

## **6/2021/3422/FUL**

### SALISBURY SQUARE DEVELOPMENT OBJECTION

I own the property at 29 Salisbury Square. I object to the current proposal.

My objections are based on loss of green space amenities to existing residents and the general disregard for the long held view that visitors should be encouraged to the area with the revitalization of Salisbury Square as a place to eat and shop. This proposal puts a thoroughfare through the Square and this road will exist solely to provide access to additional car parking spaces. Green space will be removed to provide these extra car parking spaces. This is in direct opposition to any potential use of the Square as a pleasant place to visit, shop and eat.

1. The first document, the Application Form, states the site address as the “Car Park at Salisbury Square” and implies a better use of space in an area currently only occupied by cars. This is inaccurate and misleading. The site actually includes public space at the other side of the square that is currently a community amenity.
2. Comments under the heading “The Local Perspective” are equally misleading. The Applicant’s team themselves have admitted the questions on which findings and feedback were based caused confusion. This is discussed more at the end of this document. The whole section on “the Local Perspective” should therefore be ignored.
3. The repurposing of so much of the Square to parking and vehicular access will close down for ever the possibility of the Square being regenerated to provide either a safe haven to local residents or a space for visitors to shop, eat or just spend time.

4. The proposal under consideration includes removing some 50% of the current green and recreational space in Salisbury Square and turning that amenity into a car park.
5. Existing residents, owners and tenants of properties in Salisbury Square will suffer not only whilst these works take place but also in the long term as a result of the negative change in public amenities and environment.
6. 29 Salisbury Square is the home to 3 long term tenants, one of who has lived in the property for 12 years and the other two for nearly 5. It is their home. During their time in the property they have enjoyed a green view. This proposal would mean that in future anyone living in this property will be forced to look out on car parking space as opposed to the current trees and shrubs. This applies equally to all residents in this part of the square.
7. There should be no reduction in the trees or shrubbery in Salisbury Square There should be more greenery, not less. Whether the trees are of exceptional arboricultural merit is irrelevant. They are mature trees and should not be removed unless they constitute a safety concern. If an expert deems they should be removed for safety reasons then they should be replaced by trees of a similar size – they should not be replaced with a parking space. Replacement trees should be in the same location as trees removed. It should not be used as an opportunity to transfer greenery from one side of the square to another. If any green space is to be sacrificed it should be in the areas closest to the development not at the point furthest away across the other side of the square.
8. Several key aspects of the previously approved but subsequently shelved proposal for this site included a café/restaurant providing a facility for local residents and workers and the provision of retail units. It was stated that such activities would increase safety to the area when offices were empty. The additional retail units were comprehensively argued as being necessary for the wellbeing of the residents but this element has been dropped in the latest Application. These previously accepted arguments are now being ignored with just one very small retail unit incorporated in amongst 11 office units.

9. A piazza environment could easily be created in Salisbury Square. There has rightly been an ongoing endeavor to make Salisbury Square more appealing to a wider audience and to encourage the revitalization of the square. Surely a piazza type experience with outdoor restaurant and café seating amidst green space would be far more appealing than vehicular access leading only to a car park? Only half of the commercial building ground floor in this proposed development devoted to retail/service use when that is what might draw visitors to the area. This is very small indeed compared to the sq.m devoted to office space, which could be located anywhere in the borough.

10. There has been a good suggestion that visitors to Hatfield House should be motivated to extend their visit to Salisbury Square to increase opportunities for retailers and restaurateurs in the area. But why would stately home visitors want to visit an office block in a car park? On the other hand they might be encouraged by the opportunity to have a coffee or a meal in a piazza style, well-landscaped area and shop in some quaint gift shops or arts and crafts type boutiques.

11. There is currently no traffic admitted to the Square. Environmental policy is to favour public transport over private transport and to aim for traffic reduction. Yet this Application seeks to increase it. By all means encourage extra footfall but it should be pedestrian not vehicular. Having a roadway into and right across the square will mean more pollution and will mean residents are forced to inhale more fumes. Access to the new development and any associated parking should be from existing roads not via space that is currently a pedestrian area. In the Applicant's PDAS the ease of accessibility is highlighted yet their proposal suggests further roads and vehicle parking is required.

