

ORIGINAL

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7th September, 2008

I am writing to you in your capacity as the Chairman of the Development Control Committee for Portsmouth.

The residents of Coniston Avenue and occupants of relevant properties in Copnor Road recently sent in a petition to register their concerns about a planning application for a site on Copnor Road (the planning application concerned was 08/0801/FUL). This proposes to place seven (7) houses in an area which could only hold about five (5) local properties – based upon the areas of the existing properties in Coniston Avenue and Copnor Road. The problem with crowding smaller properties into this site in this manner is that it will be out of character with the neighbouring properties and also create an appearance of over-development.

The designs and layout of the properties were withdrawn. In fact, these originals contained misleading information, giving the impression that the site was bigger than, in fact, it is and this point was raised in our petition analysis, thus (I have emboldened and underlined a serious issue relating to transparency in this process):

"A. Misrepresentations in the information submitted and a failure to check the submitted plans for accuracy.

The submitted plans misrepresent the visual impact, as well as the concentration or defacto over-development, as well as appearance of this over-development, by exaggerating the real dimensions within which seven (7) properties are expected to be constructed, Thus in the right hand side of the Plans & Elevations document a block of Coniston Avenue housing numbered as 13-7, gives the impression that some seven (7) Coniston Avenue houses (Coniston Avenue has sequential numbering) fit well within the length of the proposed site. Indeed, the block of seven (7) proposed properties is longer than the Coniston Road block of seven (7).

Closer inspection of the site, in situ, shows that this misrepresents the facts on the ground where, in fact the Coniston Avenue properties, numbered 8 and 7, lie outside the

projection of the proposed site. Only properties 9-13, that is five (5) Coniston Avenue properties, have the same dimension as the construction site on which seven (7) new properties are planned. Also, in comparison with the relevant neighbouring terraced properties in Copnor Road (128 through 132) only four (4) of these would fit into the proposed construction site on which seven (7) new properties are planned.

Clearly, such a concentration of individual properties in this application does not comply with the current housing density or dimensions of the closest properties. This is why the result will give the impression of over-development and an attempt to use a limited site area for an excessive number of dwelling houses.

The attention of the Planning Committee is drawn to the fact that plans accompanying applications are relied upon by the public to draw objective conclusions. Unfortunately, in this case, it is apparent that these plans do not appear to have been checked for accuracy by either the Planning Department or those submitting the application because the resulting submission significantly misrepresents the detail of what is being proposed. The plan contains the caveat “for illustrative purposes only”, but the degree of misrepresentation is misleading and, therefore, unacceptable.

It is a normal expectation on the part of Portsmouth residents to expect the Local Authority to demonstrate a duty of care through an obligation to uphold transparency and to require that information submitted for decisions on planning applications be based upon accurate information. This is because most interested parties are not specialists in the interpretation of technical drawings and associated plans. As a result, the unassisted reliance for assessing plans, which are defective in terms of the information contained therein, is, subsequently, not fully transparent. It would seem to be the duty of the Local Authority to carry out initial reviews of submitted applications from the standpoint of standards of accuracy and representation.

The plans submitted in this case fail to satisfy this basic requirement and, it would seem, the Planning Department has not detected the issues raised herein.”

The simple removal of the drawings and plans from the application does not alter the fact that the main issue of concern has already been conveyed to the Committee, that is that seven (7) properties is excessive. However, in spite of this, the resubmitted planning application continued to include the construction of seven (7) properties in the same site as its substantive objective. The Development Control Committee agreed to this proposal (see attached letter).

I would also draw your attention to the document (one page) attached in the application entitled "*Design Statement for Development at 112, Copnor Road, Portsmouth, Hampshire*" where it is stated under "Design Principles" amongst others: The floor space should be in keeping with the adjacent other properties."

I would therefore like to ask you on what grounds this decision was taken, when all of the residents directly affected by this application signed a unanimous petition raising concern on the issue of over-development and the inappropriate number of properties.

Other objections raised in the petition relate to the proposed houses backing on to Coniston Avenue thereby converting Coniston Avenue, where all properties front onto the Avenue, into a back yard appearance with wheelie bins, waste bags and the other common phenomena associated with rear entrances.

The additional concerns relate to the loss of fourteen (14) parking spaces-equivalent and the devaluation in the Coniston Avenue properties associated with this development as set out in the petition analysis.

I have copied this letter to all persons who signed the petition as well as members of the Development Control Committee, relevant Council staff, the Member o Parliament for Portsmouth North and to the media.

I look forward to receiving your reply.

Yours faithfully,

Hector McNeill

Cc: signatories to original petition
Members of the Development Control Committee
DC Council staff
Rt. Hon. Sarah McCarthy-Fry
APE syndication



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Our Ref: 08/00801/FUL
Your Ref:

2nd September 2008

Dear Sir/Madam

LOCATION: 112 Copnor Road, Portsmouth, Hampshire, PO3 5AN,

PROPOSAL: Outline application for the construction of 7 two-storey terraced dwellinghouses (Principles access, layout and scale to be considered) Re-submission of 08/00005/OUT) (08/00801/FUL)

I confirm that your views regarding the above application were taken into consideration when this application was decided.

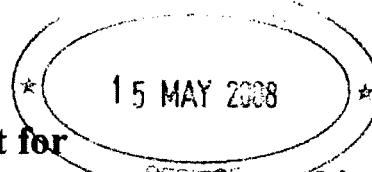
After considering the views expressed and the planning merits of the proposal the committee has decided to approve the proposal.

You can view and print out the decision notice online at www.portsmouth.gov.uk by following the **View Planning application** link in **Do it online!** or please contact me if you would like to be sent a copy.

Yours faithfully

C. Upton ~~BOST~~

Development Control Manager



Design Statement for Development at 112 Copnor Road, Portsmouth, Hampshire.

SITE ANALYSIS:

The existing site was formerly a petrol filling station.

The properties near by are of two storey appearance with rendered/ brick or all brick construction with concrete tile roofs and are a mixture of terrace/semi-detached.

There houses are all of an individual style that vary in their siting with a fairly rigid real building line.

The natural features of the site are quite limited , there is a fall down to Copnor Road.

There is an existing dropped kerb access from the highway.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES :

The new design should relate to the existing styles in close proximity and not create any harmful impact on the adjacent properties. The siting of the houses is the key requirement.

The new design should also reflect the two storey appearance and should be located so as to not create an overlooking situation. The front elevations should be of a traditional appearance.

The windows and fenestration should also reflect the existing properties.

The floor space should be in keeping with the adjacent other properties.

Any first floor windows to either sides of the new dwelling should be avoided or glazed in obscure glass to protect the adjacent property's amenity space.

DESIGN SOLUTIONS :

A design should not create an over developed appearance.

The rear gardens to be in keeping with the existing properties and the requirements of the Local Authority.

All new property should have adequate off road secure storage facilities for cycles.

The proposed materials of the new dwelling should be of brickwork and render/tile hanging with some brick detailing. All new materials are to blend in the other materials used nearby on the existing buildings.

Access is to be in accordance with Part M of the approved Documents.

The existing dropped kerb will have to be removed to the approval of the Local Authority.