

Planners refuse appeal to build flats in Davidson's Mains

A last-ditch effort to build an “imposing” apartment block opposite an Edinburgh primary school has failed amid concerns over privacy and pupils’ safety.

The planning appeal, which sought to overturn refusal of permission for the demolition of a bungalow to make way for ten flats, was heard by councillors on Wednesday.

Plans were originally thrown out in November after it was ruled the proposed three-storey development at 30 Corbiehill Road would have an “unacceptable impact” on the character of the area and infringe on neighbours’ privacy, with windows looking onto private gardens on the adjacent Vivian Terrace.

It comes after the council granted the applicant consent for a five-bed development on the site in 2020.

With five additional flats added, the latest application outlined there would be a mix of one, two and three-bed flats alongside ten parking spaces, a bike store and a bin store.

It drew more than 100 objections from neighbours and parents of children at Davidson’s Mains Primary School – which sits directly opposite the development site.



In a letter to the committee, the school's parent council called the plans "highly undesirable" and wrote the flats would conflict with aims to increase pavement space and cycling infrastructure and reduce pollution around the school in line with policies within the Edinburgh Local Development Plan.

They added: "With substantial school-related foot traffic at this location, there would seem to be a substantial safety risk for the school community from this development."

One person wrote: "This is an already busy road with traffic often ignoring the speed limit – bringing more traffic cannot be a good idea. And the disruption to the safety of the school crossing whilst demolition and building occurs is unthinkable!"

Another said: "All the extra traffic will inevitably pose a HUGE RISK for the safety for all children attending the school as well as nearby residents, anyone using the traffic lights and people using the nearby bus stop."

A Vivian Terrace resident said the proposed flats were "far too big and imposing" and "very unsuitable being directly opposite a school".



Another neighbour said it was “so scandalous” that the bungalow’s owners had submitted the application in the first place.

They added: “They clearly have absolutely no respect or consideration for any residents and if this planning application is not purely about profit then I don’t know what is.

“Clearly the development is far too big for the residential area, and will negatively impact all residents on Vivian Terrace in a dramatic way.”

This week an agent working on behalf of the applicant sent a letter to the council ahead of the appeal in a bid to allay concerns about the application.

They said the issue of vehicular traffic “has already been considered and has correctly been deemed as having an overall negligible effect”.

“We believe that some consulted parties have not correctly

interpreted the proposed plans, as the proposed development design and layout would not lead to any direct overlooking of neighbouring properties especially into bedrooms,” a representative from Whitelaw Associates added.

“In the report of handling the planning officer stated that only number 1 Vivian Terrace would be impacted by overlooking from one window – although we do not share this interpretation, as this ‘overlooking’ would not be direct.”

However, their arguments did not sway members of the Planning Local Review Body.

Councillor Hal Osler said: “Personally speaking I know this site incredibly well because obviously it’s just across the border from my own ward. I don’t feel it’s necessary, I accept the fact of the officer’s recommendations so far. This is a particular area, it is very much single dwellings on plots in bits and pieces and personally speaking I agree with the officers in terms of it is overdevelopment.”

Councillor Chas Booth added: I don’t think this is just about overdensification of the site, I think there are other issues as well; the comments from environmental health, concerns about the level of parking, the impact on trees, potential impact on road safety that’s been highlighted by a number of objectors.”

The committee upheld the recommendation to refuse the appeal.

by Donald Turvill Local Democracy Reporter.

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