



Caversham Park, Reading

Statement of Community Involvement

Prepared for Beechcroft Developments Ltd.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following a robust consultation process, Beechcroft Developments Ltd has submitted an application for 65 assisted living units for the over 55's at Caversham Park House, a 64 bed care home, 61 age-restricted retirement dwellings, including conversion of the existing Lodge and Bursars House and 27 affordable homes, as well as extensive public open space and recreational facilities.

As part of the applicant's commitment to consulting with residents and stakeholders, the community were given the opportunity to offer feedback on the proposals through several channels, including a physical exhibition, a dedicated website, email address and telephone number.

This Statement of Community Involvement provides a chronological account of the public consultation undertaken and a review of the feedback received.

The applicant will continue to ensure that interested parties and stakeholders remain informed and updated throughout the application process.

INTRODUCTION

TFA, a specialist company in promoting community engagement in planning, was invited by Beechcroft Developments Ltd ('the applicant') to organise a public engagement programme with local residents and their elected representatives on their updated proposals for Caversham Park, Reading.

Government guidance encourages the preparation of a Statement of Community Involvement to describe how applicants have engaged with the local community before submitting their planning application.

This document has been produced with the aim of clearly highlighting the community engagement undertaken in respect of these plans and how feedback has influenced proposals.

The applicant fully endorses the benefits of community engagement and has embarked upon meaningful consultation to this end.

The development proposals consulted upon at Caversham Park include 65 assisted living units for the over 55's at Caversham Park House, a 64bed care home, 61 age-restricted retirement dwellings, including conversion of the existing Lodge and Bursars House and 27 affordable homes.

POLICY CONTEXT

This Statement of Community Involvement has been prepared in the accordance with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Reading Borough Council's Statement of Community Involvement.

The revised National Planning Policy Framework (20 July 2021) ("the Framework") sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The Framework states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

At paragraph 9, the Framework states that:

"Planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area."

Pre-application engagement and the 'front-loading' of the process is generally encouraged, with paragraph 39 of the Framework qualifying that:

"Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality preapplication discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community."

Reading Borough Council adopted their Statement of Community Involvement in 2014. The adopted policy states that with regards to engaging with the community from the outset:

Paragraph 7.2

"The Council agrees with the emphasis on engaging with the community from the outset. It can result in a better scheme which takes the needs of the existing community into account, and a better relationship between the developer and local community that carries through the application process and beyond. This is particularly the case for proposals that are sensitive or of a significant scale."

The Council has also set out the five levels of community participation for developers:

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Participation level	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
Example methods	Fact sheets Web sites Road shows	Public comment Focus groups Surveys Public meetings	Workshops Deliberative polling	Citizen advisory committees Consensus-building Participatory decision-making	Citizen juries Ballots Delegated decision

THE PROPOSAL BY BEEHCROFT DEVELOPMENTS LTD

Application

The development proposals consulted upon at Caversham Park include 65 assisted living units for the over 55's at Caversham Park House, a 64 bed care home, 61 age-restricted retirement dwellings, including conversion of the existing Lodge and Bursars House and 27 affordable homes as well as creation of new public amenity space and recreational facilities.

The Proposed Vision

Caversham Park estate consists of a Victorian-era stately home with parkland in the suburb of Caversham on the outskirts of Reading.

The BBC acquired the 40-hectare site in 1941 and it became home to BBC Monitoring and BBC Radio Berkshire. It is now surplus to requirements and the applicant would like to achieve a sensitive redevelopment of the site to address the severe shortage of retirement housing, affordable housing and publicly accessible open space whilst delivering high quality complementary development that respects the historic significance of Caversham Park.

The refreshed proposals are informed by the new heritage work and continued feedback from stakeholders and consultees, the amended designs aim to provide an improved response to the historic environment.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Statement of Community Involvement

The applicant undertook a detailed programme of consultation with the local community and stakeholders, as outlined below.

Information Leaflet

An invitation leaflet was delivered to around 3,500 households surrounding the site.

The A5 invitation leaflet contained the following:

- Details of the Public Exhibition.
- Details of the site.
- Contact details including website, email and phone line with the opportunity to ring to request hard copies of material if residents did not have access to the internet.
- An image of the proposed site with accompanying information.

A copy of the leaflet can be found in the Appendices.

Contact was also made with around 50 local stakeholders and groups, including:

- Matt Rodda MP, Member of Parliament for Reading East.
- Councillor Jason Brock, Leader of Reading Borough Council.
- Councillor Micky Leng, Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets.
- All local ward members.
- Caversham Croquet Club.
- Caversham Tennis Club.
- Dr Crellin, Head Teacher at Hill Primary School.
- Mark Frost, Head Teacher at Micklands Primary School.
- Caversham Park Village Association.
- Keep Emmer Green.

