



Date 3 August 2020

Dear Ms Wells

My objections to planning application no APP/20/00241

Draft Design and Heritage Statement

The recent submission of a 'Draft Design and Heritage Statement' highlights a complete about turn in regard to the design of the exterior. It is fair to say that this statement is the result of an interim design exercise and the document makes it clear that this is only a 'draft' version of the new design. However, the change from a modern building exterior to a traditional Georgian building style does raises new issues and requires more information and visual references than that document and the current drawings can provide.

While the new elevation drawings provide an outline of the new exterior, it is almost impossible for the reader to evaluate what the final visual effect of the building will be from what are basically black and white drawings.

Up to now there have not been any perspective drawings to assist the reader though they would be very useful aids for evaluating such an important new development. Almost all architectural and building software can produce such drawings to show a proposed building from any preferred view points and at any time of the day with shadows in the correct places. These drawings can be rendered in colour to show more accurately the effect of materials proposed and can give a very reliable indication of the size and relationship of the proposed building to the site and neighbouring buildings. Perspective drawings should be provided to show the reader what might be visible; from the entrance to the site, from the courtyard of 19 Tower St and perhaps from the first floor of Saxted House.

A final version of the Design and Heritage Statement might also include some photographic detail of the Georgian architectural features to be used from the facade of Saxted House, the final brick selections, the choice of natural slate (as there are various shades) and any local examples of period flint work that have been identified as a design reference.

Design and specifications

There is no specific section for Design in the statement, but there are references to design-related issues in the section titled Proposals. Apart from some specific decisions that glazing has been reduced by 55%, that tarmac will be replaced by pavers and the driveway will be similar to the 2003 layout, design references or specifications for the appearance and external materials are minimal, but passing mention is made of red multi-bricks, natural roof slates and flint work.

The design statement on page 6 that *'The square shape of the planned dwelling echoes the traditional shape and Georgian symmetry of the adjacent Saxted House'* might need editing or clarification, as the building proposed is still appears to be rectangular in all elevations below the gutters

A manufacturer's marketing promise that their bricks *'are sympathetic in style and appearance to Saxted House'* is a standard marketing claim. With one reference to 'red multi-bricks' in very small type on one elevation drawing, the reader cannot assess what final brick colour might be. Some simple research on the site of one UK stockist of the manufacturer shows four different red multi-bricks and each of them capable of providing four quite different visual effects.

The promise of *'natural slates'* and *'traditional flint work'* also needs to be confirmed, as these terms are used for factory made composite slates and flints in pre-assembled lego-style panels. While these products may be perfectly acceptable on a new housing development as a cost-saving exercise, their use so close to Saxted House (a Grade II listed building), and within a conservation buildings can be a cause for concern. A cavalier approach to these substitutes can also have long term unforeseen consequences as such fakery can result in a dilution of the quality of buildings in the Emsworth Conservation Area. This can already be seen on the High St in the use of pvc windows on the first floor of the building beside the old bank building.

The reference to *'the style and appearance'* of Saxted House indicates a dramatic change of direction in the architectural style of the proposed house. If Saxted House is now the design inspiration for the external appearance of a new house, care must be taken not to approve too quickly a 21st century mini-version of Saxted House. The key question that this latest proposal cannot answer is; how similar to, or dissimilar, will the proposed exterior be to Saxted House?

Impact of the proposed development

The assessment of the impact seems to be based on an evaluation of the ratio of built land to unbuilt land. The comment under the heading for Tower Street on pg 9, line 6, is very misleading and is either naive or disingenuous.

'Only 13% of overall plot of approx half an acre is being built on therefore the impact will be no more than it would have been if the 2003 dwelling had been built',

This implies a physical impact that can be determined by an area calculation at ground level and skates over visual issues of massing, location, orientation and how well the building is situated within the site. It also fails to take into account the positive or negative impact it might have when juxtaposed with neighbouring properties and as part of the Emsworth Conservation Area.

The proposed development will appear to occupy a great deal more space than 13% of the site. It will give the very strong impression that the development is too large for the site and has to be tilted to allow it to fit into the space between the boundary wall to 19 Tower St to the south and the trees on the boundary to Saxted House to the north. The remainder of the site lies hidden behind the property and access to that area is constrained at either of the aforementioned boundaries. The front facade is now overlooking no 19 Tower Street and interfering with their privacy.

While the reason for the latest location has been arrived at by trial and error to minimise overlooking of neighbouring properties to the West and North, it nevertheless highlights how inappropriate this block house (and almost dolls house) approach is to this site and neighbourhood.

Ground levels and terrace levels at numbers 1, 2 and 3 Orange Row

The statement on page 9 to these properties has misquoted the ground level measurement. As stated previously, the internal ground levels of each of the properties at 1,2 and 3 Orange Row are 0.75 meters below the ground level of the proposed site. The rear terraces are each accessed by steps and

the terraces are at the same level as the site. These terraces are especially important through out the year to the occupants of these houses.

Summary

The permission granted in 2003 was for a pair of houses situated in the most advantageous locations both in relation to Saxted House and for neighbouring buildings to the east and west. These houses were well designed and their respective locations ensured their impact on the setting of Saxted House was reduced as far as possible.

The house designed and approved for this particular site allowed all of the unbuilt area to the north and east to act as a buffer zone between itself and Saxted House. It also allowed easy access to the northern area for development either as new gardens or further landscaping. Its L shaped layout of the house complemented the L shape of the site and also provided easy access to a double garage.

However, the current box shaped proposal sits in an awkward alignment to Saxted House which makes it look too large for the site. It now spreads diagonally from trees bordering Saxted House across the angle of the L-shaped plot simply to avoid overlooking Saxted house.

There is a lack of information on the impact of the proposed structure on the setting of Saxted House as a Grade II listed property. Neither has the visual impact of the proposed house in the heart of Emsworth Conservation Area been adequately addressed.

The current rectangular block layout is difficult to relocate on the site. The proximity to the Saxted house boundary and its atrium entrance creates a new and uncomfortable visual relationship with Saxted House to the north. Even though there are no windows on the north elevation to overlook the walled garden the mass of the building has moved much closer to Saxted House and will be more easily seen from the upper floors of Saxted House for many years to come. The proposed position does appear to be compromising the setting of Saxted House.

I appreciate the decision of the applicant to continue with this revised submission as part of his original application, rather than face the prospect of a negative decision on his original 5 bed proposal. However, the lack of design information, the failure to appreciate the matter of the impact of a new dwelling on the setting of a major Grade II listed building in the Emsworth Conservation Area and impacts on neighbours other than those in Saxted House means that more work has to be done on this proposal.

A reasonable course of action would be for the current application to be refused, and for this new design proposal to have the necessary design details and visuals set out clearly, for a more informed decision to be made as a new application.

Yours sincerely

