Huntingdonshire District Council
Pathfinder House Huntingdon
PE29 3TN

Planning Application Ref: 25/00335/FUL

Dear Sir/Madam,

We write with respect to the proposed development at the land at 70 High Street, Offord D'Arcy – Case reference **25/00335/FUL**.

We, along with our [redacted], are the residents of 1 The Haycroft, Offord D'Arcy which is situated immediately behind the proposed development site.

Whilst we welcome the regeneration of the site, we object to the *current* proposal due to the following concerns;

1. Highway safety in the immediate vicinity
2. Drainage and sanitation
3. Loss of light and invasion of privacy
4. Artificial light nuisance
5. Design of the building
6. Ecological impact
7. Availability of properties on the market
8. Access to services

1. Highway safety in the immediate vicinity

The district policy states that any new development must consider the need for allocated and non-allocated parking. The proposal currently lists just 2 spaces for 70 High Street (a 4 bedroom-house) and another 2 for the new dwelling (a 5-bedroom property). Due to The Offords having no sustainable transport links, the households in this rural location *must* rely upon private vehicles to access all local amenities including GPs and dental services (all of which require travelling out of the village by vehicle).

We believe the plans have not catered for this district policy. Two car parking spaces is not sufficient for such large properties. There would be no room for any additional vehicles that either belong to the household or visitors. We are very concerned that any extra vehicles would have to park in the nearby roads, severely deteriorating the safety of other vehicles and more importantly, pedestrians in the vicinity.

For perspective, all surrounding 4 or 5 bed properties of the development site have room for at least 4 vehicles.

When speaking of pedestrians, foot flow through the area is very high as the proposed development site is situated within 30 meters of a primary access point for an extremely well-used, designated, green space within the Offords – the Millennium Green.

Millennium Green is one of only two designated green spaces within the Offords and the only green space with a playground for children under 12 years of age. As a result, almost every parent that has young children in Offord D'Arcy use this access point when seeking outdoor activities. With the lack of car parking spaces, which has already been identified as insufficient, there is a very real risk of cars needing to overflow into the immediate location and therefore substantially decreasing road safety. Millennium Green is also popular with older residents and dog walkers who also use the area regularly and they, especially, require to use their vehicle to access the green.

To stress the point further – the access point does not have any designated walking pathways so those entering Millennium Green through this access point must walk on the road. (Appendix 1).

It has been suggested in the planning application that although the 'current car park has room for 8 vehicles there is little space to turn in the carpark to exit safely'. The plans indicate that 2 parking spaces will be located via the existing entrance. This will remove what space there is, meaning cars parked at the proposed development may need to reverse out of their spaces to exit the development. The large proposed building would further restrict the view in a section of road that already does not have a pavement but serves as an access route to the aforementioned communal green space. Despite the splays indicated in the plan, the very real day to day experience is that, there is already limited visibility in this section of highway by both vehicles and mainly, pedestrians. The current plans will reduce this visibility more so; not only with the scale of the premises but also the indicated trees/shrubs. For context, traffic experts state that drivers should be looking 10 - 15 seconds ahead to plan for potential hazards. The current proposal will introduce a drastic reduction in this time for those driving out of The Haycroft or Meadow Lane compared to what is currently available. This needs to be kept in mind when recalling that there are no safe walkways for pedestrians accessing the communal greenspace frequented by residents.

To highlight the stress on the road infrastructure, [redacted] neighbours [redacted] on Meadow Lane do not have allocated car parking spaces. This means they have to park their vehicles on the only section of road that will not cause disruption (appendix 2, 3 & 4) however with these vehicles parking here, there is limited additional space to accommodate other vehicles without blocking access points. [redacted] operates a horticultural business from their premises using large and heavy machinery which needs to drive past the proposed development to access the main road. This poses two issues. 1) as there is insufficient car parking spaces, any overflow will block access routes as the roads

are very narrow and 2) the proposed development will obscure the view of pedestrians and vehicles turning out/in of Meadow Lane potentially causing serious risk or harm.

