

PLANNING REF : 242066
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 17 Ascot House
: Finchampstead Road, Wokingham
: RG40 2NW
SUBMITTED BY : Mr T&A Cattanach-Taylor
DATE SUBMITTED : 17/11/2024

COMMENTS:

Objection to Planning Application 242006

Summary: In the latest proposed Local Plan Update 2023 -2040, Cllr Stephen Conway notes that "the council has a duty to positively plan for development and in doing so protect the borough from unplanned and speculative proposals." He goes on to point out that speculative proposals often come with inadequate infrastructure and securing the level of infrastructure required for sustainable and healthy new communities is far easier gained through large scale developments such as Loddon Valley Garden. The Cllr also emphasises the borough's new higher targets for much needed affordable housing. It is this objection's intent to support the refusal of planning application 242006 due to inappropriate infrastructure as well as other grounds. The break-down of points below is not exhaustive of this objection and comes purely from non-technical albeit deeply concerned residents of Ascot House.

Statement of Community Interest: JBP October 2021

- Including this document in a current planning application which has the potential to affect so many of the local community calls into question the integrity of planning application 242006. The document is irrelevant, outdated and was produced before Ascot House homed a single occupant. I respectfully ask the planning committee to ask for a reason from the applicant for including this document. From a current resident of Ascot House's point of view, it serves no purpose other than to add to the dozens of technical documents we have been drowned by and a complete waste of time and resource when producing legitimate objections. This break down in integrity supports the theme that this is a speculative planning proposal.

Transport Statement: TTP Consulting April 2024

- This report suggests that the proposed Ascot House will have no problem supporting space for a minimum 62 Bicycles. This objection would like to respectfully remind the planning committee of Condition 5 of planning application 211020, 08/06/2021 which states "No building shall be occupied until secure and covered parking for cycles has been provided in accordance with the approved drawing." As of October 2024, with every current unit inside Ascot House occupied, there is no facility anywhere within the bounds of Ascot House to store a bicycle. On highlighting this to the council prior to planning 242006 becoming active, the applicant made further promises to install a cycle shed by 28/10/2024. This deadline was also not met and at the time of writing there is currently an unsecure, rudimentary cycle store for 20 bicycles. Whilst acknowledging that the reputation of the applicant should not be called into question as a legitimate objection, it does raise the question of where a further 42 cycle spaces will fit in the current grounds and on what timescale this will be installed. The infrastructure available to construct this is simply not viable without having knock on effects to residents outdoor / car parking

space. The proposal will also render access to the new x20 bicycle storage out of bounds on commencement of works.

- This report claims that with 36 parking spaces there is not expected to be overspill residential parking associated with the development

and parking demands will be accommodated within the boundary. I respectfully ask the planning committee to apply an element of human factor in this calculation and to disregard the mathematical calculation given by TTP. With 8 proposed x2 bedroom units offering the opportunity for couples and/or small families the chance to reside, I put it to the committee that there is indeed a very likely chance that multiple units will own more than 1 car. As parking spaces will be assigned, this affords no extra parking availability should only 1 of the units own more than 1 car. I speak first hand that this is already the case and we currently reside in a 1 bedroom unit. Add to this resident's visitors and the very small road that currently services Ascot House will very quickly become overwhelmed.

- Given Ascot House's close proximity to the town centre, we are now seeing members of the public taking advantage of the unrestricted parking availability outside of Ascot House on Kendrick Road. With even more cars added to this mix, the likelihood of disputes will very likely provide a detrimental impact on community living.

- Not only in this transport statement but throughout the planning application as a whole, it is seldom if ever mentioned that Ascot House lies on a Cul de Sac. There are already current issues with large vehicles mistakenly exiting the roundabout from Finchampstead Road and struggling to turn around in such a tight space to exit again. Not only is this already a significant risk of damage to both property and vehicles, it will be multiplied even more with the introduction of more car parking spaces. The common theme is that the infrastructure is simply not suitable for more cars.

- The entrance to Kendrick Close from the roundabout has been noted as approx. 6 metres wide with no pedestrian crossing island. This is already a major concern with current flow of traffic often entering Kendrick close at inappropriate speed. Adding more vehicles to the area will significantly increase the potential of a serious accident.
- EV charging has been proposed in line with government legislation on new build properties. The report by TTP states that "passive

provision is assumed to refer to the installation of the ducting runs that will allow additional EV charging units to be connected at a later date." Could I respectfully ask the committee to require plans for the installation of this infrastructure as proposed and to ask the applicant for a long term sustainability/maintenance plan for the charging points if they are ever installed? Will any costs incurred be applied to the overall management charge for current residents? As per legislation, at least 1 fixed charging point must also be installed. I am also keen to understand the applicant's proposal for how 1

permanent EV charging point will support the residents in Ascot House given that parking spaces are assigned and the only obligation will be to install a charging point in line with the new build properties being built after the legislation cut off date.

