

Our reference: COM597264646

Application number: 2024/0189

Application address: Heath Buildings, High Street, Oxshott, Leatherhead, KT22 0JW

Name: Mr Hopper

Address: Sunridge Fair oak Lane, Oxshott, Leatherhead, Surrey, KT22 0TW

Comment type: You object to the planning application

Date of comment: 18 Mar 2024

Comment: The current 1970s-built Heath Buildings do not have any architectural merit nor are they compatible with other buildings in the village; so their demolition and replacement in my view is in principle perfectly acceptable. However:

1. When the developer initially sought pre-application advice (2022/1322) for a “Detached three-storey building with rooms in the roof space comprising 10 residential units and 4 commercial units with a partially subterranean basement area for car parking...,” Council officers advised that the Plans needed to be dramatically altered.

2. The developer then submitted Plans (2023/1026) which were substantially the same (just 1 residential unit had disappeared) as those which they had been told needed to be dramatically changed. The developer should not therefore have felt aggrieved when the Plans were rejected by the Planning Committee on the basis of: - excessive height, bulk and massing causing harm to the village street scene; and - a harmful loss of privacy due to the overbearing impact on neighbouring properties. I wholeheartedly supported that decision.

3. Nor does the latest iteration of the Plans appear to show any significant attempt to address these issues. As far as I can ascertain the main changes are: (i) the 2.5m ground level projections at the front of commercial units 2 and 3 have been pared back to align with commercial units 1 and

4. However, that has absolutely no bearing on the reasons for the Planning rejection since the floors above still project as far as the entrance lobby front; and (ii) the roof lines at the ends of the building have been made sleeker, but the overall height of the central part of the building is only a miniscule amount lower.

Since the developer has offered so little in the way of mitigation it seems to me that the Planning Committee has no rational choice other than to also reject this latest application. Then, I suppose, there will be an Appeal!

4. Apart from these main issues I am uneasy about the sale of pavement (up to the red line in the Plans) in front of Heath Buildings by (I believe) Elmbridge Council to the developer, if the Plans are approved. (i) I am somewhat surprised to find the Council having a commercial interest in the outcome of an application to its own Planning Dept. (ii) That pavement area may not be a village green but it is the nearest that Oxshott village has to an outdoor forum; and presumably it would become out of bounds other than to the new Heath Buildings residents and retail unit clients. (iii) The remaining pavement area between the red line (on the Plans) and the road, which would remain as public pavement, is not very wide (albeit no measurements are given), particularly near Braeside House. Undertakings should be required that the planned building could be constructed safely without at any time closing some or all of that pavement, which is an essential route to/from the zebra crossing, and also without needing at any times to block any of the A244?