



MERROW RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

www.merrowresidents.org.uk

Chairman: Andrew Strawson, 4 Abbots Way, GU1 2XP

Ms Lisa Botha
Planning Case Officer
Guildford Borough Council
Millmead
Guildford, GU2 4BB
By email

9th June 2022

Dear Ms Botha

Planning Application 22/P/00711 – Westhorpe, Holford Road, Guildford GU1 2QE

Outline application for demolition of existing building and erection of a block of 11 flats with associated parking and landscaping (access, appearance, layout and scale to be considered)

I write on behalf of Merrow Residents' Association, to object to the above application. The reasons are detailed below.

1. DESIGN AND CHARACTER OF THE PROPOSED BUILD

The surroundings of the existing detached house and proposed build are described in the Design Statement, in relation to the frontage and Victorian style buildings of the Epsom Road and adjacent housing in High Path Road. Demonstrably, there is no comparison. Little regard is given to the fact that Holford Road has its own 1930s characteristics, with a light and airy feel along the gentle uphill rise to Merrow Downs at its end with well spaced houses, and wide, tree lined pavements and grass verges. This is one of the most attractive and tranquil roads in Merrow.

Saved Policy G5 Design Code (2) requires new buildings to respect the scale, height and proportions of the surrounding environment. The proposed Victorian style red brick block of 11 flats is totally unsympathetic, overbearing and does not conform to the established street scene. **Saved Policy H (4) Housing in Urban Areas** specifically requires that there is no unacceptable effect on the existing context and character of the adjacent buildings and immediate surroundings. In addition, the proposed build, in design is forward of the established building line, which only adds to its bulk. **Policy D1 Place Shaping** states that 'all new

development will be designed to reflect the distinct local character of the area'. The Design Statement suggests it conforms to this policy, which it clearly does not.

2. PARKING AND ACCESS

The underground parking would have 13 vehicle spaces, which is 2 fewer spaces than GBC Parking Provision standards require. This is a critical concern, as there are no visitor parking spaces and despite the applicant's claim that 13 spaces are sufficient, there would be an overspill into Holford Road. The SCC Highways' letter has stated that additional parking should be provided within the site to comply. The restricted manoeuvring space in the car park would deter residents from using it resulting in a further increase of parking at the roadside. SCC Highways consider the turning space to be inadequate. SCC issues must be addressed. We have had recent experience of new developments in the area where the Parking Standards provision itself is frequently inadequate and the result is overspill onto the roadside.

The existing house and its driveway is on the corner of Holford Road and the very busy A246 Epsom Road. Access to the entrance of the proposed block of flats would be in the same place, which we consider would be dangerous when 13 plus vehicles are entering and exiting, whilst overflow parking would inevitably be on the kerbside. Children walking to St. Thomas's School across the main road would be at added risk. Parking in Holford Road by parents of those children is a regular problem and overspill parking from the proposed flats would add to the existing chaos.

3. AMENITIES OF NEIGHBOURS

Saved Policy G1 (3) Protection of Amenities enjoyed by occupants of buildings. At the present time, one house occupies the site. A three storey building of 11 flats would impact upon nearby residents in terms of noise, vehicle emissions and loss of privacy and light. There are no acceptable outdoor amenity and leisure spaces for the occupants of the proposed dwellings. One and two bed flats are desirable within the area, but this build would be in the wrong place.

4. SUSTAINABILITY AND ENERGY USE

We are very disappointed at the wholly inadequate commitment, even in outline, to design an energy efficient building. The Sustainability and Energy Statement commits to installing gas boilers, which should no longer be planned in new buildings. The use of air source heat pumps is mentioned with no regard to their location or noise emissions and ignoring the more effective option of a ground sourced heat network for the building. There is no information on intended air leakage or the provision of an effective low energy mechanical ventilation and heat recovery system. Mention is made of the possible use of solar panels, but with no commitment to install them.

The outline application has failed to observe the planning requirements, as set out above, and we recommend it is refused.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Strawson
Chairman
Merrow Residents' Association

c.c. Cllr Deborah Seabrook, Cllr Steven Lee, Cllr Jan Harwood, C.Cllr George Potter