

COUNCILLOR GARETH EALES REPRESENTATIONS – BARKER BUILDING, COUNTESS ROAD N/2019/0563

FAO PLANNING COMMITTEE – Northampton Borough Council.

Let me start by stating that since the Barker Building site has been derelict, it has been a hive for anti-social and criminal behaviour and as the local Councillor I of course want something to be done with it. But I have some serious concerns about this particular planning application and must object to it. I will outline the rationale as to why and ask that you please take this into consideration and that you reject this application.

➤ INSUFFICIENT PARKING PROVISION

There is proposed to be 68 flats on this site and only 72 parking spaces, only four of which are for visitors. So given there are 18 two bedroom flats, it is highly likely that the number of inhabitants in this building with cars at only one time could be in excess of 100, so there is a crystal clear deficit of parking spaces. That means additional parking onto Countess Road, Lyttleton Road, Monmouth Road, Newport Road, Chepstow Close and Raymond Road...streets that are jammed as it is...adding these extra vehicles into the mix would be a disaster.

I draw your attention to para 6.2 in your report and the highlighted section:

- 6.2 **Local Highway Authority (NCC)** - no objection, as previously stated, the development must accommodate any additional parking demand resulting from the additional demand. However, it has been highlighted that although the number of apartments will be increasing, the number of 2 bedroom apartments will be reduced. Therefore, the change in apartment types will compensate for the increase in the number of apartments with regards to parking demand. **As a result, the LHA believes that the proposed amendment to the development will not negatively impact upon the local highway network.**

The above highlighted statement is entirely false. In March & April of this year myself and Northamptonshire Highways embarked upon a widespread survey of streets in my elected area that suffer with parking pressures. Including streets directly on and around the Barker Building. See the below email as proof of this survey's existence and whereabouts it went...

From: Leighton, Andrew [A.Leighton@kierwsp.co.uk]
Sent: 24 April 2019 11:47
To: Gareth Eales (Cllr)
Subject: FW: Parking Survey...

Hi Gareth,

Apologies these streets were missed out. If you are able to let me have a revised copy of the letter I will get these delivered on Monday 29th April.

In regards to a meeting to look at roads in the area I am currently free, Tuesday morning 9.30 onwards till 12 or anytime on Wednesday, Thursday or Friday

Kind regards

Andy

-----Original Message-----

From: Gareth Eales (Cllr) [<mailto:cllr.geales@northampton.gov.uk>]
Sent: 23 April 2019 15:50
To: Leighton, Andrew
Subject: Parking Survey...

Hi Andy,

Below are the people that need hard copies of the questionnaire and a return envelope..

The streets not to receive the letter so far are: **Raymond, Countess, Chepstow, Newport and Monmouth**...can you send me the letter again, so I can amend ahead of the above being sent out?

Gareth

The letter and survey that went out can be found in Appendix A & B on pages 5-7. **Question:** Why would Highways undertake a parking survey with me and they pay for the postage to over 1000 houses if there was not an existing parking problem? They wouldn't. There clearly is a parking problem in this area, it is misleading at best, disingenuous at worst to state otherwise. Furthermore, when this planning application opened to consultation the below representations were made to Planning from Northamptonshire Highways on 28th May 2019...

Northamptonshire Highways

**Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (As Amended)
Local Highway Authority (LHA) Response**

Application Reference	N/2019/0563
LHA Reference	
Proposal	PART DEMOLITION AND CONVERSION OF THE EXISTING FACTORY BUILDING TO 54NO APARTMENTS AND THE ERECTION OF A NEW 3-STOREY BUILDING TO PROVIDE 14NO APARTMENTS, TOGETHER WITH BIN AND CYCLE STORAGE AND PARKING
Location	BARKER BUILDINGS , COUNTESS ROAD, NORTHAMPTON, NN5 7EA
Date	28/05/2019

Thank you for your consultation with regards to the above application. Following a review of the information submitted the LHA would make the following observations.

The area surrounding the development site is heavily parked with little to no residual on-street parking capacity. Therefore, the additional development over what is already permitted must meet the current LHA Parking Standards as shown below:

- Parking for a 1 Bed = 1 Space;
- Parking for a 2 Bed = 2 Spaces;
- 0.25 visitor parking spaces per apartment.

Yours sincerely
Jason Conway
Development Management Engineer

For Assistant Director of Environment, Planning, and Transport
Northamptonshire Highways
One Angel Square
Angel Street
Northampton
NN1 1ED

Note the sentence “The area surrounding the development site is heavily parked with little to no residual on-street parking capacity.” Further proof of an existing parking problem. Miraculously, these representations were diluted and reversed subsequently, hence the rose tinted version of the parking situation in your report.

I will use the stated formula and do the math on this application:

- Parking for a 1 Bed = 1 Space; **which means 50**
- Parking for a 2 Bed = 2 Spaces; **which means 36**
- 0.25 visitor parking spaces per apartment. **which means 17 (0.25 of 68 flats)**

Equals = **103 parking spaces needed**...so there would be a deficit of **31 spaces**. Therefore, this application is in breach of current Northamptonshire Highways Parking Standards. That in itself should be grounds enough for **rejection** in my view.

➤ **EXISTING NBC PLANNING POLICIES**

I am also concerned that within this proposal there is absolutely no amount of affordable housing offered in this plan. Current Northampton Borough Council policy is that developments that have 15 or more dwellings should contain 35% of affordable housing within. See below snippet from our policy documentation...

