

Outline objection for reference only. Please use your own wording.

DESCRIPTION

Outline application has been made for planning permission and conservation area consent for retail, financial, commercial, food and drink uses, offices, hotel and up to 400 flats with over 500 underground parking spaces accessed from Eyre Place. On the site of the RBS computer building and the RBS car park 8 free standing blocks containing 210 flats are proposed. On Fettes Row and Royal Crescent these would be 6 storeys above street level, plus a lower basement level. A further lower level of car parking makes the blocks 8 storeys high adjacent to King George V Park.

OBJECTIONS

The siting, height, mass and urban form of the 8 blocks facing Fettes Row and Royal Crescent would have an alien character and a dominating and overbearing effect detrimental to the character and setting of the adjacent buildings in the World Heritage Site and the general character of the Northern New Town Conservation Area where new buildings are expected to complement existing urban grain and massing characteristics.

The description of these blocks as pavilions in a parkland setting is totally misleading - 8 storey blocks are hardly pavilions and the "parkland" in fact is shown envisaged as mainly enclosed private space. The applicants supporting material admits that they will adversely affect the adjacent World Heritage Site, and the views illustrated in vol 2 parts 4&5 of the Environmental Statement make the dominating effects of the blocks abundantly clear. Blocks J and K are very close together and will appear as one massive building. The irregular form of the blocks and their rather random disposition further emphasises their lack of relationship to the urban form of the area.

The proposals are thus not in conformity with many National and CEC Planning Policies, including the requirement for new housing to be at a density and in a form appropriate to the characteristics, environmental quality and residential amenity of the surrounding area.

These massive blocks towering 8 storeys above George V Park, with a new service road along its southern boundary, would be detrimental to the seclusion and character which it currently enjoys. There would be overshadowing and loss of sunlight, particularly from the eastern block.

The park would also experience overshadowing from the proposed block on its western boundary. The park would be adversely affected, as admitted in the applicant's supporting information, and its character would be neither preserved nor enhanced as required in a conservation area.

The area currently used by RBS as a car park is part of an area of open space that, apart from the sheds on its northern boundary, has never had permanent buildings and for many decades was occupied by football grounds. In the 1970's the Council's Development Plan and Government comments recognised a lack of open space in the area, but the community's efforts to get the car park area included in King George V Park have not materialized. This issue has never been addressed by the council, apart from the reservation as open space of the former tenement on Eyre Place, which is now proposed for development. The park is some 0.5 hectares less than the minimum area required in CEC's current guidance on open space provision. The RBS car park area at about 0.75 hectares could provide this deficit which will be even more required with new housing development. When added to the existing open space it would provide a valuable amenity and an appropriate setting for Royal Crescent on the edge of the New Town. Building should therefore be prohibited on this area so that it may be reserved for an extension to King George V Park. The area used by RBS as a car park accommodates about 255 cars. It does not seem credible for the applicant to maintain that a development with over 500 parking spaces will not have a significant adverse effect on the surroundings.

The Council cannot reasonably approve this proposed development which is incompatible with so many of its own and national policies, and which shows so little concern for its visual surroundings and the functioning of the area. It should therefore be completely rejected.