



# Shaw Residents' Association

For the Residents of Peatmoor, Sparcells, Nine Elms, Middleleaze, Shaw,  
Ramleaze, the Prinnels, Eastleaze and Westlea (West)

27 August 2017

Mrs Sarah Smith  
Senior Planner  
Swindon Borough Council  
Wat Tyler House  
Beckhampton Street  
Swindon  
Wilts SN1 2JH  
sbcadc@swindon.gov.uk

Dear Mrs Smith

**Re: S/16/1832 | Erection of 4no. dwellings and associated works. | Land at Brook Cottage Hay Lane Grange Park Swindon SN5 3PA**

The Shaw Residents' Association wishes to register its objection to the building of a housing estate within the Essential Setting of Lydiard Park.

The Essential Setting was identified and agreed by SBC in June 2002 as part of the Lydiard Park restoration and development plan. This formed SBC's bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for £3.1m to restore the Park. It is designed to be the minimum line required to protect the registered landscape by maintaining the rural context of the Park.

**It will cause considerable harm to the 'Heritage Experience' of the Grade II registered Park and Grade I listed House and Church**

The 'planning, design and access statement' assigns just three short contradictory paragraphs to 'Heritage Implications'. First it asserts that the development will be 'well screened' and then it describes dwellings that 'maintain a balanced proportion that will not detract from the setting of the nearby listed building' and goes on to describe how it will merge with the street scene.

Therefore, on the one hand it asserts the (visual) harm caused will be minimal and on the other that the development will sit rather nicely alongside a grade one listed House and Church. Since the screening is simply a row of unmanaged trees, which over time will either die, get blown down or be chopped down by the new residents desperate for more light and outstanding views; it seems to us that the developer, in his own words, recognises that such a screen is not permanent and therefore, over time, his assessment of 'minimal harm' would have to be upgraded to 'significant harm'.

The statement makes no mention of the views from within the Park, in particular from the Dam wall. It is clear that, should this application be granted, the views from this most significant Heritage asset will be ruined forever. We are sure those that granted the Heritage Lottery money all those years ago for the renovation of the dam wall did not envisage its outlook becoming contaminated with the upper floors of four executive homes.

The aforementioned document offers just seven lines of text describing 'landscaping' which are seven lines of zero value-added text since all it essentially says is; 'there are some trees around the location and we will try to retain some of them' - The 'Heritage Implications' contradictory statements follow this short paragraph and says exactly the same thing with the exception of the fact that it does not talk about 'retaining as much of them as possible'.



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There is no 'visual impact' statement anywhere that we can find. Surely an application that relies on the life-span of carbon based vegetation to protect the visual character of a grade II listed Park and Grade I listed House and Church cannot be given any reasonable level of serious consideration?

We are sure you are aware of the recent high Court ruling (Steer v SSCLG) where a judge ruled that an Inspector had used an artificially narrow approach (visual only) to the issue of 'setting' and in adopting this approach had made an 'error of law'. The 'Essential Setting' of Lydiard Park is about the 'heritage experience' and not the 'look'. Therefore, given that this proposal is to build houses immediately next to the registered driveway, and use Church Lane for access, 21st century houses will be experienced as though within the park which will cause considerable harm to the 'heritage experience'.

### **It will cause traffic congestion at the entrance to the Grade II listed park**

On reviewing the proposed site plan, we can see each house has been allocated just three parking bays. There is zero space allocated for visitors. Given the proposal is for three five bedroom and one six bedroom houses, it does not take too much of a leap of faith to imagine the owners of these properties will have more than three vehicles each (many of them very large family saloons) and also likely to own trailers, possibly caravans and probably the odd boat of two. Given the confined space the proposed development occupies, where will they park all these vehicles and accessories? On the access road to Brook Cottage which will likely cause problems for residents accessing the driveway thereby causing delays on Church Lane, or perhaps on Church lane itself?

Clearly, the new residents will create their own space for their visitors to park, which will likely be yet another argument for the felling of trees, only this time to make way for the parking of vehicles.

Finally, looking at plot one; the owners appear to have to walk about 50 metres from their front door to their drive. Surely that cannot be a serious suggestion? Does the designer really believe he can sell a property, likely to be valued at about £1m, with its garages and parking bays placed at the other end of the street?

These parking related issues are indicative of the lack of foresight being applied to simple design aspects of the site, and perhaps go some way to explaining the outrageous lack of heritage related context in the application. We ask that this application to be rejected.

Yours Sincerely

(sent via email)

Kevin Fisher

Shaw Residents' Association Chair

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