
**SUMMARY OF
PROOF OF EVIDENCE
OF DAVID WOOD**
MA(Hons) DiplArch RIBA

In respect of

**PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

At

**49 LEICESTER ROAD,
WANSTEAD E11 2DW**

On behalf of

TELFORD HOMES PLC

Appeal Ref:

**APP/W5780/A/09/2119252
APP/W5780/A/10/2121325**

London Borough of
Redbridge Ref:

**3398/08
2393/09**

31st MARCH 2010

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1.0 Witness Description

1.1 My name is David Wood. Details of my experience can be found in my Proof of Evidence.

2.0 Scope of Evidence

- 2.1 I will confirm my instructions given to me by Telford Homes plc.
- 2.2 I will review the initial scheme (Scheme 1) as designed by Paul Shekleton Architects together with the previous Planning Inspector's comments in his decision letter.
- 2.3 I will then briefly review my studies of the site, the context of its surroundings and the setting of "Apple Garth" a grade 2 Listed Building on Nutter Lane.
- 2.4 I will then examine the nature and characteristics of the Wanstead Grove Conservation Area. This is essential in understanding how development in the conservation area is able to preserve and enhance the character of the conservation area.
- 2.5 I will then set out my design approach for Scheme 2. References will be made to comments received from officers of the Council, Counties Residents Association, Wanstead Society, English Heritage, the Conservation Advisory Panel (CAP) and the Local Planning Authority (LPA).
- 2.6 Following this I will set out my design approach to Scheme 3.
- 2.7 Finally, I will summarise my thoughts and opinion on the reasons for refusal of the two planning applications.

3.0 Client Instructions

- 3.1 Soon after the planning appeal for Scheme 1 was dismissed Telford Homes. plc appointed me to prepare designs for the redevelopment of the site. I was asked to consider the recent planning history of the site and, in particular, the comments made by the Planning Inspector in his decision letter.
- 3.2 I was asked to retain the design of the houses on Gloucester Road as this part of the previous scheme (Scheme 1) received favourable comments from the Planning Inspector. Also, the density, amenity provision and, in the main, the car parking

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arrangements appeared not to be issues of concern to the Inspector and therefore could be left as they were unless the new design affected these areas.

4.0 Planning History – Scheme 1 (Paul Shekleton RIBA)

4.1 Telford Homes plc with Paul Shekleton Architects submitted a planning application for Scheme 1. The proposed development was for 24 dwellings comprising of 6 houses and 18 apartments in two, three storey blocks, together with associated car parking and landscaping.

4.2 The application went before the Council's Regulatory Committee on 18 December 2007 where it was deferred.

4.3 Telford Homes plc appealed the application on grounds of non-determination.

4.4 The Planning Inspector confirmed in his decision letter the following points :

4.4.1 Gloucester Road

"I consider that the proposed pairs of houses are acceptable and would fit in with the overall pattern of housing in this street and the immediately adjoining area".

4.4.2 Leicester Road:

1. It is accepted that on the corner location of Gloucester Road and Leicester Road
(a) the development does not have to replicate the character of the street or adjoining area; and, (b) that 3 floors of accommodation in some form is acceptable in principle.
2. The corner building should face Leicester Road.

4.4.3 Nutter Lane:

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1. The proposed building has considerable bulk and its depth gives rise to high ridge lines.
2. Bulk of the building is not noticeable from Nutter Lane frontage but is noticeable from many other prominent views.
3. The gap between the proposed building and the 57-63 Nutter Lane is not great enough to accommodate the difference in scale.

4.4.4 Also, there was no objection to redevelopment at a higher density, the proposed car parking area was acceptable and there are no issues with regards to affordable housing provision.

5.0 Site, Surroundings and Context

- 5.1 My full assessment of the site can be found in the Design and Access Statement and also my Proof of Evidence.
- 5.2 I have assessed the local distinctiveness of the area, including assessments of the three frontages to the site namely Gloucester Road, Leicester Road and Nutter Lane, together with the sports ground on Nutter Lane. Importantly, I also assess the positions from which the site can viewed and also the context of "Apple Garth" the grade 2 listed building on Nutter Lane in relation to the site.
- 5.3 I have assessed the defining character of the Wanstead Grove Conservation Area which I do not believe has ever been confirmed by the LPA. I also assess the nature and the coherency of the architectural design of the streets adjoining the site and in particular, on Nutter Lane.
- 5.4 My opinion is that whilst the area is primarily residential there is little architectural uniformity. It is considered that the area is only unified by its eclecticism in architectural styles and forms.