12. If vehicular access is required to service the new development then it should come from Arm and Sword Lane but not be allowed any further in to Salisbury Square than the perimeter of the new parade. A well-lit pedestrian

route should be provided into the Square from the new development area. In this way the only retail/service unit provided in this proposal, which hopefully will contain a café as requested by a large proportion of respondents, can have outside tables in the Square itself adding the much needed vibrancy to the area.

13. Environmental policy calls for the minimization of car parking and the maintenance of existing open space. This proposal suggests exactly the opposite.

14. 65 car parking spaces have been allocated to service just 11 dwellings. The Application Plan allows provision for some 35 parking spaces between the 2 new buildings which should be adequate to allow for a parking space for each of the 11 dwellings with some 24 spaces left available for short term parking for users of the one space allocated as a retail/service unit and the provision of an electrical vehicle car club. If, as has been suggested, the offices are to provide local employment then presumably local people should be encouraged to walk or cycle to work.

15. This Application is proposing to position the additional 30 spaces and the thoroughfares to reach them all round Salisbury Square replacing existing public amenity and green space.

16. The 30 spaces are not adjacent to the houses and flats in the proposed development but instead are positioned outside existing homes and businesses on the opposite side of the Square. The Applicant's car parking should not be allowed to impinge on the existing community or the already limited green and recreational space but should be restricted to the space between the two buildings that form part of the development or constructed underneath the commercial development.

The proposed parking Spaces 1 to 7 are at the very furthest point possible to the new development. They should not be allowed. Their positioning requires the removal of 2 silver birch trees and several shrubs. They are positioned directly in front of residential property. The parking of vehicles directly adjacent to residential property not connected to the development will subject long term

residents to noise pollution from cars potentially arriving and departing late at night and interferes with their quiet enjoyment of their homes.

Proposed parking spaces 8 to 21 are also a significant distance away from the development and also require the removal of greenery and community space.

Spaces 24 – 30 also require the removal of shrubbery.

17. If the developers want more than 35 parking spaces and the councilors agree such extra parking spaces should take priority then they should run a row between the residential build and the commercial block, possibly alongside the commercial block where approximately 15 extra spaces could be added without affecting the amenities of the existing premises in the square. Alternatively they could build a 2-decked car park as previously approved in the last Application or provide parking space under their commercial block.

18. There is no reason why this new development should require vehicular access into the area currently containing green space even if that green space could be better designed. No parking or vehicular access should be allowed to extend into the Square beyond the Applicants West/East commercial block .

19. Reference is made to the Old Hatfield Charrette . One of the Charrette's conclusions regarding Salisbury Square was that it would be important to improve the quality of the open space at its heart, as this makes a substantial contribution to the character of the Square as a whole. It is unlikely that the Charrette saw the character of the Square as a parking lot.

The Charrette proposals called for a need to “improve quality of open space” not the building over of such space. In its proposals it called for a new car park to be situated behind the square and screened by buildings. Previously it has been agreed that parking facilities should be shielded to improve aesthetics. The current proposal puts parking inside the square, right in front of existing residencies.

20. No community amenities are included in this development. There is no provision for children, exercise space or even a building to house community activities. There is no landscaping or improvement of amenity in the Square itself.

21. The developers' own research backs up the comments above.

The Applicants say the least popular statement they put forward to respondents was "Green space in the square is unnecessary. It should be paved so it can be used for other things". The majority (almost 90%) of respondents strongly opposed the idea of paving over green space. Respondents did say the Square should be made more inviting. Car parking spaces are not "more inviting".

The Applicants say their second least popular statement was "Parking should be maximised and prioritised above all else". The most common response to this unpopular statement was "strongly disagree". Separately only 26.3% agreed with the statement "for shops to thrive they need parking and access"

Only 15% disagreed with the statement "consider access only for an electric vehicle car club". This seems to have been totally ignored in this proposal.

The figures re the statement "keep cars out of the square to allow people to enjoy it for events" are not accurately reflected in the findings as the "Unsure" have been lumped with the "disagrees" to suit the Applicants' purpose. If they added "Unsure" to the "Agrees" then the majority of respondents want no cars in the square.

Whilst it is claimed "some access" approach is more favourable than a "through road" the survey report itself confirms the statement confused respondents. It should therefore be disregarded and not taken as support for the developers plan. If any consideration is given to this statement then it should be recognized respondents were not asked if "no access" was preferable to "some access" but they did make it clear that they did not want a "through road". The current proposal includes a road going right across the square constructed solely to access parking at the opposite side of the Square.

