

PLANNING REF : 243125
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 3 Remenham Row
: Wargrave Road, Henley-On-Thames
: RG9 2LQ
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Geoffrey Snell
DATE SUBMITTED : 02/02/2025

COMMENTS:

I wish to formally object to the proposed redevelopment of Thamesfield Retirement Village.

The mass bulk of the proposed three storey building which would replace a single storey building would have a major impact on the Remenham Row estate, and dominate property numbers 1-5, where a three storey building will lead to a major loss of privacy, light and view. The proposal includes windows and balconies directly facing these properties, which would look directly into bedrooms, bathrooms and living rooms. The overlooking concerns are serious as the proximity of the proposed structure will encroach on the personal space of residents, negatively affecting their quality of life.

The Remenham Row properties are 16.6 metres from the boundary wall separated by gardens. The planning application suggests that the new building would be set back from the boundary wall, which may be true in some places, however at the point at which it would be directly opposite my property (number 3) it is actually five metres closer!

Retirement Villages Group (RVG) have admitted that it would be impossible to carry out extra planting to screen the proposed building as it is too close to the boundary wall.

RVG also suggest that impact on light "will not be noticeable by the occupants" and yet in the report "Daylight and Sunlight - Impact on Neighbouring Properties Report" it acknowledges that the Annual Probable Sunlight Hours for numbers 1 - 4 Remenham Row will reduce by approximately 20 - 26% in the winter months. Common sense alone says that a three storey building replacing a single storey building must have an impact on light, as the sun will rise in no different way! Not only will my property be impacted by the reduction in light, but also the gardens to the front. All of these issues will inevitably have an impact on property prices at Remenham Row.

The proposed building is not in keeping with the Remenham Row estate whether it is partially of red brick or not and certainly out of character with the other Thamesfield buildings, most particularly the original "white building". Where the proposed building adjoins this "white building" it is higher and will be visible from the river and the opposite river bank. The style of the building and materials suggested are not in keeping with the general Henley architecture

despite RVG's assertion in their proposal by providing a few carefully chosen photographs of red brick buildings in Henley. Certainly the style of building and the use of grey ceramic cladding does not feature in Henley and certainly does not blend with the Thamesfield existing buildings, nor the neighbouring Remenham Row estate.

Again, RVG have used some carefully selected photographs to suggest

that trees hide the proposed building where it adjoins the existing "white building" when looking across the river from the opposite bank. Walk a few paces along from where the photograph was taken and the new building would be completely visible as it would be higher and protrudes to the left of the "white building". Also, the trees lose their leaves.

I would suggest that a building of this nature is totally out of keeping with the vernacular of Henley, sitting in a Conservation Area and Green Belt Area, which in itself should be sufficient grounds to reject the application.

It is interesting to note that a third planning application to develop Hallmark House in Station Road, Henley, by the Hub Management Company, to add Juliet balconies to their proposal was rejected by South Oxfordshire District Council for a number of reasons. However, the specific reason regarding the balconies as reported in the Henley Standard was:- "The Juliet balconies proposed to be added to the rear elevation, facing northeast, would create an unacceptable relationship to the neighbouring properties to the north, as well as the closest properties in Hewgate Court. As such, the proposed development fails to protect the amenity of neighbouring residents."

Given that there is a greater distance between Hallmark House and Hewgate Court, including a road, suggests that the main principal of privacy surely applies even more clearly to the impact on Remenham Row by the proposed Thamesfield redevelopment, where the distance between the proposed three storey building and Remenham Row properties would be much less. Additionally, full balconies as proposed by RVG would be far more intrusive than Juliet balconies.

I would like to comment on RVG's "Statement of Community Engagement".

I, as with all of the other residents of Remenham Row, did not receive the leaflet informing of the Consultation Meeting on the 16th October 2024. I was only aware of this meeting two days before the event as another resident at Remenham Row had been informed by a Thamesfield Village resident. RVG were only aware when the issue was raised by Remenham Row residents at the Consultation Meeting. It is quite incorrect to suggest that RVG knew that the reason they were not delivered was that the postal handler had told them they could not access Remenham Row due to the locked gate. This is not true as it was myself who suggested at the Consultation Event that this may have been the case. I fail to understand why RVG did not check that their closest neighbour, and the only ones to be directly impacted, had received invitations. To suggest that the letter of invitation sent to Cognatum (Remenham Row Management Company) was not passed to residents due to a change in Estate (Property) Manager is completely incorrect, a fact which is known by RVG. The letter was sent by email to Cognatum head office but was directed to an incorrect email address. Why did RVG not ensure the correct point of contact by making a telephone call to the Cognatum head office? I believe all of this shows a total disregard for their closest neighbours, Remenham Row.

At the Consultation Event simple questions were asked of RVG representatives which they were unable to answer. For example, the architect present could not answer "how high will the three storey building be?" This did not appear to be a well prepared event, but merely a "tick box" exercise.

Of all the comments returned after the Consultation Event, using the feedback form provided online by RVG, absolutely no changes have been made to the proposal prior to the planning application being submitted. Are they really listening? Another "tick box" exercise?

RVG were invited to present their planning proposal at the Remenham Parish Council (RPC) Meeting on the 9th December 2024. RPC asked for any questions from Remenham Row residents to be forwarded to them in advance of the meeting to allow them to be passed to RVG in sufficient time for them to formulate their responses. The RVG representative knew nothing about the questions, so could not give responses. Responses were received in a letter dated the 12th December sent by email. It is interesting to note that the planning application was submitted on the 6th December 2024, prior to the RPC meeting. Another example of a completely dismissive attitude by RVG, not just to its closest neighbours but also RPC. Following this letter the residents of Remenham Row requested (on the 15th December 2024) that RVG provide an artist's impression of the three storey building looking at it from properties 1-5 Remenham Row. No response, other than an acknowledgement of receipt was received, so this was chased up on 18th January 2025 with a response finally received on the 24th January 2025 to say "we are unable to provide additional artist's impressions from the perspective of Remenham Row". Again no interest in helping its closest and most impacted neighbours to understand the full extent of this proposal. However, plenty of nice artist's impressions in the planning application several, of course, which one could suggest are misleading to hide the true impact.

I would very much welcome Wokingham Borough Council Planners to visit Remenham Row to see the direct impact at first hand.