

Re: Amended application PA 2022 / 3796 – site at 16-18 Oatlands Drive, Weybridge

Yesterday, 6th November 2023, I submitted an objection to the amended proposals for the upper floor windows at this site. I now wish to add some further comments to my previous submission, for the following reasons:

According to the Elmbridge Planning portal the extended deadline for representations on this planning application is today, 7th November, however this morning the Planning Officer's "updated" Committee Report appeared on the web page showing a date of 6th November. From the content of the report it was, in fact, "updated" a week ago.

It seems to me irregular that the Officer's report was finalised a week before the end of the extended consultation period because it appears to dismiss the possible consideration of any substantive counter-arguments to those submitted by the applicant in their amended proposals, and consequently to negate the purpose of the extended consultation period. Therefore, I will take this opportunity to highlight the following:

Regarding the upper floor window amendments, paragraph 75 of the report states "*the central (side-facing) window would serve the second bedroom of each of the four affected apartments*". Later in that same paragraph, when addressing the possibility of the side windows being adapted to use as access doors to the flat roof areas, the PO adds the comment "*...As such it is considered both reasonable and necessary to condition these windows to be obscurely glazed and fixed shut.*"

Paragraph 82 of the report claims that: "*all habitable rooms would have a source of light and ventilation.*" **But this statement is a clear contradiction of what is written in paragraph 75.** If the only window in the second bedroom is fixed shut, how can it provide a source of ventilation? Where is the source of the ventilation to the second bedrooms in these apartments? There appears to be none, which is unacceptable.

Of the other items mentioned in the amendments dated 24 October to PA 2022/3796, the PO does not seem to have allowed for any further comments regarding the parking survey or the sequential test and has made no reference at all to the amended swept path analysis, despite the importance of all these issues to the determination of the application. This does not seem right, or fair, given that the consultation period has not yet closed.

Overall, the Planning Officer's report appears extremely contradictory in multiple areas. Much of it gives the impression of arguing that the proposed development of 33 flats on such a small site is unsuitably large, bulky and intrusive, yet the report concludes, rather unconvincingly, that planning permission should be granted. Furthermore, it quotes numerous extracts from the Planning Inspector's decision at 4-6 Oatlands Drive which cite the reasons for dismissal of that appeal (many of which apply also to the site at 16-18) yet somehow manages ultimately to overlook or overrule all of them. I find this quite extraordinary, and inexplicably inconsistent with Elmbridge Council's previous decisions regarding the sites at 4-6 and 8-14 Oatlands Drive.

In conclusion I feel it is highly relevant to summarise below the main reasons for the Planning Inspector's dismissal of the appeal at nos. 4-6. **ALL OF THEM MAY BE APPLIED ALSO TO 16-18, WHICH MAKES THEM ALL VALID REASONS WHY THE APPLICATION 2022/3796 SHOULD BE REFUSED:**

Main reasons for dismissal of the appeal at 4-6 Oatlands Drive (27 flats in 2 buildings):

i) the front building would be out of character with the street-scene due to its height, bulk and cramped design. The proposal would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the street-scene and the area

ii) the rear building would leave little space for soft landscaping and would have an urbanising impact on the adjacent parkland and treed setting

iii) the loss of trees would further expose the 4 buildings already constructed at 8-14 and collectively the 3 buildings at the rear of the sites would be visually hard and dominant

iv) overall, the proposal would cause significant and unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the street-scene

v) given the intensive nature of the proposal there would be minimal space for further tree planting that would allow them to grow and mature without affecting the living conditions within the proposed apartments. This adds to concerns regarding the cramped appearance of the proposal and the harmful effect it would have on its surroundings

vi) the proposal would fail to make adequate provision for affordable housing

vii) the proposals would result in inappropriate development in an area at high risk of flooding. (In fact, because of this, the Inspector concluded that the tilted balance would not be applicable to the proposal.)

viii) collectively the proposal and the approved development on the adjoining site (8-14) would have the potential to have a negative impact on the Biodiversity Opportunity Area due to the proximity of the rear buildings to the BOA and Engine River pond, with associated loss of sunlight, light pollution and loss of vegetation.

The Inspector concluded that the proposals conflict with all the following policies: CS1, CS3, CS14, CS15, CS17, CS19, CS21, CS26, DM1, DM2, DM5, DM6, the SPD objectives, paragraphs 119, 123, 124, 125, 130, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 166 and 174 of the Framework and paragraphs 023, 024, 027 and 028 of the PPG.

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7th November 2023