

Comments from Councillor Simon Fawthrop in relation to Item 12 - 43 Towncourt Crescent, Petts Wood, Orpington

Chairman, if this application came before us in any road that was outside the Petts Wood Area of Special Residential Character (ASRC) then I would agree with the recommendation to grant permission.

However this has to be taken in the context in which the application is received. It also has to be taken in context of the development which took place at no. 45 Towncourt Crescent next door. If this application was again taken in the context of no. 45 being typical of the Area of Special Residential Character then again the recommendation to grant permission would be a good one.

To put this in context no. 45 was granted permission for the two storey side extension in 1990 over 26 years ago and 4 years prior to the introduction of the ASRC. Since then, planning policy has changed with 3 iterations of the Local Plan and the description of the ASRC has been updated.

When viewing Towncourt Crescent, it will immediately become apparent that No.45 is the odd one out. It is the only property which breaks the rhythm of that side of the street. All other side extensions are set back with a side space of 1m or greater to preserve the integrity of the ASRC spatial standards.

It is also worth noting that since the previous application went before an inspector, the ASRC description has been updated which must be a material consideration against which the inspector's decision is set. Furthermore even on the old ASRC description, the inspector found in paragraph 6 of his report that there was harm to the ASRC resulting from the proposal, with regard to the side extension.

Allowing the application as it currently stands goes against the rhythm and character of the area, it narrows the gap between no. 43 and no.45 to such an extent that the minimum usually acceptable total gap of 2m will be reduced to a mere 1m at first floor level and will keep a bare minimum gap at ground floor level encroaching on the side space and whilst not forming a terrace the gap is so narrow as to seriously undermine the spatial standards contrary to policy H9.

In addition, the total overall impact on the Petts Wood ASRC which I circulate as a reference, makes this contrary to policies H10 and BE1.

In case there is any doubt about the meaning of the policy and the description within the ASRC, as the author of the revised ASRC description, I remain best placed to advise on its meaning and the context in which the policy was set, this policy description was agreed unanimously by Bromley Council.

I therefore propose that the application be refused.