Physical Public Exhibition

A public exhibition was held at Caversham Park, Reading on 8th December 2022.

Members of the local community and other stakeholders were able to attend the consultation and discuss the proposals with various members of the project team, including those from Beechcroft Developments Ltd.

Residents were then able to leave their feedback via a form at the event or were provided a freepost envelope to send their comments to us in the post.

Dedicated Website

A dedicated website was set up displaying information about the proposals. This will be updated throughout the application process.

In addition to the information about the proposals, there were contact details, and a feedback form for residents to give their opinion. The feedback form has been analysed in the latter part of this document.

The feedback form can be found in the Appendices and the website can be found at: www.caversham-park.co.uk.

The website featured:

- History of the site.
- Information about the proposals and the site.
- Information about the applicant.
- Detailed masterplan.
- Online feedback form.
- All contact information including a dedicated 24/7 phone line and direct email address.

24-hour phone facility

During the public consultation process a phone number was made available to the public should they have wished to find out more information and / or provide their feedback over the phone.

The telephone number used was active 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. A voicemail facility was also available and responded to at the earliest opportunity to ensure that any questions or concerns were addressed and resolved.

The calls received were in relation to the details of the public consultation and more generally about the timeline of the planning application.

Private meetings

Private meetings were also offered to all stakeholders who were contacted directly. A series of different private meetings were therefore arranged with both stakeholder grounds and councillors. This was in addition to the meetings that were previously held earlier in 2022.

Meetings with local stakeholder groups included:

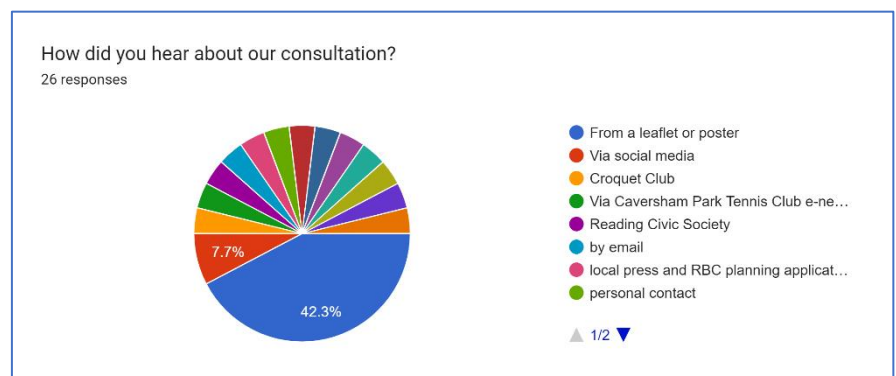
- Caversham and District Residents' Association.
- Reading Civic Society.
- Keep Emmer Green.
- Caversham Croquet Club.

FEEDBACK REVIEW

Overview

The physical public exhibition took place on 8th December 2022.

Residents who were unable to attend the exhibition in person were then able to access information on the proposals through a dedicated online website.



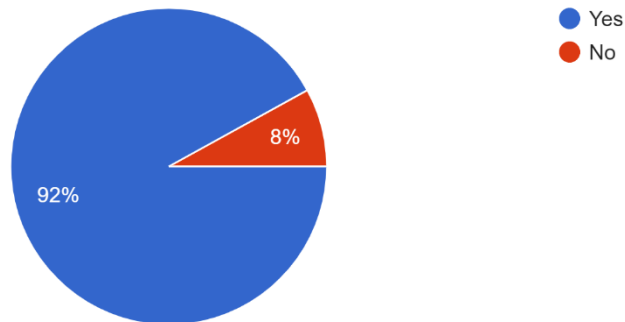
People across the majority of age brackets attended the physical exhibition at Caversham Park, Reading and had further opportunities to access the exhibition material via the website. There were 26 Responses received in total during the public exhibition and via the website.

Residents of Caversham were made aware of the proposals through several measures, this was achieved primarily through leafleting (42.3%), email (19%) and social media (7.7%).

Respondents were asked several questions relating to the proposals. We have outlined both the questions and the responses below.

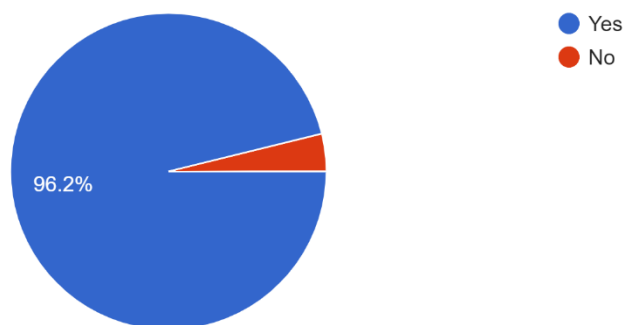
Are you aware of the local shortages of both older persons' accommodation and affordable family homes?