7. The Affordable Housing Requirement

7.1. The following section sets out the thresholds and requirements for delivering affordable housing within Northampton.

Key Principle 4: Site thresholds

The provision of affordable housing will be sought on all sites of 15 or more dwellings

7.3. Reducing the threshold, at this time, is not considered appropriate when taking account of the likely impact on addressing housing need versus encouraging the development of smaller sites by independent builders to meet the overall housing requirement of the area.

Key Principle 5: Percentage of Affordable Housing

35% affordable housing will be sought on any site, which is required to do so. Exceptions may be made on the grounds of viability on a case-by-case basis.

We cannot as a local authority breach our own planning policies, so that also should in my view be grounds for a **rejection**.

➤ **NO SECTION 106**

Also there is nothing on offer for the local community, in the form of Section 106 monies, which should be used to mitigate the impact of a development like this on the local community and provide benefits or infrastructure.

Personally, I am sick to the back teeth of seeing housing developments get approved and to hell with the impact on existing residents. Yes, absolutely we need to build more homes, but they have to be schemes that benefit everyone.

So it begs the question...what benefit is there in this scheme for the people who live locally? The answer is nothing. There is not one penny on offer for the local community and all my constituents will inherit is yet more parking problems.

➤ **IN SUMMARY**

Every single resident I have spoken to has opposed this proposal and 83% rejected it in an online poll.

In my humble opinion, this authority all too often succumbs meekly to the wishes of developers and frankly ignores the needs of wider population or those living nearby. What is needed here in my opinion is a revised plan with a more modest level of properties, in order that there would be sufficient onsite parking, there should also be a level of affordable housing contained and ideally a modest financial contribution that can be invested into the local area. That is a reasonable expectation and I feel the burden is on both Planning Officers and the Planning Committee to pursue that outcome. It is tragic that I should have to go to these lengths to ensure Highways and Planning policies are adhered to, along with a sense of fairness.

As the local Borough & County Councillor and based on this existing proposal, I feel entirely obligated to oppose this planning application, for all the reasons I have explained. I genuinely feel it would be to the detriment of local people. It is my job to stand up and speak out, that is what I am doing unashamedly so, as it is my elected responsibility. I truly hope you as committee members concur with my perspective and **reject application N/2019/0563.**

Yours faithfully,



Cllr Gareth Eales
Spencer Ward – NBC
Dallington Spencer Division - NCC

20th September 2019

APPENDIX A

Cllr. Gareth Eales *Dallington / Spencer*

Mobile: 07511 660 870

Email: hello@garetheales.co.uk

Post: 43 Raymond Road, NN5 7DX



8th April 2019

Dear Sir / Madam,

PARKING REVIEW CONSULTATION: St James / Spencer

A review of the current on street parking arrangements in your area of St James / Spencer is being conducted as a result of issues raised by a number of concerned residents. It was agreed between myself and Northampton Highways that we would write to all residents and businesses in the area to ask views of your parking concerns or suggested solutions.

This review will help us to better understand the problems being experienced by residents, the causes and potential solutions. But in order to get a true picture of current conditions it is important that you take this opportunity to assist in providing information on how the Northamptonshire Highways can help in improving the lives of residents in your area.

Most people understand that the increase in car ownership and the growth of multi-occupancy properties has created more parking problems in our towns and streets. In most cases where demand from residents outweighs available road space there are very few simple solutions. However it is apparent that in the Dallington/Spencer Division area there are competing demands coming from outside the area and therefore the Northamptonshire Highways may be able to assist developing parking changes that would benefit local residents.

Previous feedback has given some idea of what these problems and potential solutions maybe and these have been summarised in the enclosed information, but in order to understand the extent of these problems and whether residents would support any future changes I would be grateful if you could advise us of your views by completing the enclosed questionnaire and returning it in the envelope provided. **DO IT ONLINE** - you can also complete this questionnaire online – please visit: www.garetheales.co.uk/parking

The closing date to return the questionnaires is the 22nd April, in the meantime please do not hesitate to contact me on the number above if you require any further information.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "GARETH".

Councillor Gareth Eales

APPENDIX B

? RESIDENTS PARKING SURVEY

1. NORMAL PERSONAL DETAILS HERE

2. Are you a; Resident or Business

3a. How many cars does your household or business regularly park on the street?
(this does not include off-street, or private parking areas).

0 1 2 More than 2

3b. Do you have access to off-road parking?
(this includes car parks and private parking areas)

Yes No

4. Do you have a parking problem where you are living? If so, is this in the;

	Yes	No
The Daytime	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Evening	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
At Weekends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you answered yes to Q4, in your opinion are parking problems in your street caused by;

- Number of residents cars
- Customers of local businesses
- Employees from local businesses parking on street
- People attending a local education establishment
- People attending a local sporting venue
- People parking on the pavement
- Other

PLEASE TURN OVER

5. Would you support any of the possible solutions;

- A Residents Parking Scheme
- Double Yellow lines
(to prohibit parking where it causes an obstruction or a hazard)
- No change
- Other, please specify in comments box below.

6. Do you have any other comments on the parking problems within your area and the potential solutions.

Yes No

If you have answered 'yes' to question 6, please provide details of your comments or suggestions in the space below

Comments and suggestions: