

I am writing to record my objection in respect of the proposed redevelopment of the BioPark site.

Whilst I am generally in favour of the redevelopment of this site and I am of the opinion that accessible and affordable housing is a benefit to the area and potential residents, I am strongly against overdevelopment of the area and I think that the proposed plans and scope of the development are overzealous, myopic and only stand to truly benefit the developers.

I understand that the Supplementary Planning Document of 2008 recommends that developments should not be more than 5 storeys tall, whereas the proposed plans at the BioPark would see tower blocks as tall as nine stories, or potentially even higher. This would completely dwarf the established dwellings on the Mirage Development and is not in keeping with the general architectural feel of Welwyn Garden City. This is not an inner city where high rise buildings are a feature of our landscape and I'm sure Ebenezer Howard would be barrel rolling in his grave at the thought of these proposals. I'm also concerned that having such tall buildings close by may impact my right to light.

Current council policy dictates that 30% of new build housing should be affordable (and as previously stated, I am in favour of affordable housing), however, the developers of the BioPark site are only earmarking 10% of the development as affordable housing. I'm not too sure how the council can accept a proposed development which flies in the face of their own policies?

To plan such a populous development sounds great in practice, but it appears that the developers have little concern for the proposed residents, and existing residents in the vicinity of the BioPark once they have sold their properties and made their profit. This increase in population will put additional strain on already stretched public services (schools, public transport, doctors etc.). My development already faces frequent issues with lack of parking and the steep increase of dwellings (coupled with the redevelopment of the Shredded Wheat site) only stands to exacerbate this. The plans are only proposing 0.6 spaces per dwelling, where vehicle ownership in the immediate area is 1.38. In addition, pre-pandemic the peak trains into London were at bursting point and once life returns to some level of normalcy, commuting into the city will be even more difficult.

Unfortunately, my complaint will probably be glossed over and ignored, because profits before people. But I am a person who calls the Mirage Development and the surrounding area of Welwyn Garden City my home. I would be deeply saddened if the development is given the green light to go ahead as currently planned, especially in the face of the number of objections.