Energy and Sustainability Assessment: JS Lewis Feb 2024

- This report proposes individual Heat Pumps for the 10 apartments. This objection seeks clarity over the terminology, 'Heat Pumps.' Does this refer to Ground source Heat Pumps, Air source Heat Pumps

or

something else? The provision of 10 external heat pumps is not reflected on design drawings whether they be suspended outside the building or situated on the ground level.

Ecological Impact Assessment: Lizard Landscape Design (LLD)

- LLD consider the tree situated outside of 'window 179' (taken from Right of Light Consulting report) to be 'low ecological value' and the applicant proposes the removal of the tree. This tree serves Flat 17 twofold. The tree is visible directly outside of the living space and enhances the liveability of the room. It offers a calming break up from the otherwise urban outdoor view whilst attracting birds to an area distinctly lacking in green space. The tree also provides much needed privacy to the bedroom. Without the tree in place, the bedroom window becomes completely exposed to the main entrance of Ascot House and due to the nature of the window's foot level position, the bedroom will become significantly overlooked to all foot traffic coming in or out of Ascot House. The only viable option would be to cover the window with curtains or blinds completely reducing any natural light into a room that has been otherwise protected from view by the tree.

- 4.3.1 in the report states that 'Cotoneaster was identified within the planter to the northeast of B01.' The report goes on to explain that this is an invasive species and is an offence to let this species spread in the wild. This backs up the proposal that this planter should be removed in order to eliminate the invasive species. This objection would like to respectfully remind the planning committee that condition 6 of planning application 211020 required the applicant to submit full details of both hard and soft landscape proposals. Within the plans subsequently submitted and approved, the planter in question (Bed G) was to 'remove weeds and weed tree; prune shrubs to tidy up the bed and mulch with ornamental bark to a depth of 75mm.' This condition was never met and whilst the bed may include some invasive species, as it stands, it is a valuable green space offering garden like feel for the residents of both Ascot House and Kendrick Close. The proposal now intends to eliminate this entire planter to make way for 5 more car spaces. To lose this vital piece of greenery would have a significant impact on the liveability of the community as well as the various wildlife that live, feed and nest in it. There is insufficient infrastructure and/or space within the grounds of Ascot House to replace the amount of landscaping being proposed to remove.

Construction Method Statement:

- The proposed time frame for the works is 9 months. There is no supporting evidence to assure the residents that this time frame is realistic or achievable. As a resident who frequently works from home requiring undisturbed access to video conferencing, this will highly likely be affected. The denial of a work from home environment for such an extended period is not acceptable in today's working climate.

Daylight & Sunlight Report: Right of Light Consulting (RoL)

- As the owner of the only window (180) identified by RoL as having unacceptable light loss due to the proposed planning application, I find their attempt to brush over this breach deeply upsetting. To use the phrase 'only just faces within 90 degrees of due south' is not acceptable and is nowhere near a professional standard. Window 180 is our only source of direct sunlight and given that our residence is largely north facing, the direct sunlight we do receive through 180 is an extremely valuable part of our lived experience. To take away any of this will significantly impact the natural light, warmth and liveability provided to our residence and RoL should seriously consider the level of professionalism employed when being asked to report unbiasedly on the impact of resident's livelihoods.

- RoL also provide some very telling photographs of various neighbouring resident's private space and back windows. It should be noted that, assuming the images were produced from ground level, they back up the objection from neighbouring property owners that to build more stories onto Ascot House will result in a significant amount of overlooking into these exact private spaces.

Conclusion:

The proposed extension to Ascot House is a speculative piece of planning. Not only do we feel there has been a serious misrepresentation by the applicants to the current home owners and tenants of Ascot House but there is a clear pattern emerging when applying this application with those previously made. The applicants have made no attempt to engage with residents, they have proposed nothing in terms of improving quality of life or surrounding infrastructure and the extension they propose is simply not appropriate for this location. I respectfully urge the planning committee to visit Ascot House to see first-hand how this proposal should not be allowed to go ahead.

Finally, I respectfully remind the planning committee that this proposal involves not only the neighbours and local community but the livelihood of those already residing in the 24 units of Ascot House. We only need to look 200 metres west of Ascot House to see what

happened with the new build at Carnival Hub. In the event this proposal goes ahead, what security do we have as homeowners and tenants that the extension will be completed? The risk of this proposal far outweighs any reward the community or the local authorities stand to make by squeezing 10 unaffordable units into an already over-crowded Cul de Sac.