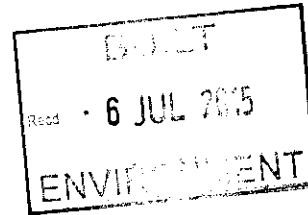


TOM WILLIAMS

The Acorns, Gloucester Road, Cheltenham, GL51 7TA

Tracey Crews
Head of Planning
Cheltenham Borough Council
PO Box 12
Municipal Offices
Promenade
CHELTENHAM
GL50 1PP



1 July 2015

Dear Ms Crews

Planning Application for The Acorns, Gloucester Road, Cheltenham
Ref: 15/0022/FUL

I have been advised that although the revised plans submitted have been approved by the planning officer, a neighbour has raised the matter with a Councillor who has requested that the matter be taken to the planning committee on 16 July 2016 and be refused. I understand that most planning applications are decided by the planning officer but that some applications are decided by the planning committee. However, these are usually high profile cases which have caused considerable public interest. In this case, since the cul de sac is not even known by the majority of the public, even those who live in the area, it appears that the usual system is being changed on the request of one household only. This seems to be an unnecessary use of committee time. I intend to be at that meeting, but wish to state my position in advance.

The original planning application, dated 3/2/15, was received on 5/2/15, having been submitted by Ian Johnstone Associates following preliminary exploratory enquiries with the planning officer on whether or not such a project was feasible, encouraged by the large 2 storey extension to the immediate neighbouring property, Morelands. The initial plans included very large windows to the rear and a slightly higher roof level. Various objections were raised by neighbours. *My response to these objections is set out in the attached note.*

I was advised that the planning officer was concerned about the height of the proposed extension and the very large rear windows. Adjusted plans were submitted on 9/6/15, with the revised roofline being no higher than that of the neighbouring property and with a more conservative rear window design.

The revised plan was approved by the planning officer but further objections were submitted by three of the neighbouring properties. *Again, my response to these further objections is included on the attached note.*

In summary, I believe :

- I am correct in assuming that the Planning Officer has accepted the recently revised plans and ordinarily therefore would anticipate the plans being approved.
- I feel the revised plans to be well considered, taking due account of such objections as have already been made and that the design parameters, sit well within the character and style of other properties in the surrounding area.
- Considerable and considerate further planting work is to be undertaken to deal specifically with privacy issues, such as they are, to mutual benefit.
- Such matters in dispute are not significant, attracting broad public interest, but stem principally from the views expressed by one neighbour, which concerns, I believe have been answered.
- The Application is in no way controversial. It does not entail boundary issues or impact unfavourably upon neighbouring properties. Once completed and properly planted the property will enhance, rather than detract, from others in the area.

I believe I have responded reasonably to objections made and such that remain, are matters which fall outside the brief of the committee members. I ask that the approval of the planning officer be confirmed by the committee.

Yours sincerely

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area of the letter.

Tom Williams

Response to objections raised to The Acorns planning application

Owletts

Any damage occasioned would be the responsibility of the vehicle owner / driver. Questions of legal liability and indemnity are entirely irrelevant to the planning issue. The low wall referred to and metal end pipe encroach onto the unadopted road and raise separate issues under the terms of the Highways Act 1980 as amended. It is however fair to say that this "obstruction" under the terms of the Act actively precludes the reasonable passage of all but the smallest delivery vehicles which increases the number of smaller vehicles involved in the building process.

Response to Owletts further comments, made 21/6/2015

None, as such objections are irrelevant to the planning application.

Three Winds

Complaint made as to the volume of traffic, detrimental effect upon the road surface and safety would be limited to the period of the building only. The likely volume of traffic is directly proportional to the restrictive access issue. The tight access is due in part to the hedge being allowed to grow beyond the roadway kerbing.

Response to Three Winds further comments made 18/6/2015

None. Except to say Morelands is a two storey building.

Erthbarton, 2, Milton Avenue

The design was specifically chosen to be in keeping with the existing extension to Morelands and other buildings. Concerns as to the rear glass elevation have been met by way of the more conservative, revised proposal. The so-called "hedge" comprised a mass of overgrown trees and shrubs and brambles, some of which were wrist-width and up to 40 feet long. One of the trees, a willow, had fallen to cover half the lawn. It has not been removed but pollarded to a more manageable size. I am equally concerned about maintaining privacy between The Acorns and the neighbouring properties and new trees and shrubs have been planted and fencing erected to facilitate that.

