

Comments on planning officers report to MCC Planning Committee agenda item 4d

I HAVE READ THIS REPORT AND BELIEVE THERE ARE FACTUAL INACCURACIES, CONTRADICTIONS WITHIN IT AND ASSUMPTIONS MADE TO REACH INCORRECT CONCLUSIONS.-----

The comments below are in sequential order to the report.-----

Paragraph 1.2 – the report refers to the house as 2 story with “additional accommodation within the roof area” this is misleading at best. This house is affectively being built as a three story house with 4 large dormers and all the roof space being used hence very high roof ridge line to cater for a lounge, Master bedroom, Bathroom dressing room and landing – this is not additional accommodation it is using the roof as a third storey.-----

No other property in the area is built this way and no property has dormers from their roofs above two storey level. If you used the same wording as the report all neighbouring houses in the willows would be single storey “with additional accommodation within the roof area” - this is incredibly misleading. -----

This property is three storey by any other name with large windows at over 6 meters high.-----

To say the garage has been reduced to single storey is bizarre. It has not changed since the first set of plans apart from ridge line reduced. It still has the proposed lounge with a dormer window. The planning officer seems to contradict herself, as later in the report paragraph 5.2.1 refers to the garage as 1.5 storey. It can't be both – so what is the overall height 2, 2.5 or 3 storey? -----

I agree the ridge line has been reduced, but would argue whether it is 1.2m as difficult to scale diagrams from on line copies. Even if the 1.2m is correct the house has gone from being 9.5m to 8.3m. This is still between 1.1m and 3m taller than any other property surrounding the proposal. Link this to the length and breadth of the house 15/16M and 11M it is still totally overbearing and out of character house sat behind and above the houses in Caestory, the Willows, Ethley drive and the park.-----

Page 28 of the report states the planning officer is waiting a report from the MCC Tree Officer. My view is this proposal should not have come to committee until he had commented. He was adamant that any removal of the trees he could not support. I would like to know his view on taking 3/8 of them away (and also the effect on the root system of the remaining trees). This is a key element to the amenity enjoyed by current residents. Replanting does not suffice as these Birches will take 3 or 4 decades to replace. Again the report is misleading without the tree officers comments, how they can recommend approval of the proposal when the tree officer has not commented on nearly half of the trees being taken that he so strongly commented upon having to stay is jumping to conclusion.---

Section 5 evaluation-----

5.5.1 – The report contradicts itself here again. It says it won't lead to a precedent, but states the two neighbouring plots are large enough to take dwellings. Surely it therefore does set a precedent (even if just for those properties, which would be even more intrusive if proposals were built in their gardens). It also sets a precedent for any other person in Raglan with a large garden to sell to

developers for higher prices than to families who need affordable housing. I think the report focusses too much on maths rather than human geography and the knock on consequences.-----

Paragraph 5.2.1 -----

As indicated above, garage now classified as 1.5 storey whereas paragraph 1.2 states single storey. More contradiction. -----

NO slate grey roofs nearby, NO dormers of this nature nearby, NO grey surround windows nearby, NO natural wood garage, front or back doors nearby, NO windows of this design nearby – WHICH BIT apart from render OF THIS IS IN KEEPING OR IN CHARACTER OR TYPICAL OF AREA. Did the planning officer visit the site and actually look at the style of houses?-----

As an aside the Chimney stack has now been removed as a nod to getting the overall height down, but this has 1) allowed larger windows at a higher height to be drawn into the plans, and 2) makes it more out of character in the location as all the houses neighbouring do have chimneys. -----

Again what definition of “storey” is the Planning officer using. She describes the Willows as two storey. If they are two storey then the proposal is three storey. i.e. “both use roof area for accommodation”-----

Paragraph 5.2.2-----

“The proposed development is set back from the building line but will not be prominent when viewed from Caestory Avenue” – Unbelievable comment. The square meterage of the proposal facing Caestory Avenue (on a slight slant agreed) is 88sqm. It will be the most obvious building for people living both sides of the road and people walking up and down the road. -----

