

Our reference: COM596076563

Application number: 2024/0189

Application address: Heath Buildings High Street Oxshott Leatherhead Surrey KT22 0JP

Name: Mrs Wheeler

Address: 4 Holtwood Road, Oxshott, Leatherhead, Surrey, KT22 0QJ

Comment type: You support the planning application

Date of comment: 15 Mar 2024

Comment: This building has improved its general street presence from previous plans. There is a limit as to how much a development can be reduced before it becomes too unprofitable to build.

I presume the plot has ownership of part of the pavement currently in front of Heath Buildings, hence the red line in the plans. If that is so, the current shops could have always been built out to the red line. That they weren't was fortuitous, so no one can really complain if the full depth of the plot is now utilised.

The ground floor shop fronts will therefore still intrude a small amount on what we residents have got used to being an overly large dirty pavement space. Whatever anyone says, it is rarely used now for gatherings except those arranged by the developer himself; the other frontage outside the cafe and deli and pub has been the focus for the last few village events. The parking layby on the High Street by the pavement enables the full depth of the remaining pavement to be used here too quite safely if wanted, especially if trees and other pavement furniture are more sensibly positioned.

The rest of the front facade of the proposed building is stepped back, which reduces the overbearing feeling that was a problem previously, yet the ground floor protrusion allows good sized shops, which is imperative for renting the retail space

There are very large overgrown conifer trees along the boundaries with the rear neighbours. Instead of being looked after to create a big tall dense hedge, they have been left to sprawl. Should branches overhanging the plot be removed to enable the build to take place it might look quite ugly from within the plot. Hence 7m tall Cypress hedging trees to mask this ugliness are to be planted in front of the boundary wall, which is itself in front of the current large coniferous trees. These new trees will struggle to thrive as the root zone of big conifers is large and soil water and nutrients will be a constant problem.

I hope they are Italianate and not a Leyland variety.

The top floor flat could overlook homes and gardens, which might be intrusive. And a balcony might create unwelcome noise. But I appreciate this flat would no doubt create the profit on the development.

I am not convinced the commercial bin stores nor the residential bins, even when moved to the side access alley on bin day, will be easily accessible by refuse vehicles. These will not have a turning facility within the access route and will have to reverse a long distance within narrow confines past a row of parked cars from or into the highway, which I think is against waste

collection regulations.

Due consideration has to be given to neighbours and other residents when creating such a change within the high street of a village but the alternative of permitted development, which doesn't require planning permission, could be much worse for everyone. It would also be an absolute eyesore, but would no doubt make a profit so is a valid fall back option for the developer. I suspect it could be made to look less awful than the drawings show. But even so, it would be a dreadful building and significantly worse than the proposed development.

On balance I support this development.