78 Milton Road

As above. It is noted that the comments from all the 4 immediate neighbours, are from properties which are 2 storey buildings. Objection as to the building being "too big" is unfounded. The Acorns will have a far smaller "footprint" and floor area than the adjacent Morelands property, with a roof height in line with Morelands, despite sitting on higher ground. Further, 78 Milton Road is some distance from and to the extreme right of the rear of the proposed extension. A new fence and Summer House has been erected and the existing trees in leaf already preclude any clear view of where the extension would be.

10a Oldfield Crescent

Objections were largely based upon the first floor front window of the extension overlooking both their rear bedroom and living room. It is expected that the first floor front room will be used as a bathroom and will have opaque glass. As to their "secluded" garden being "completely overlooked" it was subsequent to their objection that they completely grubbed up an existing 8 foot high hedge, replacing it with dry-rooted hedging, which negates entirely their objection. I have now planted a more substantial laurel hedging.

The proposed extension would not be out of character with the existing structure or its immediate neighbouring property, either in style or roof height. It is noted that Morelands already has an upper floor window overlooking this property. There would be no room for further development on the cul de sac.

Morelands

The proposed second storey rear window would be considerably forward of Morelands rear elevation and it would therefore be very difficult to look into the side lounge windows and invade their privacy as claimed. The vertical blinds to the side windows were never seen to be open even prior to purchase of The Acorns. Standing on the existing terrace affords a better view of the side windows and a small part of the rear garden. A view from the proposed first floor window provides no greater view of Morelands garden or the small rear paved area, which is in shade and used for storage of gates and ladders. [See attached photograph 1 taken from the roof of the existing garden room, a position central to the proposed first floor rear window.] Their outdoor seating area is on the far side of their large extension and cannot be seen from the Acorns. [See attached Google Earth photograph.] Trees and shrubs are already planted, intended to provide mutual privacy.

I cannot comment on the cold and damp at present in Morelands, due, possibly to insufficient damp-proofing. It is of note that Morelands' north elevation is cut into the ground rather than sitting above ground on its own foundations. The end caps to the north-east corner of Morelands guttering are absent, which, during inclement weather, would allow the roof water to cascade out onto The Acorns side pathway. The side windows are poorly sealed which would be likely to exacerbate any dampness issues. [See photographs 2 and 3.] I maintain such issues are anyway irrelevant to the planning proposal.

The proposed extension sits to the immediate north of Morelands and could not possibly cast a shadow as is maintained, quite the contrary. [See photograph 4.]

The proposed extension is bound to be closer than might otherwise be the case, caused entirely by the Morelands extension extending right up to the existing boundary line. It is wrong to assert that "all the properties on the drive are evenly spaced bungalows". Three Winds, the in-fill bungalow (accessed from Milton Avenue, and built on land previously belonging to both Three Winds and Morelands) and Morelands are all connected after a fashion (garage, fence etc) and in each case, the occupiers are unable to walk around their properties. Whereas, even post-extension, The Acorns and Oakridge will be the only two completely detached properties. [See photographs 5 and 6.]

Despite all objections, I maintain that the proposed planning application sits well within design parameters, character and style of properties in the surrounding area. The extension is intended to replace an existing narrow, unattractive and badly built garden room. The footprint of the extension will be only slightly more than twice the size of the garden room.

Response to Morelands further comments made 18/6/2015

The proposed extension is by no means out of step with Morelands own two storey construction. [See photograph 7.] The height of The Acorns roof line was designed to mirror that of its neighbour and, contrary to the objection made is testament to my architect's endeavours to compensate for the rising land. The proposed building height has been reduced to be in line with that of Morelands despite standing on higher ground.

The Acorns front elevation is currently marginally forward of Morelands front elevation and the proposed extension will not impact upon Morelands front facing view. Neither, since it is north of Morelands, can it have any effect upon casting any shadow as maintained. I entirely refute the argument that the windows to the proposed extension will look directly in to Morelands' side lounge windows or affect their privacy. Comment as to overlooking Morelands side paved area is erroneous for the reasons given previously.

