

Campion Concerns Monitoring Group

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15th November 2006

Executive summary of objections to the Campion House development application

The Buildings

1. The proposed main building frontage clashes unpleasantly with the established character of the buildings in Thornbury Road and the surrounding streets in terms of length, height, massing, design and materials.
2. The density of the proposed development is higher than the guidance range for this site. Just as significantly it is at least double that of the surrounding built development which therefore has not been taken into account.
3. The developer seeks to make up for inadequate private amenity space by designating public open space as "dual use". This contradicts guidelines which say that private and public spaces should be distinct.

Preserving Open Space

5. The developer proposes to encroach on 15% of designated open space (we believe that the real figure is higher). Recent developments and reports have heightened our awareness of the importance of such space and the need to preserve it. The area has lost open space in recent developments. No more should go.
6. The developer's claim that 2 hectares of space would be for public access is a fiction. It includes dead spots and courtyards which would clearly not be appropriate for public access.
7. The proposed 'park' would have an area of about 0.6 hectares and would not be viewable from the street. We think it would be unviable. The overall quality of the open space would be degraded by the development. There would be a significant loss of mature trees and loss of biodiversity.

Traffic/Parking

8. The development would be detrimental to traffic flow along Thornbury Road both by the quantity of trips it would produce and because of the number of exit/entrance points proposed. By the same token it would be detrimental to public transport along Thornbury Road.
9. The development would be detrimental to road safety. Although Thornbury Road (north of Church Road) is a designated cycle route, it is already hazardous to cyclists. The increased activity from the development would make this significantly worse. It is a route used by local schoolchildren.
10. Local parking problems would be aggravated. The large increase in the car-using population would clearly make it much more difficult for residents to park at a convenient distance from their homes when there is a need to do so.

Sustainability

11. The proposed design includes a large number of flats for social housing in the apse at the back of the development. This would be the worst location (near a floodlit astroturf), added to which the flats would be connected by long corridors which can easily become a focus for problems. On this basis we believe that the proposal is socially unsustainable. We believe that the 'one-big block' approach is not appropriate for this location which, in addition, is not well served by social services.
12. The proposals are also unsustainable on environmental grounds. There is no information in the application about such things as the thermal mass of the materials to be used (guidelines recommend materials of high thermal mass to even out temperature extremes). The sustainability checklist has been filled out with minimal information. The Energy Report, when it finally appeared, committed the developer to nothing and is otherwise both contradictory and inadequate. We have detailed concerns about the viability of the underground car/park, the lack of details on drainage, and renewable energy.

Consultation/quality of application

13. Residents were never consulted meaningfully by the developer, as reading their letters would make clear. They were not given the information they needed to make an informed judgement. The analysis made by Green Issues Communications of the small number of responses (76) was spurious.
14. The overall quality of the application papers is very poor. An outstanding example of this is the developer's assessment of the Spring Grove Conservation Area. Both in the text and in the photographs produced, an attempt has been made to show that the area has no established character and that therefore respecting the local character imposes no particular constraints on the developer's proposals.