

APPLICATION NO: 15/01319/FUL		OFFICER: Miss Michelle Payne
DATE REGISTERED: 28th July 2015		DATE OF EXPIRY : 22nd September 2015
WARD: Park		PARISH:
APPLICANT:	Mr J Hawtin	
LOCATION:	Compass House, Lypiatt Road, Cheltenham	
PROPOSAL:	Extension to Compass House creating two storeys of additional office space at ground and first floor with car parking at lower ground floor, and replacement windows to existing modern rear extension (excluding penthouse) - revised scheme following withdrawal of application ref.15/00518/FUL	

REPRESENTATIONS

Number of contributors	6
Number of objections	5
Number of representations	1
Number of supporting	0

Current House
20 Southwood Lane
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL50 2QH

Comments: 16th August 2015

The suggested new building's prison like appearance with its high back wall (Southwood Lane) and barred gates would make Southwood Lane into a dark tunnel. Even the afternoon and evening sun would be shielded from the Lane ..

I think this is too large an infill, with adverse effects on the character and streetscape of Southwood Lane by removing the gaps between the buildings which contribute to its character. I think a preferable approach might be to follow the suggestion of the owner architect from no 17 ...which would keep the appearance of Southwood Lane as is, but allow Charles Russell to expand.

Also Southwood Lane is only 5.5 meters wide, far too narrow for excess traffic, and certainly not capacious to allow building trucks access.

The lane is used by many pedestrians, cyclists and children, more traffic from the new proposals would be detrimental.

Finally, the proposal states there are no trees or hedges but there is beautiful buddleia and ivy growth -all natural and full of butterflies and bees when flowering. The birds nest in the ivy too, the point of biodiversity this should preserved .

Bicknor Cottage
19 Southwood Lane
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL50 2QH

Comments: 26th August 2015

I object to the proposed planning application on the following grounds:

- 1) The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local authorities to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess. The entry concerning Compass house as a Grade 2 listed building notes that "*Burlington House, Carrick House, Compass House, Imperial House and Stanmer House form a distinguished group of Villas along the east side of Lypiatt Road (marked on Merrett's map of 1834)*". Amongst the features of historic interest concerning Compass House is its historic association with the adjacent buildings and its setting within the prominent architecture of Lypiatt Road. The proposed development would obscure that relationship by over-extending the building and by building a modern extension visible between the historic villas from Lypiatt Road.
- 2) The proposed carpark would result in an switch in commuter car access from the current two lane carriageway of Lypiatt Road with pedestrian paving and via a double in/out entrance TO a single track lane without any dedicated pedestrian pavement and via a single entrance. The entrance to the car park itself would shift to lie directly opposite a row of cottages which exit directly onto the road and several of which are occupied by families with very young children. The use of the predominantly residential Southwood Lane as the main commuter entrance for a large office is wholly unsuitable, with a very narrow turning circle in and out of the car park already having resulted in collision incidents. I believe it to be a particularly unsafe arrangement as the arrival of commuters on a daily basis would coincide with the daily passage of children down the lane and exit of children from the houses on their way to school, not to mention the danger posed to children that currently play on this quiet residential lane.
- 3) The infilling of the only interruption in the multi-storey buildings that currently lie opposite the residential dwellings of Southwood Lane would fundamentally alter the character of the lane. The completion of an uninterrupted line of higher buildings facing the residential dwellings would result in a far more intimidating facade and produce a tunnel effect, particularly as there is no significant offset of buildings in the submitted proposal. This would fundamentally alter the character of the lane; which is historically a line of coach houses and cottages serving the larger historic houses on adjacent roads. The further commercial bias in development of Southwood Lane would obscure this historic relationship.
- 4) The excavation of a lower level carpark would risk subsequent shifting of the loose sandy soil supporting adjacent buildings with concomitant risk of subsidence. This is especially important when considering that several of these nearby structures are historic listed buildings themselves which lack modern foundations and are particularly vulnerable to shifting soil.
- 5) The provision of a dedicated car park for commuters to the office runs contrary to the current council aim to reduce traffic flow into and through Cheltenham. Lypiatt Road itself is well served by buses including a dedicated park-and-ride service which runs past it's end.
- 6) The justification in the application for the extension as the only way of allowing the firm to meet its spatial requirements and yet remain in Cheltenham is not supported by the availability of other suitable sites in the town.

