

Members of the Planning and Environmental Protection
Committee
Peterborough City Council
Bridge Street
Peterborough
PE1 1HF

Your Ref: 22/01217/HHFUL
Our Ref: SGK/HEN0226/0001
Date: 12 October 2022

By Email Only

Dear Planning Committee Member

Planning Committee Meeting fixed for 18 October 2022
Application Reference 22/01217/FUL (the Application)
1 Thorpe Avenue Peterborough PE3 6LA (the Site)

I am writing to you on behalf of the owners and occupiers of 3 Thorpe Avenue and 188 Thorpe Road, who are the immediate neighbours respectively to the north and west of the Site to urge you to refuse the above Application at your committee meeting on 18 October 2022.

This letter is prompted in particular by the decision of Councillor Fitzgerald to call in the above Application, and his wholly incorrect understanding of the reason for designating the Special Character Areas.

For the reasons I will briefly explain, the Application scheme is simply not good enough and is harmful to the Special Area of Conservation. My clients wholly support the officer's analysis of this Application and their recommendation for refusal. However, my clients have asked me to draw the following to your attention¹.

- The Site occupies a prominent corner plot in the Thorpe Road, Thorpe Avenue, Westwood Park Road Special Character Area and is directly adjacent to the Longthorpe Conservation Area. The Peterborough Local Plan, adopted as recently as 2019, confirms at paragraph 6.15.2 that all three special conservation areas, were designated "to acknowledge their strong landscape character, **architectural quality** and development patterns" (emphasis added). Councillor Fitzgerald is simply wrong to suggest that the SCA was introduced solely "to manage the subdivision of plots".

¹ Please note that with the exception of the extracts from the OS maps, all the images within this letter are taken from the Applicant's application materials. The attached photos of the current Number 1 Thorpe Avenue are taken from June 2021 sales particulars available on the Zoopla website.

Cambridge

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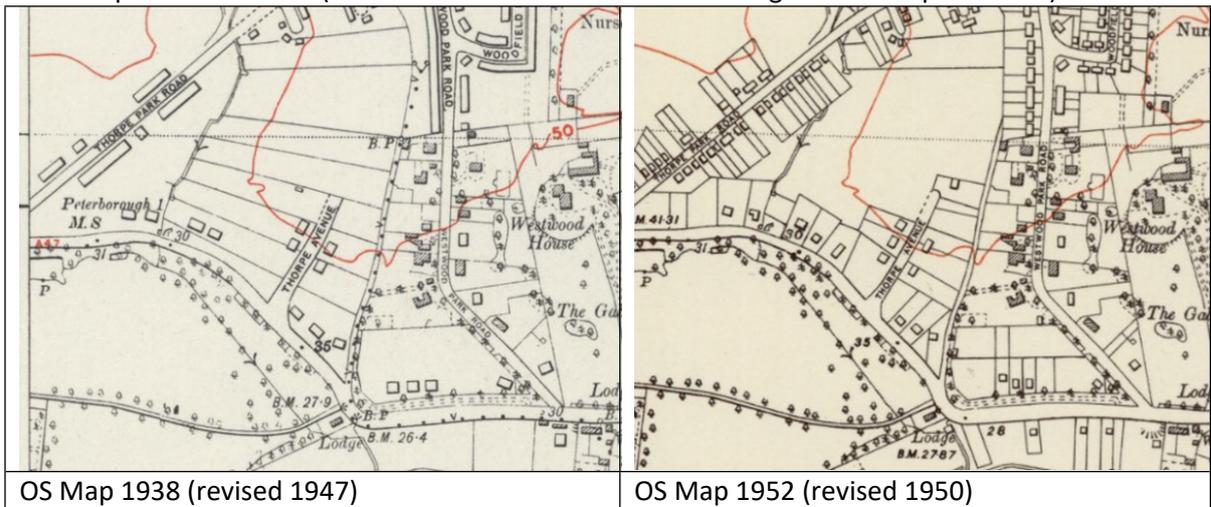
Milan



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- The OS maps of 1932 and 1952 (see below) show that Thorpe Road and Thorpe Avenue were developed in the 1940s (Number 1 was built in 1948 according to its sales particulars).



