

**Our reference:** COM475409157

**Application number:** 2022/3525

**Application address:** The Molesey Venture, Orchard Lane, East Molesey, KT8 0BN

**Name:** Mr Hammonds

**Address:** 19 Orchard Farm Avenue, East Molesey, Surrey, KT8 0AJ

**Comment type:** You object to the planning application

**Date of comment:** 02 Jan 2023

**Comment:** The principle of replacing the existing residential buildings with more modern residential units is acceptable, however the proposed plans would result in an overdevelopment of the site, with unsuitable designs in terms of bulk, density, mass, and height. In addition, the planned location near a much loved and used recreational space.

I attended the public consultation sessions that the developer delivered earlier in 2022 and raised most of these concerns at the time but was met with limited interest. The view seemed to be that the plans met the minimum guidelines set by the council, and so any concerns raised by attendees at the sessions appeared to be of no real interest to the development team.

The area is crying out for a more sympathetic plan that provides for both the needs of the existing residents to be rehoused, and for much needed housing to meet the councils new homes targets.

However, I object to the proposal for the following reasons:

#### 1. Overdevelopment/Density

These plans are grossly oversized and completely out of character with the area. To have a four storey building in an area where the majority of houses are two storeys is not in keeping with the neighbourhood, and the parkland that these proposed plans sit within.

The overbearing main building proposed will cause adverse impact to the view line of some existing residential properties on Ember Farm Way, and the style and size are not in keeping with the existing housing in the surrounding roads. In addition to the houses, it will cause an adverse visual impact to the parkland views and riverside location, both areas of beauty rife with wildlife.

In addition :

- Block A is too large in footprint & too high. It should reflect the smaller scale apartment blocks recently built by Cala Homes in Orchard Farm Avenue (off Orchard Lane). The basement car park is misconceived and would be at high risk to flooding due to its proximity to the river.

- Block B alongside the river Ember does not reflect riverside architecture. The current block resembles a riverside mill building, with small scale windows and is generally inward looking and therefore does not impose in the natural environment. The artificial lighting in these houses and on the roof terrace will affect the riverside wildlife. The townhouse concept without garden space and with 2nd floor living rooms has not recognised the need for outside living space, which was a harsh

lesson learned from the COVID pandemic.

I appreciate that the plans are intended to provide some much needed help for the existing residents on-site, and so I am sympathetic to a development taking place, however, the bulk and size of the main building seems to be driven by the need to create additional properties for the developers to profit from. A more sympathetic (eg two storey) solution is required that provides the support to the charity, without such a negative impact on the current neighbourhood.

## 2. Effect on the character of the neighbourhood

This area is a quiet residential area with access at the end of Orchard Lane to woodland walks; games; cycling and fishing for people of all ages.

The impact of this huge development on the atmosphere of this area - peaceful, natural etc would be detrimental to the local community. It would entirely change the feel of the area.

The Council aims to make the area a great place to live and where residents are able to enjoy the existing open spaces, however this proposal in its current form works against this stated aim.

## 3. Traffic / Road Safety / Parking

### A. Traffic

Orchard Lane is already regularly full with parked cars, and simply would not be able to cope with any increase in traffic that the proposals for additional properties would bring (ie. above and beyond those residents that live there currently)

Orchard Lane is already busy at peak times with traffic struggling to pull out onto Esher Road. I can see no proposals to include traffic lights at the junction between Orchard Lane and Esher Road in order to manage access to and from the main road. This would also offer a means of reducing traffic speed on the main road which is currently an issue for the police, council and residents.

### B. Road safety

The access to the site is via Orchard Lane, which is currently a poorly lit cul de sac and this proposal could further increase road safety issues.

Cars are already regularly parked in a manner that blocks the dropped kerbs. As a result many families are currently forced to push prams into the road, and young children have to cycle / scoot in the road at a blind corner in order to reach the next dropped kerb. Adding additional parked cars onto Orchard Lane will exacerbate this issue.

Any proposals should include improved lighting for all of Orchard Lane to reduce the risk of accidents and crime. The addition of a small pedestrian kerb on the other side of the road would also be a welcome safety improvement to Orchard Lane.