

**PAPWORTH EVERARD PARISH COUNCIL**

Response to application no. **S/0820/12/FL**

**Refurbishment of existing buildings to create 24 self-contained flats and demolition of existing structures before erection of a new building housing 11 self-contained flats for assisted living (C2 Use). Location: Macfarlane Grieve House, Church Lane, Papworth Everard, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, CB23 3QW. Applicant: Mr Guy Marsden, Bidwells LLP**

Papworth Everard Parish Council recommends **refusal** of the application for the following reasons:

**1. POLICY** The proposed re-development of Macfarlane Grieve House involves a net increase of three residential units and an increase of approximately 550sqm in floor area. The application site lies within the Papworth West Central area for which a 'site specific policy' exists (SCDC LDF Site Specific Policies: Papworth Everard SP/10 (Site 2), and inset map 83). However, there is no clarification or explanation within the application of how the development will meet the requirements of the policy for a mixed development within the Papworth West Central area in order to maintain the vitality and viability of the village centre – for employment and community uses, as well as residential. The lack of a more detailed document (SPD) setting a planning framework for the Papworth West Central area does not mean that the site specific policy can be ignored.

The draft S106 Agreement submitted by the applicant (dated 15.5.12) does not adequately address the need for an adequate response to the site specific policy as it goes no further in providing funding in lieu of open space and community provision, than would be required of a residential development in any area *without* a special policy provision.

The parish council reserves the right to submit further, detailed comments on policy matters.

**2. LACK OF PROVISION OF GARDENS** There is inadequate provision of private gardens and private recreational/play space within the development. If parents and young children were to be housed in Mcfarlane Grieve House, there is very limited enclosed outside space attached to the flats. (Disabled residents in other Papworth Trust Sheltered accommodation (bungalows) on Church Lane have had children and the young families have greatly benefited from enclosed rear gardens and front hard surfaced areas).

The presence of relatively high levels of benzopyrene in the soil and the probable requirement for remediation if the area were used for gardens (letter J Davis of Ground Engineering to B Heath, Bidwells LLP, 11.5.12), is insufficient reason to deny residents adequate outside space attached to their dwellings.

**3. UNATTRACTIVE VIEWS** The central court of the new complex – the so called ‘heart’ of the development (see Design and Access Statement – ‘Layout’) - will essentially be a car park. This will offer a potentially depressing view for the flats in the buildings to be retained on site. It is particularly disappointing as many of the residents will have limited mobility and reduced opportunities to spend time away from their flats. Such a restricted internal space and limited views are unacceptable and unnecessary within a village environment.

**4. INADEQUATE PARKING PROVISION** Parking provision is inadequate. Only 15 spaces have been provided for the resident of 24 flats. This will be particularly unacceptable, if, as is possible, the flats move to private ownership in future. Also, if the six ‘care and support staff’, who live in Papworth and are expected to cycle to work, actually use their cars this immediately creates an under-provision of car parking. To expect all these staff to use bicycles is naïve. (For example it is known that Papworth-based hospital staff who use their cars to travel to work account for a proportion of the parked cars that currently restrict the main road (Ermine Street) at the front of the hospital to a single lane). Parking on Church Lane is to be avoided as this would add to the present problem caused by hospital parking, and would conflict, in future, with any development which takes place on the former Robert Ellis House site, to the south of Church Lane).

**5. POOR DESIGN** The massing and bulk of the new buildings will appear considerably greater than the buildings currently on site. Great play is made in the Design and Access Statement of the benefits of creating a sense of enclosure with the new layout; however, externally, this will have a negative impact. Approaching from the east along Church Lane the present single storey elements of Macfarlane Grieve House, set behind a landscaped parking area, will be replaced by a two story block much closer to both Church Lane and to the road leading north to Elm Way. The block will appear particularly dominant as the site has already been levelled-up at this eastern edge, which is emphasised by a retaining wall on the proposed north-east elevation. (The accuracy of the drawing of the red dotted line showing the profile of the gradient of Church Lane in the section on ‘Scale’ in the Design and Access Statement is doubted).

Externally the new block has an institutional – not a domestic - appearance. This could be reduced to some extent by adding apparent doorway features to the north-eastern and south-eastern elevations. (Elsewhere in the village (Jubilee Green), it is now regretted that large blocks of apartments were constructed without any apparent doorways at ground floor level).

The large featureless area of brickwork on the south side of the vehicular access to the development off Church Lane is unsatisfactory. (The inward-facing elevation of the new block – south-west elevation - is much more interesting and imaginative than the external elevations).

The architect has accepted that there was no reference to the District Design Code when designing the new part of the proposed building. The site lies close to the Papworth Everard Conservation Area and near to the Methodist Church, which is considered to make a “positive townscape/visual contribution to the buildings of the Conservation Area” (Map 6: Appraisal map). There is no recognition of the proposed building’s relationship to the Conservation Area in the proposed design. While the Design and Access Statement includes a small photograph of the Methodist Church, there appears to be no reference to any role it has played in influencing the design of the new building.

It is proposed that dark mortar with the buff brick can be used to add contrast to a building that is proposed to be largely buff brick and buff pointing. However, the use of dark mortar with buff brick has been considered to be unsuccessful in the village centre at Pendrill Court (c 10 years old), where in some places the walls have been re-pointed with a lighter mortar.

The parish council considers the design of the proposed Macfarlane Grieve House redevelopment to be a poor precedent for the development that will take place on the south side of Church Lane, on the former Robert Ellis House site.

**6. INADEQUATE PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION** The design and access statement records that the district council was consulted on the proposed development on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2012. The applicant subsequently provided further information.

The parish council was not ‘consulted’ until 27<sup>th</sup> March 2012. Just over a fortnight later - on 13<sup>th</sup> April - the LPA received the full application. It is clear that by the time the parish was ‘consulted’, the development proposal had to all intents and purposes been finalised and there was no realistic prospect of the application being changed in response to any substantive recommendations made by the parish council. Indeed, the parish council believes that by the time it was consulted the so-called ‘consultation process’ had become merely a public relations, box-ticking exercise, in which the council and others were merely being shown the finished plans before their submission as a full planning application. Many of the concerns raised in this application consultation response were raised at the parish’s ‘pre-application consultation meeting’, but have not informed the design. The ‘Conclusion’ of the Design and Access Statement does not represent the situation accurately.

(It is also noted that this application does not appear on the SCDC planning portal, making satisfactory public consultation unlikely.)

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CB2