

As owners of 7 Park Vale (Somerwood), my husband and I would like to make some comments on this application, and hope they are taken into consideration.

Firstly, we would like to acknowledge that we are aware of the need for affordable family housing in Leek, and this development seems to comprise mostly of terraced and semi-detached properties which presumably will be relatively affordable. I also note that brownfield former mill sites such as these are numerous in Leek, and provide far more preferable development sites than some other recently proposed local housing developments on greenfield sites (e.g. The Mount).

We would not, therefore, like to see this development completely halted. As it stands though, there are some key elements of the proposal that would impact severely upon our house and that of our neighbours in Park Vale, and we would like to see some alterations made. Our objections fall under three key categories: loss of privacy, loss of light, and safety/sanitation.

Loss of privacy

We can see from the plans that some attempt has been made to reduce impact on the surrounding houses, which is appreciated.

However, Plot 1 would lead to a loss of privacy in both our house and garden. The side elevation facing towards us has four windows in it. Whilst the house will sit slightly below ours, these windows will look directly into several of our first and second floor windows, including two bedrooms, as well as potentially into our ground floor windows. They will also all overlook our garden. This will severely impact our privacy. We request that the number of windows in this elevation are reduced, and those that remain have frosted glass installed.

It is harder to visualise the impact of Plots 5, 6 and 7, but it seems from the plans that all three of these houses will directly overlook our garden from the rear elevations and balconies. We would request that adequate fencing is installed around the gardens of these plots to reduce the impact on our garden.

Loss of light

The height of the houses planned for Plots 5, 6 and 7 means that it is likely our garden will lose all winter light, as they are built where the sun tracks during the autumn and winter months. We would request that the height of these three buildings is substantially reduced, perhaps by the removal of the second floors, and/or the reduction in the pitch of the roofs.

Safety/sanitation

Most unpleasantly, we note that on the topo plan of the whole site, a bin store is sited in the north-east corner, presumably for the houses on Plots 1-4. Unfortunately I cannot attach photos to this comment, but a site visit or a glance at Google Street View will show you that this bin store is situated directly adjoining the side wall of our house, and directly underneath six of our windows. This would severely impact on the liveability of our house, meaning we could not open windows to the majority of our rooms (including our living room, dining room and two bedrooms) without the potential of allowing in smells, flies etc. None of the four planned houses are situated far from the main road, so we ask that this bin store is removed from the plans entirely and that the bins for these houses are stored within their own plots.

Finally – again it is a pity that we cannot attach photos – we have a concern about the safety of significant building work above our entire terrace row, particularly the work planned for Plots 5

and 29/30. The building of these will take place on the drying yard of the former mill, which is sited directly behind Park Vale, and significantly higher than it, held back by a high (six metres) retaining stone wall. This wall (presumably the property and responsibility of the owners of the development plot) is currently in extremely poor condition, bulging outwards, and held up in places at the bottom by bricks and stones placed haphazardly into gaps. If this wall were to collapse it would cause significant damage to all the houses in the Park Vale terrace. Similarly, the brick wall which borders the far end of our garden is being pushed inwards by decades of soil, vegetation and rubble accumulation on the development plot. We would like reassurance that the retaining stone wall has been properly surveyed and deemed safe for major development, and that the current and any future damage of both the stone wall and the brick wall will be repaired by the new owners.

Many thanks for your consideration,

Eleanor and Chris Fogwill