

Permission granted for care home in Davidson's Mains despite opposition

A council decision to grant planning permission for a care home in a former Edinburgh village centre has been described as a "really bad outcome" by local residents who called on the site to be used for "much needed houses" instead.

A planning meeting heard that the "vast majority" of people in Davidson's Mains were opposed to the development.

Despite this, councillors unanimously approved the proposals which will will deliver a 48-bed care home specialising in dementia and end of life care.

One local councillor objecting to the plans said the area's high street was "fragile" as residents argued that "elderly and frail" people moving in would not have the same economic impact on local businesses as an influx of new residents would.

Developers making their case before the planning sub committee said the vacant brownfield plot on Main Street was "ideal" for a new care home and would "add to the vitality and vibrance of the local centre".

And they pointed out the site – which objectors said was the

“only available development site” in the area – was not designated for new housing in the council’s local development plan.

Also appearing at the meeting on Wednesday were members of Davidson’s Mains and Silverknowes Association who mounted an argument against the bid.

Chairperson Rod Alexander said granting permission would be “a really bad outcome for the local area and extremely detrimental to the viability of the village centre”.

He said: “The vast majority of people are completely opposed to this application, not because they’re against care homes but because they expected that new housing would be developed on this site – and there was unanimous local support for the benefits that new provide for Davidsons Mains village.

“It’s the only available development site in Davidsons Mains.

“We’re fortunate to have greenspace and lots of nice environment but this is the only potential site where new housing could be built – and new housing is what the local residents want.

“It’s a unique opportunity to build much needed houses.”

He continued: “The prospect of 40 or 50 new homes with perhaps 100 to 120 people who actually live in the community and use local shops and services would be so important.

“With respect, I’m not anti-care homes, but a care home with 48 elderly and frail residents specialising in very specialist needs for elderly people with medical problems and other limitations are just not going to engage with local services in the same way.”

Local councillor Kevin Lang, Lib Dems, joined calls for the committee to refuse the application. He said: “This site is ideal for development. The local community want it developed, I as a councillor want it developed, the business association want it developed.

“A lot has been said about the appropriateness of a care home and I am very sympathetic that you need to look at this application on its own merits.

“This site is very different to almost every other site in my ward where a care home has been approved in the time I’ve been a councillor.

“This is a heavily constrained site – I would challenge the assertion that there is high levels of public transport in the area.”

Cllr Lang said he was concerned it would result in “very intense over-development”.

He said: “It’s a fragile high street because of that it is important to think about the sensitivity of the development on the site and how it will fit in with the character of the local area.”

Speaking on behalf of developers Linemann Healthcare, Derek Scott argued the home could “free up” properties occupied by residents in need of care locally.

He said: “The application site is not zoned for housing purposes in either the adopted local development plan or your proposed local development plan.

“The application site is from operational and logistical perspectives, ideally located for a care home facility. It will be positioned at the heart of the local community within the local centre.

“It benefits from excellent public transport links and it will contribute to Davidson’s Mains role as the beating heart of the surrounding 20 minute neighbourhood.

“Local shops and other facilities will benefit from the patronage derived from residents within the care home, from staff working in it and from those visiting friends and relatives.

“In that respect, it will add to the vitality and vibrance of the local centre rather than detracting from it.”

A report which recommended councillors to give the go ahead said: “The proposals will deliver a sustainable and well-designed care home scheme that will contribute to climate mitigation and adaptation and the restoration and enhancement

of biodiversity.

“The design draws on the character of the surrounding area to create a strong sense of place.”

by Donald Turvill, Local Democracy Reporter.

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