25 responses



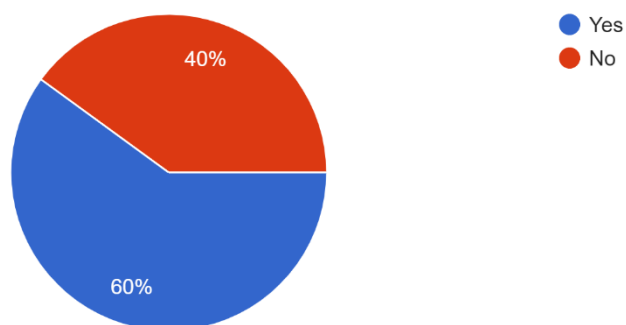
The restoration works associated with the proposed assisted living units aim to better protect the main building's historic features. Is this important to you?

26 responses



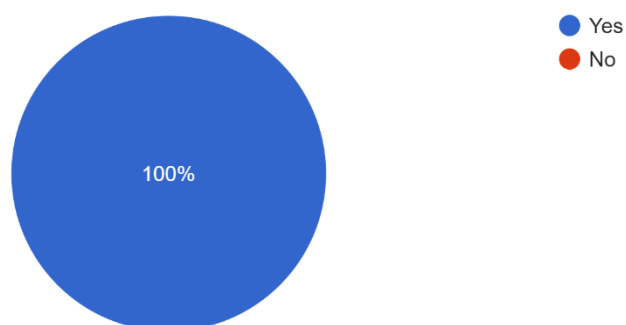
Do you agree that the contemporary design of the care home is a preferable approach to the currently submitted traditional design?

15 responses



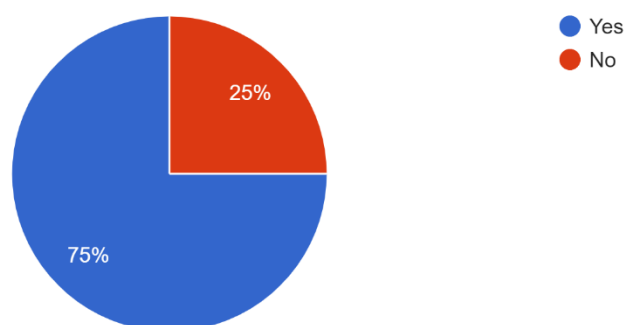
Do you support the reduction in unit numbers in the western parcel, and the landscape buffer onto Peppard Road that has been introduced?

21 responses



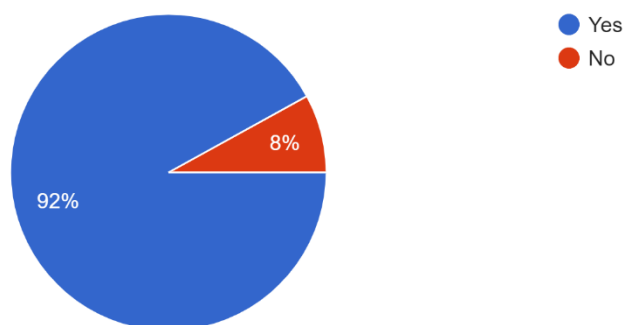
Do you support the mix of traditional and contemporary design in the eastern and northern parcels?

20 responses



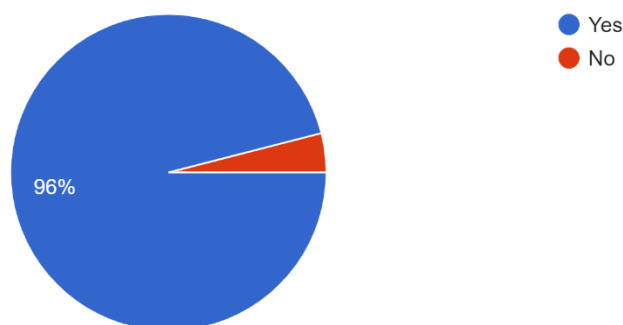
Do you agree that opening the parkland between dawn and dusk for wider public use is a significant benefit of the proposals?