17 Southwood Lane
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL50 2QH

Comments: 25th August 2015
Letter attached.

15 Southwood Lane
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL50 2QH

Comments: 24th August 2015
Letter attached.

Current House
20 Southwood Lane
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL50 2QH

Comments: 16th August 2015

Errors on Full Application Form :

Paragraph Number:

6] Building Manager told me in January 2015 that gates to Southwood Lane were "never locked" . If that is so the statement that no rights of way is affected is clearly erroneous. Being a new resident I do not know how long the gates have been open for but clearly a right of way MAY have been created which this application would extinguish.

9] Boxes ticked as to demolition of part of a listed building but boxes i]-iii] are not completed. If there is no change to the VOLUME of the building then surely these should stat "zero" or "0" or at the very least N/A.

13] States that parking spaces are reduced by 3 from "approximately 39 to "approximately 36. Design Statement says that 2 parking spaces are lost. Which is correct? Also, Form states that there are NO disability spaces. This is incorrect. One is clearly marked by the rear entrance

14] Is not completed. Although reference is made to something at the end. Since the yes/no boxes are unchecked I have no idea whether I am meant to refer to these mysterious documents.

17/19] State a] that there is no hedging or tree-growth in the affected area which would impact bio-diversity. Clearly incorrect. Photo's on P4 of the design statement and plate 2 of the "Heritage" Statement clearly show planted hedge on left of rear entrance and [self-seeded?] buddleia to the right. Buddleia, of course is otherwise known as a "butterfly tree" because of the way it supports Lepidoptera . Thus removing those buddleia would adversely affect bio-diversity.

22] Gross internal floor space PROPOSED is set at 430 sq m. Perhaps that mean ADDITIONAL floor space proposed but the TOTAL is clearly wrong. I do not wish to make any false assumptions about the applicants intentions . What are the correct figures for Gross Internal Floor space proposed? And does that lead to a change in any of the other figures in this section?

23] Existing number of employees is "unknown" and future number is "TBC" [to be concealed?]. Design statement says that expansion is needed "immediately" . If so what are the figures to justify that immediacy?

30] Document is unsigned.

All in all a fairly sloppy document.

Errors of fact in "Design Statement":

Point No:

2] States that "There was generally a good response to the scheme" This is either completely erroneous or mendacious. In the 90 minutes I was there I heard no opinion expressed and my opinion was not solicited. Neither was the opinion sought of anyone within my earshot.

Further , the statement says that "daylight to adjacent properties would be unaffected" Clearly , not the case since the proposed building will block light from the setting sun

4] Current occupiers need for expansion space is "immediate" . This implies that they cannot wait for a new build. Patently not true. Since they cannot even fill in the application with the current or proposed number of employees.

Heritage statement:

- Varies between calling the lane "Southwood" and "Southwold". It would be good for them to be consistent [and correct].

- Concludes that the view from Lypiatt Road would not be significantly different because it would have the "view of one modern building replaced with another modern building" .This is perhaps true. However, the view from Lypiatt road is at approximately 120 metres to the new build [15 metres further to 15/17 Southwood Lane which represent the "old" view].

If it is relevant from a heritage viewpoint to consider the view it should be pointed out that the views from 15/17 will be SIGNIFICANTLY altered, and for the worse, by this proposed build, since the nearest buildings will be some 15 metres away rather than nearly 10 times that distance.

Further to these errors of fact and presentation which make understanding of the whole application subject to guesswork and worse I oppose the development for the following reasons:

A] Density:

Southwood Lane , with the exception of one small alley opposite will become built-up throughout its length. Changing its nature from a backwater to a canyon-thoroughfare.

B] Daylight/ Sunlight:

The development would clearly block afternoon and early-evening sunlight to the cottages opposite.

C] Access:

Currently the gateway on Southwood Lane is used only for egress . The new arrangement would mean the area will be used for access and egress . This will increase the traffic load by a significant amount and will likely cause a danger to the children who frequently play in the street [as residents or passers-by].

Further, it should be noted that the road is approximately 5.5 metres wide [property boundaries are consistently beyond the boundary walls] making the area unsuitable for greater volumes of traffic, LET ALONE for construction traffic given the width of the vehicles.

