

We are immediate neighbours to this car park development living in Scholars Mews and back onto Campus West. Whilst we note the modification of this scheme to reduce the height of the structure from three floors to two, we are still very unhappy with this proposal that we believe still completely ignores the impact of this proposed structure on the properties to the north of the proposed development. We have highlighted the basis for our objection below:-

1) Noise pollution:- The back of the facility is open with no noise suppression measures from the traffic. We already suffer from noise nuisance from the existing Campus west building during the day and at night particularly from the service road.

2) Light pollution:- We already suffer from light pollution from Campus West building particularly during the winter when the leaves are off the trees. With the open design of the car park there will be a significant increase in light pollution.

3) Air pollution;- Pollutants, in particular carbon monoxide and particulates will blow in the wind particularly to those properties close to the development such as Scholars Mews.

4) Visual impact:- the rear façade has limited cladding presumably to save cost and the ugly structure will be very visible to properties behind the car park and the numerous pedestrians who use the Ayot Green Way. The elevation is predominantly open allowing light and sound to travel onwards. Why not create a living wall i.e., a biodiverse approach as used at Lister hospital, much more compatible with the rural environment created by the Ayot Green Way?

5) Increase in traffic:- There will be a significant increase in traffic as people enter and leave these additional parking spaces. This will inevitably lead to congestion in and around the Campus and noise and air pollution in the vicinity impacting upon the local environment.

6) Currently there is no access from the service road to the main car park. The proposal is not clear about the use of the secondary entrance to the north-east of the site. Can we have reassurance that the service road will not be used to access the main parking area at any time in the future?

7) Needs case not demonstrated. This parking is seemingly being built to replace existing parking that is closer to the town centre that is being targeted for redevelopment. The future plans for the other car parks that this is replacing are pretty vague. There is a suggestion that this is needed because one of the existing car parks will be redeveloped to provide housing, presumably more high-rise flats. Why do we need more high-rise flats when so many are being built on the other side of the railway line in the dreadful high-rise developments in the Wheat Quarter? Who are you going to find to live in the proposed development of thousands of high-rise properties that are close to the town centre and have very limited private parking and open spaces with few additional services and facilities being provided to support this new demand? The proposed multi story car park is adjoining one of the prime conservation areas in WGC and is not at all in keeping with the WGC ethos. Will people really walk from there to the town centre? It seems an unnecessary expense and at £3.8m a ridiculous waste of money at a time when the council is under enormous financial pressure due to the current pandemic.

8) Security:- Car Park security in the town centre is already weak. With the remoteness of the car park from the main town centre, it will be a magnet for vandalism and antisocial behaviour, rough sleeping, and joy riders. A clear plan and commitment to ensuring tight security is required particularly in the light of WGC having no local police station.

9) Access :- The car park will visually and physically cut the town centre off from Sherrards Wood. The link between the town and country is a core principle of the Garden City, yet the designers claim that the car park is completely in keeping with this ethos!

10) Trees;- The trees along Ayot Green Way (northern elevation) lose leaves in winter and they may be pruned or could die resulting in the loss of permanent screening. Indeed, the council are currently thinning out the trees along the Ayot Green Way in the area to let in more light. Assurances are needed that the trees that are currently in place and provide screening will not be removed or interfered with in a way that reduces the current level of screening.