



WELCOMES AND UPLANDS ROAD ASSOCIATION

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The Planning Inspectorate
Temple Quay House
The Square, Temple Quay
Bristol
BS1 6PN

FAO Case Officer: Ms Milena Opolska

14th December 2021

Ref APP/L5240/W/21/3279654

Dear Ms Opolska

Re: Proposed development at 46 Welcomes Road CR8 5HD: The erection of a frontage block of six flats and a pair of semi-detached house; and the demolition of the existing detached bungalow.

The Welcomes and Uplands Road Association (WURA), which has a membership of over 230 households, is responsible for the maintenance of the roads in the area. It is important to note that Welcomes Road is a narrow road with no pavements which is a designated Public Footpath leading to Kenley Common and the heritage site at Kenley Aerodrome. WURA is therefore very concerned with the impact of new developments on those roads, the impact on the environment and the safety of all road users, particularly pedestrians and cyclists on a designated footpath, and the amenity of WURA members.

We understand the developer has appealed to the Planning Inspectorate on the basis of non determination by Croydon Council. It is worth noting that shortly before this submitting this appeal the developer also submitted a new application to Croydon Council (21/04989/OUT), the content of which is virtually identical to the one under consideration.

While we obviously cannot comment on the lack of a timely decision from Croydon Council, we do request very strongly that this application is **REFUSED**, for the following reasons:

1. Overdevelopment and Intrusion

The height of the land to the rear of this plot indicated by the need for retaining walls means that the houses at the back will completely dominate the neighbours and indeed the outdoor space at the back of the flats, giving no privacy to those residents.

In addition, there are 2nd storey windows in the side elevations of both the houses and the flats which will directly overlook the neighbouring properties.

Given that among the reasons for rejecting the application at 37 and the previous application for 52 Welcomes Road was that *"the development would be detrimental to the amenities of the occupiers of the neighbouring properties by reason of its mass, design and siting resulting in increased visual intrusion, sense of enclosure, and loss of privacy, and would thereby conflict with Policies DM10 of the Croydon Local Plan 2018, Suburban Design Guide SPD 2019, and 6.12 and 6.13 of the London Plan"*, we believe very strongly that the same ruling should be made for this proposal.

Indeed, similar reasons have already been used by the Planning Inspectorate to uphold rejected applications nearby in South Croydon, including appeal L5240/W/21/3266351 which specifically states the application *"would fail to be respectful of the existing place and would have a considerable and negative effect on the residential amenity of neighbours"* in conflict with several section of DM10 of the Local Plan.

Chairman	Colin Brown	Willow Cottage	161 Welcomes Road	Kenley	CR8 5HB	Tel 020 8668 2101
Secretary	Richard Russell		12 Zig Zag Road	Kenley	CR8 5HA	Tel 020 8668 7293
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2. Poor Access to the Back Section of the Site : Safety Implications

Our understanding from the latest Building Regulations (Fire Safety 2019 edition with 2020 amendments, Section 13) that there should be access to within 45m of all points within a house which means that the fire appliance would need to approach using the access drive along the side of the block of flats. The minimum width required for fire engine access is 3.7m and the drive is stated to be less than that. Dead-end access routes longer than 20m also require turning facilities, clearly not possible here if there is anything parked in the visitor bays. The drive to the houses at the back of the site is extremely narrow (immediately to the east of the cycle-store the drive definitely narrows) as well as being close to the boundary with the adjacent property.

The drive is also insufficient to allow for safe passing of two cars. The size of many cars these days means that it would not allow a car to pass a pedestrian as there are no refuges for pedestrians. Given the bends at either end of the driveway it is possible that motorists might encounter each other and one or other will need to reverse to resolve the conflict. Again, this is a significant danger to pedestrians. Light spillage from car headlights is likely to be harmful to the neighbouring properties.

3. Poor Parking Design and Poor Access to the Flats

The swept path analysis at the end of the Transport Statement (added in March 2021, after the original application) show how dangerous the parking is at the front of the flats. Any vehicle parked in the southern spaces has to reverse out with no visibility whatsoever of any vehicles which may be approaching from the properties at the rear of the site.

The disabled bays are significantly smaller than the recommended 3.6m wide which means the access path at the front of the flats will be blocked by vehicles parked in these bays. The narrower part of the footpath looks to be less than the minimal acceptable width of 1.2m and definitely insufficient for disabled use. Any future occupants would need to accept that disabled car users will need to park such that they block a significant width of the already narrow foot path.

The “visitor” parking bays are dangerously located at the curve of the drive and again have insufficient space around them to allow safe manoeuvring given that reversing will be necessary. We also note that any visitor arriving at the site will be unable to see if a visitor parking bay is available unless they drive down the driveway. If they then find the visitor bays occupied, they are likely to be left with no option except to reverse back along the very narrow driveway and reverse out onto Welcomes Road.

WURA believes this application conflicts with policies DM29 and DM30 of the CLP. Similar issues have been cited by Croydon Council in recent rejections at both 67 and 37 Welcomes Road and the same reasoning should be applied for the current application.

