

OBJECTION TO PLANNING APPLICATION 253113

Dear Sir/Madam,

As the resident of a neighbouring property at 17 Nursery Gardens, I am writing to object to planning application 253113 on the following material planning grounds.

I should make clear at the outset that I am not opposed in principle to the redevelopment of this site. The existing cottage has been allowed to deteriorate into a poor state of repair and the site would benefit from sympathetic redevelopment. However, the current proposals are grossly excessive in scale, completely inappropriate for this Area of Special Character, and the proposed garage with accommodation above is a much more significant structure than implied and would cause severe and wholly unacceptable harm to my residential amenity.

OBJECTIONS TO THE PROPOSED GARAGE WITH ACCOMMODATION ABOVE

The planning application is incorrect, misleading, and inconsiderate of the impact on our property at 17 Nursery Gardens. In paragraph 5.41 of the Planning, Design & Access Statement it quotes “whilst the proposed garage would have some potential visibility from the rear boundary of No.17, its single storey height and overall scale would be as a typical incidental residential outbuilding.....”. There would be **highly significant** (not ‘potential’) visibility from our rear boundary, given it’s approximately 6m height in close proximity to our boundary – see image below for illustration of the current view from our house in the direction of the location of the proposed garage (note: this shows the existing garage to the left to give context with the new proposed garage approximately 3m higher).



It is also misleading to describe this as a car port or garage as the accommodation above has a significant impact on the height of the building – it is approximately the height of the guttering in our 2 storey house. This statement also does not seem to consider that there is already significant outbuildings and garaging, not just to the rear of our property but also on the end of the existing commercial office buildings.

Dramatic and Unjustified Increase in Height and Impact

The site currently has a garage structure approximately 3 metres in height. The elevation drawings show the proposed additional car port with accommodation above would be approximately **6 metres high - double the existing height**. This dramatic escalation in scale at just 2 metres from my boundary would transform the impact on my amenity from tolerable to wholly unacceptable.

The existing 3-metre garage demonstrates that adequate vehicle storage can be provided at a much more appropriate scale. **There is no justification for doubling the height** other than to create additional residential accommodation - which intensifies the use of the site beyond what is appropriate for this location and seems wholly unnecessary given the size of the proposed house and existing extensive outbuildings.

Exceptionally Severe Loss of Amenity - Overshadowing and Loss of Light

Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy for new development includes for 'without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life'.

The proposed garage with accommodation above is positioned just 2 metres from my boundary fence and **runs approximately half the length of my garden. At 6 metres in height - double the existing 3 metres** - this represents a fundamental transformation in the impact on my property.

Comparison of impact:

- **Existing situation:** 3-metre high garage - tolerable impact
- **Proposed situation:** 6-metre high structure - devastating impact on light and amenity

My garden currently benefits from reasonable light levels despite the existing 3-metre garage. The proposed 6-metre high structure would cast enormous shadows across my **outdoor space, doubling the depth and extent of overshadowing**. It would block all direct sunlight into my garden from late afternoon, clearly having a detrimental affect on the quality of our lives and rendering our sunlit later afternoon/evening patio including dining area & garden cold and dark.

The proposed planting of two new trees to the end of our garden and our neighbours at number 16 would further overshadow the garden is a further blow and one we are struggling to accept.

This would transform my south-facing garden from a usable amenity space into a dark, overshadowed area dominated by a looming, effective two-storey structure. **The doubling of height would more than double the impact on my amenity.**

Wholly Unacceptable Overbearing and Oppressive Impact

Currently: The 3-metre garage, while adjacent to my boundary, is single-storey and creates a tolerable visual impact.

Proposed: A 6-metre high, two-storey structure - double the existing height - would create an utterly overwhelming and oppressive presence running a significant length of my garden at just 2 metres distance.

In the space next to the existing garage I would go from having nothing in close proximity to a 6-metre two-storey building - fundamentally transforming the character and usability of my outdoor space. No neighbour should be expected to tolerate a 6-metre-high building running for a significant length of their garden at a distance of 2 metres.

Breach of Separation Distances and Privacy Concerns

A 6-metre high structure with accommodation above is not a simple garage - it is effectively residential accommodation. At just 2 metres from my boundary, this is grossly inadequate separation for habitable accommodation and raises serious concerns about overlooking and loss of privacy to my garden.

Disproportionate and Unjustified Escalation

The proposal represents an unjustified escalation from existing conditions:

- **Dwelling size:** 180 sq m → 580 sq m (+222% - more than triple)
- **Garage height:** 3m → 6m (+100% - double)

Add to this the significant amount of parking – new area in front of the house, existing garage that seems sized for 3 vehicles, significant existing hard standing.

This demonstrates a pattern of gross overdevelopment and excessive intensification across the entire site without adequate regard for impact on neighbours or appropriateness for this Area of Special Character.

Impact on Parakeets

A tree that the applicant proposes to remove is home to parakeets. I am concerned that:

- No ecological survey or assessment appears to log this concern
- The development may harm protected species or their habitats

AREA OF SPECIAL CHARACTER - SERIOUS POLICY BREACH

Wholly Inappropriate Development in Area of Special Character

This site lies within an Area of Special Character. The excessive scale of both the proposed dwelling and the 6-metre high garage/accommodation building is completely inappropriate for this designated area.

