

Hills Road Area Residents Association & Queen Edith's Way Residents Association

We object to plans to replace a Edwardian detached house with 15 modern flats!

Gibson Developments Ltd are already demolishing the houses at 3 and 5 Queen Edith's Way and will replace them with six new houses across the two plots. Now the same firm plans to demolish the house at 291 Hills Road and build a large block of 15 flats. If this development goes ahead, it will be more difficult to resist similar applications in the future. There are a number of detached houses with large gardens in the area which could be demolished and replaced with faceless blocks of flats. Next time it could be the house next door to you!

We have a number of immediate concerns:

- The demolition of an Edwardian detached house of the type which makes the area distinctive and attractive, the design of the proposed flats which is bland and out of keeping with the neighbouring houses and the removal of mature trees and vegetation would be a retrograde step which could lead to demands for more "could be anywhere" development.
- The house at 291 Hills Road was designed to reflect and enhance an important road junction with the bay articulating the corner, whereas this development is simply a large rectangular block with no regard to its location.
- The plans take no account of the unity provided by the block of 5 attractive red brick houses (285, 287, 287A, 289 and 291).
- There is great demand for and short supply of large family homes on the south side of the city. There is less demand for flats and a large supply in the area. Many of these flats are used by London commuters or purchased by foreign buyers as an investment and remain empty.
- 15 flats would generate frequent vehicle movements onto Queen Edith's Way, right next to the already-congested junction with Long Road, and increase the risk of accidents. There would be major congestion issues during the construction phase.
- The proposals would lead to "over-development" of the site. This area already has flooding problems, following the loss of verges to provide space for the cycleway. The larger building footprint, the hard landscaping, the removal of greenery and the creation of an enormous basement would together increase flood risk.
- This site is a valuable habitat for wildlife, has considerable biodiversity and the greenery mitigates pollution. The reduction in the tree canopy and the wholesale removal of vegetation would leave the site open to the road and be highly visible. The planned basement would have a substantial impact on the roots of nearby trees.

Please look at the overview at www.queen-ediths.co.uk and follow the link to the detailed plans. Then email your comments to jamesrberry2003@yahoo.co.uk for inclusion in our detailed response to the planning application.

Next please send your comments to the City Council before the deadline of 15th September. The more comments the better! To do this, read the article on www.queen-ediths.co.uk click to read all the documents, and then select the comments tab.