

To Planning Control, North Herts Council

Thank you for your letter dated 13th December inviting us to comment on the application for planning permission received from the Guysfield Residential Home on Willian Road.

My family and I reside at 17 Greenway which borders the property in question on its northern side. Our comments are as follows, and please see attached images which are referred to in the text.

Our starting point is that we support the need for additional care home space in the region and for general enhancement of the site. However, we do object to the plans as they are currently presented and have specific comments we hope you will take into account in your consent considerations and any design discussions that take place.

These are:

- **The mass of the building** - The existing building has a profile which varies across the rear (north-westerly) facing side, onto which our property looks. Of particular note is the conservatory space between the "old" and "new" wings of the building (as the plans describe them) which breaks up the mass of the building and allows light through to our property. The new design by contrast has a continuous block structure, three storeys high and extends further to the east. We refer you to document 4870-ORA-01-ZZ-DR-A-33202 which displays the elevations, comparing the existing with future designs.

- **Access to light** - The development lies directly south from our property and therefore has the potential to interfere with our right to light during certain times and seasons, considering the mass of the building design mentioned above. We would disagree with the comment within the planning statement document (section 2.37) that the proposed building would have no greater impact than the current building. Please refer to the photos taken from our property as evidence.

- **Privacy/screening** - The windows of the upper floors of the proposed structure will be positioned directly overlooking our property and particularly into populated rooms - a bedroom, bathroom and kitchen. Currently the higher floors of the existing structure are shielded by trees, so have not been a concern. We would strongly object to the design in its current form allowing line of sight from the upper windows directly into our property. To assist with understanding the above, we've attached two photos taken from our ground and first floor windows looking out onto Guysfield.

- **Roof Design** - Contributing to the mass of the building is the decision to use a flat roof, rather than a sloping one in keeping with the retained Guysfield House and the neighbouring Manor Park estate houses (where we are situated). While the attempts of the architect to use alternative materials on the upper floor are designed to appear roof-like, we would raise concern on the loss of consistency associated with the local roof styles and shapes - particularly given the siting within Letchworth and Willian conservation areas.

- **Trees** - The plans in their current form show removal of the trees (labelled G29) behind our boundary line which provide us with valuable visual and noise screening. We would not support approval for removal of these trees and would suggest that any planning consent requires the retention of these trees or replacement with mature trees of the same height. It should be noted that the landscaping report was completed in 2018 and has not been updated, and assessed the impact on residents by viewing from the street level of Greenway and not from the residents property viewpoints.

We also have concern that the plans appear to indicate the newly planted trees positioned at the boundary of our property and therefore within the 1m easement space required for access and maintenance to our fenceline (see next point).

-Easement access - Our property has a right of easement between the two boundaries to allow us to maintain our boundary fences. The current plans do not adequately address how this access is to be maintained.

-Vehicle access - The plans propose relocation of parking and refuse storage from the front to the rear of the Guysfield site, close to our boundary. This is likely to result in increased noise pollution to our residential property at unsociable hours. It is noted that in the transport plans, waste vehicles are expected to reverse along the rear of the property, which would lead to the vehicles reversing sirens being used in this location. We would suggest vehicle access and waste handling should be retained at the front of the property where there is already traffic noise from the road.

-External lighting - We would request that planning considers the impact of outdoor security lighting at Guysfield onto our property. There is already one bright security light creating light pollution onto our bedroom space all through the night and we are concerned that this issue will be exacerbated with a larger expanse of building across our rear boundary, and the loss of the tree screening. Any external lighting should be directed towards the ground level and not permitted to shine outwards.

-Construction - While we understand that construction works of this scale will inevitably result in some disruption to neighbours we would suggest that increased mitigations be put in place to ensure safety to residents and protect our property from noise, dust and vibration during the construction phase. The retention of the current treeline and a suitable acoustic fence during construction across our boundary would be appropriate mitigations. Restricting working hours for noisy work, and a traffic management plan to control access of heavy vehicles to site should all be in place before work begins. Construction traffic should not be allowed to use Letchworth Lane to access the site given its tight corner at Garth Road and narrow carriageway, as well as its busy use for commuter traffic.

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Photos from 17 Greenway showing the view of the existing building.



17 Greenway Upper Floor View of Guysfield



17 Greenway Lower Floor View of Guysfield