

PLANNING REF : 243125
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 27 Perpetual House
: Station Road, Henley-On-Thames, Oxfordshire
: RG91AF
SUBMITTED BY : Mrs Veronica Carlton
DATE SUBMITTED : 14/10/2025

COMMENTS:

I am writing as a local resident of Henley-on-Thames to object to the amended planning application for the redevelopment of the existing retirement home at Thamesfield Retirement Village. Whilst I am not an immediate neighbour to the site, I am familiar with the area and concerned about the wider impacts this proposal would have on the character of the locality including its impact on views of Henley from across the river, the openness of the Green Belt, and on road safety and parking pressures along Wargrave Road.

Having reviewed the latest amendments, I do not believe they adequately address the key concerns raised previously by myself, Remenham Parish Council, or other residents. My principal objections are summarised below.

1. Design and Scale of Development

The proposal remains excessive in both scale and massing for its location. Despite minor design amendments, it continues to disregard the character of the surrounding area and the sensitive riverside and Green Belt setting. The increase in building size over six times larger than the original represents a disproportionate expansion that would fundamentally alter the appearance of the site.

This conflicts with Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy, which requires development to be of high quality and to respect local character, and Policy CP11, which restricts inappropriate expansion in the countryside.

The visual impact from the river and other public viewpoints would be considerable, resulting in a clear loss of openness and rural character both defining features of this part of Henley-on-Thames.

The applicant's claim that replacing balconies with dormer windows reduces the height from three storeys to "two and a half" is misleading. The overall ridge height, bulk, and mass remain very unchanged, as do the visual, overlooking, and loss of light impacts on neighbouring properties. The proposal continues to appear as a full three-storey structure in both form and effect, and therefore does not meaningfully mitigate the concerns raised in earlier submissions.

2. Green Belt Impact

The site lies within the designated Green Belt, where the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) strictly limits inappropriate development. The proposal constitutes a substantial and disproportionate extension of the existing building and therefore fails to meet the Green Belt exceptions outlined in paragraph 154(c) of the NPPF.

The increased bulk and footprint would erode openness and encroach upon the countryside, directly undermining the fundamental purposes of Green Belt designation namely, to prevent urban sprawl and safeguard the countryside from encroachment.

3. Cross-Boundary Considerations

Given the site's proximity to the River Thames and its visual and environmental relationship with Henley-on-Thames, this development would have a clear and noticeable impact on views and character from the South Oxfordshire side of the river.

South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) has consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to ensuring that development does not adversely affect the setting of Henley or the river corridor. It would therefore be appropriate for SODC to be formally consulted on this application, given its cross-boundary implications. Their input should be sought before any determination is made to ensure a coordinated planning approach that safeguards the setting and visual character of Henley-on-Thames.

4. Cumulative and Community Impact

Beyond the technical planning issues, there is a broader concern that large-scale redevelopment of this kind risks eroding the semi-rural and low-density character that defines this area. Local residents greatly value the open, green setting along the river, and developments of this magnitude would fundamentally alter that balance.

Such cumulative change would have lasting consequences for the distinct landscape and townscape qualities that contribute so strongly to Henley's identity and appeal.

In summary, the amended application remains inappropriate in scale, form, and location. It fails to address the substantive issues previously identified in relation to design, Green Belt policy, and the cumulative impact on local character. For these reasons, I respectfully request that this application be refused.