

**11 Camden Cottages, Church Walk,
Weybridge, Surrey KT13 8JT**

Dear Sirs

**Planning Application 2017/0445
Riverside, Church Walk, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 8JT**

I write with the following comments on the above planning application.

Before doing so, I am surprised that the Council has not issued a Section 215 notice about the disgusting state that this property and the grounds has fallen into. I live at 11 Camden Cottages and my property adjoins Riverside and I am fighting a losing battle with the amount of greenery growing up and over the boundary wall and on the edge of the river bank. Additionally – and I have raised this in a previous objection, when the owner felled the trees on the riverbank, most of which had preservation orders, the ground has started to move and the boundary wall between our properties has developed severe cracks and is in grave danger of falling down. There are foxes living in the property, which continually run across my garden causing a mess, in particular with the food refuse bins. The ivy covered wall leading through the alleyway in front of Portmore Cottages has grown up and is blocking light to those properties. It is very despondent for residents to live beside such a mess.

I would also ask what is going to happen to the other property in the grounds. There has been no mention of this in this planning application. Is the property going to be transformed into another residence? If yes, this planning application needs to be redrawn.

Design and Access Statement

I am astonished at the following paragraph in the Design and Access statement:

“However, the planner stated that in principle she didn't have any objections to a single storey side extension or to the second floor dormers, that the council is not adverse to modern extensions and that the aesthetic we had developed for our application could have been acceptable (as per emails received on the 29th September and 2nd October 2015).” I cannot find the emails referred to, perhaps the Council could forward them to me.

“The proposal objective is to modernize the two properties.....”

“.....maintaining the overall aesthetic of the existing building and the coherence of their appearance”

“.....without losing the character and original aesthetic of the building.”

The surrounding properties are of Victorian design and do not have modern exteriors. Bricking up the arched windows on the side of the building will spoil the character of the building.

“Many of the neighbouring houses have second storey extension and our scheme will not be higher than its direct neighbour.” It is true that four properties have an extension but the windows in the extensions are too high for anyone to be looking over neighbour's properties. Adding an extension to this building means that the adjoining cottages, the cottages opposite Riverside and some of Portmore cottages will be overlooked and will lose privacy.

“The parking area has been designed following the the minimum parking standard both in terms of vehicles dimensions and turning angles. The one without a straight access from the street and more disadvantaged has been given a wider area and the sweeping paths analysis diagrams for a car entering and leaving the car park have been drawn using the online software autoturnonline.com (drawing 90).” This statement says it all. It has been computer generated – I have made a comment in the Criteria section about the danger of this proposal and I urge the architects to visit the site to come up with a better proposal rather than sitting behind a screen.

New mooring. There is an existing deck and mooring – currently covered in overgrown greenery – but I'm surprised that the Environment Agency has given permission to install a new mooring and decking. The developer of Whittet's Ait was denied an application for moorings as the river is very

narrow and adding extra moorings will restrict the flow of traffic. I will contact the agency for its view.

Repositioning the lampost. Again, I'm surprised at this statement. The lampost was reinstalled with funds from residents. Again, I will check with the relevant body.

In summary, the developer and architect doesn't seem to have listened to any of the concerns about the historic significance of this building.

Weybridge is an historic town comprising mostly of Victorian and Edwardian architecture and adding modern extensions is not in keeping with the area, hence my surprise at the planning officer's statement above.

This building is of great significance. It was built as an electricity power station and in use from 1890 to 1896 (the original building included the four cottages adjoining it). Weybridge was the first town in the country to be wholly lit by electricity generated from this building. I have spoken to Historic England and have been encouraged to submit an application for listing which is in process. I have also spoken with the Victorian Society and I am researching archives containing a study on former power stations in the UK. All evidence will be submitted with the application for listing to Historic England. The iron bridge sited just a few meters from Riverside is Grade II listed and the boat house around the corner is also listed. This is a historic area.

The planning application itself has several untruths, as follows:

Section 10: Vehicle Parking

This section states that zero parking spaces currently exist. This is **untrue**. Approximately ten spaces were in use when the building was last occupied as office space. Most households today own two cars and as it is proposed for both buildings to be four bed

Section 14: Existing use

Whilst I understand the change of use to residential has been granted, please note that the property has **NEVER** been used as a residential space. The last use was as office space for circa twenty years and prior to that it was used as warehouse space since the 1920s.

Section 17: Residential units

This section states that there will be no loss or gain of residential units. I repeat the property has never been used as a residential space so there will be a **GAIN** of residential units.

Section 24: Site visit

This states that the site cannot be seen from a public road, public footpath, bridleway or other public land. This is **untrue**. The site can be seen by occupants of Camden Cottages and Portmore Cottages in Church Walk, Beales Lane, Jessamy Road and can also be viewed from Whittet's Ait.

Ground and First floor plans – existing

Both show the building as being split into two. This is **inaccurate**. When the building was originally converted from warehouse use to office use, it was divided into two spaces for two separate organisations but was merged into one space for one company ten to fifteen years ago.

Lifetime Home Criteria Assessment

Criteria 1 - Parking

There is a statement on the Lifetime Home Criteria Assessment that there are several public car parking spaces in Church Walk. Please note that church walk is a private road, owned by the residents and therefore **no public car parking spaces exist**. The surrounding public roads are already congested and there is no available space for parking.

Criterion 2 – Approach to dwelling from parking

Criterion 3 – Approach to all entrances

If disabled access is being provided for car parking, and provision made inside the proposed living spaces, surely it must be provided for access the properties so where will the access ramps referred to be located?

Criterion 4 – Entrances

This criteria states “The main entrances to both the properties are in their existing position.” This is **not true**. The current door at the front of the building is not located directly next to my property as is the proposed new front door. How are they going to be illuminated?

