

**Reference number: 16/507491/FULL**

Further representations have been received from Councillor Tony Harwood raising the following concerns and from the adjoining land owner:

- There is very little detail in terms of landscaping, materials or design;
- We have conditioned the introduction of good quality planting ('pollution busting' small-leaved lime trees are a key landscaping motif) between any new development and Tonbridge Road. In this case there is just a reference to 'amenity space' on the Tonbridge road frontage; indeed there is no indication of planting anywhere in the plans.
- The drawings seem to indicate squat oblong tenement blocks with tiny windows totally filling the site. This approach seems to be at odds with previous permissions on similar sites in the vicinity which have achieved good design.
- The proposal will adversely impact upon the adjoining site in terms of the quality of the accommodation due to the failure to meet the BRE guidelines

The following response is provided to these comments:

- The existing site has limited existing tree planting, landscaping or ecology capability with the land predominantly occupied by buildings or hard surfacing. The proposed development allows for the appearance of the site to be enhanced with improvements in relation to tree planting, landscaping and ecology.
- The proposal has been considered by the landscape officer who has no objection to the development subject to planning conditions requiring the submission and implementation of a landscaping scheme. It is recommended that planning conditions also secure swift bricks and bat boxes, tubes or tiles within the new building.
- There is open space for landscaping along the site boundaries and at the front of the site to provide the setting to the building with details of landscaping requested through condition 24.
- Whilst there are other conditions that consider air pollution, a specific reference to Lime trees can be added to the landscape condition if required.
- The flats are one and two bedroom units with the majority provided with balconies as external amenity space, this arrangement is similar to other buildings in similar locations.
- The proposed design provides interest and rhythm to the side and rear elevations of the building (east, west and south) through fenestration, the balconies, different facing materials and the three staircase cores.
- Whilst the development provides dual aspect units the main orientation in terms of habitable space and sunlight and daylight is to the east (towards the railway station). The smaller windows facing west towards 5 Tonbridge Road are designed to minimise overlooking and loss of privacy in order and allow the development of the neighbouring site at 5 Tonbridge Road.
- There are a variety of different building facing materials locally including red brick (Vaughan Chambers) stone cladding (6 Tonbridge Road), red brick and render (8 Tonbridge Road) and buff brick (1 Tonbridge Road). The new building will be constructed with a buff facing brick, with vertical cladding at third floor level. At the rear of the building the ground floor and the front staircase core will be in a blue/grey facing brick, with the other two staircase cores in vertical cladding to match the third floor. Following comments from members on the outline proposal at 5 Tonbridge Road, the use of render was replaced with brickwork.
- A 7 metre set back is provided between the main front elevation and Tonbridge Road. This is 2 metres further back than the existing building and behind the neighbouring Victorian building. This set back is also similar to that requested on the neighbouring site.

- In terms of site coverage, density, extent of open space, the proposed layout is similar to the outline proposal that members approved for the adjoining site at 5 Tonbridge Road albeit the proposed block on the adjoining site is 6 storeys.
- The height of the proposed block will have a closer relationship to the adjoining Victorian building and 4 storeys is considered appropriate in this context and to respect the scale of this adjoining building .
- The BRE sunlight and daylight guidelines are non-*mandatory* and the guidelines advise that they should not be seen as “...an instrument of planning policy”; As they are based on a model of two storey detached housing the guidance states that “...in an area with modern high rise buildings, a higher degree of obstruction maybe unavoidable if new developments are to match the height and proportions of existing building”.
- The footprint and extent of the proposed building reflects the linear shape of the site (similar to the nearby Broadway Heights site). The proposed layout makes efficient use of land in this highly sustainable location, with the draft housing allocation seeking ‘a high density scheme’.
- As stated in the officer report it is considered that the current proposal and a building on the neighbouring site can adequately co-exist and provide an acceptable standard of accommodation.

## **RECOMMENDATION REMAINS UNCHANGED**