

Application ref 2025/0149/P

Comments from owners of 100 Chetwynd Road

General observations:

- This application was submitted without seeking pre-application advice from the council planning department, and without prior discussion with neighbours. Subsequent to submission, we recently met with the applicants to discuss some of our concerns. They seemed to be amenable to adapting their plans to take our concerns into account, but given that these plans have been already been submitted for approval, we would like to register our comments and concerns, based on the existing documents and drawings.
- The drawings that have been submitted, though notionally to scale, are inaccurate and misleading: the difference in height between the proposed new building and existing structures (such as the balcony at no. 100 and the boundary wall between 102 and 104) is misrepresented, as significantly less than it would be in reality. (The difference between the existing balcony surface at 100 and the top of the proposed parapet wall would be 50 cm, but the drawings show it as c 34 cm). The drawings therefore play down the negative impact of the proposed structures, both on the neighbours on either side and on the overall aspect of the building, which would be far greater than is recognised in the application.
- 100-106 Chetwynd Road comprise two paired, semi-detached 'villa style' early Victorian houses. Dating from 1857, these were among the very first buildings to be constructed in the Dartmouth Park Conservation Area, and are a rare and significant architectural survival. Although there have been relatively minor alterations in the past to the rear aspect of these houses (the addition of the small existing extension on no. 102 and the metal first-floor balcony on no. 100), the buildings remain coherent, but the proposed substantial extension of the footprint of 102 and changed ground floor aspect of 100-102 would have a very negative impact on the architectural integrity of the buildings.
- Though this is not specified in the documents submitted for planning approval, subsequent communications from the structural engineer employed by the applicants have indicated that the intention is to demolish substantial sections of the shared boundary walls on both sides of the property, both of which are largely the original, very attractive early Victorian garden walls. This removal of these historic structures seems both unnecessary and unacceptable, not least because it would inevitably put the remaining parts of these rather fragile walls at risk of collapse during the demolition and building process.
- There is no indication of what roofing materials are envisaged for the flat areas of the proposed extension, but assuming that felt or a similar covering is intended, this would significantly urbanise the outlook from many neighbouring properties, and would also pave the way for the use of the roof

as a terrace, something that would presumably not be acceptable on a property like this, in a Conservation Area.

- The proposed scheme would result in a significant loss of biodiversity, thanks to the removal of an area of lawn and of numerous shrubs and climbing plants
Specific impact on no. 100:

- Loss of light:

- Although there are no actual measurements on the drawings to show the proposed height of the parapet wall, the application statement gives this as 3.30m, which is substantially higher than the existing small extension on the back of no. 102 (c.2.70m), and is also higher, in relation to the existing and neighbouring structures, than it has been drawn on the plans. The height of the proposed parapet is shown as dropping towards the back of the extension, but if the scaling of the proposed elevation drawing is correct, then the height would only drop to c. 2.85m.

Currently, the height of the boundary wall between 100 and 102 is 1.80m at the end by the houses, dropping to 1.50m towards the back of the section under discussion. For part of this run of wall, adjacent to the houses, there is also a shed on the back patio of no 100, which is 2.25m tall by the houses, but drops down to 1.50m. Above the wall and shed there is only trellising and delicate balcony railings, both of which let through a lot of light. So the proposed solid structure, rising as much as 1.80m higher than the existing structures along the boundary, would very significantly block light from reaching the ground floor family room and the rear patio of no 100. That is in fact precisely the route by which morning sun reaches those locations, and the claim in the application statement that to build a solid wall to a height of 3.30m “has minimal impact on the neighbouring property as there is an existing staircase, balcony and planting on the that boundary to a much higher height” is totally false.

- The proposed buildings would greatly increase the sense of enclosure at no 100, not only on the ground floor, as described above, but also on the first floor, from where the view from the dining room across neighbouring gardens would be significantly compromised. (Attached are photographs from both levels, and copies of those photos marked up to indicate the approximate extent of the proposed new wall on the boundary.)
- As mentioned above, the engineer’s proposal is to demolish the shared boundary wall, but no party wall agreement has been sought, and furthermore that party wall forms part of the structure of a high quality purpose-built shed on the back patio of 100, which would therefore also inevitably be demolished if the proposed building plans were to be implemented, something that is not acceptable.
- The plans seem to provide for a ‘privacy screen’ at first floor level, which from the drawings looks like a solid modern structure that would be totally inappropriate in this historic context. The applicants have since reassured us

that this is not what they envisage, but we would still appreciate formal reassurance on this point. The current privacy arrangements, consisting of delicate wooden trellises and a variety of climbing plants, are both effective and preferable, and given the location, to grow new plants along that boundary would be extremely difficult, if not impossible. The impact on no. 104 would be in many ways comparable, with amongst other things considerable loss of light and unnecessary destruction of/risk to an historic, shared boundary wall, and established plants. We are totally willing to work with the applicants to try to find a solution whereby they could gain the increased internal space that they would like in a way that does not have a serious negative impact on the neighbouring properties, but unfortunately the application was submitted prior to any discussions taking place, and for the reasons outlined above, the plans as they currently stand are totally unacceptable to us.