Google Earth Picture showing Morelands' conservatory and outdoor sitting area



Photograph 1, taken from roof of existing garden room, central to position of proposed rear window.



Photograph 2, showing absence of upper and lower guttering end caps



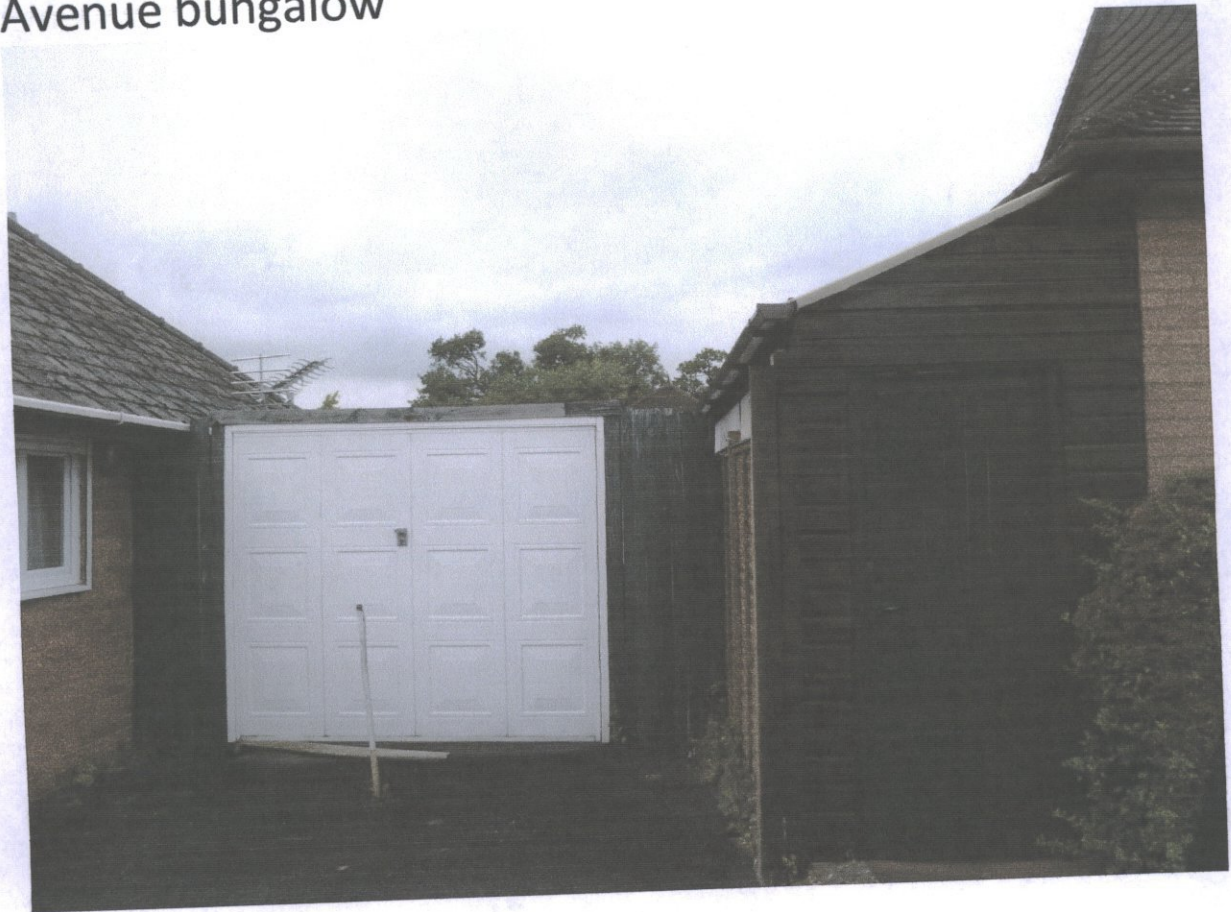
Photograph 3, showing poor sealant around Morelands' rear windows



Photograph 4, showing shadow cast by Morelands at midday



Photograph 5, In-fill between Three Winds and Milton Avenue bungalow



Photograph 6, In-fill between Milton Avenue bungalow and Morelands



Photograph 7, rear elevation of Morelands taken from Milton Avenue, The Acorns is to the left

