

FTAO Mr A Clarke

Dear Mr Clarke,

Re: DM/25/0289 Planning Application – 5 Silverdale Road.

The timber framed garage for 6-9 cars that has started to be constructed within the Conservation Area of Silverdale Road is excessively large and unnecessarily high, contravening several of the Conservation Areas Applications points for “Character and Design and Appropriate Scale”. The current structure does not resemble the original application for a single storey garage, as only one elevation was drafted, giving a false impression - please also note the precedent set by the single storey garages nearby at Nos. 3, 7, 9 & 11, which adjoin No.5 and do not impact on nearby properties. Nor does this structure stand scrutiny with the expectation that the Planning Department will have properly and carefully considered what should have been a conservative and appropriately sized garage for this Conservation Area with substantial houses of quality and amenity in Silverdale Road of 130 years.

The structure currently being built is also on a newly raised ground level of some 5- 6 feet above where it was before building started, and where the boundary fence still stands. This is unacceptable, as the Contractors knew, so it was ‘slipped in’ with no planning application for this. The proposed height now of 5.69m on top of this artificially raised ground, totally overwhelms the neighbouring properties and gardens, immediately beside and behind this ‘garage’; it casts a huge shadow “causing substantial harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents, including impact on our privacy” and on our enjoyment of our home and garden, where we have lived and brought up our family over the last 3 decades, and where we would like to continue to live with no impact or destruction of our amenity, including what is the only direction of light and sunshine for us, as the gardens on this side are North facing and surrounded by trees to the North and East and the house to the South. We have not had a problem with light or sunshine until now.

To summarise our objections due to the direct impact of this ‘garage’, which is not appropriate in scale to any other garage or the properties in Silverdale Road -

1. The elevation adjoining our property rises from the pre-existing ground level to a newly raised ground level by over 1.6m to their new floor level (NOT 1.09m as on the retrospective N&S elevation drawings) and continues to rise to a two-storey building height, with a steeply rising high pitched roof. Why would a garage for cars need this roof height? This is causing loss of light right across our garden. This negatively impacts on both No.7 and No.9 Silverdale properties. The drawings marked as North & South Elevations (No. 2210283) are misleading at best, if not actually wrong.
2. The scale of this unnecessarily imposing ‘garage’ does not reflect the characteristics of the area or other existing neighbouring Silverdale garages, as it rises from the unnecessary and so-far illegally raised ground level, to an immense disproportionate and unnecessary height for any garage. It is bigger than many domestic dwellings, including one occupied by our daughter and her family.
3. The location is within this prestigious Conservation Area, and contravenes the intention of such a statement to preserve and/or enhance the area. On the contrary, the size and height of this structure causes serious negative impact on the adjoining properties.
4. There is no mention of the rainwater management and how or where the water off the roofs will be directed, to prevent concentrated flooding to properties on a lower level. This poses another negative impact on our garden. The soil is clay and holds water during the winter months, often to saturation, hence there is a concrete path, in existence for over five decades or longer, to access the end of our garden, located just below this proposed new structure. The clay soil cannot physically absorb increased rainwater from this proposed structure.

5. There is no mention of fire prevention and control in relation to 6 or 9 vehicles with their fuel storage within this building. Together with a timber constructed building, this raises a significant fire risk and potential damage to the surrounding properties and the personal health and safety of residents.
6. Has a noise assessment been undertaken with regard to the intention of usage? We suggest the noise level of 6-9 cars driving in and out of this 'garage' is yet another negative impact on the neighbours' lawful right to the 'quiet enjoyment' of their properties and gardens, hitherto uninterrupted.
7. We object to the application to include space for "domestic storage" in this 'garage'. The houses in Silverdale Road, including No.5, are large and substantial enough for plenty of domestic storage. Domestic Storage is unquantifiable, and it is imperative to avoid any risk at all of a later likely application by this or another owner of No.5, to apply for change of use from 'Domestic Storage' to 'Domestic Dwelling'. A change of just one word, with likely no need to increase the size. This concern is huge, in view of the building of many houses of similar size to this going on around us, and the ongoing request of central government to build more.

Conclusion:

Please consider that in view of the Conservation Areas Applications issues of inappropriate scale, substantial harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents, impact on our privacy and the enjoyment of light and sun in our garden, lack of sensitive design to reflect the special characteristics of this area in terms of scale, density and design, not addressing the sloping site of Silverdale, and failure to avoid the erection of a prominent retaining wall, artificially raised ground level and overly large flank elevations right next to us, the existing half-built structure and this retrospective application to approve it, must be refused and the only way to erect a conservative single-storey garage, in keeping with other garages in this Silverdale Conservation Area, that does not impact on us or our neighbours, would be to restore the pre-existing ground level and the proposed single storey low structure on their level, not on any raised ground including that drawn currently even on their higher level, and sloping downwards with the natural flow of the pre-existing ground level, respecting the sloping ground, so that their cars could enter and drive downwards, possibly underground, with a flat roof that does not block out light and with sufficient drainage and fire safety, with no negative impact to what has been our pre-existing amenity over several decades and circa 130 years for the property.

Regards,

Nos. 7 & 9 Silverdale Road

Burgess Hill

RH15 0ED