

APPLICATION NO: 13/00813/FUL	OFFICER: Miss Michelle Payne
DATE REGISTERED: 21st May 2013	DATE OF EXPIRY: 16th July 2013
WARD: College	PARISH: None
APPLICANT:	Halebourne Developments Ltd
AGENT:	Mr Clive Petch
LOCATION:	Land adjacent to Eagle Tower, Montpellier Drive, Cheltenham
PROPOSAL:	Erection of three storey building to provide 5no. apartments (2no. one bed units and 3no. two bed units)

RECOMMENDATION: Recommendation at Committee



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4. CONSULTATIONS

HMO Division

3rd June 2013

I have no fundamental objection to this proposal.

Architects Panel

20th June 2013

2. Is the information sufficient to understand the application?

Yes

3. Context.

The scheme doesn't appear to make much consideration of the adjoining building uses.

4. Massing and Scale

The proposed density looks fine.

5. External Appearance.

The building doesn't have a very residential appearance and the elevations closest to the boundary are particularly poor.

6. Detailing and Materials

No comment

7. Environmental Design.

There appears to be little real consideration towards sustainable design.

8. Summary

If this site is to be developed the proposal should better relate to the site.

9. Recommendation

We would not support the application in its current form.

Cheltenham Civic Society

20th June 2013

We consider that the elevations should be simpler. The emphasis of the vertical is not right in a building of this scale.

Heritage and Conservation

3rd July 2013

Historic analysis of the site:

1. Prior to the construction of the Eagle Tower buildings this site was garden land to two historic houses which have since been demolished.

2. The current site boundary between the application site and the Edwardian property (8 and 10 Montpellier Parade), appears on the 1884 map in the same position in which it is today.

3. This Edwardian house (8 and 10 Montpellier Parade) originally had a much larger garden and all the land between it and Montpellier Terrace was originally garden for this house.

4. It is noted that whilst this Edwardian house is very attractive, regrettably it is not included on the Index of Buildings of Local Interest and therefore its setting is not a material consideration in the determination of this planning application. However it has been identified as a key unlisted building in the Conservation Area.

Comments:

1. This application site does not seem to be an obvious residential site. It does not have any merit in terms of creating a focal point or good public realm. However whilst the principle of developing the site does not enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area, neither does it harm either the character or appearance of the conservation area. Given the problem with the shortfall of housing within the Cheltenham area, the principle of this site for residential development would appear to be difficult to resist. However please note that whilst the principle of developing the site may not harm the conservation area, it does not necessarily follow that the detailed design of a new building will automatically also not harm the conservation area.

2. Therefore I accept the principle of the development of this site for residential use, subject to the detailed design of the new building.

3. Whilst this new building will certainly affect the setting of the adjacent Edwardian house (8 and 10 Montpellier Parade), it would be difficult to argue that the impact of the new building will harm the setting of the Edwardian house with the large Eagle Tower looming over the area.

4. However I do have concerns about some aspects of the proposed detailed design. The proposed form, mass, height and proposed materials are all acceptable but the proportions of the east elevation are of concern and so is the absence of any meaningful soft landscaping proposals.

5. The proportions of the east elevation are too vertical, and this vertical effect is emphasised by the vertical proportions of each window light and the swept eaves of the roof.

6. It is recognised in Section 7 of the NPPF that the "Government places great importance to the design of the built environment. Clause 60 of the NPPF states Planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness".

7. It can certainly be argued that the predominant local distinctive style in this part of Cheltenham is high quality Regency architecture, set in tree lined street and lushly planted gardens and public parks. Whilst the Eagle Tower building is the physically largest building in the town, its 1960s architecture is not predominant in the area. One of the key elements of Regency architecture is the excellent balance of vertical and horizontal elements and features which together combine to give good proportions and balanced elevations in harmony.

8. I do not object to the modern/contemporary style of the architecture, but modern architecture can be as well proportioned and as balanced as Regency architecture and unfortunately the design of the east elevation of this modern building has poor proportions and a poor setting with no landscaping of any significance. It does not promote or reinforce local distinctiveness and therefore fails to comply with clause 60 of the NPPF.

9. It also fails to comply with CP7 of the Local Plan which states that development will only be permitted where it is of a high standard of architectural design and complements and respects neighbouring development and the character of the locality.

10. It also fails to comply with Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

5. PUBLICITY AND REPRESENTATIONS

5.1 Letters of notification were sent out to 20 neighbouring properties. In addition, two site notices were posted, and an advert published in the Gloucestershire Echo. In response to the publicity, two letters of objection have been received from the residents of no.10 Montpellier Parade.

5.2 The letters have been circulated in full to Members however the main objections relate to:

- Visual impact
- Overdevelopment
- Loss of privacy
- Traffic/parking

6. OFFICER COMMENTS

Officer comments to follow