

Highfield Residents' Association



Planning Appeal Reference: APP/D1780/W/23/3315088

Erection of a two-storey rear extension to create additional ancillary space for the existing retail unit with a 1-bedroom flat above, whilst retaining the existing dwelling.

Highfield Residents' Association considers that the building proposals outlined in the original Planning Application and subsequent Appeal would be an inappropriate development of the retail unit at 201 Portswood Road.

HRA supports the decision of Southampton City Planning Authority to refuse permission and agrees fully with the reasons given:

1. The development by virtue of its orientation, location, scale and bulk would have a detrimental effect on the prospective occupiers and neighbouring properties in terms of loss of daylight, sunlight and outlook. The proposal as a result fails to protect the amenities of existing and proposed residents and therefore would be contrary to the requirements of the Development Plan and the NPPF.
2. In the absence of either a scheme of works or a completed Section 106 legal agreement or unilateral undertaking to support the development the application fails to mitigate against its wider direct impact with regards to the additional pressure that further residential development will place upon the Special Protection Areas of the Solent Coastline. Failure to secure mitigation towards the 'Solent Disturbance Mitigation Project' in order to mitigate the adverse impact of new residential development (within 5.6km of the Solent coastline) on internationally protected birds

and habitat is contrary to Policy CS22 of the Council's adopted LDF Core Strategy as supported by the Habitats Regulations.

It is for the LPA to argue the legal and policy reasons for refusal and HRA does not hold such expertise. However, as a residents' association, HRA does have the needs and welfare of residents as core values.

Therefore HRA is objecting to the appeal on the following grounds.

The proposed extension covering two floors is out of scale and design with the original building. The proposed residential unit is tiny, only just achieving minimum space requirements. According to the plan (Ref: Plan 1670227.pdf) this unit would only have two small north-west facing windows and two flat rooflights. There is no statement of calculated lux value within the rooms of the unit. It would be a dingy small place to live with little or no natural light and a poor outlook.

The retail unit store has a small window which would be partly blocked by the bin storage. The proposed staffroom has only one, even smaller, window which would not allow staff much natural light. Would the construction of a new residential unit also remove a bedroom window of the existing flat?

There is no residential outdoor space at all except a metal exterior staircase. It is presumed that this would provide a fire escape route for the first floor unit, although the important issues of fire safety provisions and fire escapes are not addressed by the plans. This is especially important if items, which may be flammable, are to be stored immediately below a residential unit.

HRA supports the aims of the Local Authority Supplementary Planning Document (2006) which seeks to achieve well designed places in high quality buildings. This Planning Proposal achieves neither of these. The build would be squeezed between the back of other buildings in the Portswood Road terrace. It would take away two current car parking spaces and provide none. Space for two large bins is illustrated, but there is no indication if these would

be for the residents of the two flats or for the shop. What would happen if the shop filled the bins and residents had no bin space available? Southampton City Council operates a recycling scheme. No provision is shown for recycling or glass collection.

Finally to the location. The entrance to the unit is not at 201 Portswood Road but in an unadopted lane to the rear. The lane is not named and so the proposed residential unit would not have a postal address. This lane is unmade, has many potholes, is full of rubbish, is crowded by haphazardly parked vehicles and subject to regular flooding. As an unadopted road, the upkeep is the responsibility of the shop owners. There is minimal, if any, upkeep. HRA has recently discussed at committee the problem of the spread of Japanese knotweed along the unmaintained areas at the back of the properties for which no one has taken responsibility. The two windows of the proposed residential unit and the store would look out onto this lane. The immediate view is of high metal railings around the MENCAP building carpark (Ref: HRA photo 1).

The lane has no street-lighting and it would not be comfortable or safe to walk from the main road to the residential unit entrance in the dark.

The agent submitted several photographs with the Appeal Statement. HRA would consider that these photographs, illustrating the rear of other buildings along the lane, are not relevant to the proposed build. I am attaching some alternative photographs of the immediate surroundings (Ref: HRA photographs 2 - 4) and a Google Street view (Ref: HRA photograph 5). HRA considers the location to be unsuitable for a new, residential first floor dwelling and ground floor shop space. In any new build, it should now be the aim to achieve higher standards, both environmentally and in design, than those constructed in an earlier period. Indeed, it could be argued, that the poor design and lack of visual amenity of previous extensions to the rear of shops on Portswood Road would be reason in itself to dismiss this appeal not a reason to allow.

Highfield Residents' Association objects to the Planning Appeal. Fundamentally it would not be a very nice place to live.

HRA asks that the appeal be dismissed.

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Photographs Mrs N. Johnson HRA Digital Comms