application:

**Application Number:** 6/2019/2714/OUTLINE

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Address
60 Peartree Lane
60 " "
76 PEARTREE LANE
38 Hyde way
38 Hyde way
55 Peartree Lane
55 Peartree Lane
53 PEARTREE LANE
53 PEARTREE LANE
30 HYDEWAY
30 HYDEWAY
68 Peartree Ln
54 PEARTREE LANE
70 PEARTREE LANE
74 Peartree Lane
78 PEARTREE LANE
78 PEARTREE LANE

## Appendix B - Illustrations



Pear tree Lane (North)



Pear tree Close



Pear tree Lane (South)



Peartree Lane (North)



Peartree Close

Proposed residential apartments

Peartree Lane

Proposed street scene



Peartree Lane

Proposed residential apartments

Peartree Farm

Proposed street scene