



16th December 2024

To all Members of Cheltenham Borough Council Planning Committee
By email

Dear Councillor

Land at Coltham Fields
Proposed self-build dwelling
Application 24/01730/FUL

Prior to your site visit tomorrow, and in advance of the committee meeting on Thursday, we wish to cover some important points below, using images, which it is difficult to do during the 5-minute slot for speaking.

The recommendation proposes two reasons for refusal. The second is a technical matter. This is easily resolved by a legal agreement which, in the event you are minded to approve, will also cover the relationship between self-build and BNG.

As far as reason 1 is concerned, the report suggests a few things, including:

- That the proposal is little different in scale, height and mass etc from the scheme dismissed at appeal
- That the appearance (design) is harmful to the street scene and unacceptable – reference is made to a run of blank wall
- That the living conditions for future occupiers is not acceptable due to the type of amenity space provided

With reference to objective evidence and measurements, we show below that we don't believe the harm officers say arises actually occurs; and the proposed dwelling is just as appropriate as the approved dwelling. If anything, this is a subjective design judgement, as opposed to there being anything specifically 'wrong' or unacceptable with the proposal.

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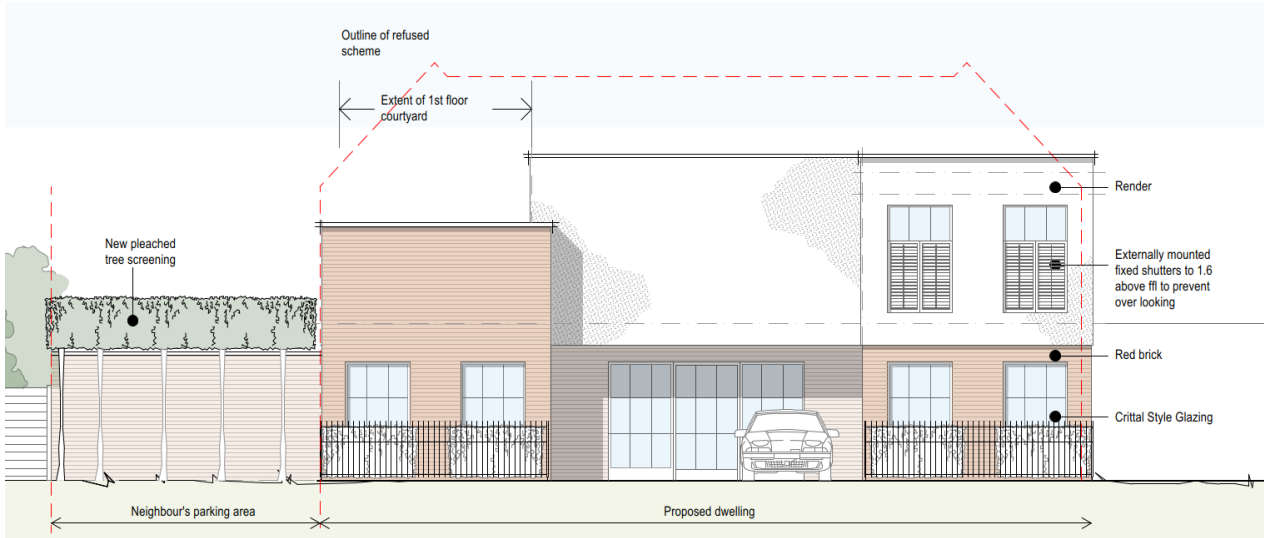
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REGISTERED NO: ENGLAND 06114677

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Firstly, the current scheme is compared with the refusal on the extract below. This shows how the dismissed scheme is considerably taller and much more bulky than the current application, and so has greater mass too.

In places the current application is 2.7 metres lower than the refusal. It is also lower (by between 1.2 and 0.3 metres) than the approved dwelling, the front elevation of which is also shown over the page for reference.



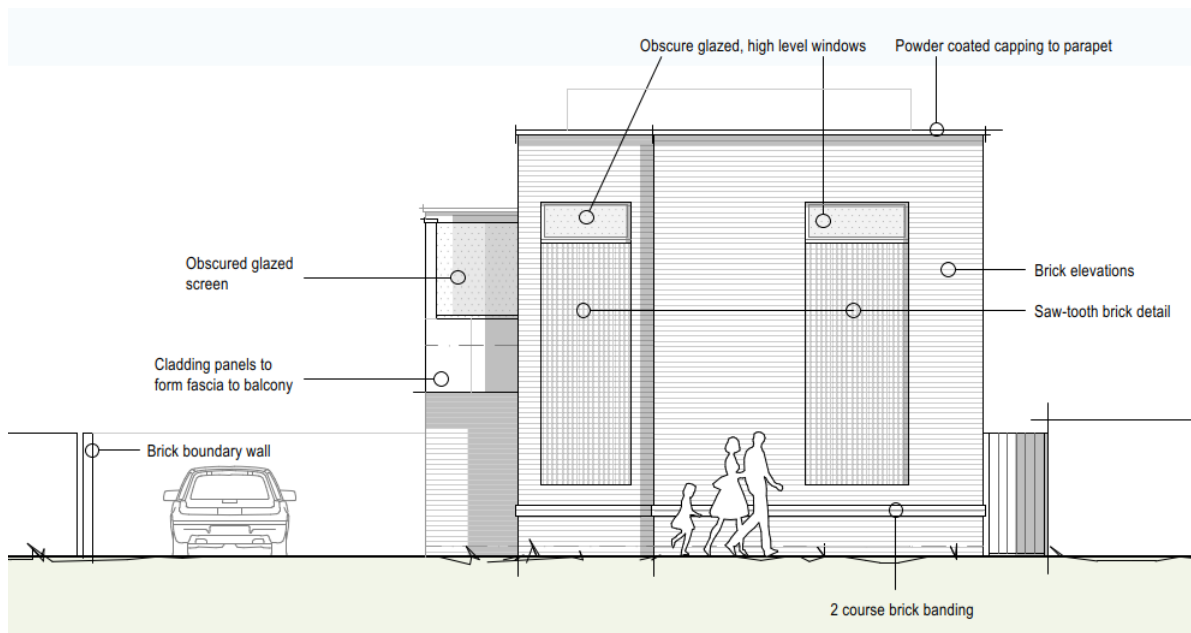
Extract of proposed front elevation (not to scale)

