



FAO: Planning Department,  
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

Ref: 6/2021/2207/MAJ  
Date: 24/08/2021

## HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION ADVICE

Dear Sir / Madam,

**RE: *Campus West, The Campus, Welwyn Garden City, AL8 6BX***

The application is for the expansion and adaptation of existing car park, including construction of new single suspended level parking deck, reorganisation of road and pavement arrangement, introduction of additional cycle parking, junction improvements and associated landscaping improvements.

The site is located within the Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area. The Campus is a key element of the original Garden City layout located to the north of Parkway. Arranged in a semi-circle with a central green space, it is lined with the Garden City's main civic and education buildings (including the 1930s Council Offices, 1950s Oaklands College and 1970s Campus West building).

The scheme has been subject to several pre-application discussions also involving Historic England (6/2020/1239/PA) to refine the design of the structure.

At a single storey, the now proposed car park is less visually intrusive and more readily screened by existing and proposed planting than previous multi-storey iterations. The viewpoints presented in the Townscape, Heritage and Visual Assessment demonstrate that the proposed car park will be of low visibility in many views throughout the Conservation Area due to its height and existing trees and planting. The proposed additional planting along The Campus is important in mitigating the visual impact of the structure.

The cladding of the car park with angled metal fins in colours to reflect the surrounding Garden City architecture is considered to be an appropriate design solution which further mitigates the impact. The design references the vertical proportions of the neo-Georgian architecture as well as the existing tree screening along The Campus (south) and Ayot Greenway (north) and is considered to be successful with the fins adding interest to the structure without creating a solid mass.

However, whilst it is considered that the design is an appropriate response to the locality and has mitigated some impact, the erection of a single storey car park is considered to result in some residual 'less than substantial' harm to the significance of the Conservation Area. It is a large



structure in an area originally laid out to contain the Garden City's main civic, community and education buildings fronting the central green space. The original character of this part of the Garden City is still perceivable, and the car park structure is considered to detract from this. The addition of lighting (albeit necessary for its use) to the structure exacerbates its presence and visual impact on this part of the Conservation Area at night, but information has been provided to demonstrate the amount of lighting proposed.

The proposal is considered to result in a low level of 'less than substantial' harm to the significance of the Conservation Area and paragraph 202 of the NPPF is relevant. Successful efforts have been made to reduce this harm through design and landscaping, but it has not been removed completely. Consideration should also be given to paragraph 199 which affords great weight to the conservation of heritage assets and paragraph 200 which requires clear and convincing justification for any harm to heritage assets. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

Yours sincerely

Maria Kitts BA (Hons) MA PGCert  
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Place Services

*Note: This letter is advisory and should only be considered as the opinion formed by specialist staff in relation to this particular matter*