

3 The Quadrangle
Welwyn Garden City
Herts AL8 6SG

25 March 2021

Dear Sir

Re: WHEAT QUARTER.BIOPARK/BROADWATER ROAD DEVELOPMENT

I am writing to express my strong objection to the proposed development plans for the “Wheat Quarter”, Biopark and Broadwater Road, including the former Shredded Wheat Site.

This town was conceived and carefully planned to create a bright, relaxing and visually attractive townscape on a human scale which broke the mould for traditional urban development. This was achieved through careful consideration for the visual impact of development and the innovative integration of open spaces and landscaping.

The present scheme is almost entirely allocated to flats – which do not have gardens – and the open spaces of this proposal amount to little more than areas of grass with the occasional token tree in a concrete canyon created by 10 storey blocks.

This proposed scheme is a far cry from the attractive open vistas of Parkway and Howardgate. It is also noticeable that the developer’s impressions of the development show aerial perspectives in which the roofs of the blocks are coloured green, thereby creating a false impression of the limited landscaping. If the roofs are shaded black or grey a quite different impression emerges.

The height of the proposed buildings will have a major visual impact on the town, and its overall ambience. The scale and number of these blocks will be overbearing, completely transforming the skyline of the town from any viewpoint, destroying its sense of space and openness.

The current regulations state that only under *exceptional* circumstances should anything over 5 storeys be considered, yet these proposals are for *twice* this height. These blocks will dominate the townscape and are totally out of scale and appearance of anything else in the town. They represent yet another step in the erosion of the town’s unique character. Their number and size will totally obscure the Shredded Wheat silos and Production Hall, which for so long have been an iconic symbol of the town.

This proposal comprises entirely flats on the Wheat Quarter, with only a small number of houses on the Bio Park site. This not only contravenes the SPD which requires a mix of houses and flats, but since flats have no gardens, rather refutes the town’s name.

In terms of occupancy and ownership the proposal flies in the face of agreed policy of a minimum of 15% of social housing. The development will create a housing density

far in excess of that of the rest of the town, indeed as great as many major conurbations. The number of residents on this small area has been increased by 900 from earlier proposals without due consideration for associated issues. Restricted car parking provision will not limit the number of vehicles owned by residents – they will simply find other places for them. This and other issues arising from the density of development will place unacceptable pressure on the existing infrastructure, to the detriment of the quality of life, not only of those who choose to live there, but also the existing population of the Garden City.

While accepting a need for additional housing, this should be proportionate and sympathetic. This scheme is neither. It also is noticeable that no such intensive development is being advocated for other locations – even those which are equally accessible in terms of public transport, notably those with stations along the rail link.

The town has just celebrated its Centenary and is about to commemorate its founding father with a new statue. It rightly prides itself on its heritage and being a landmark in the history of town planning.

It seems incomprehensible that this development proposal should be permitted to proceed when it flies so blatantly in the face of the whole ethos of “The Garden City” movement, both socially and visually, and will have such a detrimental impact on the appearance and character of the town.

Yours sincerely

██████████