INDIVIDUAL
ROADS
DO HAVE
CONSISTENT
LOOK

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5.5 "Apple Garth" is grade 2 listed dwelling which I understand dates from the 18th Century. It is approximately 100 metres from the site of 49 Leicester Road. I consider that the setting of "Apple Garth" is not affected by the development proposals at 49 Leicester Road primarily because of the distance between the two sites. There are oblique views up and down Nutter Lane where both properties can be seen if one looks carefully though given the distance between the two, the angle of viewing and, the trees which partially mask both sites, I do not consider that the setting of "Apple Garth" is affected. Similarly, when the site and "Apple Garth" are viewed across the adjacent cricket pitch I do not consider that the setting of "Apple Garth" is affected, primarily because of the distances involved and that the two cannot be seen in one line of sight.

5.6 The site has 16 trees with Tree Preservation Orders.
Of these 16 trees, 2 are recommended for removal in the Arboricultural Method Statement

1. The Spruce along Gloucester Road.
2. The Walnut tree towards Nutter Lane.

*SUBSEQUENTLY
CHRIS OVERBROKE
DENIED THIS*

6.0 Scheme 2

6.1 Scheme 2 went through 5 iterations prior to its final form which was presented to the Regulatory Committee on 23rd July 2009. Prior to this, a decision had been deferred on two occasions; firstly because of the imminency of the formal designation of the conservation area and, secondly because of the late receipt of comments from English Heritage.

6.2 The Planning Inspector, in his decision letter which dismissed the appeal of Scheme 1, provided a very good starting point for the design process. I also met with the officers of the LPA and also local residents which included representatives from Counties Residents Association and Wanstead Society to discuss outline proposals for the site.

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Comments received during these meetings were pooled and have been the subject of careful consideration along with the constraints and opportunities this site affords.

- 6.3 The scheme evolved from Scheme 2(a) to 2(f). Refer to A3 bundle of drawings which plots the design sequence. Each proposal of the scheme being amended in a sequential manner to address comments received from officers of the Council, English Heritage, Conservation Advisory Panel and local residents' groups.
- 6.4 Block A, on the corner of Leicester Road and Gloucester Road, following consultation with English Heritage, was designed taking references from the Wanstead Grove Conservation Area as well as from a pre-war block of apartments at 35 Cambridge Park in Richmond. This block was considered by English Heritage to be a typical design of an apartment block in London suburbs and references from it would fit well on the corner of Gloucester and Leicester Roads.
- 6.5 For Blocks B and C, following consultation with officers of the Council, it was felt that an 'Art Deco' inspired architectural style would integrate very well with the varied and eclectic mix of housing styles in the surrounding area. The scheme looked at the influence of the neighbouring 1930's housing and sought to make references of Art Deco style by using balconies, glass and white render. There are many successful examples in London suburbs of the 'Art Deco' style being used in pre-war housing for both houses and for apartment buildings. Also, the site overlooks the cricket ground where the pavilion might well have been designed in an Art Deco style which was often used successfully in the pre-war era for sports and leisure pavilions. For these reasons it is thought that references to the Art Deco style in the design of the new blocks would be an appropriate contextual response.
- 6.6 The designs of Blocks A, B and C evolved through a number of iterations to address comments received from the officers of the Council , English Heritage and local residents' groups.

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- 6.7 The scheme comprised 24 units of accommodation as follows:
6 semi-detached houses and 18 apartments split into 3 blocks of 6 apartments each.
- 6.8 This final proposal was supported by officers of the Council and was broadly supported by English Heritage but did not receive the support of CAP, Wanstead Society or Counties Residents Association.
- 6.9 Scheme 2(f) as presented to the Regulatory Committee on 23rd July 2009 was refused. The reason for refusal of the previous is as follows:
- 6.10 *"The design of the proposed development, particularly Blocks B and C, is out of keeping with the Wanstead Grove Conservation Area. Blocks B and C present an incoherent appearance to Nutter Lane and are incongruous with the Arts and Crafts cottages. Thereby the character of the area fails to be preserved or enhanced and the proposal is contrary to Policies E3 and BD1 of the Council's Borough Wide Primary Policies Development Plan Document."*
- 6.11 I was very surprised by this decision and was frustrated by the circumstances which lead to this decision. I thought many of the comments made during the committee debate were unfair and, at times, misleading. A representative from Counties Residents' Association, registered to speak at the committee, spoke considerably longer than the allotted time. Telford Homes plc, on the other hand, having registered to speak, was not called to speak by the committee clerk. Overall, the effect of this was to give an unbalanced account of the proposals to Members and, as such, gave unfair bias in favour of Counties Residents' Association. Council officers, having recommended approval of the proposals, showed little appetite to redress this imbalance when presenting the application to Members.
- 6.12 Contrary to the reason for refusal I think the proposals are very much in keeping with the Wanstead Grove Conservation Area. I also think the proposals do present a coherent and interesting appearance to Nutter Lane. They are certainly not incongruous with the