D] Design/Appearance:

The one open vista in the street will be closed, shutting off the view of Lypiatt Road opposite.

E] Cumulative Impact:

If successful this will create a canyon. Not an ordinary terrace of houses and mixed shops/offices [Like Upper Norwood Street for example] but a high-walled, unwelcoming, potentially dangerous, dingy canyon.

Please ensure that future documentation is properly completed and signed before being submitted.

8 Lypiatt Terrace
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL50 2SX

Comments: 21st September 2015

I attended a display of this application at Compass House on 21 July. My impression at that meeting was that it was going to be looked at by the architect yet again - clearly not. I would not want you to think I was, by my silence, agreeing to this proposal. Far from it.

The expert consultee comments already lodged point out the degree to which this application goes against planning guidelines. It is an extraordinary proposal in a conservation area - almost as flagrant as the original allowing of the "penthouse" on top of the 1960s extension.

The proposed "green wall", as the expert consultee reminds us, is likely to fail - and the underlying design which will thus be laid bare, is mundane and dreary. An eyesore without aesthetic merit of any kind.

The oddest thing of all is that this proposal flies in the face of the instructions given some years ago by the Planners, to the owners of the next door offices, Carrick House: that its new build facing on to Southwood Lane had to be in red brick with a pitched roof, as that is what back lanes in Cheltenham traditionally employed (i.e. as hay and coach sheds)! It seems that when Compass House at first presented a brick and pitched roof proposal to match their neighbours', they were told by the Planners this was unacceptable. It is hard to see what principles are being employed when the Planners instruct applicants to go entirely against what was laid down only a few years before in an identical situation!

The proposed building is going to form an ugly - and unnecessary - punctuation to the elevations as seen from Lypiatt Road. While a car park replaces a garden, and makes little visual difference therefore - the height of the intrusions being the same low profile as the consultee suggests - a three-storey building blocking the sightline between Lypiatt Road and Southwood Lane, and aggressively at right angles to the existing building, is an entirely different matter!

What's more, this building will be - as the 'penthouse' has proved - a short-term desideratum only. Once in place, if Speechlys move - as they surely will, in their expansionist mindset - who will desire this ugly agglomeration of second rate insults to a Grade II* villa?! Lypiatt Road will be further degraded. It is almost as if Cheltenham has a visual death wish! Regency Cheltenham it says on the brown signs. Hm. I wonder where it's gone?

BUILT
Recd 25 AUG 2015
ENVIRONMENT

24 August 2015

Miss M Payne
Planning Services
Cheltenham borough Council
Municipal Offices
Promenade
Cheltenham
GL50 1PP

Zed House
Malvern Road
Cheltenham
GL50 2JH



Dear Miss Payne

RE: COMPASS HOUSE, LYPIATT ROAD, CHELTENHAM - APP NOS. 15/01319/FUL & 15/01319/LBC

I am the owner of 17 Southwood Lane, Cheltenham.

At the invitation of the applicant, I attended an informal meeting at Compass House on 21 July 2015 to see the revised plans as now submitted. Apart from changes to the external materials and roofline, the revised plans are substantially the same as previously submitted. None of my concerns, as expressed to the architect at the meeting, have been addressed.

The new application drawings do not include a street elevation as existing. This is a serious omission, since a comparison between the existing and proposed street elevations will show the significant intrusion of the proposed development.

If allowed to proceed in its revised form, it is clear that this proposal will have a detrimental impact on my property and on the visual character of Southwood Lane. The following points are of particular concern:-

1. Southwood Lane is an attractive mix of mainly residential properties of differing architectural styles, some of which front the road and others that are set back. There are many gaps of open space between buildings.

The proposed extension is too large and will completely infill the open space between Compass House and the red brick offices to the north. Taken together, these buildings will form a continuous solid block of development along the road edge that will overwhelm and significantly detract from the attractive character of Southwood Lane.

2. The proposed extension is too close to the road edge, creating a much reduced distance to nos. 17 & 19 Southwood Lane. Although the elevation of the proposed extension to Southwood Lane has few windows directly overlooking my property, this necessary concession to privacy has the effect of increasing the monolithic and faceless appearance of the proposed building.

