

21 Clifton Hill
Brighton
BN1

13 September 2007

Dear Ms Dubberley,

Planning Applications BH2007/02925 and BH2007/02926

I am writing on behalf of the CMPCA, which represents residents in the Montpelier and Clifton Hill area, to object to the two planning applications made by Taylor Wimpey plc to demolish all the buildings previously occupied by the Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital and to construct blocks of flats in its place. The decision to enter objections was taken unanimously at our management committee meeting on 5 September.

The grounds for objection are as follows:

- Inadequate consultation. An exhibition of preliminary drawings was held in the May half-term week with most local residents being given 72-hours notice or less. Not surprisingly the applicants received less than 100 responses to their questionnaire. No further consultation has been undertaken apart from a meeting in July with local community representatives when their plans had been finalised. While some owners of adjoining properties have initiated individual (and in the end unsatisfactory) discussions others have had no contact with the applicants despite their properties being directly affected by the proposals, as explained further below.

- Failure to justify demolition. The application fails to meet the Council's criteria for approval of demolition in conservation areas. The CMPCA's application in 2005 for listed building status was turned down by the Secretary of State but English Heritage's assessment of the main building's merits is wholly at odds with that contained in the "Justification" document submitted by the applicants. The planning advice note circulated to prospective purchasers by Council officers in 2006 says the EH decision letter "reaffirms the view that the building has clear interest in its local setting and makes a strong contribution to the area." The note concludes that "It is expected that both the 1881 and 1904 buildings would be retained and re-used....Their demolition would need to be justified". The applicants have made no feasibility study for retention and re-use but appear to base their case for demolition almost wholly on an alternative and eccentric architectural assessment of the buildings that is irreconcilable with those of English Heritage and the Council's own documents. Nor, as

explained below, have they submitted a replacement proposal of the quality required by the Council's policies in cases such as this.

- The redevelopment proposals are defective. Since Taylor Wimpey took possession of the site only at the end of July it is not surprising that their plans show evidence of a rushed and inadequate approach. Detailed comments have been submitted to you by many of our members. Among the most significant are that:
 - o The reports on sunlight and daylight and on noise impact totally omit any mention of the adjoining properties in Clifton Road. The manager of Homelees House, a sheltered housing complex where many residents are unable themselves to respond to this consultation, has asked the CMPCA to make representations on their behalf. Their garden, which is immediately to the north of the proposed Block F and which is the only green space accessible to many residents, will be overlooked and cast into shadow for much of the day. The similar impact of Block G on other houses and gardens on the north side of Clifton Road is also omitted from any consideration.
 - o Other adjoining properties in Clifton Hill continue to suffer problems of overlooking from Block A despite representations made.
 - o The internal design of some of the blocks is of poor quality as explained in the detailed letter of objection from Dr Graham Towers which we support. The Council should require improvements to reduce the chances of a spiral of deterioration in future years.
 - o The external design, though improved from the sketchy original drawings, has yet to meet the standard required for a prominent landmark that will be visible from much of the city centre (as the former hospital's famous pepperpots are today).

We have four other significant comments:

- We welcome and support proposals for a GP's surgery to replace the inadequate converted premises in Victoria Road. As the city's Primary Care Trust recognises, this meets an essential need for the local community and incorporation of such proposals should be an integral requirement for any future proposals for this site.
- We also welcome retention of the triangular green space at the junction of Dyke Road and Clifton Hill. The retention of this open space and implementation of plans to prevent unauthorised access to this area after dark should be a condition of any future planning consent.
- We request consultation by the Council on the uses of Section 106 payments. Discussion at our community meetings has shown strong

support for improvements to the St Nicholas Churchyard sites on both sides of Dyke Road.

- It should be a condition of any planning approval that no residents occupying the new flats will be entitled to Council parking permits. Neighbouring spaces are already oversubscribed and it should be clear from the outset that new occupiers should rely on public transport (which is easily accessible), on-site provision for bicycles, motorbikes and car-club vehicles, or a very limited number of on-site parking bays. We would not support any proposals to increase parking space provision beyond that currently proposed – the majority of existing residents in this area do not own cars and we wish to discourage growth in local traffic.

I should be grateful if you could please draw the planning sub-committee's attention to these objections and comments. I am copying this letter to Regency Ward councillors.

Yours sincerely

Adam Jones
Chair, Clifton Montpelier and Powis Community Alliance