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houses at 57 to 63 Nutter Lane for the reason that the difference in architectural style between the two is very much in keeping with the varieties and differences of styles and massing that are evident on the street scenes within the conservation area and on Nutter Lane. I therefore think that the proposals do, without question, preserve and enhance the character of the area.

7.0 Scheme 3

- 7.1 A meeting took place with officers of the Council and Telford Homes and their representatives on 22 September 2009. The purpose of the meeting was to seek a way forward for the design of Blocks B + C on Nutter Lane which would address the reason for refusal.
- 7.2 Telford Homes stated that it was important to agree on a direction to follow as the bodies being consulted did not appear to share the same vision or opinion regarding the development of this site. Conflicts of opinion appeared to be rife.
- 7.3 The design of block A in Scheme 2 appeared to receive general support given the direct advice from English Heritage.
- 7.4 The proposal for Blocks B and C, which are adjacent to 57-63 Nutter Lane, was to form two, 2.5 storey asymmetrical blocks.
- 7.5 Front elevations feature half timbered gables to echo the themes of the houses at 57-63 Nutter Lane together with gables to the roofs at each end of the block. Roofs are pitched at 45 degrees and will be in plain red/brown tiles. References would be made to an Edwardian/Arts and Crafts style which appeared to be favoured by residents.
- 7.6 Also, orange/red brick and white render, together with fenestration patterns and styles, are used in similar but not identical way to the houses at 57-63 Nutter Lane.

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- 7.7 Subsequent to the submission of Application and, following meetings to discuss the details of the scheme between Telford Homes plc and Counties Residents Association, the scheme was further amended to include alterations to Block A, Blocks B and C and, in particular, the houses. It was also proposed that, in addition to two TPO trees being removed, a further non-TPO Cypress tree be removed on Gloucester Road.
- 7.8 Resulting from this process I considered that the revised designs for Scheme 3 fully address the reason for the previous refusal.
- 7.9 The proposal are very much in keeping with the Wanstead Grove Conservation Area and present a wholly coherent appearance to Nutter Lane and are congruous with the houses at 57-63 Nutter Lane therefore meaning, that the character of the area would be preserved and enhanced by this proposed development.

Regulatory Committee on 18th January 2010

- 7.10 Scheme 3 did not receive support from CAP, officers of the Council or the Wanstead Society but did receive support from Counties Residents' Association.
- 7.11 This application was refused by the LPA on 18th January 2010. The reason for refusal is:

"The design of the proposed development, particularly Blocks B and C, is out of keeping with the Wanstead Grove Conservation Area. The design and height of Blocks B and C would be harmful to the character of the Locally Listed Arts and Crafts Cottages and Wanstead Grove Conservation Area. Thereby, the character of the area fails to be preserved or enhanced and the proposal is contrary to Policies E3 and BD1 of the Council's Borough Wide Primary Policies Development Plan Document and Policy SP3 of the Council's Core Strategy Development Plan Document."

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7.12 I was very disappointed with this decision and fundamentally disagree with the reason cited for the refusal.

71.3 I think the proposals are very much in keeping with the Wanstead Grove Conservation Area. I also think the design and height of Blocks B and C are complementary to 57-63 Nutter Lane and the conservation area and are not harmful in any way. I go further in that I am of the opinion that the setting of 57-63 Nutter Lane is improved by these proposals when considered in the context of the street scene. I therefore think that the proposals do, without question, preserve and enhance the character of the area.

8.0 Conclusion

8.1 Scheme 1 was dismissed at appeal. Clear reasons for this were cited in the Planning Inspector's decision letter. The Inspector also indicated what was acceptable together with very helpful direction on other matters.

8.2 Scheme 2 as finally presented in a planning application as Scheme 2(f) fully addressed those reasons given by the Planning Inspector. This view was supported by officers of the Council. The scheme was broadly supported by English Heritage. Notwithstanding this, the planning authority refused the application.

