

Mr Jedd Goodwin-Roberts
Planning Officer, Croydon Council
Bernard Weatherill House
8 Mint Walk
Croydon CR0 1EA

24th October 2020

Dear Mr. Goodwin-Roberts,
20/05075/FUL 1 Kearton Close, Kenley

Before stating my objections to the above application, it may be helpful if, as a resident and neighbour for over 50 years, I touch on the history and the character of the area; the latter being the main reason why I and the majority of residents chose to live here.

Kearton Close is one of the highest points in Kenley, built in the 1950's on farmland that overlooked green belt with views towards Kenley Common.

Because of its elevated position, over 500 ft above sea level, the then Council permitted only *bungalows* on the southern side of Kearton Close to retain an open outlook for all residents of that road especially for those of the *houses* on the opposite side of the road.

Over the years many of the bungalows have been extended and some have had chalet rooms built into the roof space but their overall roof height, that of a bungalow, has been retained. The housing stock, in terms of habitable rooms, has therefore increased over time and the majority of dwellings in that road are in Council tax bands G or H. Importantly, the character of the road has not changed.

The properties in Kearton Close stand on fair sized verdant plots which provide the amenity of privacy, light, open outlook, peaceful recreation areas and a pleasing street scene. All have parking spaces/garaging for multiple cars, which is necessary in this low PTAL location, and also eliminates the need for on road parking.

All of the above contribute to the unique 'character' of Kearton Close which make it such a desirable place in which to live.

I object to the above application for the following reasons:

1. **Out of Character.**

The proposed development would be completely out of character with nearby properties in Kearton Close, Uplands Road and Pine Close. Such urbanisation would be alien to the semi rural topography of this part of Kenley.

2. **Density and Massing**

The construction of 19 mixed dwellings within 4 co-joined buildings approx 70 metres in length in a plot on which one property currently stands would represent a massive over development of the site. Together with a new access road/ parking areas and paving, approximately 75% of the plot would be concreted over leaving little space for vegetation. The plans show that buildings would extend the entire length of the plot to within a metre of neighbouring properties in Pine Close.

3. **Height and scale**

Its dominant size would be out of scale, oppressive and over-bearing relative to neighbouring properties and would be detrimental to the visual amenity of other residents and to the street scene.

Further, the proposal, for a multi storey building, up to 4 storeys in height (3 floor plus rooms in roof), would be counter to the long standing and sound principle, described above, of permitting only bungalows on the southern side of Kearton Close.

The height and bulk of a multiple storey building would be particularly detrimental to the occupiers of the two bungalows on the eastern flank of 1 Kearton Close: 44 and 46 Uplands Road.

These two properties were built approximately 3 years after 1 Kearton Close. They were built *at a lower ground level* and on the slope of the hill that overlooks the wooded valley of Welcomes Road and also green belt beyond.

Because they are at a lower level, there would have been the opportunity to build two *houses* in that location; a roof of a house in that position in Uplands Road would be no higher than the existing roof of 1 Kearton Close.

But following the policy described above, only bungalows were permitted in order to retain the open aspect of Kearton Close residents, but **primarily those of 1 Kearton Close** who enjoyed views over the Welcomes Road valley to the east. Additionally, the occupiers of the Uplands Road bungalows were able to enjoy the amenity of an open outlook to the rear, over the bungalow roof of No 1 Kearton Close. It was a sensible planning decision beneficial to all parties.

It would be perverse in the extreme if Croydon Council were now to permit a tall overbearing co-joined block 4 storeys high to be built *on the higher level* of Kearton Close thereby impacting on the open aspect and privacy currently enjoyed by the occupiers of these two neighbouring bungalows in Uplands Road *at a lower level*

4. Loss of Privacy and Visual Intrusion

The height and close proximity of the development to neighbouring properties in Uplands Road, Pine Close and Kearton Close would create a gross invasion into the Privacy, a valued amenity, long enjoyed by those neighbours.

For the same reason the proposed buildings would be intrusive to and detract from the visual amenity afforded by the wooded backdrop and skyline in this hilltop setting.

