

Our reference: COM617791293

Application number: 2024/0189

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

Name: Ms Garnade

Address: 2 Heather Drive Lindford GU35 0RN

Comment type: You object to the planning application

Date of comment: 27 May 2024

Comment: I have spent a lot of pleasurable and memorable times in Oxshott, and I find this 'new' application to have no merit for the village whatsoever.

This is the third time that this development has been proposed, and the second time a knowledgeable Planning Committee has quite rightly refused it. It is clear that the Developers have completely ignored ideas from both the current residents of Oxshott, those who have lived in and visit the village, together with the Elmbridge Planning Committee plus the lead Planning Officer at Elmbridge Council. Clear reasons were given for rejection both last time and the previous two times, but the Developers have chosen to totally ignore the very valid reasons for rejection. This applies not only for this application 2024/1089, but also 2023/1026; which then raises the question of why public resources are being used to try and force through this inappropriate (for Oxshott) development to be 'recycled' and foisted upon the residents.

I would argue that with Council finances in a critical state, as they are all over the country, there comes a point where the Lead Planning Officer's recommendation of "no" should mean "no". I feel time and money could be better spent on projects that meet the needs of the community.

As a visitor to Oxshott for more than 20 years, I want to repeat my position on the current proposal: Whilst I am supportive of efforts to upgrade the appearance of the current building, I object to the recent proposals on the following grounds:

The 'gross' style of the proposed development will significantly disrupt the residential character of the village, which many in the area are keen to maintain.

The planned encroachment on the existing open space in front of the buildings will impair pedestrian safety even more than is currently the case, particularly for wheelchair and pushchair users.

The scale of the proposed development is excessive and will dwarf the surrounding buildings. Extending the height of the building will turn the high street into a stream of traffic squeezed into an increasingly smaller area. This despite the recent designation - but not enforcement of - the road as a 20mph zone.

Preserving the trees and plants which surround the existing building, and especially Midgarth Close, should be a priority; especially also due to the known flood risks down Oakshade road, caused by numerous recent developments. The council will have extensive records and external invoices validating this fact.

Increasing the residential capacity of the property will lead to an increase in road traffic and cars associated with the property. The proposed parking arrangements will remain insufficient, which will lead to additional traffic chaos in Oakshade and Silverdale roads plus the A244 in front of Heath Buildings themselves. These areas are already congested and dangerous due to the location of three schools in the area, none of which are served by buses given the age of the children. Since the last time this proposal was raised, a speed limit of 20mph has been introduced in the area – further proof of the risk of death/injury on the local road.

The likelihood of the basement development causing subsidence and other threats to the structural integrity of surrounding buildings is very high. In addition, the schematic in the revised (latest) proposal is incorrect in that the tree at No 3 Midgarth Close is at least 2 metres lower than shown, and the 'radar' survey is inaccurate. Excavation WILL affect the roots and the TPO'd trees at No 3 Midgarth Close are very likely to die as a result.

Losing the four car spaces in front of the current building will have a negative impact on the shops in the village, with passing cars much more likely to drive on through to either Cobham or Ashted for a coffee break, to pick up a prescription or to visit a local store.

The scale of the proposed development (e.g. groundwork and subsequent construction) is likely to disrupt traffic on the A244, Oakshade Road and Steels Lane, both significantly at the time of the proposed works and probably for an extended period. The Council holds extensive evidence of the level of through-traffic resulting from incidents on the M25; a problem which does not need further exacerbation.

The Council also has evidence of vermin infestations caused by similar developments at the top of Oakshade Road: a phenomenon which is likely to occur again should a development of this scale proceed.

It feel it would be far better to re-develop the building in a tasteful way, in line with the image of a village, and I believe the residents would appreciate this. It seems that no effort has been made to re-think the project and take local residents' opinions into account. I therefore strongly urge you to reject this proposal once again.