- The Conservation Officer is therefore correct in their assessment that the area has an “early to mid C20 character of large dwellings sited in spacious plots” and that this “is the reason for the designation as a ‘Special Character Area’ within the Local Plan 2019” (Conservation Officer’s first consultation response).
- The key policy requirements for development in an SCA, are:
 - “Alterations should be sympathetic to the original style, and of an appropriate scale to maintain their character” (LP20(b)); and
 - “Any new development must where possible enhance the character and appearance of the Area. It must respect the scale, massing, depth, materials and spacing of established properties” (LP20(c)).

As I will briefly explain, the Application breaches these requirements.

- The photos taken from the 2021 sales particulars (below and attached) show that the current Number 1 Thorpe Avenue is a fine example of a 1940s prestige house with attractive detailing, including its front entrance, the locally distinctive Stamford bricks and unusual blue/green glazed pantiles. It sits within a generous and once well-tended garden, set back from the predominant Thorpe Road building line. By any measure this is very attractive house which as the Conservation Officer notes “melds with the established character of the area” and “contributes positively to the special character of the area”.



- The proposal will more than double the footprint of the existing house, making this by far the largest house in the SCA:

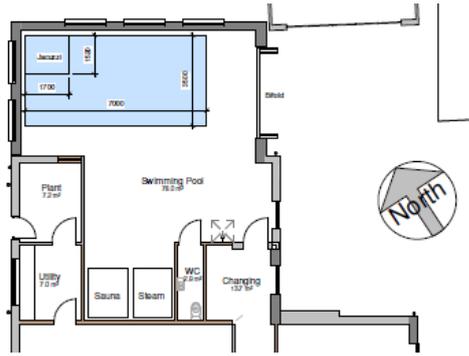


- With a maximum ridge height of 10m, the proposal looms over and dwarfs its neighbours:



3 View from Rear (Neighbours)

- There are no downstairs bedrooms to support the purported multi-generational living, and a substantial part of the ground floor is given over to a swimming pool, with related plant and changing rooms. A swimming pool and large related recreation area are a *lifestyle choice*, not a matter of cultural requirements (contrary to the Applicant's assertion).



- Because of the large area devoted to the swimming pool (etc), the double storey extended living areas must push into the southern garden by at least 11m. As a result, it presents a vast expanse of high, unremitting render and roof tiles to 188 Thorpe Road:

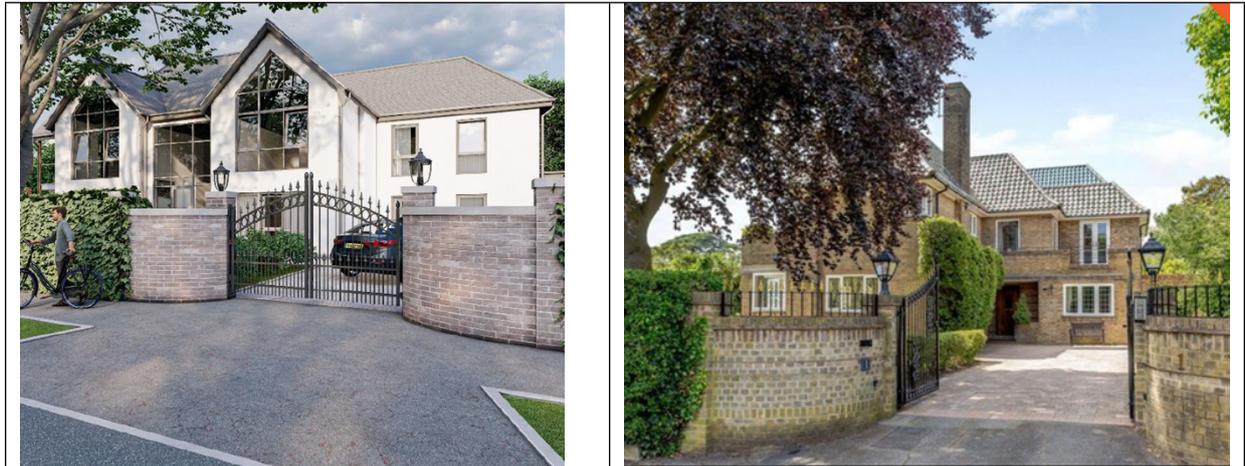


- With just a 3.9m gap between the respective side walls of 188 Thorpe Road and 1 Thorpe Avenue, the current mature boundary planting between the two properties is unlikely to survive (and in particular, unlikely to survive the construction phase).
- The proposed first floor bedroom balcony is just 3.9m distant from the upstairs bathroom window of 188 Thorpe Avenue (marked 'c' in the image below). That proximity robs the users of that bathroom of any sense of privacy (even with the proposed balcony screen), and raises the potential for noise and smell impacts on users of the proposed balcony. This is the epitome of poor design.