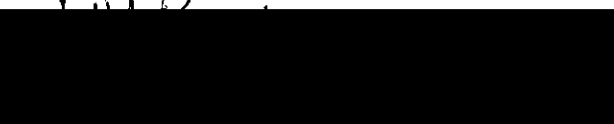
3. The acceptability of this proposal would be improved if the new building is set back further back from the road and its frontage reduced to allow gaps between Compass House and the red brick offices.

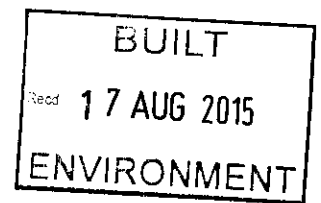
The recently completed Current House to the south (by the same architects) shows how the bulk of new infill can be successfully designed to reduce its visual impact.

The construction of any approved development will present particular logistical difficulties. Each resident owns 1.2m of land in front of their boundary walls. The road is not wide enough for the heavy construction plant necessary to carry out the planned work, and it cannot be closed, as vehicular and pedestrian access has to be given to residents.

Will you please ensure that effective conditions are imposed in any planning consent to restrict and control the access and use of Southwood Lane during construction, the hours of work, and also to control noise and dust.

Yours sincerely





Compass House extension 15/00518/FUL

Planning objections:

I live at 15 Southwood Lane directly opposite the exit from Compass House onto Southwood Lane

I would like to raise the following concerns re this application:

**National Planning Policy Framework
Chapter 12 paragraph 134**

Need for extra office space - does this need outweigh the spoiling of a conservation area ?

I quote the Court of Appeal 20th February 2014 Barnwell Manor
This office is in the heart of a conservation area and the development will harm not only Lypiatt Road but also Southwood Lane (Policy on back lanes CBC). I believe the impact of this new build on the area outweighs the importance of providing more office space on site when the Nat West building on Andover Road is empty and could serve as an office extension. I would like to object to the proposed extension to Compass House. I am concerned that since I have been advised by the architect to have a full structural survey carried out on my house (15 Southwood Lane, directly opposite the proposed extension), before work commences on Compass House then surely Compass House itself, the grade II listed front part is in even more danger than my home of suffering permanent damage with the construction of the lower car park.

This lovely listed building along with its neighbours, in a conservation area are in danger of all being damaged.

**National Planning Policy Framework
Chapter 12 paragraph 132**

Substantial harm to Grade II listed building

I am concerned that since I have been advised by the architect to have a full structural survey carried out on my house (15 Southwood Lane, directly opposite the proposed extension), before work commences on Compass House then surely Compass House itself, the grade II listed front part is in even more danger than my home of suffering permanent damage with the construction of the lower car park.

This lovely listed building along with its neighbours, in a conservation area are in danger of all being damaged.



Sunlight/daylight issue:

VALIDATION CHECKLIST – GLOSSARY OF TERMS – CHELTENHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL'S LOCAL REQUIREMENTS

"In circumstances where there is a potential adverse impact upon the current levels of sunlight/daylight enjoyed by adjoining properties or building(s), including associated gardens or amenity space then applications may also need to be accompanied by a daylight/sunlight assessment."

This development would block daylight from my sitting room, front patio and balcony rendering these areas dark from 4.00 p.m. onwards. The offices in the brick extension to Douglas House would have their daylight severely restricted throughout the day.

Sunlight and landscape issue:

Objective 02 and 011 Back Lanes in conservation areas (Cheltenham Borough Council Local Plan Second review

Southwood Lane has a variety of residential properties and is a lane intersperse with large gaps, which allow light into the lane and prevent it having the appearance of a tunnel.

The proposed development would reduce sunlight on the lane making it a gloomy place to walk down or to live on. There would be a monolithic block of buildings covering a large part of the lane. The lane would be in permanent darkness. This would have a cumulative impact on the environment.

Layout:

Boundary enclosures 5.31 Cheltenham Borough Local Plan

The proposed plan brings the building line for the lane forward. It would be in front of the building line of the existing extension to Compass House and the brick development at the back of Douglas House.

I ask that the extension be moved back in line with the existing buildings

Access, noise and traffic concerns.

