

**Public speaking statement – application 20/01601/FUL**  
**Reference - CM/071220/125**

This statement has been prepared on behalf of all local residents that have objected to the proposed development.

Members will see from the committee report that a substantial number of valid and material considerations have been identified by the local community. However, in the limited time available we must focus on what we consider to be the key planning issues, which are:

- The design, scale and massing of the proposed development does not meet the requirements of policies within the adopted and emerging development plan or national policy;
- The proposed development would result in an unacceptable adverse impact on amenity; and
- It has not been demonstrated that the proposed development would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or severe impacts on the road network.

The Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan has a clear intention to protect and enhance the strong sense of place, community and local identity as well as its integrity and character as a historic market town. As a result, the issue of design is included within several policies. The importance of good design is also a major element of national planning policy and was a key component of the proposed planning reforms, set out within the recent planning white paper.

We believe that the proposed design, scale and massing of the development does not accord with the requirements of Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan policy Des1. We submit that it would not make a positive contribution to the local surroundings, nor would it protect or enhance the quality, distinctiveness or character of the local area. We consider the proposed block form, massing, density, height, size and scale of the development is inappropriate.

The impact of the proposal is even greater as a result of the changing levels within the site. We consider it would be very prominent and overly dominant because of the nature of the local area. It is material that the officers report states that the overall height is very similar to that of the previous development proposed for the site which was dismissed at appeal.

The fact that the proposal does not respect the character of the site or its surroundings is even more of a concern given its proximity to the conservation area. We believe the proposed development would have a negative impact on the setting of this important heritage asset.

We note that the case officer considers that the impact on residential amenity of the proposed development to be acceptable. We strongly dispute this. Neighbourhood plan policy Des1 is clear that development should not have an unacceptable adverse impact on amenity. Whilst we note the separation distances quoted within the report, we believe that insufficient consideration has been given to the impact of the height of the development, changing site levels, as well as the unbroken block facade. We believe this would result in the development having an overbearing impact particularly in relation to the properties on Schools Close and South Terrace, this impact would not be mitigated by screening.

Several representations raised concerns over the validity of the transport statement submitted as part of the application. Local members will be well aware of the existing traffic congestion and highway safety problems associated with Cottingwood Lane. Also, that the proposal is to combine with the school and adult education facility in sharing one single pedestrian and vehicular access into the lane. Comments submitted set out that the traffic survey was undertaken during the half term

holiday in February 2018 and that it is not comparable with data provided by the highway authority. It is a notable omission that this serious matter has not been addressed within the officers report.

We therefore submit that insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate that the proposed development would not severely adversely impact on traffic congestion as required by neighbourhood plan policy Tra2.

Local residents would also like to take this opportunity to express concern regarding the handling of the application. The unprecedented times are fully acknowledged however we feel we have been excluded from the process and unable to obtain advice and guidance from the planning service.

We urge members of the committee to refuse the application to ensure the vital character of Morpeth is maintained, protect residential amenity and safeguard highway safety.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee to highlight some of the concerns of All local residents.

725 words