5. Conflict with Council's Planning policies

The proposed development would NOT **respect existing residential character and local distinctiveness** nor would it **integrate with or enhance the borough's natural environment. Neither would it respect the development pattern, layout, scale, height, massing and density of neighbouring properties.**

It would thus be in breach of the Council's own planning policy and strategic objectives.

6. Removal of 16 trees and Risk to Protected Oak Trees.

The Arboricultural Report lists 16 trees that would be removed should work proceed. It describes them of low amenity value but, **on the contrary**, those along the boundary with 44 & 46 Uplands Road currently **provide natural screening and privacy** for neighbouring occupiers and also add to the pleasing wooded backdrop. Removal of these trees would add to the intrusive view of the new buildings and also to the loss of privacy.

In particular, a 5m Yew tree (Part of T18) is to be removed. This tree currently provides screening of the existing bungalow at 1 Kearton Close from my property. **I object strongly to this Yew tree being removed.** (Although shown in the plan, the schedule of trees in the report does not mention this tall and mature Yew. This omission should be corrected.)

The roots of four ancient Oak Trees in 44 & 46 Uplands Road that are protected under Croydon TPO No 15 2008 (T3,T4,T5,and T8 in that TPO) would also be at risk from the construction of the foundations. Although the Arboricultural report recognises this fact, the branches of one of the Oaks extends well into the plot **further than is shown on the plans** and as rooting systems can extend beyond the canopy any excavation in the proposed footing area could well put this old oak at risk.

The other three oaks have been pruned recently which would suggest that the rooting system of these trees also extend some considerable distance beyond their present canopy.

7. Noise pollution

Being located in a quiet area and on high ground there would inevitably be an increase in noise levels especially with so many households packed into this hitherto quiet area. This would be a nuisance to residents of Pine Close, with the proposed dwellings positioned just the other side of their fence and to those at 44 & 46 Uplands Road at the lower level.

8. Surface water and drainage

With such a high proportion of garden being built on and the consequent loss of natural drainage, it is questionable how the drainage and soak-aways proposed would cope following heavy rainfall. Most likely surface water would be diverted either down the gentle slope to the gardens in Pine Close and/or down the steeper incline to gardens in Uplands Road.

9. Insufficient Parking space.

The site has a PTAL of 0. It is situated at the top of a hill. The nearest public transport is a mile away at the bottom of that hill. It is reached via a narrow private road that has no pedestrian foot ways. With all the other development at the lower end of Welcomes Road vehicular traffic in that road is increasing and pedestrians are finding it both more challenging and dangerous to walk up and down that road, especially if children are in tow or in a push chair.

And only 23 parking spaces are provided for 19 dwellings containing 43 bedrooms. The new buildings, if constructed, would in all probability contain 2 or more adults and one or more children.. Any adult caring for a child or children would require a car, particularly for school runs.

The Parking space proposed would be insufficient for the needs of its residents and visitors and delivery vehicles. The result would be an increase in on-road parking which would be both dangerous, if attempted on the curved road of Kearton Close, and detrimental to the street scene. On-road parking on Uplands Road anywhere near the junctions of Kearton Close or Welcomes Road would be a danger to both drivers and pedestrians, many of whom are dog walkers heading for Kenley Common. (There are no pavements in Uplands Road).

The fact that Aventier themselves requested a traffic survey to look into on street parking is an admission that parking provision on this development would be insufficient.

In conclusion:

It would be difficult to conceive a plan for a residential development that would be more unsympathetic to the verdant character of an area, more damaging to the amenity of residents both in Kearton Close and in nearby roads and less respectful to the development pattern, lay out and siting, scale, height, massing and density of properties in this area and to the street scene in and around Kearton Close.

For these reasons, this application has understandably aroused strong feelings within the local community and there is absolutely nothing in this proposal that would foster a safer, healthier **or a more cohesive community** as stipulated in the Council's Strategic Objective 7.

I fear that, if approved, it would achieve just the opposite.

The application should be refused.

Yours sincerely

A Frontager

CC (by email) Chris Philp, MP
Heather Cheesbrough, Director of Planning
Steve O'Connell, Councillor
Jan Buttinger, Councillor
Kendra
Wura