



Wednesday 16th October 2024

Dear Mrs Lisa Fisher,

Re: 1 Russell Road, Gravesend, Kent, DA12 2RT
Planning application: 20240554

We are writing to list our objections regarding the proposed plan to demolish 1 Russell Road ("current property") and replace it with essentially a three-storey building with 1x three-bedroom house, 3x studio apartments and 3x one-bedroom apartments ("proposed property").

The key basis for our objections are the issues the proposed property will cause on an already overcrowded residential area. In particular parking concerns, privacy issues, disruption and the property being out of place.

Ground 1: The proposed property would be out of place amongst the current surrounding areas.

In the Planning Statement by Mialex in Clause 2.4 it says the current property is out of place and that forms a basis upon which it should be redeveloped. Images 7 and 9 in the Planning Statement are used as a point of reference. However, this point is disputed as the proposed property will not resolve this purported issue but also be out of place in the current surrounding areas.

Images 7 and 9 are taken from Albion Terrace and Norfolk Road. If this is compared to the properties located on Russell Road, where the majority of the property is located and visible, the current property is on an elevated part of the road. The raised roofs on each end of the current property add to its elevation, bringing it more in line with the properties neighbouring it (17 Russell Road onwards) and directly opposite (2 Russell Road-14 Russell Road). Please refer to the screenshot picture provided from Google Maps showing the current property in line with the neighbouring property (17 Russell Road). This means whilst it is smaller in size compared to its neighbouring property (17 Russell Road), which is to be expected as it is a bungalow, it is not such a great difference that it should be deemed as "incongruous".

Furthermore, the current property is not the only property that has a small difference in building height on Russell Road. The newer buildings located on 28-42 Russell Road are slightly higher than the buildings directly opposite and next to them (26-16 Russell Road). Whilst these newer buildings are also 3 storey buildings, they are located on a less elevated part of the road and are in line with the surrounding buildings.

In the Design and Access Statement (Supplementary Information) there have been various architecture styles provided to demonstrate why the proposed property should be accepted. The proposed property is 3-storeys high (as shown through building plans provided) and has an architectural style that is too contemporary for the buildings in the surrounding area, is significantly large in mass and height and would be out of place in the residential area. The fact that the property sits on an elevated part of the road makes this point particularly pertinent.

If planning permission is given for this property type, this will encourage others to create further varied architecture style buildings, creating a mismatch and inconsistency of designed homes within this area of Gravesend and subsequently other areas of the borough.

Ground 2: The proposed property would be contributing to parking issues, including inadequate parking and cause a highway safety hazard, in a busy residential area.

A building of the proposed property's height and width on a corner between two roads, one being a main road frequently used, will make it difficult for vehicles to see into the road. This will largely impact Russell Road residents and non-residents using Russell Road.

There are several connecting roads and places surrounding the current property. There is a shop (between Albion Terrace and Norfolk Road), mosque (between Albion Terrace and Brunswick Walk), and a pub (between Russell Road and Canal Road). The latter two places regularly have events taking place which leads to an influx of non-residents parking on Russell Road and nearby roads. Gravesend Promenade and the Mark Lane Industrial Estate are also close by.

There is a constant flow of traffic in and around Russell Road and surrounding roads by both residents and non-residents. This includes parents dropping off children at Chantry Primary School as well as some vehicles from the Mark Lane Industrial Estate who cut through Russell Road towards Albion Terrace rather than travelling all along Canal Road.

There is also the related matter of parking. The Planning Statement refers to Policy P3 (Vehicle Parking Standards) which in Clause 5.40 states "the Council will expect development to make provision for vehicle parking....All vehicle parking provision should normally be made on the development site". Under Clause 4.2 of the Planning Statement, the proposed number of occupants is 14. Whilst there are two private parking spaces provided in the proposed plan, this is the same number available in the current property. Currently, one vehicle can be parked in the garage and one outside the garage. Therefore, the proposed property is not adding any additional parking spaces to the current availability.

Many existing residents on Russell Road have more than 1 vehicle. The proposed 14 occupants to occupy the proposed property will likely mean more drivers per flat/house. Lack of parking on the proposed property, will push them to park on Russell Road and surrounding roads (Albion Terrace, Suffolk Road, and Norfolk Road). Currently, it is almost impossible to park when non-residents are visiting events held at the Mosque, the pub and the Gravesend Promenade. Some events at these locations can take place simultaneously.

Despite them having their own car parks, these are small and do not always have enough space for all visiting which result in them parking on Russell Road and nearby roads.

Although there is provision for bike spaces in the proposed property, it is not guaranteed that potential occupiers will have bikes and/or use them.

Therefore, the large occupancy from the proposed property will exacerbate inadequate parking in an already busy residential area. The proposed property would also create a major blind spot to those travelling along Russell Road and turning right onto Albion Road and vice versa – a highway safety hazard.

Ground 3: The proposed property would cause issues with residents' living conditions.

The increased height of the proposed property and the current property on an elevated part of the road means the proposed property is likely to obstruct the view of other properties.

As per the proposed elevations plan (supplementary documentation), the proposed windows on the first and second floors will overlook neighbouring garden areas. This would be deemed more intrusive, as it would change from a ground floor building to a three-storey building. This would mean it has a higher line of sight overlooking neighbouring properties.

Additionally, with multiple different occupants in the proposed property, it would be difficult to monitor the individual behaviour of all the residents to a sufficient level to protect privacy levels of neighbouring residents. This includes overseeing further neighbouring gardens within the line of sight and negatively impacting other residents' privacy.

Ground 4: The proposed property would be increasing noise pollution.

According to Clause 4.2 of the Planning Statement, the proposed number of occupants will be 14. With this many occupants in a smaller space, it is likely to lead to noise pollution and disruption to nearby residents.

The residents surrounding the current property on Russell Road, Norfolk Road and Albion Terrace are primarily families, us included, and it is very much a residential area. Therefore, this is a huge cause for concern.

Ground 5: The proposed planning application has not been sent to the relevant residents of Russell Road, Norfolk Road and Albion Terrace - all roads that would be affected with the new proposed property.

There was no notification of the proposed planning permission to our current residential address (19 Russell Road). The only way we became aware of the application was due to a letter being delivered to our rental property which is situated on the same road (14 Russell Road).

Upon speaking about the matter with other residents nearby, some were unaware of the proposed planning permission and had not received such a letter.

In conclusion we would also like to request that, should the application be approved, the Council consider using its powers to enforce controlled hours of operation and other restrictions that might make the duration of the works more bearable. The proposed site of development is in a small space, so we would ask that consideration be made about how and where construction vehicles and staff would gain access to the site for unloading and parking without causing a highway hazard or inconveniencing neighbours.

We would be grateful if the Council would take the objections above into consideration when deciding this application.

Kind Regards,