With mention of the roads being very narrow. The roads in the immediate vicinity really are extremely narrow. This is especially true for the Haycroft. With two spaces being accessed through a new drive via The Haycroft and again, not enough spaces being allocated for a 4-bedroom rural property, any overflow will prevent the flow of traffic for residents on The Haycroft and 74a High Street (who have access to their drive and garages via the Haycroft). This will also prevent emergency services and refuse collection from accessing the Haycroft. (appendix 5)

The plans fail to consider the good design principles of accommodating needs for the present and future. A 5 bedroom house could reasonably provide a home to 2 parents and 3 adult children who, live in a rural setting with no sustainable transport, in an area which already has a higher propensity for vehicle ownership than the national average (as identified in the local plan) there simply isn't the space available in the vicinity to accommodate the potential vehicle ownership for this one property. There also needs to be the consideration that 70 High Street will only get 2 spaces also, further congesting the local vicinity.

2. **Drainage and sanitation**

LP15, point d states; if a road would be affected by the drainage system the details have been agreed with the relevant highway authority;

The soakaways and drainage in the Haycroft are already stretched. This is evidenced by moderate flooding of The Haycroft after rainfall. (See appendix 6). The area is susceptible to blockages. By having an extra 4 bathrooms/W.C and usual utilities potentially connected to the current infrastructure could well cause further damage.

To add further concern, the grass verge and hedgerow acts as a natural soakaway for surface rain water - under the proposals, a large section of the current grassland and hedgerow are being removed and replaced with concrete and brick paving. As the entrance is directly on the Haycroft, the gradient required for access means surface water will naturally run off onto the Haycroft, amplifying the flood risk. (Appendix 7)

3. **Loss of light and invasion of privacy**

LP14, point b states: the physical relationships arising from the design and separation of buildings are not oppressive or overbearing, and in particular will not result in overlooking causing loss of privacy;

We are very concerned with the proposed layout and orientation of the new dwelling. Although the distance may be almost 30 meters, the windows from all bedrooms will be able to see directly into our living room, dining room,two of our bedrooms and a large section of our rear/side garden (appendix 8). The existing dwelling at 70 High Street already has a bedroom that looks directly into our master bedroom and we, also, can see directly into their bedroom

and actually all the way through their bedroom (appendix 9). The proposed new dwelling will be even closer in distance. This is especially true of the rear dormers proposed in the plans. The elevated windows provide an excessive, elevated, overlooking of the properties and curtilages of the surrounding properties. This is very concerning as we feel there would be legitimate invasion of privacy into our property more so since the proposal removes a significant section of the hedgerow in-between our property and the proposed development that provides a level of privacy. There is a tree between the properties however, for several months of the year, where the trees are bare, there will be full visibility into our living room, two bedrooms and a significant section of our rear/side garden.

We're also concerned about the impact of light flowing into the living areas into our property. The living quarters can already be dark even on bright days, the main source of light is provided by large windows located to the front of our property which will now be potentially overshadowed by the proposed dwelling.

4. **Artificial light nuisance**

The plans indicate two parking spaces will be located directly off The Haycroft. These spaces will be allocated for 70 High Street. These spaces will be roughly 10-15 meters away at best. The picture in appendix 7 shows how far away the spaces will be; in an orientation that points directly into our window. The concern is that the orientation of the spaces mean that car lights will shine directly into our dining room window and/or our living room window. It is not unreasonable to suggest that under normal use, this could mean during usual commuting times, where we will be sitting together as a family in our dining room as we have young children - we would have bright lights shining directly into our windows. For our dining room, the window is the only source of natural light that we have. We accept the duration may be short but to have that issue everyday means we will be unable to enjoy family meals at a dining table, something which is vitally important to us as a family.

Combined with the fact that our dining and living room will be extremely overlooked by every bedroom in the property, we will not be able to enjoy normal use of two key rooms of our house.

5. **Design of the building**

The proposed design of the building is also of grave concern. LP12 of the local plan states that any new development will be expected to be “well designed based upon a thorough understanding of constraints and appraisal of the site’s context, delivering attractive, usable and long lasting buildings and spaces”

To begin; the size, scale and positioning of the building means it will present a large, unbroken and dominant facade in the street scene with little relief nor variety. A building with such a large facade could be considered oppressive when considering the dwelling’s location.

