

St James residents urged to request restrictive conditions for a new Maximum Motors, Howell Road, application.

Following hot on the heels of the refusal of planning application 21/1014/FUL for a 26 bed purpose built student accommodation development at 68 – 72 Howell Road, the Maximum Motors' site, a new application has been submitted on behalf of the owner / developer.

On the face of it [23/0583/OUT](#) for 7 two-bedded and 2 one-bedded flats, seems much more acceptable, but it would be a mistake to conclude that if approved, a development of either affordable homes for local people, or good quality private residential development, compliant with the Neighbourhood Plan's policy SD3, will necessarily result. In fact, the application form reveals that the applicant has already ruled out affordable housing.

It is vital to note that this application is for *Outline* permission only, unlike the application for *Full* permission sought for the PBSA. and hence in this case, all important details are left for later.

The Heritage and Planning Statement, available by clicking the link above and searching under 'documentation', reveals in three paragraphs under *Layout*, (two are numbered 6.7 and the third 6.8) the purely **indicative** nature of the proposals, including the floor plans.

6.8 states '*It is envisaged that the final layout and design will be considered during the reserved matters application.*' Hence, if this application were approved, the internal arrangement would not have been determined.

At 6.7 the emphasis is placed on the size of plot and how a block of 9 flats **could** sit on the plot. Note also the reference to the previous application and the emphasis on the (planning officer's) acceptance of the size, siting and design of the building for PBSA.

This is particularly concerning, as by the owner's own explicit admission to the Trust, his intention remains to develop the site to accommodate some 28 – 30 students. At a meeting he requested in March with a Trust rep., he explained openly and in some detail that if the PBSA application were refused, a new application on these lines would be part of the steppingstone process he would embark on, playing the planning system.

To reduce the chances of this being successful, we are urging all who support the NP and its vision for a balanced community, to respond to the current consultation, by requesting that approval of this application **must** be accompanied by a condition, restricting alterations of the illustrative internal layout to prevent the creation of units of more than two beds, and prohibiting any subsequent change of use to any form of student housing, or to advertise it as such. Anything other would be to make a mockery of the refusal by Planning Committee of the PBSA application. It is important that our councillors can once again point to the strength and extent of feeling in their briefings with planning officers.

Comments may be submitted on the planning website, or by sending an email to the planning officer, Christopher Cummings christopher.cummings@exeter.gov.uk. The deadline for responses is 18 June.