



Development Control
Wokingham Borough Council

20.07.26

(by email only)

AM2P Ref: J.183
LPA Ref: 261403

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Prior Approval Application 261403 @ Atlanta, Wargrave Road, Remenham

I write in order to object to the above application on behalf of Remenham Parish Council. It is noted that the application is a Prior Approval scheme relating to Part 1, Class AA (b) of the GPDO, which allows for the introduction of an additional storey to existing dwellings, subject to various criteria/conditions being adhered to.

The site has a considerable and complex planning history, including Enforcement action. It is considered that Officers at the Council will be best placed to assess whether the Applicant is correct to suggest that the Council were wrong to apply an informative to consent under application 233177, advising that the dwelling on site does not benefit from permitted development rights. If the Council were correct, and the dwelling in question does not benefit from permitted development rights, then the current Prior Approval Application must clearly fail – because the dwelling does not benefit from the rights that the current Application claims. If the Council were wrong to apply such an informative, then the below should be taken into account.

One of the conditions of the Prior Approval, at AA.2(3), requires that;

- (a) before beginning the development, the developer must apply to the local planning authority for prior approval as to—*
 - (i) impact on the amenity of any adjoining premises including overlooking, privacy and the loss of light;*
 - (ii) the external appearance of the dwellinghouse, including the design and architectural features of—*
 - (aa) the principal elevation of the dwellinghouse, and*
 - (bb) any side elevation of the dwellinghouse that fronts a highway;*

In this case, it is strongly considered that the external appearance of the dwellinghouse is unacceptable for a number of reasons as follows;

The siting of the dwellinghouse is unusual, in that the proposed works will be prominent from both the highway to the north and the River Thames, and public footpath beyond, to the south. It is noted that the Applicants have titled the river facing elevation as the dwellinghouse's 'Front Elevation' and referred to the elevation that is directly adjacent to

the highway as the 'Rear Elevation'. The wording of criterion(ii) of condition AA.2(3) includes reference to the principal elevation, but this is not considered to exclude consideration of other elevations if they are relevant with regards the external appearance of the building. As a result, it is considered helpful to consider both the front and rear elevations of the building in this instance, given the unusual siting of the dwellinghouse, and public views of it.

When assessing the appearance of the proposed additional storey from the highway, the fundamental impact will be that at present the single storey building is not overly prominent above the fenceline. The addition of an additional storey will completely change this. The resulting two storey dwelling will be very obvious and given the fact it is tight against the highway boundary there is no opportunity for any intervening planting or set back to soften the visual impact. If the surrounding environment consisted of other two storey dwellings tight against the boundary, then such a proposal might be appropriate in its surroundings. But it quite clearly does not. This stretch of Wargrave Rd is characterised by single storey buildings, some dwellings, some leisure plots. As one approaches Henely to the west, there are some taller structures, but these are set back notably from the highway, with intervening planting minimising their impact.

The addition of an extra storey to this dwelling in this location, given its immediate and apparent relationship with the public highway, and surrounding character, will detract from the sylvan character of this part of Wargrave Road. This detrimental impact is all the more relevant given the Green Belt location of the site, and associated loss of openness, meaning conflict with the NPPF and the Development Plan. As confirmed in *R (oao Patel) v SSCLG & Johal & Wandsworth BC* [2016], development plan policies may be relevant in prior approval cases, but only insofar as they relate to the matters, and only as evidence to support the planning decision. The appearance of the dwellinghouse is clearly one of the matters that needs to be assessed in this instance.

The detailed design of the scheme also causes great concern. There is no architectural quality to the proposed first floor, which will be very apparent from the street, unlike the existing building. It will appear as a low-quality commercial structure, completely out of context with the surroundings.

The above concerns are similarly applicable when the property is viewed from the Thames, and the public footpath that runs to the south of it. The addition of a first floor will detract from what is quite a unique and attractive riverside environment. Whilst properties do vary in size and appearance, they are typically of a small historic form, single storey in scale, or in some instances there are examples of more modern, larger redevelopments, that demonstrate strong architectural features. The proposed introduction of a first floor to Atlanta, will not fall into either category. The doubling of its height will make it more apparent in the public views, but the lack of quality will detract from the contribution it makes to the local environment.

It is acknowledged that a replacement dwelling has been approved on site under reference 233172, but this will be notably smaller than that now proposed in terms of height and will also offer a more attractive design.

Finally, a FRA is submitted in support of the application. This correctly recognises that a Sequential Test is necessary for the resulting 3 bedroom property, as a result of the high risk of fluvial flooding. However, the FRA suggests that a Sequential Test, assessing alternative less likely to flood sites, can't be undertaken in this instance because the extension has to occur on this site. Would it not be feasible for the Applicants to identify

an alternative 3-bedroom property in a location that is less likely to flood, of which there will be many?

The FRA, when referring to the Exception Test, talks about the proposal as a 'sports centre building', and at 8.3.2 comments that 'there will be no habitable rooms/bedrooms on the ground floor', which is clearly not the case, with a large lounge/kitchen/dining area occupying the ground floor. Such mistakes question how much weight should be given to the document.

For the above reasons, it has been explained that the proposed additional storey will not satisfy the stated conditions set out under Part 1, Class AA (b) of the GPDO, most notably that the proposal will have an unacceptable external appearance in terms of its detailed design, and impact upon the local environment. The application should be 'Disapproved' accordingly.

Yours sincerely,



Andy Meader BSc Hons Dip TP MRTPI

Director

andy.meader@am2planning.co.uk