##### **ERA**

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##### **Emmbrook Residents’ Association**

#### ONE VOICE

###### REPRESENTING EMMBROOK RESIDENTS

18th August 2019

Development Management,

Wokingham Borough Council,

Shute End,

Wokingham,

RG40 1WR

Dear Sirs,

**Planning Application No. 191725**

**Site Location: Land Adjacent To 1 Fernhill Cottages Toutley Road, RG41 1QJ**

**Proposal: To construct a terrace of three dwellings**

I am writing on behalf of the Emmbrook Residents Association to submit our comments on the above application as detailed below:

* The view of the proposed development from the road is dominated by the car parking court to the front of the building, with little attempt to soften its impact apart from the retention of the TPO tree. This fails to comply with the WBC Design Guide (June 2012) which states in section 6 that:
  + P2: Parking in residential development should aim to accommodate car ownership in a manner that is compatible with local character and creating a high quality environment that functions well. It must also include cycle and motorcycle parking.
  + Parking courts should be designed as spaces in their own right, rather than simply as car parks, with a high quality of landscape, (boundary treatments in particular), lighting and tree planting or other soft landscape where possible.
  + Front parking courts in particular must be designed to be part of the public realm, as attractive spaces which happen also to contain some parking.
* The shared access way to the parking bays provided is cramped and convoluted and does not allow vehicles to be easily turned on site, making it difficult for them to enter and leave in a forward direction. Considering the proximity of the site entrance to the Emmbrook Vale road junction this represents a potential road safety hazard.
* As is common practice on current developments, the shared access way provides no segregation between pedestrian and vehicle traffic. However, what is exceedingly uncommon is the fact that this lack of segregation extends up to the front elevation of the dwellings. Although vehicles would normally be travelling at low speeds, this means that hazardous conflicts of movement between residents using their front doors and vehicles manoeuvring on site can easily arise. It is also noted that the end parking bay of the row of four actually extends across the front door of Plot 3!
* It is evident that the parking bays adjacent to or under the TPO tree canopy will be subjected to high levels of plant and insect detritus from the tree during the spring and summer, and leaf fall in autumn. It is also likely that vehicles parked here could suffer damage to their windows and bodywork from shed branches at any time. This will lead to pressure from the residents to severely prune or remove what is a healthy tree.
* With regard to the roots of the tree it is proposed to protect them from vehicles passing over, and parking on, them by installing a proprietary ground overlay system. However, no assurance is given that this system would fully protect the tree for its projected 40+ year life span. This is of concern as the tree’s root system must be already compromised to some extent by the adjacent Toutley Road carriageway.
* The amenity value of Plot 2 is compromised by there not being an external access to the rear garden. This means that all material for the garden will have to be manoeuvred though the front door, into the family/dining area via a right angle turn, and then out of the residential bi-fold doors to the garden, with garden waste having to do the same in the opposite direction. Also, if the residents wish to make use of the bicycle storage in the rear garden their bicycles will have to make the same journey through the dwelling. This clearly is not an acceptable situation.

Although some of the above issues may be considered of minor importance on their own, taken together they show that the site, constrained as it is, is inadequate for the proposed development leading to significant deficiencies in the layout. In this respect the proposal fails to comply with the National Planning Policy Framework requirement to “always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings”, a requirement that is also repeated in WBC’s Core Strategy Development Plan Document.

The documents submitted with the application show that the construction of the dwellings is broken down into three phases which, on the face of it, is unusual for what is one building. In order to assess the impact the construction of these phases will have on the amenity of the neighbouring properties it is suggested that the applicant should be required to provide details of what exactly is intended here, with timescales.

Yours faithfully,

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Paul Gallagher

Chairman

Emmbrook Residents Association