The reason given for refusal is as follows:

8.3 *"The design of the proposed development, particularly Blocks B and C, the character of the area fails to be preserved and enhanced. Blocks B and C present an incoherent appearance to Nutter Lane and are incongruous with the Arts and Crafts cottages. Thereby the character of the area fails to be preserved and enhanced and the proposal is contrary to Policies E3 and BD1 of the Council's Borough Wide Primary Policies Development Plan Document".*

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- 8.4 It is my opinion that Scheme 2 does preserve and enhance the character of the area. Also, Blocks B and C do provide a very coherent appearance to Nutter Lane and do complement the neighbouring houses at 57-63 Nutter Lane. The neighbouring 1930's semi-detached houses to the immediate north of the houses at 57-63 Nutter Lane do no harm to the setting of the houses but do serve to reinforce the eclectic nature of Nutter Lane. It is clear from a review of existing houses on Nutter Lane that there is a rich variety of styles, types, heights and sizes which, in my opinion, is the very essence of the character of the area. This proposal fits well in this context and represents a proposal of high quality which is well thought out and well designed.
- 8.5 Scheme 3(b), as determined, fully addressed the reasons given by the Planning Inspector for dismissing the appeal for Scheme 1. The proposals also fully addressed the reason given by the LPA for refusing Scheme 2. Scheme 3 received full support from Counties Residents Association. English Heritage did not object to the application while officers of the Council recommended to their Members that the application be refused. The planning authority followed their officers' recommendation. The reason for refusal states :
- 8.6 *"The design of the proposed development, particularly Blocks B and C, is out of keeping with the Wanstead Grove Conservation Area. The design and height of Blocks B and C would be harmful to the character of the Locally Listed Arts and Crafts Cottages and Wanstead Grove Conservation Area. Thereby, the character of the area fails to be preserved or enhanced and the proposal is contrary to Policies E3 and BD1 of the Council's Borough Wide Primary Policies Development Plan Document and Policy SP3 of the Council's Core Strategy Development Plan Document."*
- 8.7 It is my opinion that the proposed development, particularly Blocks B and C, are not out of keeping with the Wanstead Grove Conservation Area as my Proof of Evidence clearly proves. The design and height of Blocks B and C would not be harmful to the character of the locally listed houses at 57-63 Nutter Lane and Wanstead Grove Conservation Area as they are complementary and fit very well. Therefore, the character of the area is

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unquestionably preserved and enhanced by the proposal and, therefore, it is in full accordance with Policies E3 and BD1 of the Council's Borough Wide Primary Policies Development Plan Document and Policy SP3 of the Council's Core Strategy Development Plan Document.

- 8.8 It is my opinion that both proposals that have been refused by the Regulatory Committee of the Council have fully addressed the reasons for dismissing the appeal of Scheme 1, they have fully addressed comments and direction given by the Inspector in his decision letter and, they achieve a high quality of design which both preserves and enhances the character of the Wanstead Grove Conservation Area.

PRACTICE PROFILE - AWARDS:

CAMDEN BUILDING QUALITY AWARD 2007

Winner – New Dwellings Category

THE CHELMSFORD SOCIETY DESIGN AWARD 2003

For Academy 24, Springfield Road, Chelmsford - a housing scheme for Higgins Homes Limited

THE CURREY AWARD - BISHOPS STORTFORD CIVIC SOCIETY - 2001

For a contribution of special merit, a development for Higgins Homes Limited at the Island Court London Road, Bishops Stortford.

EVENING STANDARD "BEST NEW HOMES" WINNER BEST NEW - CONVERSION 1999

Award for quality in housing design for "The Cedars", Belmont Hill, Blackheath - conversion of listed building for Durkan New Homes Limited.

SUNDAY TIMES WHAT HOUSE AWARD 1998

Award for quality in housing design for "Sycamore Way" Shared Homes - Housing development for Tower Housing.*

THE CHELMSFORD CIVIC SOCIETY DESIGN AWARD 1998

Regional Award for quality in Civic design for "Coates Quay" Housing development at Navigation Road, Chelmsford, for D.J. Higgins Developments.*

WOOD DESIGN COLLEGE - POMEROY 1994

Competition for design of a wood technology college in Pomeroy, County Tyrone, Northern Ireland. AGW winning project.

ROSE BOWL ARCHITECTURAL AWARD 1993

Flats development at Park Road, Sittingbourne for Swale Housing Association.*