Criteria 12 – Lifts

It is unclear where a potential lift would be installed. I seem to recall that in a previous application it would be the other side of my party wall which would incur more noise.

It would appear that the architects are addressing all access requirement internally apart from a disabled person getting into the building!

Proposed Front Elevation

Has the developer taken into account how raising the roof level will affect my property? Aluminium windows are not in keeping with the surrounding properties. There is no room for the proposed single extension and no reason for it. What is the rationale behind the second house having a bigger ground floor? It states that it will be within 8 metres of the nearest neighbour's windows. Having measured the distance, I think you will find that this will not be the case.

Proposed Rear Elevation

Again, my comments are the same as for the proposed front elevation.

Existing Side Elevation

This elevation clearly shows the original arched windows of this significant building. The proposal is to completely remove them.

Proposed Section AA / BB / CC

Raising the floor plan sounds like a good idea but of course that will not meet the access criteria. I ask again what is the purpose of the single story extension?

Existing Ground Floor Plan

The boundary wall between my property and Riverside is incorrect. The river line is incorrect – see further comment below. Riverside is not currently divided into two.

Proposed Ground Floor plan

I see that a front door is going to be located just a short distance from my door and as noted above, the staircase is on the other side of my lounge. This will increase noise to my property.

Locating doors at the front of the building is going to affect parking in Church Walk as Camden Cottages residents have parking use in front of the building under the rights of easement for more than thirty years.

Existing First Floor Plan

The boundary wall between my property and Riverside is incorrect. The river line is incorrect – see further comment below. Riverside is not currently divided into two.

Proposed First Floor plan

This shows a staircase and a bathroom the other side of the party wall. This will mean an increase of noise in my property. The walls in these old buildings are very thin and every sound can be heard. I do not want to listen to people running up and down stairs and I certainly do not want to listen to people using a bathroom that will be located the other side of the wall to my bedroom. I would suggest any future plans show the staircases for the two houses located back-

to-back. Similarly, I would suggest situating the bathrooms back to back.

Proposed Second Floor plan

Adding another floor to the existing building will mean that all properties in Church Walk will lose their privacy. Both Camden Cottages and Portmore Cottages will be overlooked. Please remember that this space has never been used as residential before. It was used as warehouse and office space for almost 100 years and then only during the working week so residents have enjoyed a degree of privacy which is now going to be lost.

Existing Front Elevation Drawing

This drawing shows the rectangular window which originally housed the carved sign for Weybridge Light Co. The door below would have possibly where the employees of the power station entered the building.

The Design and Access Statement states:

“The two separate properties will be organized in a similar fashion. The ground floor to both properties will be completely occupied by the kitchens and reception rooms while the first and top floors will accommodate 3 bedrooms and a master bedroom. All the windows to the existing building will be maintained, the missing arched opening to the front will be added to maintain intact the aesthetic of the building.”

There is no missing arch – please refer to the paragraph above.

Existing Rear Elevation

This is a bit vague. It doesn't show the garden boundary wall that divides the two properties. As my comments above, the 'existing' riverbank line is wrong. This is amusing because currently, the end of Riverside's garden ends some four or five feet away from the drawn line. It is just an empty space so residents will step immediately into the river. Please also note that the angle of the garden boundary wall is not shown correctly.

I would encourage the architect's firm to visit the site so that it can produce accurate plans of the building and to do some research in order to make factually correct statements. The firm continually looks foolish and it is time consuming to wade through all the untrue statements.

Existing & Proposed Photo & 3D View 1

The two proposed front doors are shown in the two middle arch spaces which is different to the floor plans and elevations. Part of the windows have been bricked up - an ugly proposal that is not in keeping with the surrounding properties. The proposed extension is ugly and unnecessary. The original rectangular aperture that housed the electricity sign has been removed. The lamp post appears to have been moved from the private area of Church Walk to be sited on the adopted road – has Surrey County Council agreed to this?

Existing & Proposed Photo & 3D View 2

This is a perfect view of the ugliness of the proposed design. It shows very clearly what the cottages that formed part of the original power station look like today and the proposed new facades are not in keeping. Again, I note that this view shows the two front doors in the middle rather than that shown on the floor plans and elevations. Which is accurate? I would say that locating the doors in the middle would be my preference.

Existing & Proposed Photo & 3D View 3

I'm fascinated by the mature trees that have appeared in this photo. Is the developer proposing to plant mature trees? The river bank will need shoring up as it has been moving since he removed all of the trees some three years ago.

Proposed Parking Plan

I note that there is no Existing Parking Plan showing the ten or so available spaces. Of course, the grounds are so overgrown it would be difficult to see. The architects could not have made this more dangerous if they had tried. The reversing cars are shown driving over a much used public

thoroughfare. It is used by all age groups and in particular, young families. I will seek the view of the local Highway Department on this matter. The cars are shown reversing over a public footpath without any view of oncoming pedestrians, then reverse onto a public road (is this legal?) and finally onto private property (has permission been granted?). The previous occupants use to park around ten cars and they were still able to turn around on the property and drive forward into Beales Lane.

This site needs to be developed. It has stood empty for some 3-4 years. It was cleared of shrubs and trees at that time but has now become overgrown. I would suggest Mr Joel and his architects look at using the existing footprint and developing the building as two 2/3 bedroom houses that will retain the original external features and will perhaps be more affordable.

I hope the Planning Committee will take my comments into consideration and I thank the Planning Officer for granting me a deadline extension. I will of course keep the Council informed of the progress of my application to Historic England for listing the building.

Yours faithfully

Susan Speece