# Plymouth council approves eco-friendly home despite resident concerns



Plymouth City Council’s planning committee has approved plans for a new eco-friendly home near the city’s waterfront, despite concerns raised by residents about privacy, daylight loss, and other issues. The development will be situated on land adjacent to a property on Parsonage Way at Queen Anne’s Quay.

The proposal, submitted by Susan Beesley, received 49 letters of objection from local residents. Objections centred on the home’s proximity to neighbouring properties — the proposed distance of 8.8 metres at ground floor level falls short of the council’s recommended 12 metres — and the anticipated reduction in daylight for neighbouring homes.

Councillors acknowledged that the scheme breached planning guidance, but described the breaches as “minor” and felt they did not justify refusal. Measures such as obscure glazing on some windows have been incorporated to prevent overlooking. Planning officers also considered altering the roof to increase light into the neighbour’s property but concluded it would have limited effect and negatively impact the new building’s appearance.

Housing policy changes, driven by government targets for increased housing supply, played a role in the committee’s decision. Members were advised that any adverse impacts would need to “significantly and demonstrably” outweigh the benefits to warrant refusal.

Linda Maynard, Chair of the Queen Anne’s Quay Residents’ Association, voiced strong opposition to the scheme, highlighting a variety of concerns. She stressed that the new home would be shaded for most of the day due to its position north of an apartment block, thus reducing the usability of its outdoor space, which is already 25 square metres smaller than council standards recommend. Furthermore, Ms Maynard pointed out the lack of reciprocal obscure glazing requirements, meaning neighbouring residents could potentially look directly into the new property’s living spaces.

Additional worries included loss of privacy for residents in the nearby block of 42 apartments, safety concerns related to visibility and parking, and the fact that the land was originally earmarked for parking under a prior planning approval. The parking is currently inaccessible due to being chained off, but if permanently lost, it could cause difficulties for local residents who might lose opportunities to lease spaces.

Ward councillor Mary Aspinall (Lab, Sutton and Mount Gould) urged refusal of the application on the grounds that breaches were not minor. She drew attention to the potential disruption construction would bring to the closely packed community, which includes many elderly and disabled residents. “We need to make sure they are absolutely safe,” she said, speaking to the Plymouth Herald.

Councillor Patrick Nicholson (Ind, Plympton St Mary) suggested the application be deferred to allow developers to revise their plans, commenting, “We are being swept up by a change of policy which says housing, housing, housing without making sure we get quality housing.”

Conversely, Cllr Matt Smith (Lab, Compton) supported the proposal, describing it as a “sympathetic and modest design” on a brownfield site within an already developed area. He added, “We need more houses and brownfield sites are the place to do it. This is already a road of terraced houses that looks out onto block of flats.”

Architect Tom Drury, involved with the project, emphasised efforts made to address residents’ concerns. He explained that the design had been amended based on planning officers’ pre-application advice. “We are aiming to supply a really modest, super-efficient house which is pushing technology, with heat pumps within the house, in a sustainable location that is in keeping with its surroundings,” he said.

Mr Drury described the home as accessible for individuals with mobility issues and energy-efficient enough to potentially incur little or no energy bills.

The council approved the scheme with conditions including strict controls over construction activities devised by officers and ward councillors. Additionally, permitted development rights will be removed, preventing any future extensions being added to the property.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)