

FAO Catherine Aldous  
Head of Planning  
Newport City Council  
Civic Centre  
Newport  
NP20 4UR

Dear Ms. Aldous,

**Council Ref : 24/1034, Planning Application at Rear of 15 Ridgeway, Newport**

We write this letter (sent to you via e mail on 21 January) in connection with the above application. For the reasons outlined briefly below, we strongly object and wish you and the Council to take into account our objections when considering this application.

**1. Destruction of Woodland / Felling of Trees as part of this Planning Application**

We would like to raise the *significant concerns we have regarding the actions of the applicants regarding large scale tree felling* on the land which is the subject to this planning permission in the run in to their application for planning permission. This is very disturbing at a time when the whole world is taking very seriously the impact of climate change.

There were many many well established trees at the rear of 15 Ridgeway up until recently and they represented a natural extension of the woodland immediately adjacent to 15 Ridgeway. They offered biodiversity and beauty, were good for plants and animals alike and were in line with the ambience of the area neighbouring onto ancient woodland. It would appear that as many as thirty / forty established and significant trees (or perhaps many more) were felled shortly before the application for planning permission was made. We are outraged by this as we love our garden, love our land and love our environment and we believe that the actions of the applicant in destroying this wonderful natural habitat should be taken into account by the Council and should negatively impact on their planning application. A question I have is "did the applicants seek feedback / comment / agreement from the Council before taking these actions?"

Indeed even worse - my understanding is that more trees would need to be felled should the application be passed and there would appear to be a total absence of new trees, fauna,

shrubs etc in the application. Furthermore – it would appear from plans submitted that the gap (buffer zone) between the development proposed and the neighbouring woodland is wholly insufficient. This should not be accepted as a stand alone issue and in our eyes should be worthy of declining the planning application outright on its own.

Finally, it seems that the Council's own "Trees Officer" has material concerns regarding this application himself so we would request that these issues are considered at length by the full council. I would refer you specifically to LDP Policy GP5 v and vii – does the application pass tests included here?

It would seem (to us) that the opportunity for financial gain by the owners of 15 Ridgeway has already ridden roughshod over the interests of the environment and this is hugely disturbing. So we urge you to take this into account in consideration of this planning application and reject it outright as a result.

## **2. Impact on Amenity and Privacy**

The proposed development of 2 new large detached houses and the building of an associated road of approx. 100 metres would impact unacceptably on the residential amenity and privacy principally on 13A Ridgeway and 17 Ridgeway, but also our house at 13 Ridgeway (which would be overlooked by both new dwellings). It would also increase Security concerns we have.

**Overlooking into rear gardens** at 13A and 17 Ridgeway would be significant with both new houses looking directly over to existing houses. In addition, this issue would also extend materially into our garden at 13 Ridgeway as well to the detriment of our amenities and privacy. This being exacerbated by the fact that the new houses will likely (due to elevation issues) need to be built on raised platforms which will rise up from the ground, significantly – aggravating the issue even more. Furthermore, my understanding is that the house at 15 Ridgeway would be situated at a height very significantly above the two new dwellings and as a result at least its closest new dwelling there could be a "light nuisance issue" with that new dwelling being overlooked by 15 Ridgeway.

**Noise disturbance** during both the building phase and post building phase would be significant. Currently our garden area is very peaceful, which is precisely the reason for buying our house. During construction, in particular, life could be intolerable since as retired folk we are in our garden most of the time and love the peaceful nature of what we have (and previous owners have had in the past). This could be totally eroded if the application is accepted.

**Lighting** of the new road which gives access to the dwellings will likely be required and if so, will impact on the amenity of many existing properties, certainly ours. Currently during evenings, we have peace and quiet to enjoy looking out over our land. If street lighting were to be introduced the whole ambience at the rear of our home would be materially impacted.

**Security** issues are a serious concern for all households. For us in particular as we were burgled (along with others on Ridgeway on the same evening) some years ago. As a result we installed side gates and implemented other security measures. If the application proceeds as presented, the new road will in effect give improved rear access for burglars to potentially attack the whole stretch of properties neighbouring 15 Ridgeway. This is a serious concern during these challenging economic times.