25 responses



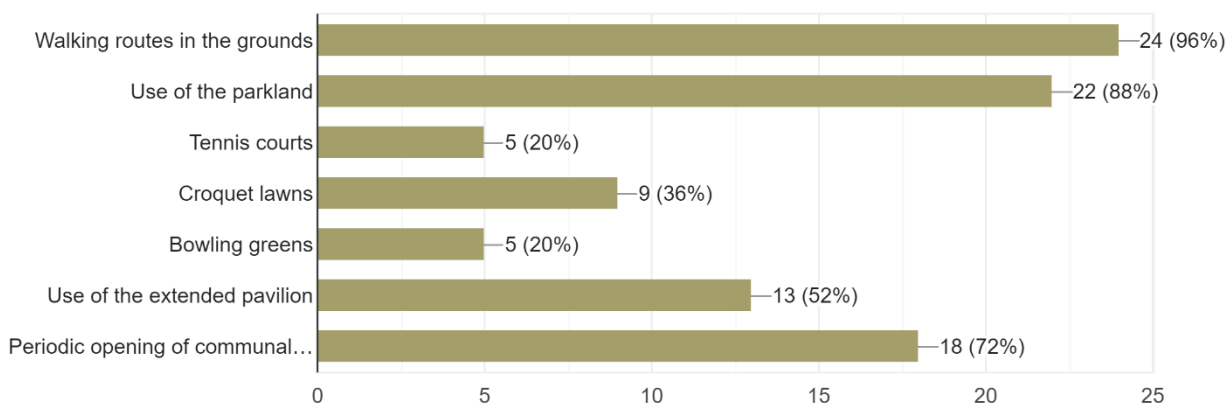
Do you agree that the community uses associated with the proposed redevelopment provide a significant benefit for the wider community?

25 responses



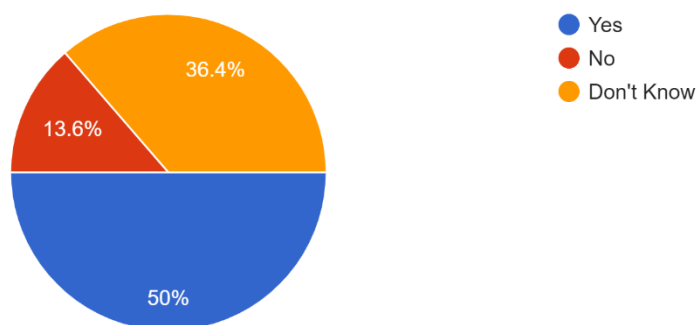
Which community uses/facilities are you most likely to use?

25 responses



The refreshed approach to the proposals at Caversham Park have been informed by feedback, including that from local residents. Do you consider the changes to be positive overall?

22 responses



Further Comments

Density

Some respondents felt that the density of dwellings on land to the west needed to be reviewed and a greener area included at the heart of this part of the site.

Several attendees remarked that they were happy to see the prospective new-build homes moved to more secluded areas of the site.

Parking

Respondents also raised concerns about the number of parking spaces included on the development. They felt that residents may park in the surrounding areas if adequate parking provision was not included within the site.

Museum

Residents thought that more could be made to showcase the history of the site. A museum was suggested to make the development and the site's history more accessible to the public.

Other stakeholder groups welcomed the principle of information boards detailing the history of the site, the house, gardens, and BBC Monitoring, and asked to be involved in the development of the information boards.

Public open space

Almost all the community welcomed the potential to open-up the parkland between dawn and dusk and concluded that the applicant's "proposals have the potential to make a positive contribution to the local community."

RESPONSES TO FEEDBACK

All comments received from the public and stakeholders have been reviewed and, where possible, the applicant has made amendments to the proposals.

Density

The density of the land to the west has been reviewed and a greener public amenity space has been incorporated at the centre of this development parcel.

Parking

The provision of parking spaces has been expanded. The second tennis court has been removed and the space has been used to create an additional 21 car-parking spaces predominantly to serve the new/enhanced community and recreational facilities.

The parking layout at the Care Home has also been amended to create a more efficient use of this area to improve parking provision.

Museum

In response to a request from local stakeholder groups, a small museum will now be provided within the extended pavilion/hall/café building. This will contribute towards enabling greater understanding of the history of the site for the local community.

POST-APPLICATION CONSULTATION

Ongoing Stakeholder Engagement

The applicant will continue to ensure that the local community and interested parties remain updated with any new information during the application process.

The website cavershame-park.co.uk will continue to be updated at the following points:

- Details of the proposals will be posted once the application is formally submitted.
- When any decision is made.

Those who requested further updates and information by telephone, email or letter will also be informed in the appropriate manner.

APPENDICES

- Copy of the Information Leaflet
- Copy of the Feedback Form.

Beechcroft Developments Ltd invites you to view the revised proposals for Caversham Park, Reading.

