

I am writing with serious objections to the proposed change in planning permission of the Wheat Quarter.

How can you justify having such a low- key consultation period for a 53% increase in housing on the site? I know Covid will have prevented any face-to -face consultation, but this consultation hasn't been well publicized at all. I'm only aware of it because of an email from a neighbour. With the number of dwellings proposed, we could be looking at another 8000 inhabitants of WGC. The current population is only 50000.

There's (still) been no thought as to public services such as schools and GP surgeries. I'm aware, having read through some of the documents, that the plan is for these flats to be used by residential care users and young professionals. Don't those care users need a doctor? And these flats will be snapped up by landlords- after that neither you or I have any control whether families live in them or not. So where do those children go to school? I know that there's plans to build an art centre, and a restaurant of top of the silos, but public services come first.

There's a lot of thought given to the fact that the silos are part of the town's heritage and that they need protecting. They are in an advanced state of disrepair and urgently need conservation. With all this thought given to them, why is it that we can then hide them away behind 10 storey buildings? I wasn't happy with the original proposal of 9 storeys, and I know the 10 storeys is a reduction from the originally proposed 13 storeys, but I think such high-rise living is completely at odds with the original ethos of the Garden City. Such housing is really high-density; I've noticed the plans for allotments on the rooves of the building, and that is not what a Garden City is about, is it?

What about the potential for horrendous traffic problems on the junction of Broadwater Road/ Bridge Road? Spenhill were denied permission to build a Tesco at the same site 10 years ago, and part of the reason was because of the traffic pressure along Broadwater Road. How are these thousands of people going to travel to work? Again I've read of the plans to build a Brompton Cycle hub, and that the town centre is only a couple of minutes walk away- but there's still a lot of people who will want to use a car.

My final point is the sheer hypocrisy of the Planning department when it comes to the Conservation Areas. What do high rises have to do with conserving heritage? I'm sure the argument is that they're not in the Area itself. I live in the West Side – which I read in one report is of “medium heritage value”- and in my time here I've had to get permission to change my windows so they're like-for-like; I'm not allowed a caravan on my driveway; I've had to have any change to the driveway paving signed off; I've had to have the paint used on the house signed off by Estate Management when it was re-rendered. I was also refused permission to fit solar panels on the side-facing roof of my house, barely visible from the road, because “they would be detrimental to the street scene of our internationally renowned Garden City”. I shall remember that as I sit in my back garden in a year's time and look out on the high rises half a mile from my house.