The proposal to increase the dwelling from 180 square metres to 580 square metres - **more than three times the existing size** - combined with a substantial two-storey garage/accommodation building, double the height of existing and remaining garaging and running a significant proportion of the length of neighbouring garden boundaries, represents gross overdevelopment that is wholly out of character with this sensitive designated location.

Areas of Special Character are designated precisely to protect the existing scale, pattern and character of development from inappropriate intensification. This proposal would cause **significant and demonstrable harm** to the special characteristics that justify the designation.

Excessive Height and Massing in Designated Area

The proposed dwelling would exceed the height of all neighbouring properties within this Area of Special Character. Combined with a 6-metre high outbuilding, the overall massing and scale of development would be unduly prominent, dominant and severely harmful to the special character that the designation seeks to protect.

OBJECTIONS TO SCALE OF MAIN DWELLING

Gross Overdevelopment of Plot

The proposed dwelling represents gross overdevelopment, increasing from 180 square metres to 580 square metres - **more than three times the current size**. This quantum of development is:

- Completely out of keeping with the scale of properties in the immediate vicinity
- Wholly inappropriate for an Area of Special Character
- Grossly excessive and disproportionate for the plot size
- Harmful to the established pattern of development

Excessive Height

The proposed dwelling would exceed the height of all neighbouring properties, making it unduly prominent and dominant within the street scene and harmful to the established character of the area.

DRAINAGE AND FLOODING CONCERNS

Serious Surface Water Drainage Issues

The site and surrounding properties are built on heavy clay soil, which has very poor drainage characteristics. Demonstrated by our garden at 17 nursery gardens flooding in heavy rain. The proposed development would dramatically increase impermeable hard surfacing through:

- A dwelling more than three times the existing size (580 sq m vs 180 sq m)
- A substantial 6-metre high garage/accommodation building with large footprint
- Associated hardstanding, driveways and extensive parking areas

This substantial increase in hard surfacing would generate significantly increased surface water runoff. Given the heavy clay soil conditions, this additional runoff could severely exacerbate drainage and flooding issues affecting my property and neighbouring properties.

The application does not appear to adequately address how surface water drainage will be managed, particularly given the clay soil conditions and the substantial increase in impermeable surfaces.

Other usage of the property

The property is currently used in what seems to be as a commercial/business office for the large buildings that already exist.

The application notes there is no previous planning history, which makes it unclear as to its current and future use. Given the extensive hardstanding, additional parking to the front of the proposed property, extensive existing garaging (on the end of the office building and directly to the rear of our property), and the new garage/car port proposed this would seem excessive for residential use.

As this is an application for residential redevelopment, clarity is requested on whether this will remain as a business office usage as well as residential going forward.

CONCLUSION

For the reasons outlined above, I **respectfully request that this application be refused.**

The proposed development is fundamentally unacceptable:

1. **Grossly excessive impact on residential amenity** - A 6-metre high structure (double the existing 3m garage) running a significant length of my garden at 2m distance plus the additional trees being planted equates to about 80% of our garden and would cause devastating loss of light and severe overbearing impact that no neighbour could reasonably be expected to tolerate
2. **Gross overdevelopment** - 580 sq m dwelling (more than triple the existing 180 sq m) plus 6m high outbuilding represents extreme over-intensification
3. **Wholly inappropriate for Area of Special Character** - Scale, height and massing cause demonstrable harm to the designated area
4. **Inadequate drainage provision** - Serious concerns about surface water management on clay soil given the massive increase in hard surfacing
5. **Breach of residential amenity standards** - 2m separation for a 6m habitable structure, in our area, is grossly inadequate
6. **Existing planning permission** – One of the documents we have read said they have never submitted planning permission before from this address which surprises us as the current garage they have on the premises is very close to our boundary which we would have expected planning permission was required for.

I support the principle of redeveloping this derelict site, but the current proposals bear no relationship to what would be appropriate. A development of approximately 250-300 square metres, with height no greater than neighbouring properties, and **with any garage limited to single-storey (maximum 3m) and positioned minimum 5 metres**

from boundaries, would provide appropriate redevelopment whilst respecting the Area of Special Character and neighbouring amenity.

Should the planning authority be minded to approve this application despite these fundamental objections, I strongly request:

1. **Referral to Planning Committee** - This application raises such serious amenity and policy concerns that it must be determined by elected members, not under delegated powers
2. **Mandatory conditions requiring:**
 - Removal of accommodation above garage, limiting it to single-storey maximum 3 metres height
 - Garage repositioned minimum 5 metres from all boundaries
 - Dwelling size reduced to maximum 300 square metres
 - Height reduced to no higher than neighbouring properties
 - Comprehensive sustainable drainage scheme independently verified

I request that I am kept fully informed of the progress of this application and notified of any Planning Committee date.

Yours faithfully,

Phil & Clare Austin

17 Nursery Gardens, RG10 0GN