


35 Longcroft Lane
WGC AL86EB

Welwyn Hatfield Council
10th August 2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: Comment on Planning Application: 6/2020/3420/MAJ
Bio Park Development Broadwater Road

I am writing to register my strong objection to the Bio Park development Broadwater Road.

I live in Longcroft Lane, in the historic west side of Welwyn Garden City. The Bio Park site is clearly visible from my back garden. Although on the plans the site appears as though it is buffered by railway lines and sidings, this perspective is deceptive. In reality the existing bio park buildings are visually in close proximity. The existing industrial building on the site is not imposing, having an unassuming white façade, which recedes into the background and as it is not residential there is no worry of overlooking. When the existing structure is replaced by up to 9 storey high residential blocks with a prominent and incongruous design and overlooking balconies, they will dominate the skyline having a substantial impact on the visual and general amenity of residents in Longcroft Lane Conservation Area. The visual impact will be worst in winter when the trees no longer provide a barrier due to leaf fall.

- No assessment has been carried out on the the visual impact of the tall buildings from the the back gardens of Longcroft Lane. Furthermore there has no assessment of the impact on strategic views within the Town Centre, or from nearby heritage sites such as Hatfield House. Normally such an assessment is a critical requirement when tall buildings are proposed. Because I and my neighbours on Longcroft Lane will be directly and materially affected by the development we should have been directly consulted on the proposals. I am not aware of any such consultation. If this happened during Covid lockdown, this should be deemed invalid.
- The Bio Park development will loom over the historic west side townscape and dominate the skyline. This contradicts WHBC's own vision for Broadwater Road west which was to integrate the spirit of the Garden City with the very best of 21st century design.
- The scale, mass, and height of the scheme bears no relationship to the existing heritage of WGC Town Centre. It contradicts the Broadwater Road SPD which limits building to five storeys except in exceptional circumstances
- The development does not create any new social housing for local people when there are over 2000 people on the waiting list.
- Only 216 parking spaces are proposed for 289 homes further increasing pressure on local parking. The expectation that people will be solely occupying the new dwellings as commuters into London with no wider requirements of the area is unrealistic.

- The existing local transport, social and health infrastructure is inadequate and cannot sustain the numbers of new residents proposed for this site when considered alongside proposals for the former Shredded Wheat factory site.
- The scheme is not forward thinking in terms of the social, economic and environmental needs of our future communities. Only 20% of the parking spaces offer electric vehicle charging when in the near future petrol and diesel cars are being phased out. The scheme proports a 10% carbon saving at a time when all new development should strive to be more sustainable, moving away from use of fossil fuels for heating and hot water.
- This development along with the Wheat Quarter proposals will forever destroy our Garden City status at a time when proposal are being put forward for World Heritage Status
- The piecemeal nature of the approach to developing the three Broadwater Road sites underlines the fact that the Council has no cohesive vision for the townscape or greenspaces of these sites, which respects their cultural and industrial heritage and meaningfully connects them to the original vision of WGC and historic town centre. A masterplan is urgently needed to establish such a vision.

The opportunity exists to create a sustainable, imaginative scheme at the Bio Park site with true architectural vision, that is in keeping with the unique setting and heritage of WGC, with well designed green spaces that are integrated with the existing townscape and are integral to the new development. Such a scheme can add to the cultural, economic and environmental capital WGC as well as providing decent much needed homes. As residents of WGC this is what we deserve. If Bio Park together with the Wheat Quarter proposals, are approved, it will forever destroy the very concept of a Garden City.

I ask that a proper consultation is undertaken by officers of Longcroft Lane residents and a revised scheme requested which is more in keeping with the heritage of WGC and meets the current and future needs of the local community.

Yours faithfully,

