

Head of Planning Services
Elmbridge Borough Council
Civic Centre, High Street
Esher, Surrey, KT10 9SD

Portmore Park & District Residents Association
3 Clinton Close
Weybridge, Surrey, KT13 8NU
17 February 2022

Dear Head of Planning Services

Re: 2021/4412, Blenheim House, Church Walk, Weybridge, KT13 8JT

I am writing on behalf of the Committee of Portmore Park & District Residents Association to object to this application, on the grounds of overdevelopment of the site, conflict with previous applications, access issues, parking issues, negative impact on neighbouring dwellings, design out of keeping the surroundings and inadequate flood mitigation.

The current small building is office Building B in EBC 2013/4255, PDR Prior Approval for change of use from Class B1 to C3 (residential). Approval was granted subject to change of use to residential being begun before 30 May 2016. The site is described as Unit 3 in EBC 2016/1274, which granted a Lawful Development Certificate in September 2016 on the basis of works previously started in Units 1 & 2.

1/ The Design and Access Statement describes the current studio former office/storage building (Building B) as a “house”, although it lacks essentials such as bathroom and kitchen and is not known to have been inhabited. There seems to be no visible sign of work ever having started to convert it to residential use.

2/ Overdevelopment: The current proposal is for a very large extension of this small studio building, to turn it into a habitable house. The result would occupy most of the Unit 3 Riverside site as shown in previous planning applications (e.g. 2019/3237, retrospective consent for moorings), and leave little usable outdoor amenity space.

3/ Conflict with 2017/0445 – double-counting the same land: We note that the 2021/4412 application site boundary has been extended to include a parking space and bin space allocated to Units 1&2 Riverside in 2017/0445. This space was material to the granting of the 2017/0445 planning consent. Without it, Units 1&2 suffer parking and access issues, and loss of bin space.

4/ Vehicle access issues: The sweeping access path diagram in 2017/0445 shows access to the parking space which this new application (2021/4412) proposes now to remove from Units 1&2 and add to Unit 3. The swept path requires vehicles to reverse onto private gated land which is not associated with Unit 3, in order to turn around. This may be unacceptable to the majority of owners of that private Church Walk land. The new proposals make parking and turning very difficult for Units 1, 2 and 3.

5/ Parking issues: The site is in an area of very high on-street parking stress, which will be exacerbated when 28 new consented high density dwellings are completed in Beales Lane. Units 1&2 Riverside are four-bedroom houses, currently sharing three tight parking spaces, plus ample current parking space within the Unit 3 area which would be lost to the proposed extension (see aerial photo). Transferring one existing Unit 1&2 space for use by an extended Unit 3 will only make parking stress worse.

6/ Pedestrian access issues: The application form states there is NO new access proposed to/from public highway. But the plans show a proposed new pedestrian access to/from Church Walk, a public highway over which the public have a right of way on foot only (as per S. 329 (1) Highways Act 1980). Such an access would disturb neighbours in Portmore Cottages, and we understand has been previously refused on those grounds (EBC 89/1066).

7/ Design out of keeping: The current Unit 3 office Building B has attractive fanlights, which are an appealing and longstanding feature of the Riverside buildings (Units 1,2&3). The current application states that the site cannot be viewed from a footpath, but Building B is highly visible from the public footpath crossing the bridge, and this view is featured in the design and access statement. The proposals would remove the fanlights, and build an angular extension with large rectangular windows. The result would be entirely out of keeping with the style and charm of the neighbouring cottages (which many local people have long felt should be in a conservation area).

8/ The original 2013 change of use applications were refused for flood reasons. The site is in a Class 3 floodplain. The EA originally recommended that the floor level should be raised 300mm above the 1 in 100 year plus allowance for climate change floodplain level. The current application's Design and Access Statement describes a subterranean underfloor flood mitigation void, which it is difficult to see mitigating flooding above ground level.

Overall, this application would have a negative impact on the quality of life for neighbouring residents, and on the character of this charming and historic corner of Weybridge. If Building B is to be extended, we trust that a more appropriate design can be proposed.

Yours sincerely

Miles Macleod
Chair, Portmore Park & District Residents Association

Attachments below show site plan comparisons and parking arrangements



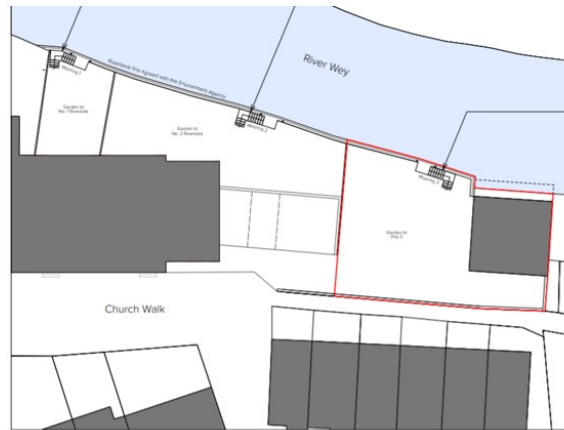
2017-0445 Units 1 & 2 Site Plan



2021-4412 Unit 3 Site Plan



2017-0445 Unit 1 & 2 Parking Plan
(showing need to reverse onto private gated land not associated with Unit 3)



2019-3237 Unit 3 Site Plan



Blenheim House Unit 3 in use as parking space, March 2021



Blenheim House onsite parking and turning space, May 2009