

STATEMENT C24 – Sally Cavanagh

Tower blocks have been used previously to resolve housing crises but resulted in creating other social and health problems. High levels of depression, social isolation and 'ghettoisation' of residents in high-rise blocks are well researched. Building high rise blocks equals building future social isolation on a massive scale; cementing in a culture of the 'individual,' not community. Bedminster and Windmill Hill are two of the most densely populated wards in the city, already have 5 tower blocks and with planning permission granted for Little Paradise, 5 more. These wards do not have the infrastructure to accommodate exponential population growth.

Our specific concerns with the proposed development of St Catherine's Place in application 20/04934/P are:

Incomplete Plans: - The application submitted is incomplete. Without the detailed plans for all Parts 5, 6 and 7 full and proper democratic scrutiny cannot be carried out on the proposed development.

Comments related to aspects of the Application which are fully detailed:

These plans do not meet Bristol City Council's social housing minimum threshold for new housing developments of this scale. Fluctuations in the value of land is a known risk. Firmstone's attempt to excuse itself from meeting the key mandatory requirement to include social and affordable housing in the scheme on the basis that they paid too much for the land is unacceptable.

This is a family orientated area with a tangible culture of social responsibility - most people really value this - we would much prefer to see many more socially affordable homes in all plans for new homes in the area.

Loss of light and privacy Residents of St Catherine's House will lose up to 68% VSC. Stafford St will lose up to 75% of day light. We understand that the residents of St Catherine's House have 'gagging' orders, in their purchase contracts, so cannot object to the loss of light without potential litigation. There will be significant loss of light to Bedminster Green, which supports mature trees and flowers.

Overshadowing on homes - Shadow study shows this development will not meet BRE recommendations. Overshadowing significantly impact on the sustainability of the 3 storey flats on Stafford St, whose residents rely on solar roof panels to generate clean, affordable energy.

Highway safety - adding over 4,000 people to this small area of the city, (if all planning applications for all five high-density developments proposed are agreed on three sites adjacent to St Catherine's Place), will dramatically increase problems with highway safety. That's even without considering highway safety during the construction of these high-rise blocks and numerous even higher ones proposed for adjacent sites. Traffic and parking issues - The proposed development has parking for only 27 residents. 67% of cyclists also own a car – to expect that only people who do not own a car will buy these properties is at best deluded. This proposal will result in significantly exacerbating existing parking problems in the local area.

Noise - It is not possible to add over 2000 people from this and approved Dandara development and for the pre-existing noise level to remain the same. One of the unique characteristics of this area, and one we value most highly, is how quiet the area can be especially at the weekends.

Flood risk - Flood Risk Officer noted there had been no update to the drainage strategy to the previous application. Meaning the developers had not produced a SuDS solution for the site that met BCC requirements.

Fire risk – Avon Fire and Rescue assessed the plans and concluded that there are insufficient Fire Hydrants and water mains dedicated to fire-fighting included in the plans.

Wind tunnel effect – No modelling has been carried out on this development in conjunction with the other 3 or 4 proposed along both sides of Malago Rd/Dalby Avenue – so no understanding of how the wind will behave.

Amenity - Primary care services are stretched to beyond capacity in this area.

East Street is already challenged as a retail area – adding 815 square metres of additional retail space will exacerbate rather than solve the problem.

Design - The three higher buildings for which plans are detailed are 14 and 7 floors look incongruous with the surroundings – over-bearing and imposing, are oppressive and would irrevocably change the character of the local area. To be more congruous with the geography the buildings should be no more than 6 floors - 5 if the bottom floor is double the height. Appearance of the development – The scale, massing and height of the highrise blocks for which there are detailed plans, result in an over-bearing, oppressive, light-blocking, forbidding, imposing presence which is at best, completely incongruous with the prevailing context of 3 storeys on Stafford St.