



## A2dominion

**Exhibition and pre-application consultation for new apartments for the over 55s on the site of the former Albert Road Day Care Centre and Arthur Clarke Care Home.**

### **Response from the Caversham and District Residents' Association (CADRA)**

#### **Design**

1. The site is in an established area of two to three storey housing where third storeys are incorporated into the roof space giving a two and a half storey appearance. We share the concern of many local residents that 4 storeys on this prominent corner site is too high and the bulk of the building too great. It would be a substantial change in the local character and would be detrimental. The three storey north side of the building would be close to the southern boundary of No3 Albert Road and would overlook and shade the garden for most of the day – even more so during winter months. It should be noted that the existing buildings, close to this boundary, are single storey. The design shown would have a highly prominent and invasive appearance to nearby householders and diminish the character of the area.
2. We note that the 2013 feasibility study by Reading Borough Council, which itself bordered on over development, showed 40 apartments (as opposed to the 44 proposed) and a maximum of 3 storeys. The current proposal represents over development out of keeping with the area.
3. We believe that 3 storeys should be the maximum for this development and that others design options should be considered which might include:
  - A reduction in the number of apartments
  - More use of the roof space as demonstrated in the existing building.
4. We are disappointed that the a2dominion has not attempted to retain all or some of the existing Albert Road day Centre frontage and build new behind and adjoining the existing building. We hope this can be reviewed and the opportunity also taken to incorporate some of the attractive features of that frontage.
5. We were pleased to see that the mature trees on the frontage are to be maintained. This is critical for the character of the area, for screening of the new buildings and for the privacy of residents. We would wish to see a visual representation of the relationship of the trees to the new buildings which takes account of any tree work considered necessary. We would also wish to see robust measures to protect the tree roots during construction.
6. We note that there was concern raised during the exhibition about the adequacy of parking. We acknowledge that some of the older residents may not choose to have a car. However, the model of care through visiting providers and visiting professionals implies a substantial need for parking – in addition to parking required for regular staff. Sub-standard parking provision (12 for the 44 dwellings) will result in overflow parking on the public highway near an acute corner and two vital bus stops. If the flats are being provided for over 55 year olds, many could be fully employed car owners. Albert Road is poorly served by public transport.

## Care and Eligibility

1. We note that following the significant local concern over the closure of the Care Home and Day Centre, the Council committed to retain the site for care services for older people.
2. Wards north of the river have a significant older population.
3. We are aware of the difficulty in securing suitable provision for older people with significant care needs.
4. For the above reasons, we believe that eligibility for these apartments should reflect:
  - An older starting age – except in cases of very particular needs
  - A clear preference for local residents and parents of local residents
  - A clear preference for those with greater needs.
5. We are concerned that the apartments are billed as 'luxury' flats. While clearly they need to be comfortable and carefully designed, we believe the emphasis should be on Care not on luxury accommodation. Care is the prime requirement and the basis for retaining this site for provision of services for older people.
6. We note that the communal facilities in the design will allow some use by non residents. Given the lack of Day Care facilities north of the river and the real difficulties experienced by older residents and their Carers, we believe that facilities should be available for use by non residents on a daily basis. This would clearly need to be by prior arrangement only, to ensure privacy and safety for residents. This should be reflected in the design and layout as well as in the model of care.

15 April 2015