

Comment on Planning Application: 6/2022/2801/MAJ

Monday 23 January 2023

Local Plan - This application is for 313 dwellings which exceeds the WHBC Local Plan.

Dwellings size / type - The council has approved multiple new developments in close proximity to the Town Centre. Planning policy requires a distribution of dwellings sizes. This application does not have sufficient 3 or 4 bedroom dwellings, which I understand should be greater than 50%. The apportionment of dwelling sizes and types on this site should be comparable to the development adjacent to Shire Park and Mundells.

This site is part of the WGC conservation area and adjacent to the WGC Estate management zone and when properties were built on Gresley Close, WHBC removed Permitted Development rights; this application is inconsistent with these. If this application is approved, the conservation area, estate management zone and revoked permitted development rights will be subject to challenge.

Density - This application would produce a greater population density than other recent developments close to the town centre but there is no additional provision of school places, doctors and dentists. These, especially schools, are already oversubscribed. The county must ensure that adequate schools provision is in place in local schools that can be reached by sustainable transport, cycling and walking, prior to the development being approved.

Height, overlooking, blocking sunlight - The block(s) of 6 storeys is at odds with the council's policy town-wide policy of a maximum of 5 storeys. The 6-storey block is within the conservation area and this height limit must be adhered to. The blocks at the north end of the site rise to 4/5 storeys at the point where they meet neighbouring properties. This gives rise to privacy and encroachment issues to those neighbours and will block right to sunlight when the sun is low during winter months at the south (during the middle of the day). Where the site borders lower properties the height should be limited to avoid these issues. At the north end of the site the height should be gradually stepped up, one storey per building (and no greater than the 5 storey maximum).

Parking - There is insufficient parking Census 2021 indicates more than 75% of homes own a vehicle, with the average ownership being more than one vehicle. Residents of this site must not be permitted to park on Gresley Close or other nearby streets.

Social Housing - This application does not have any social housing; this is against policy. A site of this size should have more than 40 dwellings allocated to social housing.

Sustainable energy source - The application fails to provide adequate information regarding the inclusion of sufficient renewable energy means, e.g. solar panels. In addition, modern developments should be considerate of future national government legislation, e.g. use of heat pumps rather than gas powered boilers.

EV Charging - The allocation of spaces equipped with EV is at 50%, this is in contravention of building regulations Part S introduced in 2021. Whilst officers may state that this is a

building regulation rather than planning regulation, it would be wholly negligent and remiss of any officer to recommend an application for approval, whilst being aware that it contravenes building regulations.

Play Space - The absence of designated space where older children could play ball games. While the area of open space is perhaps acceptable, it is punctuated by a large number of trees which would make ball games impossible. Local Areas of Play needed. The nearest council play areas are more than a kilometre away (Knightsfield and Harwood Hill), it's not reasonable to expect responsible parents to take small children this far across busy roads.

Design - There is a lack of continuity in the design between the block in the conservation and the blocks not within. The design does not utilise the accepted window style in the town centre design guide. The design does not widely utilise mansard roofs, which is the style town centre dwellings. This site should copy the design of adjacent residential buildings, including in height (i.e. Peel Court).

Consultation - The consultation on this development is different to the planning application. Whilst it is not the council holding the consultation, WHBC should have guidelines so that as a minimum requirement consultations are meaningful and representative and held at reasonably convenient times with reasonably convenient notice.

Application Documents - The documents do not give local residents or councillors adequate information on which to produce an informed opinion. The application should be rejected, feedback provided and prior to further consultation.

Construction phase - There is no information pertaining to the continuation of access from the site through to Gresley Close - thus includes the existing cycle route, which would have to be rerouted along one of two busy roads.