

Our reference: COM600159335

Application number: 2024/0189

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

Name: Mrs Zabari

Address: 9 Crown Cottages, Steels Lane, Oxshott, Leatherhead, Surrey

Comment type: You object to the planning application

Date of comment: 27 Mar 2024

Comment: This is the 3rd time the developer has submitted plans (pre-application 2022 , formal application 2023). The plans now being reviewed are essentially the same namely a 4 level building which impacts significantly onto nearby properties and affects the pavement area directly in front of the building.

What isn't fully appreciated is that ground level in Midgarth is approximately one floor lower so the proposed building is effectively 5 storey when viewed from Midgarth.

At the pre-application stage the council said the excessive scale needed to be dramatically altered, however there was no material attempt to adjust the scale issue in the 2023 application.

I would strongly contend that the current application is still in breach of 2 key planning regulations namely :

- Excessive height, bulk and massing causing harm to the village street scene
- Harmful loss of privacy due to the overbearing impact on neighbouring properties

As a long term Oxshott resident I do accept that Heath Buildings is a tired building that would benefit from a considered renovation/redevelopment. But at present what is being proposed is at a scale not in keeping with our protected village street scene and creates unacceptable privacy issues.

Even after having earlier applications rejected by council officers and most recently by councillors the developer has chosen not to engage with residents about possible alternative design solutions and has actually suggested that should this scheme be rejected they would consider extending the current building upwards by a further 2 floors.

If the application goes ahead then the current rear parking for 8 vehicles would be lost and replaced with 10 spaces to support 9 flats (8@2 bed 1@3bed) and no spaces for retail staff (4 new units). In addition it would appear that retail deliveries would be made via the front lay-by. These changes will undoubtedly create extra pressure to nearby streets.

To facilitate the proposed underground car park there will need to be excavations below the current building foundations. We remain concerned that this will put at risk the adjoining trees that provide essential cover to the otherwise exposed North face of the building. To date the council's own tree officer has chosen not to visit the site which would provide a much needed independent assessment.

At present the developer has also not provided any plans as to how the construction activities will be managed to minimise impact to pedestrians and traffic movements through the village.

To date there has been no transparency regarding the sale of the required pavement area from Elmbridge to the developer. As seen from the earlier application comments residents do value this currently council owned space. The latest application still encroaches into the existing pavement area and I believe would adversely impact this public space.

At the planning Council meeting the chairman emphasised the economic benefit for the development. However to date no economic assessment has been provided. Indeed one could argue that reducing retail space by 36% (575m² to 370m²) and from 5 to 4 units would potentially reduce economic activity on the high street.