### **3. Character, Appearance of the Area and potentially setting a precedent for further planning applications on Ridgeway from other properties on Ridgeways northern side**

Currently, with the exception of just outbuildings, there are no other developments in the rear gardens of any of the properties on Ridgeway's north side. As per item 5 below, there have been applications in the past, but these have been rejected.

In our view, the building of two new houses in one rear garden of the current linear housing on Ridgeway, would NOT be in accordance with the prevailing character of this part of Ridgeway. The layout of the application presented would not in any way be sympathetic with the established nature of buildings along this side of Ridgeway.

Critically in our view, should the Council approve this planning application this could open flood gates to other potential developments on rear gardens at properties on the same northern side of Ridgeway, with significant development impacting negatively on the charm and ambience of the area as a whole. If you grant planning permission at the rear of 15 Ridgeway, we feel that it may set a precedent and you may find it difficult to reject other applications from owners and property developers in the near future. This would have a huge impact on the character and appearance of the area and undermine the pattern of development on Ridgeway. As a result this could be in conflict with the LDP Policy H6, GP2 and GPS 6 and also the Council's Supplementary Planning guidance on new dwellings.

### **4. Highways Impact**

The application does not satisfy your own Highways Officer requirements in many ways which is troubling given the time that the applicant has had to fully prepare their application. If they can fell dozens of trees before applying surely they should ensure that their application is full and complete, which the application currently is not. We would like you to naturally take into account all of the issues raised by your officer.

Very importantly for us, access to the proposed area both during construction and thereafter is at a very dangerous part of Ridgeway, right at the start of a left hand bend in the road going "up" Ridgeway, and shortly after going around the bend in the road coming down Ridgeway from the opposite direction. To summarise – access into the new site is very tricky, sightlines are compromised as a result and potentially dangerous. It would impact on road user and pedestrian safety. To compound the issue, reversing backwards down the proposed new road, down a slope would be very difficult. In winter – potentially treacherous.

*Irrespective of this application – our advice is that the Council should seriously consider putting in some type of speed control measure at a suitable location on the road somewhere between 13 Ridgeway and 15 Ridgeway (e.g. a sleeping policeman) since as the road is on a curve and many drivers (particularly going up Ridgeway turning left from Glasllwch Crescent) totally ignore the speed limit knowing that traffic officers are never stationed on a bend to take speed readings. Put simply, the road is dangerous as it currently is and warrants a speed control solution. If you add any new development at the rear of 15 Ridgeway the safety issues are compounded and would absolutely need to be addressed before some-one gets seriously hurt, or even worse.*

## **5. Past Precedent / Consistency in deciding on applications**

Backland development on Ridgeway has been considered by the Council in the past – refer to Planning Applications 04/1644 & 04/0049 back in 2004 which both related to garden areas immediately behind 29 Ridgeway. Both applications were refused on residential privacy and amenity grounds – the main reasons being :

- Proximity of access to adjacent properties and introduction of vehicles into the rear area would cause both noise nuisance and loss of privacy to the amenities of the occupants of neighbouring properties.
- Existing properties would be “overlooked” to the detriment of and privacy of the occupants of neighbouring properties.

Whilst we appreciate that planning guidelines change over time – the rationale for rejection of the aforementioned 2004 applications remain in our view as strong today, as they were in 2004 when the Council made your decision to reject the planning applications submitted. Given the similarity of the applications made back in 2004 and the recent application made for the rear of 15 Ridgeway, we trust that you will act in accordance with the obligations placed on the Council to decide applications based on consistency of decision and as a result, reject the application.

## **Conclusion**

We would request that you take into account all of the concerns summarised above, plus the issues raised regarding the application from your own officers plus issues the application presents which may not be in accordance with various local development plans, national policy and Council SPGs.

## **Potential Amended Future Application**

Should the current application be amended in future (or further information be submitted), we would appreciate if you could inform us in writing so we are able to review and potentially provide further observations and comment. Indeed, we were only made aware of the application for planning permission very recently as a result of a discussion with a neighbour. Had that discussion not taken place we would not have even been aware that a planning application which impacts on us had been made. We absolutely want to contribute to any potential development close to us which potentially impacts on our safety and quality of life. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

