

Plot 23 Should Not Be Treated as an Exception

Plot 23 occupies an exceptional position within the development. It is prominently located at the highest part of the site, alongside the Green Belt, with extensive panoramic views. The developer has actively marketed Plot 23 on the strength of those views.

What concerns us is that this advantageous position appears to have been accompanied by a progressively different planning treatment from that applied to the other dwellings.

Along Lingards Road, the ridge lines of the new houses generally rise gradually with the road and with the existing properties opposite. There is an identifiable pattern to the streetscape.

Plot 23 breaks that pattern.

It is already situated at the highest and most prominent point. Yet its approved height also rises beyond the gradual progression established by the neighbouring plots. Rather than completing that sequence, Plot 23 becomes an exception to it.

That is difficult to reconcile with the principle that new development should respond sympathetically to its surroundings and the established streetscape.

There is also an important planning distinction between taking advantage of a site's natural position and increasing the height of a dwelling in order to enhance that advantage. Plot 23 already benefits from its elevated position and outlook. There is no obvious streetscape justification for making an already prominent dwelling higher still.

For those of us directly opposite, the consequence is significant. The very characteristics which make Plot 23 commercially attractive — its elevated position and extensive outlook — increase its prominence and its relationship with existing homes on the opposite side of Lingards Road.

The planning question should therefore not be whether additional height improves the outlook from Plot 23. It should be whether that height is justified when viewed as part of the wider streetscape and when its effect upon neighbouring properties is properly considered.

Plot 23 should follow the pattern of the development, not be allowed to depart from it simply because it occupies the most advantageous plot.