"Proposals that result in a noisy or unclean operation may be required to provide details of how the impacts will be mitigated. Proposals next to existing noisy or unclean uses may also be required to provide details of how the impact will be mitigated. "

Southwood Lane is a narrow road in a residential area. The proposals to remove hundreds of tons of earth to dig out the lower car park are not addressed in the application. When I asked Mr Hawtin how long he estimated the works would take he quoted the best part of a year. Residents require access to their properties



and fire engines, dustcarts and waste lorries need to be able to travel straight down the street.

All the houses on Southwood Lane have their front doors onto the lane. We have no other entries to our homes so all residents need access to their homes at all times.

Small children live on the street too and their safety is paramount.

Air Quality Control:

I am retired and at home during the day. Beside the site there are office businesses operating on Lypiatt Road. No mention is made of how the unclean operations will be carried out or how the disruption will be kept to a minimum. I could not live in a house with heavy plant machinery going from 9 a.m.– 5 p.m. every day for even a week never mind 5 months. As a registered asthmatic the dust would be a great nuisance and would damage my health; potentially shortening my life. How can I prevent this?

Risk of Subsidence:

When the architect visited my home he suggested I had a full structural survey carried out before work started so that if any damage occurred during the works, if they went ahead, I would be able to make a claim. I would like assurances that the developer will meet the cost of this survey and any work that has to be carried out as a result of his extension and that he meets any cost in loss of value of my property should it subside. Also that should I make a claim it will be dealt with quickly and fully by the developer.

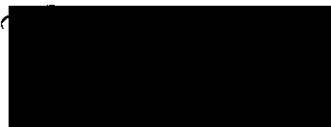
7. Landscape and traffic

I would ask that if the extension goes ahead that since this work is being carried out on a property on Lypiatt Road that all vehicles use Lypiatt Road entrance to the property and that site offices and portaloos are kept within Compass House grounds. It would be intolerable to have site offices and portaloos parked in Southwood Lane restricting the traffic and reducing the width of the lane making it dangerous for residents.

This application is made by the owner of Compass House, Mr Hawtin, who is the landlord to Charles Russell and not on behalf of the firm itself. Charles Russell want to expand its workforce and in the council's own words quoted in the Echo 'there are lots of empty office spaces in Cheltenham' they could move to. (Examples include:

Cheltenham Office Park, Hatherley Lane, Cheltenham, GL51 6PN,
Offices 5000.09 - 50000.39 Sq Ft

or Honeybourne Place, Cheltenham, GL50 3SH Offices 18901 - 50612 Sq Ft)



It seems unnecessary to build an extension when there are plenty of other places in the town that the office could re-locate to. The developer himself has told me he thinks that the firm will need even further space in the future and will move again in less than eight years. This application is offered to keep the developer in income and not for the good of the town.

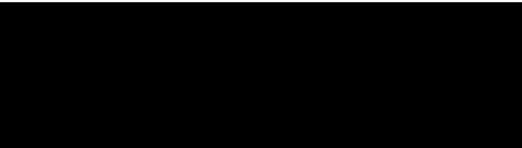
Cheltenham Council is rightly proud of its good planning officers. In the application Southwood Lane is described as being a vibrant residential area with a mixture of styles of houses. This is true. The applicant then goes on to describe my house as a little cottage. While this might reflect the snobbery and wealth of the proposer, the current market value of this 'cottage' is I believe over £500,000. Whatever the value of the property I would hope that the Council would uphold the rights of the poorer citizens equally with those of this wealthy man.

I know of no council in the country that would allow the work of the lower car park to go ahead in light of the environmental policy that discourages the use of cars in town, particularly when there is a perfectly good park and ride bus stop close to Compass House.

Finally the conservation policy states that buildings should not be over extended and in fact my neighbour had planning permission for an extra bedroom in his 'little cottage' refused, I quote Mr Hawtin's own words in the application here, for this very reason. It would be unfair to allow the Compass House extension on these grounds alone.

I notice that none of the points I have raised are included in the report and I fear that if the proposal is accepted that my valid points will not be addressed properly.

I would like assurances from Cheltenham Borough Council that if these plans are passed that I will be able to live in my house and have access for my car and to my garage at all times throughout the building process. That my health will not suffer as a result of their decision and that my concerns about the use of Southwood Lane as an extension to the building site in Compass House will be groundless.


15 Southwood Lane
Cheltenham
GL50 2QH

H d H

