

The Planning Inspectorate
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Temple Quay
Bristol BS1 6PN

1 October 2017

App/B1930/W/17/3179167

Appeal by Beechwood Homes Ltd: 1 Mount Pleasant, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL3 4QH

We write in support of objections to this appeal by our members resident in the area around the site. We endorse the detailed list of errors and omissions in the appeal case submitted by the Old Garden Court Management (19 July).

From the very first statement of the appeal (1.1) it should be clear that the replacement of a single bungalow and garden (albeit a large one) by a much larger 5-bedroom house and **five** 4-bedroom town houses must be an undesirable scale of development in a Conservation Area.

The proposed town houses of effectively 4 storeys on the highest ground within the site are overbearing in relation to the award-winning community of two-storey blocks of Old Garden Court (the only 3 storey block here is in the far south-western corner on ground 5 metres lower and hence unobtrusive). The height and rear design are incompatible with the directly facing Grade II listed houses in Welclose Street to the east. The development would also block traditional views of St Albans Cathedral from the recreational ground immediately north of the site. Thus we fully concur with that the reason given that the proposal was “*not in keeping with adjoining properties. By reason of its size, scale, layout and design there would be a detrimental impact on the character and setting of nearby locally listed buildings and conservation area*”. At no stage during the sequence of modifications to earlier refused applications listed in Section 3.6-3.10 has there been any offer to reduce the height of the proposed buildings, despite strong indications from Councillors that they wanted a more modest proposal.

Further comments on the appeal case summary:

9.1 Deficiencies in the Officer’s advice are noted in the critique by the Old Garden Court Management (posted on Council website on 19 September 2017).

9.2 (a, b) The need for redevelopment is predominantly the developer’s.

9.2 (e) As argued above, the proposal impairs rather than complements existing developments.

9.2 (f) It is not for the applicant to state that the proposal is acceptable but for others to decide; we disagree as outlined above.

9.2 (g) We disagree.

9.2 (h) The Conservation Officer’s collaboration does not in itself make the proposal acceptable.

9.2 (i) There are genuine safety concerns with a tight entrance opposite parking bays and a popular recreation ground including a play area for young children.

9.2 (k) St Albans does need more houses, but not expensive 4- and 5-bedroom homes.

9.2 (c, l, n) These points are irrelevant.

We respectfully ask you to uphold St Albans City and District Council’s refusal of planning permission.

Robert Pankhurst
Secretary, APRA
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