Facing the Willows and Ethley drive is 110sqm of building that is not in character with the Willows. TO SAY THAT IS NOT INCONGRUOUS is naïve at best.-----

THE RIDGE HEIGHT IS NOT IN LINE WITH NEIGHBOURING PROPERTIES. FACT. My ridge height is 7.2m – measured last year. It is arguably the highest around. This proposal, if it is 8.3m tall, is nearly 16% higher than the highest and some 35 / 40 % higher than others. Again I ask whether the planning officer visited and if yes, if the heights were measured.-----

Paragraph 5.2.3 -----

“The retention of six of the eight existing birch trees on the site is welcomed and will further help to soften the overall impact of the development and also screen the property from views from the south-west”-----

The fact that the development needs further softening says it all!!! There is some confusion about how many trees will actually be lost. Report says 6 birch to stay whereas plans suggest 5 remain. I am surprised the report was issued without the Tree Officers comments on the revisions.-----

Not sure “South West” is correct here. The remaining trees are to the North, North West and West of the development. -----

Paragraph 5.2.4 ----- DUE TO THE ABOVE I COMPLETELY DISAGREE WITH THE EVALUATION BY THE PLANNING OFFICER. THERE ARE POINTS THAT ARE FACTUALLY WRONG AND CONCLUSIONS DRAWN THAT ARE BASED ON INCORRECT ASSUMPTIONS/VIEWS.-----

Highways. Paragraph 5.3-----

Without the tracking diagrams how can an assumption be made that this has been dealt with. This was requested 5 months ago and been ignored by the developer.-----

All I can do is reiterate the fact that this is a dangerous bend that will become more dangerous with the proposed additional exciting traffic from the proposed development. Be it on the Highways conscience if there is a fatality or serious injury.-----

5.4 Residential Amenity

5.4.2 – “8.3m which is similar to a standard two storey dwelling “ – WHERE WOULD THIS BE - NOT WHEN COMPARED TO PROPERTIES WITHIN ¼ MILE OF THIS PROPOSAL. I have just done some research on “average height of a two storey house” and my results come in at between 6.09 and 7.10m – so please let me know where 8.3m qualifies as similar to standard.-----

With regard to bulk and mass the proposal is totally out of character and not in keeping with the bulk and mass of any properties within the location. This property is three times the size of the next largest property and you could argue 4 on the basis of how the L shaped nature faces other properties. The square meters of building facing all sides is still huge having only been reduced slightly. It is totally out of character. It is up to 5 times bigger than some of the other neighbouring properties -----

The proposal may confirm regulatory wise to being exactly the right distances away from “living/habitable” rooms, but you need to look at the size compared with existing properties and the fact it is really three storeys which gives it the elevation to overlook gardens and houses.-----

5.5.1 Trees mentioned above is it 5 or 6? Tree officer to comment please. If a smaller development was put here no trees would be lost.-----

5.5.2 Does the site need to be inspected for bats rather than wait for a non-community driven developer to disclose?-----

5.5.1 On the basis the developer wanted to put two new houses on the site originally (pre planning advice) I can't believe they are building for them self. I hope this isn't a loop hole.-----

5.7.1 I DONOT CONSIDER THAT THE REVISIONS GO ANYWHERE NEAR OVERCOMING THE OBJECTIONS OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL.-----

SUMMARY-----

SMALL PIECEMEAL AMENDMENTS RECEIVED TO TRY AND PLACATE PLANNING OFFICER. I AM AWARE THERE WAS DISGAREMMENT IN THE PLANNING TEAM AS TO WHETHER THE RECOMMENDATION WAS APPORVE OR NOT.-----

PROPOSAL CONTINUES TO BE OVER BEARING, OVERSHADOWING, OUT OF CHARACTER IN THE LOCATION. IS DANGEROUS TO PEDESTRIANS AND ROAD USERS. STILL WANTS TO TAKE AWAY TREES.