4. Waste Management

The bins for the flats are located in a room near the front door – it is not clear whether the intention is to have 18 wheelie bins or to use Eurobins. No provision is made for the bins to be available kerbside and this would mean dangerous roadside clutter just where there is poor visibility due to the curve on Welcomes Road. If there is a disabled car that overhangs the footpath it will be very difficult to manoeuvre any kind of bin past the parked cars without risk of damage.

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The bin space provided for the houses at the back is completely inaccessible by bin lorries despite being labelled as a collection point. The Council bin lorry at 2.6m wide would need to navigate the narrow driveway to collect the bins. The Council bin lorry would then need to reverse out of the driveway. The alternatives are equally unacceptable:

- 1) The Council bin lorry remain parked on Welcomes Road whilst the collection staff walk 33m to the bin collection point, collect the bins, empty the bins into the waiting lorry and then return the empty bins to the bin collection point.
- 2) The residents of the rear dwellings re-locate the bins from the collection point to a position near the road for collection. But there is nowhere to place the bins where they will not be in the way and therefore cause danger.

The proposal therefore does not provide adequate and accessible refuse storage. The application conflicts with policy DM13.1 of the Croydon Local Plan 2018.

5. Trees and the Environment

The Tree Survey identifies many Category A trees which will have to be removed to create the driveway to the back of the plot. It seems very likely that the other mature trees on the site would be affected by the disruption to their root systems which will come about from the construction work.

There is no debate about whether Kenley, and Welcomes Road in particular, has special character. Welcomes Road, a designated footpath, was identified by Croydon as part of the Green Grid, giving access to Kenley Common and the heritage site at Kenley Aerodrome. These areas are to be protected under Section 8 of the London Plan.

Recent Government report, Living with Beauty, states the importance of a green environment and specifically, in Policy Proposition 6, that non-negotiable infrastructure includes green infrastructure. This is not only for maintaining a pleasant environment for the residents, but more fundamentally is part of eradicating the UK's net carbon contribution. The green environment in areas such as Welcomes Road, with its mature trees, cannot be easily re-instated once destroyed by over-development.

Given the unique benefits of the green locale, even on a general level, such intensification has to be *"harmful to the character and appearance of the area and therefore in conflict with Policies SP4 and DM10 of the Local Plan and Policies D3 and D4 of the London Plan, which amongst other things, seek to ensure developments respect the existing character and appearance of the locality in which they are sited"*, as stated in a recent Planning Inspectorate decision (L5240/W/21/3266351) for a nearby location in South Croydon.

6. Cumulative Effect of Overdevelopment in the Area

The cumulative impact of developing (let alone over developing) individually relatively small sites MUST be considered - "these include the consequences for the special character of an area including green cover and tree canopies, for health and social infrastructure and for transport".

The developer's Planning and Access Statement makes reference to several already approved proposals on Welcomes Road as if this is a 'good thing'. However, it only goes to show how important it is that the proper allowance is made for the cumulative impact of all the developments which have already been accepted. Any decision must take into account the cumulative effect of overdevelopment in the area, with 8 applications for



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intensification of so called 'windfall sites' already approved and more still pending representing around **140** new dwellings within the Welcomes and Uplands Road area alone.

A recent refusal at nearby 11 Hermitage Road included recognition of the *"unacceptable impact on the highways network given the cumulative impact of the development. The increased pedestrian and vehicular movement ... would compromise highways safety and there be contrary to the NPPF 2019, Policy 2.8 of the London Plan 2016, DM29 and DM30 of the Croydon Local Plan"*. This current application must be considered on the same basis.

Previous acceptance of nominally similar applications should not be taken as a precedent. In fact, it should be quite the reverse as it takes no account of the snowballing impact on infrastructure and environment. The acceptance of too many applications of this scale is contrary to both the Croydon Local Plan and the London Plan. Policy SP1 of the CLP refers to the need to "enhance local character, the heritage assets and identity of the Places of Croydon" : this cannot be achieved by the mass removal of mature trees and the green environment of a public footpath which is a recognised part of the Green Grid.

Table 6.4 of the CLP specifically refers to "Evolution without significant change of area's character" applicable under policies DM 10.1 to 10.10. The number of applications already approved will make a significant change which cannot possibly be considered to be evolutionary.

To assess how the number of these developments is already out of proportion, we understand from some analysis done by the Kenley and District Residents Association (KENDRA) that there are 177 new units already approved since 2019 in Kenley against a target of 53 (calculated pro-rata from the 20 year target in the Croydon Plan 2020 assuming Kenley is 50% of the "Kenley + Old Coulsdon" area). This represents a rate of **over 3 times** that required to meet the new housing target for windfall properties. This is significantly over-target, which would indicate not only that the infrastructure will not cope with the impact but that the character of the area will be irreversibly harmed.

We accept that a plot such as 46 Welcomes Road is suitable for development but a plot of this size and topology does not support this level of intensification.

WURA therefore request that this planning application be REJECTED.

Yours sincerely

Richard Russell
Secretary

Colin Brown
Chairman

Cc (by email): - Jan Buttinger – Councillor
Ola Kolade - Councillor
Chris Philp - MP
KENDRA

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