- The proposal will completely wrap the existing house in a mix of off-white render (which is likely to stain with time unless regularly maintained), grey anthracite cladding, grey aluminium framed windows and a grey tiled roof. These materials bear no relationship at all to the mid-C20th character of the SCA and are more reminiscent of a modern business park.

- The Applicant’s agent has circulated some well-produced CGIs of the proposal (although quite inexplicably, No. 188 is not visible in the image showing the southern façade of the house). They show a very large, bland, modern house with extensive areas of render, and of a wholly anonymous design. As the images below show, the design has none of the detailing, charm or character of the original dwelling which it completely hides.



- This is not the only way of modernising 1 Thorpe Avenue, and therefore, there are no material considerations to outweigh the harms described above.

Please note that my clients are not against redeveloping this Site. They wholly agree with the case officer’s comment in their report that “there is scope to significantly extend ... the existing dwelling”, *provided that* “any proposal would need to be designed in such a way as to contribute equally positively to the Special Character Area or enhance it where possible” (Officers report, page 8).

The present scheme is just not good enough. It is bland, poorly conceived and harmful both to the character of the recently designated (2019) SCA and to the amenity of its neighbours. It lacks all the charm of the original house, and has none of its own. It therefore breaches the key policy LP20.

For these reasons my clients urge the Committee to refuse the Application, and to encourage the Applicant to seek a more appropriate way to achieve their ambitions for a top quality, prestige home, that enhances the character of the area and does not harm its neighbours.

Thank you for your time in considering this letter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Kelly', written in a cursive style.

Simon Kelly

Solicitor Planning

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Encl: photos from 2021 Sales Particulars

Photos from 2021 Sales Particulars²



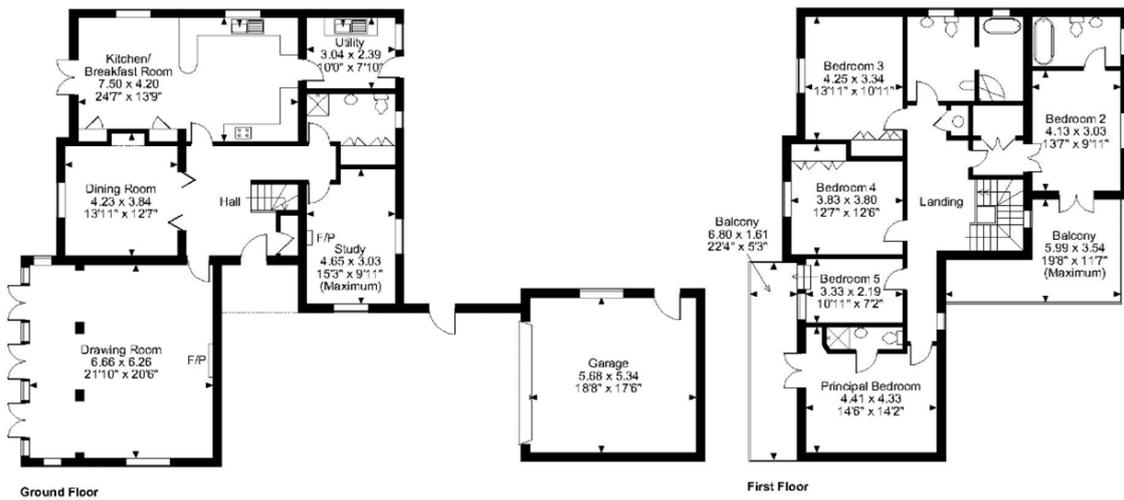
² Available here: <https://www.zoopla.co.uk/property-history/1-thorpe-avenue/peterborough/pe3-6la/59032734/>







Thorpe Avenue, Peterborough
Approximate Gross Internal Area
Main House = 2690 Sq Ft/250 Sq M
Garage = 326 Sq Ft/30 Sq M
Balcony external area = 280 Sq Ft/26 Sq M



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