



## **Bear Flat Association (BFA) comment**

**24/04008/FUL**

### **Garages To Rear Of 21C Wellsway, Bruton Avenue, Bear Flat, Bath**

#### **Incomplete submission**

The submitted material seems to be incomplete. It is difficult to assess from the Street View, the Site Plan or the Ground Floor Plan how the level entrances to the garage and front door would marry with the sloping pavement. It is important that the pavement remains in its current uninterrupted form, usable by wheelchairs and push chairs: this is a well-used route leading from Wellsway to Bruton Hall (used for a polling station, nursery, exercise classes, community market, meetings etc). The material should also give assurance that the pedestrian way alongside the Church adjacent to the site would be unaffected.

More detailed plans showing the relationship to neighbouring properties would also be useful. There is no Design and Access Statement.

#### **Principle of redevelopment**

The proposal would remove disused garages that have become an eyesore. They have no architectural merit, and the site is ripe for redevelopment. The re-use of this brownfield site for housing would be welcome. The location in a local centre, close to bus stops and within walking distance of the city centre is a good one for housing development. The proposal would contribute to the Council's policy to increase housing provision.

#### **Impact on the Conservation Area**

The impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area which forms part of Bath's Conservation Area is a major consideration. Also the site is close to Beechen Cliff Methodist Church and Bruton Hall that are of local architectural and historic merit.

The house as proposed would not accord well with the character of Bruton Avenue and adjacent streets where houses typically have a narrow frontage and where houses step up hills. The scheme shown is of a single building with a wide frontage that would relate awkwardly with the steep slope of Bruton Avenue in visual terms (and with practicalities of access on the public highway). Buildings stepping up hills are a characteristic of Bath generally – in fact does Bath have an example of a wide-fronted building resting successfully at right angles to the contours?

Although a contemporary design would be acceptable, the flat roof and horizontal emphasis of the building would be at odds with the Hall above and 21 Wellsway below.

The scheme should be revised to make a more positive contribution to the Conservation Area. A smaller house, perhaps stepping up the hill, would be worth investigating. A narrower house frontage would help, such as by the base of the lowest existing garage becoming the dwelling's parking space. This could also provide a side access to the property avoiding the issue of reconciling a front door threshold to the sloping road. And removing the garage from the front elevation would be to the benefit of the design in its context.

### **Quantum of development**

The intense development proposed for this site with no garden or outdoor area at ground level would be harmful to the living conditions of future occupiers. As the proposal is for a three-bedroom house, it would likely be occupied by families with children, who would need access to outdoor space. Adults too could feel confined by the proposed house, and arguably it would not satisfy "good design" standards.

The site is very constrained and there is a case for limiting the accommodation such that a scheme offering satisfactory living conditions can result. It would be better at two bedrooms. Any scheme here should not exceed two storeys.

### **Impact on neighbours**

The impact of the proposed development on occupiers of neighbouring buildings, bearing in mind the need to avoid overlooking, overbearingness, loss of sunlight or daylight, or loss of privacy needs to be assessed.

The southern boundary of the building would be along the boundary with the garden behind 23 Wellsway. The Planning Statement shows that the applicants have taken into account the need to avoid overlooking and overbearingness for neighbours, by limiting the height of the proposed house and including only obscurely glazed windows. As the proposal would stand north of 23 and 25 Wellsway, it would not cause a loss of daylight or sunlight for residents and occupiers of those properties. The garage and utility area of the proposed new house, however, would be close to the back of 23 Wellsway, and there could potentially be an adverse impact on neighbours, due to overlooking or noise and disturbance. A site visit should ascertain whether or not there would be any such harm.

Space saved by a smaller scheme might allow for better separation of the new build from 23 Wellsway (possibly including maintenance access to the southern elevation).

### **Conclusion**

BFA supports the principle of redevelopment and asks for a scheme more apt for the site and area to which we could give our full support.

20 November 2024