

Head of Planning Services
Elmbridge Borough Council
Civic Centre, High Street
Esher, Surrey, KT10 9SD

Portmore Park & District RA
c/o 3 Clinton Close
Weybridge, KT13 8NU

25 March 2019

Dear Head of Planning Services

Re: Application 2019/0386 – St Catherine’s, Thames Street, Weybridge, Surrey, KT13 8JR

I am writing on behalf of the committee of Portmore Park & District Residents Association, to object to the proposed construction of part two / part three storey building comprising 28 flats with access from Beales Lane (or as set out in the planning application, 11 houses and 17 flats) with a total of 53 bedrooms.

There is great concern among local residents about its negative impact, in terms of:

- excessive bulk, mass and height dominating the surrounding streetscene
- the vertical style clashing with neighbouring traditional residential buildings
- loss of light and privacy
- inadequate parking provision increasing an already high level of local on-street parking stress, to the detriment of local amenities
- the loss of existing turning space in a cul-de-sac with no turning circle risking the safety of pedestrians, including school children and elderly

Negative impact on character

Residents are worried that the character of Beales Lane will be lost. The St Catherine’s buildings are low and mostly set well back. Their layout is staggered so it doesn’t impose. The houses opposite are a traditionally styled 1998 development, in keeping with the character of Weybridge.

Beales Lane is currently a pleasant suburban lane, leading to the historic small cottages of Church Walk. It is notably green and open towards its Thames Street end.



The current St Catherine’s building as seen from Thames Street

The new building would present a much larger and more dominating profile along its length, and project closer to Thames Street. It would be a massive difference.



EAST ELEVATION - THAMES STREET - PROPOSED STREET SCENE

The proposed building would be 55% higher, far wider and project much closer to Thames Street

Oppressive bulk and mass

- The proposed development is excessively massive compared with neighbouring properties
- It is taller, with its bulk closer to the pavement, and would dominate a road that is currently open and spacious
- Its bulk and mass would be excessive for this suburban site.
- Beales Lane leads to the historic riverside small scale cottages of Church Walk, the contrast is stark.

Lack of fit with local streetscene

The proposed is quite unlike other buildings in the area, in appearance and style as well as scale:

- North Weybridge is characterised by Victorian/Edwardian dwellings with traditional roofs and lots of gables
- The proposed vertical and rectangular lines might look fine as worker accommodation in Rotterdam, but don't fit well here
- It would have a very negative visual impact, transforming Beales Lane:
 - from a light, open, airy road with chimneys the highest points & St Catherine's staggered and largely set well back
 - to a visually narrower street dominated by a high, massive, alien building along its south edge, with vertical bulk much closer to the road.



14. NORTH ELEVATION - BEALES LANE - PROPOSED STREET SCENE



13. NORTH ELEVATION - BEALES LANE - EXISTING

Excessive density

- The proposal is for a much higher density than neighbouring dwellings
- It squeezes a very large volume of habitable space (11 new houses and 17 new flats, 53 bedrooms) onto a limited suburban site
- The floor area and number of bedrooms doubles.

Loss of light

- Neighbouring residents are concerned that the proposed high building will block their light
- We note that the measurements supplied in the application for the angle to the windows opposite is questionable, as it exaggerates the height of those windows.

Loss of privacy

- Neighbouring residents are concerned about loss of privacy, especially in their back gardens.

Traffic issues:

Impact on safe traffic flow, safe delivery access, and safe manoeuvring, with loss of turning space

We are surprised that Surrey Highways has no objection to the loss of turning space meaning large vehicles will have to reverse out of Beales Lane into Thames Street (a road which Surrey's own figures show carries around 5700 vehicles a day) right next to a school crossing.

The officer notes that Thames St is unclassified, 'tends towards residential' and has a 20mph limit, but **fails to note that it carries 5700 vehicles a day** using Walton Lane to access Walton Bridge.

- Beales Lane is directly opposite the entrance to St George's Junior School, so there are special safety factors in term time
 - the traffic survey was conducted during the school holiday
- Beales Lane/Church Walk is a cul-de-sac with no turning circle
- It gives resident and delivery access to circa 40 homes (apart from St Catherine's)
- Delivery and traffic flow would be greatly increased by 17 new flats and 11 new houses (53 bedrooms)
- Currently the St Catherine's visitor parking space is used for turning by delivery vehicles and visitors
- It is heavily used at school drop-off/pick-up times (scores of vehicles using it to turn)
- The proposed design, in bringing the building closer to the road along Beales Lane, would remove current delivery parking and turning facilities
 - large vehicles would have to reverse into Thames Street, which carries high traffic flows and has a school crossing adjacent to St Catherine's
 - reversing vehicles would risk the safety of pedestrians including school children and obstruct traffic flow
- The design **does not allow headroom for vehicles higher than approx 2.5 metres** to access the rear parking
 - big delivery and removals vans would have to park up on Beales Lane
 - likewise SE Ambulances (2.75m) and fire appliances (3.25m-3.6m) would not be able to access the rear

- Beales Lane is only wide enough for one car (with parking on one side), so parked up service or delivery vehicles would disrupt access to Church Walk.



Beales Lane limited road width – pictured here with people using the St Catherine’s parking space for stopping and turning at lunchtime in March 2019 during school term time

Impact on parking

- This is an area of existing on-street parking stress
- As sheltered elderly housing (27 bedrooms), there were previously very few residents’ vehicles associated with St Catherine’s
- 28 parking spaces are proposed to serve 28 dwellings (9 x 1 bed; 13 x 2 bed; 6 x 3 bed) with 53 bedrooms, meaning 40-50 cars would be associated
- 40.5 spaces would be required to meet Elmbridge Parking Standards:
Development Management Plan – Appendix 3: Elmbridge Parking Standards (DM21 – Access and Parking)
1 bed residential unit : 1 space per unit
2 bed residential unit : 1.5 spaces per unit
3 bed residential unit : 2 spaces per unit.

We sincerely hope that after considering Application 2019/0836, Elmbridge Borough Council will refuse this application, because the excessive bulk, mass and height of the building would be oppressive and result in loss of light, and combined with its alien style would dominate the street scene detrimentally; because limited on-site provision for deliveries and the loss of existing turning space would have a negative impact on safety close to a school and disrupt access for other residents; and because inadequate parking provision would cause additional on-street parking stress detrimental to the amenities of residents, failing to comply with acceptable standards.

Yours sincerely

Miles Macleod
Chair, Portmore Park & District Residents Association
on behalf of the PPDR Committee