The proposal also contains several features uncharacteristic of this part of the village.

- With respect to the proposed materials, the predominant external facing material in this section of the village is Buff-Cambridgeshire which is not being proposed
- The large building of this scale and nature would be demonstrably out of character wit the prevailing immediate and wider context
- I have already mentioned the rear dormers in section 3 of this letter but the number of rooflights generally is out of character in the immediate setting and context 3

The proposal is significantly over-fenestrated. The proposal has too many windows of too large a size. This will have an impact on the sustainability and efficiency of the dwelling. In addition to the privacy concerns we referred to in section 3.

6. **Ecological impact**

The plans state there will be a net biodiversity gain however this should be considered in context. The biodiversity gain is as a result of a concreted area being turned into a private, fenced off garden. Being fenced, this does nothing to protect the existing wildlife and some of their commuter routes. The proposal removes sections of the existing hedgerow and grassland which is used as a resting place and foraging area for several species, one of which is the great crested newt which is a protected species. Great crested newts regularly commute between breeding grounds, of which there have been 3 identified in the vicinity. At present, the newts are able to cross through the hedgerow but this will no longer be the case under the new proposals.

The species identified in the ecological report will experience potentially material disturbance as a result of the current plans.

7. **Availability of properties on the market**

Although we respect that LP25 is in relation to large scale developments, the principles of this policy in the context of the village still holds true. As of 21/3/25, there are currently 8 properties listed for sale in the Offords - all of these houses are either 4 or 5 bedroom houses. Does the village need another 5 bedroom property when these properties are already available in the village keeping in mind that 70 High Street will be yet another 4 bedroom property available on the market? What is not available in the village however, are good sized 3 bedroom properties which, given the current cost of living crisis experienced by us all, would actually be affordable for young families wishing to reside in the village - something which the Parish council identified as needed to prevent stagnation in the village.

8. **Access to services**

Currently, between both Offord villages, there is a single shop which services the community. The plans remove two commercial premises. Although, again, we support the transition to residential. It would be remiss not to mention the removal of these facilities considering the recent ‘call for sites’ indicate that a potential 350 homes could have planning approved in the Offords, an increase of circa 55% of the current homes between the two villages. LP22

acknowledges that local facilities become more important to service the community with an “increasing proportion of older people in the population”.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is the size of the proposed property without the correct infrastructure to support such a large dwelling which is the cause for concern. As mentioned, we’d be happy to see the site redeveloped but the area would be far better serviced by a more empathetic 3 bedroom property which would then;

- Allow for more space for appropriate car parking, dampening the extensive highway safety concerns.
- Will not stretch so far across the site as to block light into our property and infringe on our privacy
- Would be more in keeping with its surroundings
- Will add even more biodiversity net gain to the proposed plans
- Would be less stress on the current available infrastructure
- Would be far more desirable in the village as there is a real shortage of 3 bedroom houses.

We ask the council to take these concerns into consideration when making their decision. Again, we will stress that we are not against the development of the site, we are against the plans in their current format in terms of safety, sustainability and what the village actually needs.

Appendix

Appendix 1:

Pedestrian access point to the Millennium Green is indicated by the red arrow. None of the roads have pavements.

Note: I have blocked out number plates for privacy.



Appendix 2:

