

1 Watford Mount

New Mills

High Peak

Derbyshire

SK22 4EP

01 August 2017

FAO: Faye Plant

High Peak Borough Council Planning Department

PO Box 136

Buxton

SK17 1AQ

Re: Planning Application – HPK/2017/0216

Made by Sean Kelly, London Place, Bridge Street, New Mills SK22 4ER

Dear Faye,

We wish to make you aware of a number of strong objections that we have with regard to the proposed development of 2 additional detached houses on open space to the east side of our house at Watford Mount, facing Mr Kelly's property at London Place, application referenced above. As immediate neighbours to the site of the proposed development, we are of the view that the proposed development will have a serious negative impact on our standard of living. Our specific objections are as follows:

NB. Quoted references are taken from The High Peak Borough Council Local Area Plan.

1. Detrimental impact on residential amenities;

4.108 "Both New Mills and Whaley Bridge are heavily constrained by...potential high visual impact of development".

Page 58: Spatial strategy and specific policies..."protecting and enhancing the historic environment".

The area surrounding the proposed development site is rich in historical heritage. London Place is important in the industrial history of New Mills, as are the cottages at Watford Mount which pre-date 1829. Watford Lodge, largely owned by HPBC, is a former mill owner's house sympathetically converted into modern apartments. If this planning proposal is approved, there will be a detrimental effect on the character of the immediate area with changes to infrastructure, building density, use of proposed building materials, over development, layout, design and the external appearance of the proposed houses. **Put simply, modern detached properties on the site constructed of re-**

constituted stone with modern slate roofs are completely at odds with the immediate neighbourhood and the traditionally built older properties found therein. The proposed site is currently undeveloped and we are able to see open green space from our house and driveway. The site is certainly not under-used waste land but a potential viable garden area providing enhancement to the immediate locality.

Our objection is supported by HPBC policy **EQ 6 Design and Place Making** which states:

- *“Requiring that development contributes positively to an area’s character, history and identity in terms of scale, height, density, layout appearance, materials and the relationship to adjacent buildings and landscape features;*
- *Requirement that development achieves a satisfactory relationship to adjacent development and does not cause an unacceptable effect, by reason of visual intrusion etc... or other adverse effects on local character and amenity”*

We believe that the proposed development does not respect the local context, in particular the scale and proportions of closely adjacent buildings/houses and would be entirely out of character with the area, to the detriment of the immediate environment.

2. Impact on Local Ecology and Wildlife

Policy EQ 8 Green Infrastructure

- *“Requiring that that development will not have a detrimental effect on the amount or function of existing green infrastructure:*
- *Requiring that development proposals where appropriate contribute to the creation of new or enhancement of existing green infrastructure ...including public or private open space, local nature reserves/wildlife sites;*
- *Requiring that through its layout and design new development responds to the location of existing green infrastructure and ecological networks supporting their appropriate use and functions”*

The proposed development site is rich in its diversity of a range of wildlife as listed below:

- A wide range of both common and more rare garden birds use the proposed site as a source of food and for nesting and rearing their young;
- Both infant and adult toads and frogs are commonly found in the immediate area, given that the Disley and New Mills Angling Club provides a wet area for their seasonal needs via the lodge and the adjacent area across Bridge Street owned by the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust;
- Hedgehogs, badgers and foxes are seen in the immediate area from time to time. Bats regularly feed in the area at dusk especially in the Summer months.

Our evidence here is supported by the commissioned **“Plant Ecology Survey”** as part of the planning application which clearly states the following:

4.3 “Trees and shrubs within the site are likely to be used by nesting birds. All wild birds, their nests, eggs and dependent young are protected under the Wildlife Conservation Act 1981.

Therefore this will have implications for the scheduling of any site clearance activity.” Clearly here there is a clear acknowledgement of likely risk to the habitat of wild birds.

We believe that the proposed development will have a devastating negative and detrimental impact on the Green Infrastructure, Local Ecology and Wildlife as the proposed site is cleared prior to any site clearance undertaken before proposed building works commence.

3. Screening by Existing Trees

Policy EQ 9: Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows

“Requiring that existing woodland, healthy mature trees and hedgerows are retained and integrated within a proposed development”.

In the **“Tree Constraints”** report which forms part of the planning application there is clear reference to the Leylandi Cypress trees to the western and northern boundaries of the proposed development. The report says that the said trees quote are

- “a largely unmanaged garden boundary hedge;
- The western facing section has been topped at a height of 4 metres”.

We believe that the current height of the fast growing Leylandi Cypress trees on the Western boundary will increase rapidly give local prevailing weather conditions and will soon exceed 4 metres. Before “topping” in March 2017, the trees were in excess of 6 metres as are the Leylandi Cypress trees on the northern boundary. We believe that the current height of the tree to both current boundaries is far in excess of the permitted height of 2 metres. All of these trees are in an overgrown and poor condition due to a lack of effective management in the past. Should the planning proposal succeed, we think it is highly likely that potential house owners of these detached properties will wish to remove them given their condition thus affecting the current measure of privacy they afford us and with consequent impact on garden birds and other wildlife.

The “Tree Survey” commissioned in 2016 describes trees in good health. This is at odds with our view.

4. Loss of Privacy and Overlooking

This new development should ensure that adequate privacy is protected for the occupants of neighbouring properties. Currently we enjoy adequate privacy to our property and those of neighbours. Having considered the **“Layout plan”** it appears that the upper storey windows as depicted in **“Indicative Layout 7”** will directly overlook our driveway and the gable end extension of our house thus causing us a significant loss of privacy. In addition, the “Layout plan” shows that the proposed dwelling ie. Plot 1 is extremely close to the land boundary currently shared by our property and 5 London Place.

