

To:

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Councillors and Welwyn Garden City County Councillors  
Chief Executive  
Leader of the Council  
Chief Planning Officer

**Destruction of Welwyn Garden City**, is this the way to celebrate 100 years and plan for the next 100 years of our GARDEN City and turn into LONDON SUBURB City? Any plan in the CONSERVATION AREA by the wgc2021 group at such a time as this should be considered carefully, what is the rush? We will not be going back to where we were in 2019! No-one yet knows how the future way of living and working will pan out.

Town Centre – Conservation Area - plans:

How was this "regeneration" board created - spending tax payers money on consultants who have no interest in the heritage of the town devising a plan for the north of the town that is flawed, not fit for purpose and impacts on people's lives?

Regeneration should be about using derelict or vacant spaces NOT rebuilding and selling off sites that have a useful life and will do for many decades to come, some of which have money spent on them recently. The town centre is compact and should be dealt with as a whole, not divided into the points of a compass. The RIBA are promoting refurbishment and re-use of materials, not bringing in the bulldozer.

You want to encourage people into the town, but want to push ahead with building on at least three car parks and planning to ruin another with an ugly structure in an iconic part of the Garden City CONSERVATION area?

You have reduced short term free parking close to shops and amenities – which are for many people their "local" shopping area – quick trip to the doctors, dentist, bank, newsagent, bakers, post counter, pick up a coffee or take-away. Parking transfers to residential roads not designed for this; endangering access for emergency, maintenance and delivery vehicles.

We have wide pavements, we are not inundated with tourists, plenty of space without any more paving over the roads and green areas. This is environmentally unsound.

The work in Stonehills is unnecessary, trees, hedging, grass and plants grubbed up. This "event" space could have transferred to the area in Wigmores South which has no identified use, as it has adjacent parking for traders. More sustainable planting, get rid of those awful plastic planters.

Existing car parks should remain as they are for the time being until it is known what the effects from the pandemic, leaving EEC, outcome of the Census, the national economy, are on home, work and leisure, and how this relates to our town.

Campus East sandwiched between the railway line and supermarket loading bay is not suitable for housing, it already has a parking level above garages, the area could be re-furbished to make a double level facility. It provides essential long term parking for people going to the college, working in the town, and those living in the town requiring off road parking. Provide some public toilets. Link this through to Campus West area, by extending improvements to the old railway track footpath round the back of the college and under the white bridge to create a history/nature trail for those wanting just a short quiet traffic free walk within the town.

Hunters Bridge multi storey was extended to link to Howard Centre and give access through to station with a high level walkway. Ideal for those not able/wishing to walk far. It could be modernised with refurbishment, small retail units for independent traders or "pop ups" at ground level. An indoor/outdoor restaurant on the roof for views over the town, whilst retaining convenient and accessible parking.

Car park behind council offices – the fire station was here? If this is not required by the council, could be developed with town houses or maisonettes, reflecting the adjacent architecture, including provision of parking and green outdoor space.

Campus West – at present delightful - on one level to help all ages and those who want to be "seen" if in need of help, safe for parents and grandparents taking children to soft play areas. Mature trees surrounding and within the car park. Ideal to improve and link to the green space of Sherrardswood. Keep it to one level. Maintain sufficient ground level parking for Campus complex whilst perhaps giving a parcel of land to adjacent Woodside House to provide additional single level disabled accommodation.

The town was created at the end of the Spanish Flu (4 "peaks" over 2 year) by Ebenezer Howard and his colleagues who were concerned about people's living conditions and improving life after WW1, to give families from the slums a better chance to live where town meets countryside, space for work and leisure in beautiful surroundings. Any profit was reinvested in the town. Keep this ethos going for future generations.

Think it all over - keep the existing sites as they are for now, look at buildings that have been empty, create a register - walk around you will spot quite a few.

Take into account how many commercial employment buildings/areas have already been already converted or have approval for residential use. Bessemer Road, Broadwater Road, Bridge Road East, Panshanger Airfield, what next Police HQ, John Lewis? Will there be any employment areas left in the town or will it become a massive housing estate?

For residential development, encourage buildings be refurbished not demolished, look at plot ratio, in many developments this is far too high no outdoor space - where are the balconies, quiet green spaces we have so craved? Where are the green outdoor children's playgrounds in these plans, yes we have lovely public gardens, but no public park in the town centre.

How many people will really want to live in the urban sprawl being created here after the pandemic of 2020 and 2021? How many will want to escape to a green fresh way of living to fit with how much their lives have changed, having outdoor space and more space in the home, as the Garden City was originally planned to do? There will be population movement, some may come some may go.

Think of what is needed throughout the town:

Renewable power sources, reclaiming materials, climate change, heatwaves, floods, storms.....

Help people facing a change to skills affecting employment and family living aspirations.

Electric buses to link existing outlying housing areas to town and run 7 days a week into early evening - you want the town to be open 7 days - for those wishing to shop and enjoy leisure facilities - and for those needing to work there.

Investment in primary care services - GPs over worked and running out of capacity to take more patients and help patients in recovering from Covid.

Bring back our own Police Station and Post Office, Hospital and convalescent facilities, overcrowded Schools need more space.

Provision of ground floor living with outdoor space for the elderly and disabled.

That's the way to usefully future proof our taxpayers money for the next generation.

Get the government(s) to re-think VAT on buildings so refurbishment and re-use of materials is more the way to go than new.

**At a time of continuing pandemic when many of us not only fear for our future but our lives and livelihoods - ABANDON this so called concept that the "north" of the town centre needing redevelopment - IT DOES NOT!**

  
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