

PLANNING REF : 243125
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 7 Remenham Row
: Wargrave Road, Henley-On-Thames, Berkshire
: RG9 2LQ
SUBMITTED BY : Mrs Margaret Johnson
DATE SUBMITTED : 09/02/2025

COMMENTS:

Remenahm Row and its neighbouring property, Thamesfield Retirement Village, sit quietly on the North East bank of the River Thames, on the Berkshire side, facing the historic town of Henley-on-Thames in Oxfordshire. Not far away is the Grade I listed historic stone bridge and the medieval church of St Mary's dating back to 13th century. Both properties fall within the Conservation Area: an area of special architectural and historic interest, so deemed to be considered worthy of preservation or enhancement.

With this in mind, I object strongly to the planning application made by Retirement Villages Group (RVG) to demolish a single-storey wing of their existing retirement village and replace it with a three-storey building.

Outlined below are reasons for my objection to the RVG planning proposal, a major application:

?The mass and bulk of the proposal would have a detrimental impact on outlook of the adjacent properties. It would reduce the sunlight reaching the neighbouring properties at Remenham Row significantly. It would also shade out their front gardens.

?The proposal would greatly infringe on the privacy of the properties at Remenham Row, mainly Nos 1-5, but also on the communal amenities of the estate. The three-storey RVG proposal includes windows and balconies that directly look into bedrooms, bathrooms and living rooms of the neighbouring houses. This would be an unacceptable intrusion on their privacy, where currently there is none.

?R16 of the Borough Design Guide states that, for schemes over two stories high, the separation distance is 30 metres. The actual separation is only 20 metres. This is only two-thirds of the requirement. The existing building barely shows itself above the boundary wall and does not dominate the outlook. A three-storey replacement with balconies facing directly at the front of properties 1-5 Remenham Row would be very detrimental to their outlook. The resulting loss of privacy would detract from the amenities currently enjoyed by these houses and from the users of the communal grounds.

?The proposed building is not in keeping with the existing building or its surroundings. The proposed use of materials and the bulk and scale of the building would make it unsightly from both sides of the river. This is an important part of the scenery from the historic town of Henley, its footpath along the river and from the waterway itself.

?The design does not consider the scale; bulk; mass; height and density of the proposed development, in relation to its immediate

neighbours and to the surrounding environment. It is not an enhancement of the local architecture and does nothing to protect the look of the Conservation Area that it is situated within. The detrimental effect of the proposed development to the amenities of the adjacent houses at Remenham Row have been completely ignored.

?RVG failed to follow The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) by not engaging with the local community at the early stage of planning and when shaping its proposals. This should not have been the case with such a major application within the Conservation Area. It seems there was minimal effort by RVG to alert Remenham Row residents of the Consultation Meeting they held at Thamesfield Retirement Village on 16th October 2024. By chance, a resident was informed of the meeting indirectly two days prior to the event. As a result, many residents were not able to attend. Those that did attend did not get satisfactory responses when raising their concerns. At the following meeting at Remenham Parish Hall on 9th December 2024, a presentation was given by architect Jack Sterling, representing RVG. He came without basic crucial information, further showing the company's lack of empathy towards the valid concerns of those most affected by its proposals.

?I would question the need for such an extensive development while many of the existing properties at Thamesfield Retirement Village are not occupied. Likewise, there are other similar facilities in Henley, for example, McCarthy & Stone at Albert Court, some of which have not been sold since being built in 2018.

?Although this application is based in Berkshire, under Wokingham Borough Council, its mass and scale will greatly affect the outlook from the neighbouring town of Henley-on-Thames in Oxfordshire.