Yes, the Inspector dismissed the scheme outlined red above and shown below. The proposal though has been amended significantly since then and we feel it is an unfair comparison to suggest that the two schemes are the same and so have the same impacts. The dismissed scheme for example had 3 floors of accommodation and a more traditional design (see below). The current proposal (above) has 2 floors with a contemporary and clearly stepped height across the plot.



Extract of refused front elevation (not to scale)

Whilst approved, (as shown below) the design now proposed could be considered preferable. For example, one might argue there is a greater amount of relief and interest to the proposed front elevation than the approved front elevation.



Extract of approved front elevation (not to scale)

The proposal does occupy the width of the plot. The location plan below though, and as you will hopefully see on site, shows there are dozens of dwellings locally (shaded green), including numerous along Coltham Fields itself, that also occupy the full width of their plot. This is therefore not uncommon in the immediate vicinity.



Extract of location plan showing dwellings locally that fill the width of their plots (not to scale)

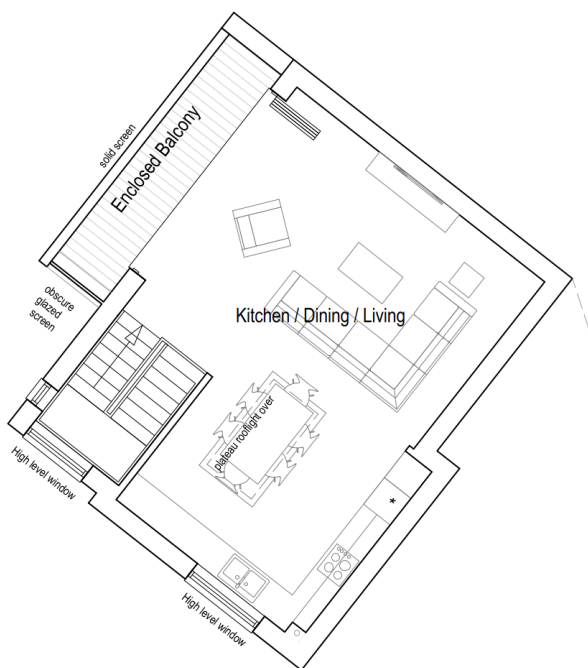
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In terms of private amenity space, the approved dwelling had a very small, enclosed patio area to one of the ground floor bedrooms, and an enclosed raised terrace of 11.4 square metres, shown in the extract below.

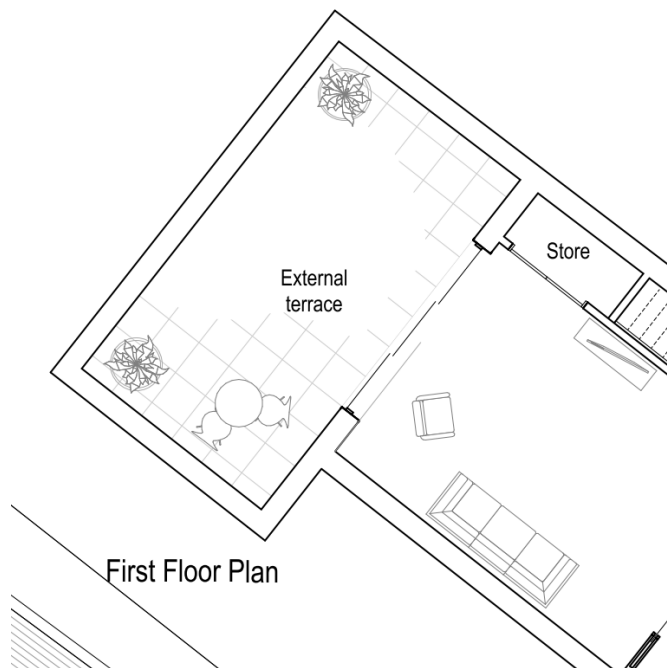
On the other hand, the proposal provides a far larger raised amenity space of 23.7 square metres, also as shown below.

Yes, the proposed amenity space is enclosed; but the approved much smaller space is also enclosed. If the smaller, equally enclosed space was acceptable, the same should apply to a similar space more than double the size. The arrangement is also essentially very similar to dwellings in urban streets up and down the land, where a small rear courtyard is enclosed by 1.8 metre walls/fences on all sides.

The site visit will reveal to you many dwellings in this street, and elsewhere nearby, that have small private amenity spaces; such that the proposal is not unusual or out of place in this regard.



Plan extract showing approved amenity area



Plan extract of proposed amenity area (both not to scale)

There are some other matters the applicant wishes to convey, which can be done when presenting to you on Thursday more easily than the above.

We are grateful to you for taking the time to read this letter and hope it assists you in your considerations.

Yours faithfully

Simon Firkins
SF Planning Limited