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Mr. D Ritson
Sent via email
planning@mo-ra.co

complaints@croydon.gov.uk

Our ref: CAS-126578-P1P6P4
Date: 18 February 2020

Dear Mr. Ritson

Stage 2 Complaint – 17 Orchard Avenue, LBC ref 19/00131/FUL.

I write further to your email dated 26 January 2020 to our Corporate Resolution team and Mr. Pete Smith, Head of Development Management, in respect of 17 Orchard Avenue. Your complaint has been registered at Stage 2 of the Council's complaints procedure and, as Executive Director of the Place department, it is my role to oversee this stage of the procedure.

I understand from your complaint you are concerned that some of the planning proposals do not meet reasonable requirements within planning policies, that you believe the Council find it more imperative to meet housing targets than to implement correct planning policies and that you are concerned the proposed development appears to be overbearing to the adjacent properties.

I have checked with the Planning team and can confirm that both sets of objections sent by the Monks Orchard Residents Association dated 03 April and 05 August were received and reviewed. The issues raised were considered within the Planning Committee report and were debated at the Planning Committee meeting on 06 November 2019. I note that point 6.5 in the Planning Committee reports details the objections made by the Monks Orchard Residents Association.

In terms of your comments appearing on the Public Access register; if you submit objections on different dates, then the owner or user name will appear just the once rather several times over. Further to this, if any comments and / or objections are duplicated by different parties, then they will be addressed once rather than the same concern being answered multiple times.

I've watched the webcast of the Planning Committee meeting myself and with regard to the impact on the neighbouring property, I agree with Mr. Smith's perspective. This was outlined and discussed, and was open to further discussion if anyone present felt it was necessary.

The London Plan together with the Croydon Local Plan identify the appropriate use of land as a material consideration to ensure that opportunities for development are recognised in order to maximise the best options to increase housing.

Given that this site is within an already established residential area and encompasses existing residential accommodation in a variety of designs, the principle of proposing additional residential development on the site was considered acceptable by adopted planning policies and guidance.

I understand you feel the Council has breached standards and planning policies within the Supplementary Planning Guidance and the Council's own Suburban Design Guide, as well as the London Plan and Croydon Local Plan. The National Planning Policy Framework states that '*local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans*' which gives the Council discretion as to the weight given to such policies. These policies influence the decision making process and can be treated with flexibility as they are expected to be used, to respond to a variety of circumstances.

As you may already be aware, Public Transport Accessibility Levels or PTALs as they're also known as, are used for developments and will indicate how well the plot is connected to public transport services. This in turn determines the density in housing that is desired. So essentially an area with good public transport links and services are more suitable for intense development with more habitable rooms.

Following this, Policy 3.4 of the London Plan indicates that in suburban areas with PTALs of 2, the appropriate density levels ranges should be 150-250 habitable rooms per hectare (hr/ha) with 50–95 u/ha; after reviewing all records, the proposal for this development would be above this range. However the subtext of 3.4 of The London Plan says a "rigorous appreciation of housing density is crucial to realising the optimum potential of sites, but it is only the start of planning *housing development, not the end. It is not appropriate to apply the density matrix mechanistically. Its density ranges for particular types of location are broad, enabling account to be taken of other factors relevant to optimising potential*".

As you are aware, the Corporate Resolution Team are unable to overturn a planning decision as part of the Corporate Complaints process. Whilst I'm of course sorry this isn't perhaps the response you were hoping for, I'm satisfied the decision to grant planning permission for 17 Orchard Avenue was correct. The local planning authority stands by the approach adopted in this case, and I'm content the scheme was correctly presented to the Planning Committee for decision.

Having reviewed Mr. Smith's responses to your concerns, I am also satisfied that these have been fully addressed and am in agreement that in most cases the need to deliver more housing should reasonably counter other considerations including density, car parking and so on, unless serious harm is caused by the scale of development for whatever reason.

Your complaint has been considered at Stage 2 of the Council's complaints procedure. I hope I have satisfactorily addressed your concerns. However, if you remain dissatisfied you can ask the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman to consider your complaint:

By writing to: The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
PO Box 4771
Coventry
CV4 0EH

By telephoning¹: 0300 061 0614

By texting: Text 'call back' to 07624 804 299

By online form: www.lgo.org.uk

Yours sincerely,



Shifa Mustafa
Executive Director - Place

¹ Calls to 03 numbers will cost no more than calls to national geographic numbers (starting 01 or 02) from both mobiles and landlines, and will be included as part of any inclusive call minutes or discount schemes in the same way as geographic calls