We believe that the design of the proposed development does not afford adequate privacy for the occupants of our property and our close neighbours at Watford Mount plus a negative impact on the quiet enjoyment of our respective garden amenities. We would urge you to consider the responsibilities of the Council under the Human Rights Act in particular Protocol 1, Article 1 which states that a person has the right to peaceful enjoyment of all their possessions which includes the home and other land. We believe that the proposed development would have a dominating impact on us and our right to the quiet enjoyment of our property. Article 8 of the Human Rights Act states that a person has the substantive right to respect for their private and family life. In addition, the potential future removal by occupants of the boundary Leylandi Cypress trees would further reduce our potential privacy.

5. Ground Stability and Drainage

Policy EQ10: Pollution Control and Unstable Land

“Ensuring that sites are suitable for their proposed use, taking account of ground conditions and land stability...”

Our property is almost 200 years old as are the neighbouring cottages at Watford Mount. Number 2 Watford Mount has been underpinned in the past. Our gable end extension at Number 1 is built on solid foundations, although we are certain that the foundations appertaining to the oldest part of our property are not of a modern standard. Given that our house sits on the hillside from Parkway above us and slopes significantly to London Place and then Bridge Street, the amount of water run-off during periods of heavy rain, will only drain downwards. During the last 10 years the boundary wall between our property and Mr Kelly’s garden has had to be dismantled and reinforced in sections because of collapse. The house proposed at Plot 1 is so close to our boundary that we feel there is a potential for landslip without significant buttressing to the boundary wall.

Having considered the water and sewage report from United Utilities there will be a significant need for the provision of new drainage from the site to Bridge Street below.

We believe that the construction of these two houses will cause potential landslip problems with consequent damage and future instability for our property. We believe that the Council should take into account the stability of the site and its surroundings and potential surface water drainage and adequate sewerage disposal issues.

The Provision of Affordable Housing

Policy H3: New Housing Development

5.145 This policy will ensure that an appropriate range and mix of new homes are provided (including affordable housing) for the needs of the current and future population

Policy H4: Affordable Housing

“The Council will seek to maximise the delivery of affordable housing across the plan area by working in partnership with partners.

The Council will require all new residential developments to address the needs of local people by:

- a) *Meeting the requirements for affordable housing within the overall provision of new residential development;*
- b) *Providing a range of market and affordable housing types;*
- c) *Providing a mix of housing that contributes positively to the promotion of a sustainable and inclusive community taking into account the characteristics of the existing stock in the surrounding locality”.*

The proposed development at London Place does not represent “affordable housing”. Detached houses of the size depicted in the plans are likely to be valued in excess of £350,000 which is to be expected in the High Peak area. They will certainly be way beyond the grasp of first-time buyers and thus affordable. The proposed development takes no account of either local heritage or the nature of the traditional and historic character of immediately neighbouring properties.

We believe that the building of these houses would significantly alter the fabric of the area and amount to serious “cramming” in what is low density area. The houses suggested in the planning application do not take account of the Council’s stated policy under H4 Affordable Housing and is in contravention of it. The proposal allows little space for landscaping/ gardens and we believe it would lead to gross over-development of the site. The proposed development would not result in a benefit in environmental and landscape terms – on the contrary it would lead to the loss of valuable green space.

6. Access and Parking

We note from the “Layout Plan” that there are two points of access outlined in the planning application. The current driveway between Bridge Street and Watford Lodge giving granted access to our property at Watford Mount, is owned and maintained by the Council. At the beginning of 2016 the driveway was completely re-surfaced following extensive drainage works to Watford Lodge. Given the proposal is for 2 detached houses with a suggested 3 vehicles per property, this represents a massive increase in the volume of traffic from residents and visitors/tradesman etc. The drive has a sharp right-hand bend about halfway upon its length upwards and vehicles travelling up and down are unsighted as they meet this obstacle.

We believe that the potential increase in traffic flow along the driveway will make it far more hazardous for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists increasing the potential for accidents and collisions. We believe that the driveway would need to undergo major changes in order to facilitate appropriate passing places for vehicles. We are also concerned that there will be extra dangers to current users caused by the vehicles used to deliver building materials and those of tradesmen involved in any actual building work. In addition, where are contractors` vehicles to be safely stored?

7. Non-compliance with Government Guidance

“Government Planning Policy Statement PPS1, Paragraphs 17-19: The Government is committed to protecting and enhancing the quality of the historic and natural environment, in both rural and urban areas. Planning policies should seek to protect and enhance the quality, character and amenity value of the countryside and urban areas as a whole. A high level of protection should be given to most valued townscapes and landscapes, wildlife habitats and natural resources.

Government Planning Policy Statement PPS3, Paragraphs 13 – 14: Good design should contribute positively to making places better for people. Design which is inappropriate in its context, or which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, should not be accepted. Local Planning Authorities should encourage development that creates places, streets and spaces which meet the needs of people, are visually attractive, safe, accessible, functional, inclusive, have their own distinctive identity and maintain and improve local character”.

We believe the proposal contravenes this guidance as it is to the detriment of the quality, character and amenity value of the area as we have outlined in our points above.

The proposed site of the development is very small and contained with no easy access or road frontage. We would ask that the Council give due consideration to how and where access for construction vehicles and staff would gain access to the site for unloading and parking without causing a significant driveway hazard or inconveniencing neighbours.

We would be grateful if the Council would take our objections into consideration when deciding this application. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with a representative of the Planning Department at our home to illustrate our objections at first hand.

Yours sincerely

Peter and Jacqueline Allen

