

TDCS WELCOMES PLANNING DECISION IN BONEHILL ROAD - 26th April 2016

Common sense prevailed at Tamworth Borough Council's Planning Committee this week (26th April 2016) when an application (0275/2015 - Land adjacent to Co-op, Bonehill Road) for a highly-visible, block-design building, against the iconic Tamworth heritage site of Lady Meadow, Lady Bridge and Tamworth Castle was *unanimously* rejected by councillors on design grounds, despite a recommendation from their own Planning Officer to accept it.

Derek Hoey of The Tamworth and District Civic Society (TDCS) spoke against the application at the meeting, urging councillors to reject it because of the damaging impact it would have on this important and sensitive area. Well done also to Mercian Ward Councillor Richard Kingstone for taking the trouble to address the committee on something so unacceptable in the neighbouring Castle Ward. TDCS do not object to the principle of development. Indeed, we welcome a mixed-use (housing, food and business hub) building such as is proposed. It is the unsightly block, glass and render design that is so objectionable and inappropriate, and happily for Tamworth, all the councillors agreed.

The historical and heritage importance of Lady Meadow, Lady Bridge and Tamworth Castle, and the views of and from them, must not be underestimated by anyone. Surprisingly, the applicants had taken no notice of the negative comments that members of the Planning Committee had made in January when initial design proposals were first submitted. Any new development in this area needs to be subtle, sympathetic, and respectful of its historic surroundings. Hopefully, the applicants will now realise their error, and the strength of feeling on this issue in Tamworth, and return to the drawing-board to come up with something far more pleasing and appropriate.