Objection to Planning Application at Bramblewood, Newhouse Lane - DC/26/1373

From Neighbouring Property: Silverburn, Melrose Place

Below we outline our objections to the planning application at Bramblewood, Newhouse Lane (DC/26/1373) which is a neighbouring property to Silverburn.

In summary this application seeks the following:

- To alter the existing chalet bungalow, substantially increasing both its height and size (we will refer to this as the altered dwelling)
- To build a completely new additional 2-storey dwelling alongside the altered dwelling on the same plot (we will refer to this as the new dwelling)

We would like to start by saying we generally have no problem with reasonable and considerate property development. Indeed when Bramblewood was redeveloped in 2020 from a bungalow to a chalet bungalow we raised no objection as the modifications were moderate and did not impact neighbouring properties, including ours, in a significant way.

The current proposal is at the other end of the scale, not only seeing a major redevelopment of the existing property in terms of both size and height but also the addition of a second entirely separate 2-storey property on the same site.

We note the Planning Notification describes this as *"Extensions and alterations to existing chalet bungalow"*. However, looking at the proposed plans, we believe there will be little of the original building that will be retained and in reality this will be an almost total redevelopment of the existing building.

Loss of Privacy/Overlooking

For the proposed altered dwelling the roof ridge height rises to 7.5m** from 5.37m for the existing dwelling, an increase of 40%. This combined with very large floor to ceiling windows on the 1st floor effectively gives 180° views from the proposed altered property directly over and into our property. Whilst shrubbery to our northern boundary effectively screens overlooking from the existing property this will not be the case for the altered building with its increased height and panoramic windows.

For the proposed new dwelling the roof ridge height is 6.5m still substantially above the existing dwelling on the site. Again the height and unimpeded design of the 1st floor windows on the southern elevation, will give open views of our property and amenity space and that of the neighbouring property to the west.

In light of the above, we believe the proposed design goes against **The Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) / Policy 33 – Development Principles / Point 2**, which states: *"Ensure that is designed to avoid unacceptable harm to the amenity of occupiers/users of nearby property and land, for example through overlooking or noise, whilst having regard to the sensitivities of surrounding development"*.

** There is no scale shown on the altered or new building plans so determining exact dimensions is difficult. We originally estimated the new ridge height was over 8.0m but Planning have advised they estimate it to be 7.5m.

Appearance, Scale and Massing

The height and size of the altered building will be significantly larger than the existing dwelling, particularly when viewed from the south and north elevations. Combine this with the proposed new building, itself substantially higher than the existing dwelling, the massing is virtually complete across the entire plot from the south and north elevations. The two proposed dwellings are close to their respective east and west boundaries while the distance between the two separate dwellings is only 1.5m. We would suggest this extreme closeness is more what you would expect to find on a new housing estate rather than the general spaciousness that prevails along Newhouse Lane.

The sheer height impact, particularly of the proposed altered dwelling, is not to be underestimated, and will dominate the view from neighbouring properties on the south and east boundaries.

Again we believe the proposed design goes against **The Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) / Policy 33 – Development Principles / Point 3**, which states: *"Ensure that the scale, massing and appearance of the development is of a high standard of design and layout and where relevant relates sympathetically with the built surroundings"*.

Comments on Design Statement

We've made some comments below on specific parts of the submitted Design Statement which we either found ambiguous, misleading or effectively disagree with.

4.0 Amount of Development

In this section they have compared the floor area of the existing house with that of the proposed altered and new buildings. They have concluded the overall percentage increase in floor area is just 31%. However, it is notable they have included garage areas in this calculation which is not habitable space (our understanding is that as part of the original planning for the existing separate garage block, it was a condition that the 1st floor area was not to be used as habitable space).

A revised calculation excluding garage areas shows the actual proposed increase in habitable space is approaching double at 88%.

In general we found this section poorly written and unclear, for example for the proposed new dwelling it states *"The proposed dwelling comprises of 3 bedrooms, which is commiserate with the previous number of bedrooms available with the existing dwelling"*. Since this is the additional new house why the comparison with the existing dwelling ? (that comparison has already been done with the altered dwelling).

5.0 Layout

For the altered dwelling the following statement was made: *"The positioning of the accommodation has been designed to minimise the potential overlooking of the neighbouring properties".*

We find this statement misleading. The positioning of the altered dwelling is exactly the same as the existing building. As we've discussed previously, the important factor regarding overlooking is the significant increase in height of the 1st floor and the use of very large floor to ceiling windows.

Similarly for the new dwelling we find the following statement misleading *"The proposed property has been designed to consider the impact of overlooking to and from neighbouring properties and their respective private amenity space. There will not be any windows to the east and west facing elevations".*

We can only conclude, making this statement in the context of east and west elevations only, while omitting any reference to the south elevation, is deliberate, since the south elevation will most definitely overlook our property and respective amenity space.

6.0 Appearance, Scale and Massing

This section comments: *"The proposals have been designed in consideration of the scale of the overall site, boundaries, and the neighbouring properties".*

As previously discussed we do not believe the proposals have any real consideration for the scale of the overall site and certainly not the neighbouring properties.

It continues with the following comment: *"…and has no demonstrative impact on adjoining properties or setting of the existing residential dwelling".*

We personally find it hard to believe that anyone could look at what is proposed and conclude it has no demonstrative impact on adjoining properties or the setting of the existing residential dwelling.

10.0 Conclusion

The 1st paragraph states the following: *"The proposed development has been designed to respond to and respect the site and its immediate context while considering the private amenity spaces of the neighbouring properties and the applicants alike."*

We cannot agree the proposed development considers the private amenity spaces of the neighbouring properties as the altered and new properties will overlook directly over and into our property. Additionally as previously expressed, the two proposed dwellings will have a major increase in massing and scale across the entire plot from the south and north elevations.

The 2nd paragraph states: *"The amount of proposed development creates two new dwellings that are commensurate in scale to those in the local context and is similar in scale to that of the previously approved scheme on the site."*

It states here *"creates two new dwellings"* which we believe has caused confusion for some, as the application is for one new dwelling and major alterations to the existing dwelling.

More importantly we question the comment *"similar in scale to that of the previously approved scheme on the site"*. We know of no other similar application on this site which has previously been approved and would seek clarification of this comment.

Comments on Planning Documents

As previously noted there is no scale shown on the altered or new building plans so determining exact dimensions is difficult. Scales have been shown for the existing property plan and proposed location and site plan.

There are omissions in the proposed plan drawings, eg. for the altered dwelling the study window is not shown on the north elevation drawing and for the new building the utility door is not shown on the west elevation drawing.

A new separate garage is shown on the proposed site plan but is not shown in any detail elsewhere nor mentioned in the Design Statement.

Summary

Our major objections to this application are on the grounds of Loss of Privacy/Overlooking and Appearance/Scale/Massing. As stated we believe what is proposed goes against the relevant policies of The Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

We would politely request, if it is considered that the proposed application contravenes these Planning Framework policies then the current application be refused.