

The following are the comments of the Trustees of the Friends of Old Headington (agreed unanimously) with respect to planning application 21/00927/FUL |Erection of a single storey rear extension, formation of 2no. rear dormers and insertion of 1no. rooflight to rear roof-slope. | 31 St Andrew's Road, Oxford, Oxon OX3 9DL

Our chief concerns are threefold:

1) The planning application process

The current application is the 4th in a series of applications (the previous submissions were: 19/01594/CPU; 19/03317/FUL; 20/01593/FUL). Had the current application been submitted originally, we believe it would almost certainly have been refused, because the extension is almost 12m long whereas planning guidelines state that rear extensions should not exceed 3m in length for a house of this size. The iterative nature used by the Applicants' architects seems to us to be an abuse of the planning process. Each application only applied for the changes from the last approved application, but no work has been done yet. The result is that the documentation of each application looks like an innocuous, minor change to something either existing or approved – the sort of thing that any busy person might ignore or rubber stamp. On these grounds alone the current application should be resisted. It sets a dangerous precedent for future planning applications – not just those in the Conservation Area.

2) Nature of the proposed development

The proposed extension seems to us to be out of proportion to the row of houses of which it is a part. These (27-33 St Andrew's Road) are identified in the Old Headington Character Appraisal as a row of '20th century houses of note' [Annex Map 3, OHCA Appraisal]. More generally, the Appraisal also mentions 'poor design of rear extensions to properties' under its list of 'Negative Features, Issues and Opportunities for Enhancement' (in the Conservation Area). (pp67-70). It is our view that the proposed developments in the latest application do not respect existing local character and certainly do nothing to enhance the Conservation Area: it is too big and overpowering. Section 9 of the submitted Planning Application declares that the site cannot be seen from public land. But this is incorrect. The view across the back gardens of the row of cottages is completely visible from the west end of the graveyard of St Andrew's Parish Church.

The nature of the development also may have traffic and parking implications in future when the building in the garden (which has separate access from the street) could potentially become a 'granny flat or an Airbnb property.) This could be mitigated by a Deed which required the separate access to be permanently sealed.

3) Scale of the proposed development

With each planning application the scale of the proposed development has grown, with the result that the existing 3-bedroom house would become a 5-bedroom house by the addition of a large building in its rear garden. The living area of the house would be 'bulged out' to add space and the ground floor of the house would be nearly three times as deep as it is now. The roof line of the ground floor extension is too high - up to the

first-floor window sills; and the rooflight over the 'bulge' area is the same height as the ridge of the long extension along the eastern boundary of the property.

The Friends of Old Headington (FOH) was formed by a group of local residents in 1959 to protect the special character of Old Headington village, what is now the Old Headington Conservation Area. FOH is an active membership organisation with elected trustees which meet regularly to promote its aims, organise local community events, including an annual AGM.

The Aims of the Friends of Old Headington include

- retaining Old Headington as a village, with special emphasis on preserving its lanes, walls, grass verges, and trees;
- ensuring that new buildings and alterations are in keeping with the existing character of the village;
- co-operating with the Oxford Preservation Trust and the City Council in their declared policy of preserving the village; and
- involving as many as possible to achieve these aims successfully .