

Comment on Planning Application: 6/2020/3420/MAJ – The BioPark (OBJECTION)

This development is clearly out of quilter with so many planning policies and the ethos of the garden city. Nowhere (and certainly not so close to the town centre) do we have 9-10 storey building in Welwyn Garden City. There is, I believe, even a restriction somewhere on the number of storeys buildings can have (SPD – 5 storeys). And, with respect to views and vistas, this development is clearly going to stick out unpleasantly and interfere with the current views and vistas. Even if this were a 5 storey development in its current location it would be pushing the boundaries but 9-10 storeys is just outrageous. Where is the consultation with the residents. Not just those immediately next door or adjacent to the development but all those that will be impacted. There is clearly no desire on the developers side to engage in such consultations. Whilst I appreciate this may be a quick win in the eyes of the council to take pressure off on planning developments, this is absolutely the wrong way to go about it.

Additionally the development has virtually no parking or gardens/greenery/landscaping commensurate of the size of development and disproportionate about of dwelling. Perhaps if this were being built in London it would be in keeping but is certainly massively off the mark for a garden city and demonstrates the developers lack of experience or complete disregard to the town – this is not a good neighbour. The fact that residents may not need cars to walk to the town centre may or may not be true but it is also based on the assumption all residence will work locally, but clearly residents will not necessarily work in the town and will need cars to travel to work at a minimum.

Considerations not only needs to be given from a conservation perspective, which also needs to be balanced to the approach taken when reviewing applications from private residents. I am trying to do an extension and the council are concerned about a simple brick plan whilst they entertain a 9-10 storey development near the town centre. This is not a consistent approach at all and is very blatant.

We also have schools, doctors, hospitals, dentist, roads, public transport, parks, car parks, etc, all bursting at the seams to support the residence we have today let alone the additional residents this development will bring to Welwyn Garden City.

All-in-all this development would be disastrous aesthetically and from a conservation perspective for Welwyn Garden City and would set a precedent for other developers and surrounding properties looking at building or adding to existing developments. Therefore, this application cannot be considered from a standalone perspective but from the potential damage this could do overall to Welwyn Garden City. Welwyn Garden City would very rapidly lose it's appeal and people may move and new house hunters may very well look elsewhere for somewhere to live. The potential economic loss to Welwyn Garden City will certainly outweigh any short terms gains from this development.

Finally, there is absolutely no consideration given to the pandemic situation or acknowledgment of any lessons learned from this pandemic. Boxing people into high density residential areas and accommodation with little to no green space and recreational space is one of the significant observations from the pandemic but this and neighbouring developments completely disregard any learnings whatsoever from the pandemic but rather put profits first above health and well being.

Kindest regards,

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