

My name is Malcolm Dowers and I am speaking on behalf of the Counties Residents Association. Whilst we regret the loss of the bungalow, we accept its demolition and also the concept of a pair of semis. Our objections are focussed purely on design, which is the most important consideration in the preservation or enhancement of a Conservation Area.

Design is even more important at this location given it's opposite the recreation field, the vistas across which, particularly to the nearby listed Applegarth, locally listed Roding Cottages and down Leicester Road towards Wanstead Hospital beyond, are key elements in the Conservation Area.

The proposed semis offer a stark ultra modern theme, with large blank facades, frameless glass windows and floating parapet walls. These modern bland features would be so jarring with the rich detailing prevalent in the surrounding area, that the buildings would stick out like a sore thumb and do great harm.

Some committee members will recall the four year battle on Chepstow where the various modern proposals were repeatedly rejected, even by the Regional Inspector. To have fought so long against unsympathetic development and then allow such modern designs literally next door, would be unacceptable and a slap in the face to the residents of the area.

The Chepstow site sets a precedent for contemporary development in the area and is supported by similar cases. For instance, last year there was another pair of semis (the Sarum site) at the other end of Leicester Road. Once again contrasting proposals were rejected and subsequent in keeping designs approved. Although Chepstow is under construction, Sarum is finished and local residents have strongly welcomed them. This local opinion even extends to earlier development, for instance the flats at 27-29 The Avenue are warmly accepted, whereas the modern Higgins Development is deeply criticised.

We therefore invite this committee to reject this scheme and suggest a redesign to a contemporary look. Whilst such an approach may not soothe the ego of the architect, it is the residents of the area who have to live with the building day in day out. If a contemporary redesign were provided, as with Chepstow and Sarum, the applicant would likely find support from the Counties Residents Association.