

Dear Ellie,

We have some further comments in response to the committee update that we feel should be considered prior to the application being heard at the next committee meeting.

The update stated, *'the openings proposed within the annex would be significantly screened by a large hedge which appears to be within neighbouring land (at no. 1b).'*

The hedge referred to is within our client's land and not within the applicant's land and therefore control. As such, the hedge could be reduced in height or removed entirely at any given point and it should therefore not form part of the planning and decision making process in this case. Our client has three windows on the side elevation that face the proposed annex. On the ground floor there is a utility room window and on the first floor a bathroom and bedroom window. It should be noted that the bedroom window is the only window to this room. It isn't a secondary window. The separation distance of 14.2m from this bedroom window to the proposed bedroom window in the annex falls well below the recommended 21m in the SPD and we are astonished that officers find this to be acceptable.

The update went on to state that, *'Furthermore, the existing plans show the annex at first floor to be used as an office, which benefitted from a habitable opening. Therefore, whilst the residential use may be more intense, the relationship between these two neighbours has already been established.'*

In response to this, we would question whether the 'office' is actually used as an office. Whilst on a recent site visit, we ended up engaging in conversation with the applicant. He firstly admitted that he's a builder by trade. He therefore certainly doesn't work from home. Even if the office is occasionally used for business or personal use, a bedroom within an annex, rather than an office within an outbuilding, would result in a far more intensive use. Furthermore, the garage was left wide open when the applicant went out. Why would someone do this if the office contained expensive electrical equipment e.g. computers, and important documents etc? We are of the opinion that the office is not used as an office at all. As such, we simply do not feel the existing office should be viewed as an existing habitable room in this instance.

In addition, the existing garage is proposed to be turned into a lounge. The separation distance of 11.4m from what would be a habitable room window to our client's non-habitable utility room window, also falls below the recommended 12m in the SPD. A lounge would most certainly be a more intensive use than the existing garage, and given the separation distance, the proposed development would create additional overlooking.

Throughout this application we have felt that our client's concerns have not been dealt with properly or in accordance with current planning policy due to the 'principle of development' being found to be acceptable in the past. We have tried to argue all along that two wrongs don't make a right and that even though this application has been approved in the past, it doesn't necessarily mean those decisions were the correct ones at the time and should therefore be repeated again.

Our client is particularly concerned with the proposed annex. During conversation with the applicant on site, he also admitted that he lives on his own and has done for over 20 years. We would again question the need for the annex in the first place. We have requested clarification on this issue, but have yet to receive any information detailing the nature of the accommodation proposed and its intended use. The Council therefore cannot be surprised that our clients suspect the annex would instead be used as a separate dwellinghouse.

Please could these additional comments be addressed in the committee update with further clarification on the issues raised.

Kind Regards,