

Copy of e-mail from Geoff Woodcock dated 27<sup>th</sup> May 2008

Further to Idwal's e-mail and the points raised at the last meeting I attended, I have waited until now to respond due to a meeting that was held with the Planners and Housing Officer at Newcastle City Council last Friday, where we tabled a further plan that you have not seen, but is attached (Revision M) and for the sake of completeness, I have also attached the plan handed out at our last meeting (Revision K). This new layout (M) was well received by the Planners.

You will see that our Architect has located the large block of flats in the North-Eastern corner adjacent to the school, so there is no overlooking issue with existing residents, this also (I think) addresses some of the concerns Idwal raised at the last meeting regarding views of the flats through the trees, placing the flats in front of the most dense section of tree belt and as far back in the site that they can go. The previously supplied cross-section of the site shows that the flats are not higher than the trees, the other points raised are discussed below:-

- the landscaping of the buttresses,

Presumably this is suggesting 'soft landscaping' ie climbing plants, etc, which is not advisable on areas of brickwork where open joints are already a problem, this would also cause an issue with the open watercourse below, which is an operational watercourse with rights still held by NWL over its management, etc. Maintaining 'soft' landscaping in such a location would be an unacceptable burden in terms of cost and Health and Safety.

- the traffic issues,

I have attached a section from our supporting planning statement which deals with access arrangements:-

### **Access**

5.26 The vehicular and pedestrian entrance to the proposed development will utilise the existing access point from Hexham Road . However, due to the width of the existing access and lack of footpaths the access will be improved by widening and including footpaths to both sides

5.27 The necessary 4.5m x 60m visibility splay are achieved by reducing the front boundary wall to 600mm within the splay. Appropriately designed and spaced railings will be added to the wall within the visibility splay to ensure highway safety whilst preventing access to the existing watercourse for health and safety reasons (as shown on Drawing 3e C2005/P2)

5.28 The construction of the improved site access will involve extending and replacing the existing culvert to ensure the continued the flow of water. These works are also form part of a separate application for SMC (Scheduled Monument Consent) to be submitted to the DCMS.

- the unsightly (wooden cladding) and discontinuous appearance of the front elevation on the west end.

The use of wood in building is now deemed to be one of the most sustainable materials on the market and is becoming more prevalent, even amongst the major house-builders, external materials are governed by Development Control, who will ultimately decide on finishes. With regard to the Western Flats, the reduction in height will cause the Architect to revisit the

finishes, so that it does not look like a 'Liquorish Allsort', with different materials on each of the 3 floors, however I'm sure the use of wooden cladding will still be evident in some way throughout the development.

I hope this reaches you and you colleagues in time for your meeting this week and look forward to your reply.