



The Friends of Abingdon
Civic Society

Comments from The Friends of Abingdon on Application 09/02240/FUL

This application involves the demolition of Champion House in Wootton Road, Abingdon and its replacement by 24 retirement apartments. Members of The Friends of Abingdon have considered the application and make the following points.

- Champion House was an Edwardian family house designed by a well known and respected architect of the time. There is some sadness that a building that is of considerably higher quality than most of the local examples presented in the photographs by the applicant should be demolished. However, we recognise that the location of the house is not ideal and this makes it less attractive as a family dwelling or for renovation and improvement as a valuable legacy of the Edwardian period.
- The replacement building is not at all popular with our group for a number of reasons. Some people are not happy with the overall appearance, but we are mostly concerned about the density of the proposed development and the access from the narrowest part of Wootton Road - for both pavement and roadway.
- The site is not only next door to John Mason School, but Wootton Road is a very busy road for both traffic and pedestrians including many children and young people who walk or cycle to several other schools and Abingdon and Witney College. The schools also generate a great deal of traffic as do the nearby shopping centre and North West Abingdon residential estates.
- We also think that 8 parking spaces are not sufficient for such a development of 24 apartments. It looks as though the developers expect the residents to be active as there are minimal communal facilities and no sign as yet of warden accommodation. Given that active retired people often keep a car for fairly irregular use, where will they park it for long periods? Friends and relatives and also care workers are likely to be regular visitors, where will they park? There are already parking problems on the Fitzharris estate.
- There is also concern about the cramped nature of the apartments. Retired people might have to use walking aids or even wheelchairs. Unless it is intended that they should be uprooted again from their homes, there seems to be little consideration given to such needs. The kitchens and hallways, in particular, look very tiny. It is also felt that the development does not take account of the social needs of the residents. Retired people need to keep active socially for their health and well-being. Living rooms that are between 9 and 10 feet wide are too small to accommodate even small groups of visitors such as family or friends (e.g. book groups, or church groups). The dining areas also seem too small to accommodate more than 3 or 4 people round a small table.

We hope the Vale of White Horse District Council will seriously consider refusing this planning application.

Mrs J P Bryden
for The Friends of Abingdon

16-01-2010

Outcome Application refused. Developers appealed and hearing with Inspector held August 2011. Decision pending 31-08-2011