

Dear Sir/Madam,

We write to object to the proposed car park at Campus West.

Consultation process: As residents of Densley Close, the car park is directly visible from our home (you can stand in the car park and see into our windows) and yet we were not consulted as neighbours to this proposal. Sadly this is consistent with the proposed plans (and the Council's initial consultation), both of which show a total lack of consideration for the impact this development will have on nearby homes.

Overall design and failure to adhere to WGC design principles: The proposed scale and the design of the car park are both monstrous. The design has not taken into account the fact that the car park will be in a conservation area and a giant metal car park fails to adhere to the heritage of the town centre in almost every way.

Parking strategy: Any good faith decision to spend £3.8m of public money on additional parking should be accompanied by a much more detailed feasibility study supporting the need for such additional parking and associated spending. As residents of Welwyn Garden City for over 10 years, we are unaware of a lack of public parking serving the town centre. Given the use of the Campus East car park as a predominantly private car park it seems utterly bizarre that it's proposed closure requires such a large amount of additional public parking to be made available at Campus West. In addition, at its furthest point, the Campus West car park is almost a mile from the town centre. From our experience (walking through it each day) it is the least popular location for town centre parking. Making the car park bigger will not change this.

Impact on our home: The proposed car park will give a direct line of sight from the car park into the majority of rooms in our home (including our lounge, kitchen and multiple bedrooms - including those of our children). The proposed measures to mitigate the loss of privacy or headlight beams into our home (and neighbouring homes) are clearly inadequate.

Insufficient Cladding/Shielding on Northern Perimeter: As the trees that face the North side of the car park are deciduous, for half of the year the car park will be fully visible to all residents that live on that side of it (and the walkers in the woods). The presence of a decked car park will impact hugely on neighbouring properties on the North side of the development and the proposals to lessen the impact or mitigate the effects of the look of the building (as well as the light, noise and fumes emanating from it) are clearly insufficient. At a minimum, the proposed northern perimeter of the car park's tarmac surface should be moved away from the Ayot Greenway to allow planting of additional evergreen trees and shrubs to provide adequate screening for local residents.

Light Pollution: The lighting on the top deck is too prominent. The lighting is "street lighting", the type of lighting high on fixed poles. The lighting should be low level lighting on the top deck, located within the external barrier walls and should be dimmed at all times.


Noise Pollution: The Noise Survey seems to assume the loudest noise will be cars “pulling away”. It does not include the noise generated by the excessive engine revving and squealing of tyres caused by sharp turns that are commonplace in any car park of this nature.

Anti-social behaviour: Other than CCTV and the occasional visit by a Council employee (which have failed to help in other local car parks), what security will be in place to prevent anti-social behaviour in the proposed car park? This is a known issue and it seems like the Council are relying on wishful thinking.

Alternative Design Options: There is no mention of why brick-built design proposals similar to the Sainsbury’s car park in WGC and/or the recent Hatfield train station multi-storey car park were disregarded. If new parking is truly necessary, why not aim for something which bears at least some resemblance to the other buildings in Welwyn Garden City, rather than a monstrous metal eyesore?

Additional Stories: We assume that the ludicrous three storey proposal for this car park originally put forward by the Council was simply a tactical ploy to allow the Council to claim that the current decked car park took into account local feedback. Nevertheless, we would hope that, if approved, a condition is put in place to prevent the building of any additional stories to the car park in the future.

In conclusion, we implore you to please reconsider the proposed car park at Campus West. It is grotesque, ill conceived and an eyesore that will be a stain on the architecture of Welwyn Garden City town centre. A development of this scale, which is also a startling departure from the architectural heritage of our local area, must be approached with great care. To the extent it is true that the approval of this car park is inevitable, we would please ask that further consideration is given to mitigating the impact on nearby residents.


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