

43 Brookmans Avenue
Hatfield
Herts
AL9 7QH
29th September 2018

Dear Mr Elmore

RE: 77 Brookmans Avenue, 6/2018/1996/FULL Erection of 8 x self-contained apartments with lower ground floor car park following demolition of existing dwelling

We wish to object to the planning proposal at 77 Brookmans Avenue on four grounds, Character and Context, Unduly Dominant Mass, Parking Provision and Planning Obligations.

We believe each of these objections to be separate and that the planning proposal should be rejected.

Character and Context

There are two blocks of flats at the gateway properties adjacent to Bradmore Green, numbers 9 and 11. Thereafter, Brookmans Avenue is a residential road entirely formed of single household properties. The cumulative effect of continually granting planning permission for the conversion of family homes to flats would be to massively change the character and context of Brookmans Avenue as well as the nature and feel- something Policy D2 explicitly seeks to prevent. Thus, the conversion to a block of flats at 77 Brookmans Avenue should be rejected.

Unduly Dominant Mass

Section 5.2 (iii) of the Supplementary Design Guidance for residential properties states that "an extension should not cause loss of light or be unduly dominant from adjoining properties, as a result of either the length of projection, the height or the proximity of the extension".

The huge increase in footprint extending back significantly from the existing property and beyond those adjacent, despite some of it being single story, will clearly have an overbearing feel, rather like being next to a small warehouse, for both 79 Brookmans Avenue and in particular 75 Brookmans Avenue. A significantly reduced footprint could address this issue, but until then the proposal should be rejected.

Parking Provision

The parking bays of 2.4m * 4.8m are unrealistically small for modern cars which have increased significantly in size since 1994 when the initial 2.4m guidance was issued. This is even more pertinent given the presence of supporting concrete pillars within the underground car park. The Interim Policy for Car Parking Standards and Garage Sizes, August 2014 states that the Supplementary Planning Guidance, Parking Standards, January 2004 should be used as a guide, and Case Officers should use their judgment. In this instance, especially given the likely income bracket of those buying these flats and therefore the expected size of their cars, the parking bays should be of a more realistic size (3m * 5.2m) and the available parking bays reduced. Subsequently there should be a reduction in either the number of flats or the number of bedrooms within the flats.

The assumption of 1.5 cars for a two bedroom flat in Brookmans Avenue is unrealistic. The cheapest two bedroom flat in Brookmans Avenue is currently £799,000 and therefore it is to be expected that owners in this income bracket will have at least two cars, more if they have children of driving age. In addition, the flats are not within 5 minutes walking distance of the shops and it is reasonable to assume that access to a car will be essential for all parties living in the flats. Once again, the Case Officer is in a position to use their judgement on the likely level of car ownership to ensure the new property can fully provide sufficient parking within its boundaries as well as cater for disabled parking and visitors.

Planning Obligations

As set out in the Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document February 2012, the council would seek 30% of a new development to be affordable housing on residential sites of 25 units or more. While this site is only of an additional 7 units, combined with flats at 9 and 11 Brookmans Avenue, this would amount to a cumulative net increase of 13 units. If permission is granted then it is reasonable to assume this sets a precedent and the flats in Brookmans Avenue will soon number well in excess of 25. Therefore, to be consistent with the policy, it would seem a condition of planning should be for this developer (and any subsequent ones for other Brookmans Avenue properties) to give over up to 30% of the flats as affordable properties.

The HCC Planning Toolkit states that the Council can seek contributions towards infrastructure for each additional residential dwelling, although normal practice is to use a threshold of 10 units. Once again, granting this planning application will set a precedent and therefore it seems entirely reasonable that as part of consent being granted, the developer makes a significant and ongoing contribution toward improved education infrastructure in the already oversubscribed local primary and secondary schools.

To confirm, we believe each of these objections to be separate and that the planning proposal should be rejected.

Your sincerely

Mr & Mrs Ward