Beechcroft
DESIGNED WITH RETIREMENT IN MIND

In response to consultation with the community, stakeholders and statutory consultees, the Beechcroft team has revised our plans for Caversham Park and look forward to sharing these with the local community.

Our vision remains unchanged: to bring forward a development that conserves the special historical and architectural interest of Caversham Park, opening it up to the public for the first time, whilst also responding to the growing need for specialist older persons housing and affordable homes.



OUR PROPOSALS

At Beechcroft, we are passionate about ensuring that the right proposals are put in place for Caversham Park and have instructed new work to support this. The new plans have been carefully considered to respond to the comments and responses received throughout the planning process to date. We are delighted to be able to showcase these revised proposals at a forthcoming event to be held at Caversham Park House on 8 December 2022.

The revised proposals seek to sensitively convert the Grade II listed manor house into dedicated older persons assisted living units, provide a new specialist older persons care home and introduce a range of new housing including independent-living older persons homes and affordable homes; all carefully

designed and sited to minimise impact on Caversham Park House and the Registered Park and Garden. In addition to this, the proposals include opportunities designed to significantly enhance local facilities including the provision of tennis courts, croquet lawns, bowls greens and public open space which will benefit the local community.

At the exhibition, the Beechcroft team and a range of our technical consultants will be on hand to guide you through the refreshed proposals for the site. If, unfortunately, you are unable to attend, the updated proposals will be uploaded to the dedicated Caversham Park website following the event and feedback can be provided by email. Details of the website and email address are found on the reverse of this leaflet.

If you would like to attend the exhibition it is important that you first register by email and provide the name(s) of those who will be attending by replying to:
cavershampark@beechcroft.co.uk.

YOUR VIEWS MATTER

Beechcroft Developments Ltd warmly welcomes you to this public exhibition event as part of maintaining our commitment to public and community engagement.

However, if you are unable to attend the exhibition, you will still be able to access the information on our dedicated website www.caversham-park.co.uk and provide feedback by email cavershampark@beechcroft.co.uk.

BEECHCROFT'S EXHIBITION
WILL BE HELD:

2pm – 8pm

8 December

Caversham Park House,
Caversham Park,
Reading, RG4 6PF



Beechcroft
DESIGNED WITH RETIREMENT IN MIND

With over 37 years' experience, Beechcroft is one of the UK's leading retirement specialists with a portfolio of award-winning retirement communities located in some of the most desirable villages, market towns and cathedral cities across the southern counties.

WWW.CAVERSHAM-PARK.CO.UK

FEEDBACK FORM

Beechcroft would like to know your views on the revised proposals for Caversham Park.

Please use this form to let us have your comments.

1. Are you aware of the local shortages of both older persons' accommodation and affordable family homes?
☐ Yes ☐ No
2. The restoration works associated with the proposed assisted living units aim to better protect the main building's historic features. Is this important to you?
☐ Yes ☐ No
3. Do you agree that the contemporary design of the care home is a preferable approach to the currently submitted traditional design?
☐ Yes ☐ No
4. Do you support the reduction in unit numbers in the western parcel, and the landscape buffer onto Peppard Road that has been introduced?
☐ Yes ☐ No
5. Do you support the mix of traditional and contemporary design in the eastern and northern parcels?
☐ Yes ☐ No
6. Do you agree that opening the parkland between dawn and dusk for wider public use is a significant benefit of the proposals?
☐ Yes ☐ No
7. Do you agree that the community uses associated with the proposed redevelopment provide a significant benefit for the wider community?
☐ Yes ☐ No
8. Which community uses/facilities are you most likely to use?
☐ Walking routes in the grounds
☐ Use of the parkland
☐ Tennis courts
☐ Croquet lawns
☐ Bowling greens
☐ Use of the extended pavilion
☐ Periodic opening of communal space in the main house
9. The refreshed approach to the proposals at Caversham Park have been informed by feedback, including that from local residents. Do you consider the changes to be positive overall?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

FEEDBACK FORM

10. Do you have any other comments?

ABOUT YOU

Name:

Postcode:

Email Address:

How did you hear about our consultation?

☐ From a leaflet or poster

☐ Via social media

☐ Other (please specify)

Privacy Notice and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The information on this questionnaire is being collated and controlled by Tristan Fitzgerald Associates, on behalf of Beechcroft Developments, pursuant to the promotion of Caversham Park's redevelopment. Written and electronic feedback will be anonymised and shared with the project team. For further information about how we manage and control your personal information, please email: dan.angell@tfa-ltd.co.uk; or write to: TFA, Tobacco Factory, Raleigh Road, Bristol, BS3 1TF.