

COUNCILLOR FAWTHROP'S COMMENTS IN REGARD TO ITEM 4.6 - 106 KINGSWAY, PETTS WOOD, BR5 1PU

The issue with this application is the impact upon the appearance of the Petts Wood Area of Special Residential Character (ASRC).

As ward Councillors, and I speak for both Cllrs Onslow and Owen as well, we recognise that buildings designed and built in the 1930s will need updating and refreshing to be commensurate with modern day living. However when looking at development it has to be taken in the context that Petts Wood is one of only two outstanding garden suburbs in the whole of Greater London, the other being its more famous counterpart of Hampstead Garden Suburb.

When drawing up the description of the ASRC Councillors and local residents struck a balance between preserving the appearance and character of the area, but allowing appropriate development. Unfortunately in recent times some residents took advantage of the gaps within the planning regulations to make inappropriate additions through Permitted Development Rights within the area. To prevent this degradation of the area, some PD Rights have been removed across the area, namely those with regard to the front roof line and with regard to the frontages. This was to ensure that reasonable development could be undertaken at the rear of the property without impacting the appearance and character of the ASRC.

The rationale behind these moves was to ensure that the appearance of the ASRC remained intact. The description of Petts Wood ASRC lays great store in the rhythm of the street scene and the separation between houses.

It is therefore disappointing that the report appears inadequate as it does not even consider the impact of the proposals on the ASRC as to the impact this development would have within the street scene, nor does it deal with the context and history of the area, which is laid out in the ASRC description which I have already circulated to members.

The report concentrates on the impact on policy H9 Side Space which is important. But fails to address the policy on page 32 of the current UDP paragraph which states that "the retention of space around residential buildings is essential to ensure adequate separation It is important to prevent a cramped appearance and unrelated terracing from occurring. It is also important to protect the high special standards and levels of visible amenity which characterise many of the Borough's residential areas." When this is read in conjunction with the ASRC description which states "The separation between building and the rhythm and pattern of the houses adds to the special character. In many cases there is a much wider separation between houses than in other parts of the Borough which demands a higher degree of separation between buildings to maintain the special character," then openness and feel of the area is clearly compromised and undermined by this proposal.

The new plans whilst keeping a hipped shape do two things to undermine that firstly the side space is compromised as what is currently a single storey on the western flank as viewed from the street becomes more than a single storey and slopes much more rapidly up to 2 stories, than the existing elevation. Narrowing the gap and the visibility from the street scene and undermining the special standards of the area. Contrary to the description which states "This allows many of the trees and greenery which prevails throughout the area to be seen from the street scene giving the area its open and semi-rural feel in line with the garden suburb principle." It is fair to say that this is also true of the eastern extension, although there is more space on this flank due to facing the garden of 17 Crossway which also has issues of overlooking.

The second design feature which undermines the character of the area is the front dormers. There are very few of these within the ASRC, most of which were introduced under Permitted Development, which was one of the prompts for the A4D. No matter what design is used any dormer at the front is not of a level that is ever going to be sufficient to meet the very high standards now expected to compliment the character within the ASRC.

Finally to support my contention that inspectors take great account of the ASRC Description, I have circulated 3 recent inspector's decisions which back up this contention, in all the cases the Council Officers had also recommended permission and members local knowledge and degree of expertise was accepted by the inspectors.

To conclude Mr Chairman, the plans add a bulk to no. 106 leaving it out of kilter within the street scene. This is contrary to policies BE1 H10 and H8, and also policy 44 of the emerging plan (which on this specific policy the inspector has not raised any issues). I have also expressed my concern that this also does not meet the high standard of policy H9 required within the ASRC. I therefore propose refusal on the grounds stated.