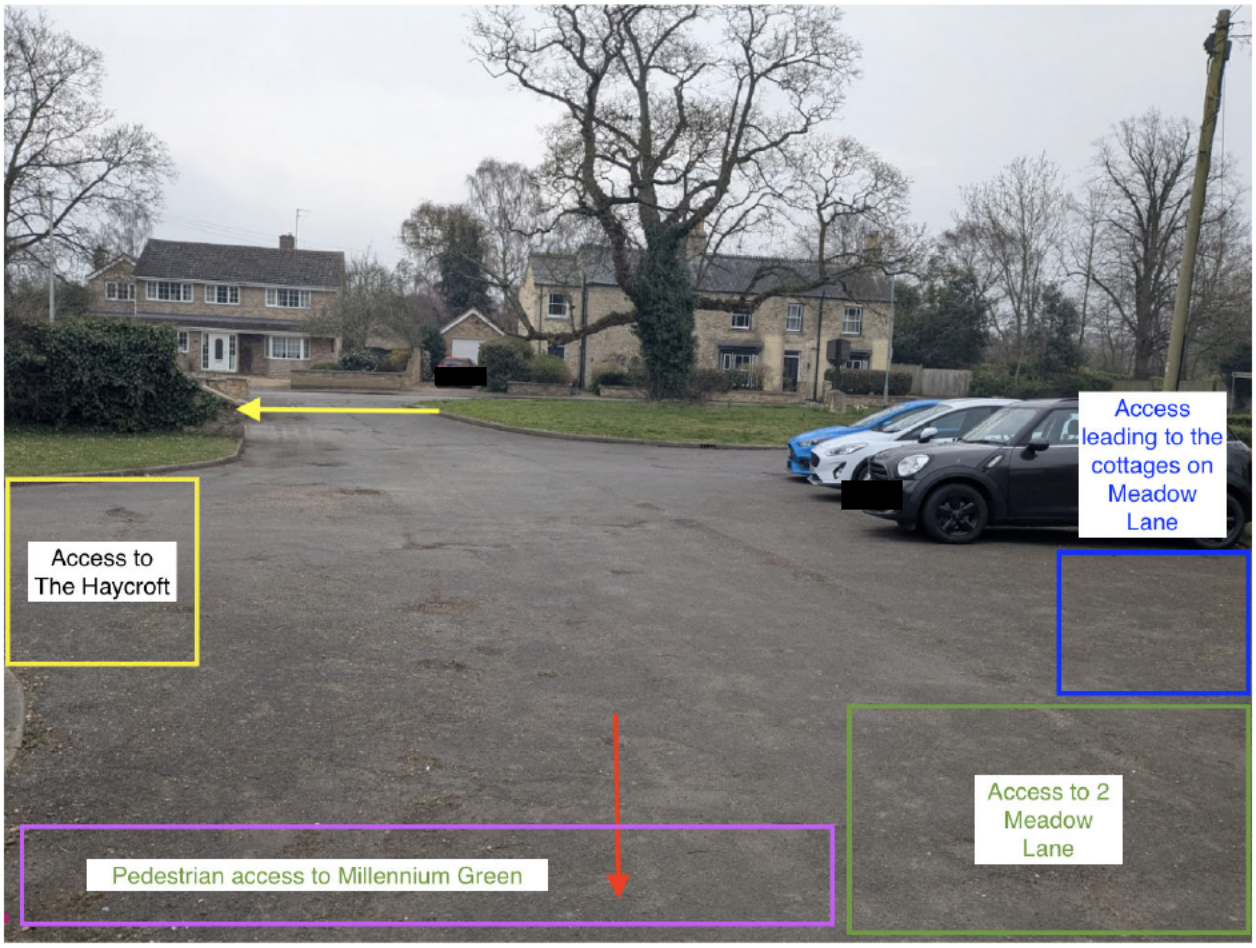
A view of the limited section of road where vehicles can park without causing disruption to other road users/pedestrians and residents - indicated by the yellow line. Pedestrian entrance to the Millennium Green highlighted by the red arrow.

Note: I have blocked out number plates for privacy.



Appendix 3:

As appendix 2 but taken at a different angle. The proposed development entrance indicated by a yellow arrow. Millennium Green entrance indicated by red arrow.



Appendix 4:

We regularly have visitors to neighbours or the Millennium Green parking on the sides of the road when the other car parking spaces have been filled. The yellow arrows show roughly where the two new driveways for the properties will be created.



Another photo of a different car parked in the same spot as the above photo, taken from a different angle. The driveway to the new dwelling (and current entrance to the carpark) is immediately in front of this vehicle.



Appendix 5



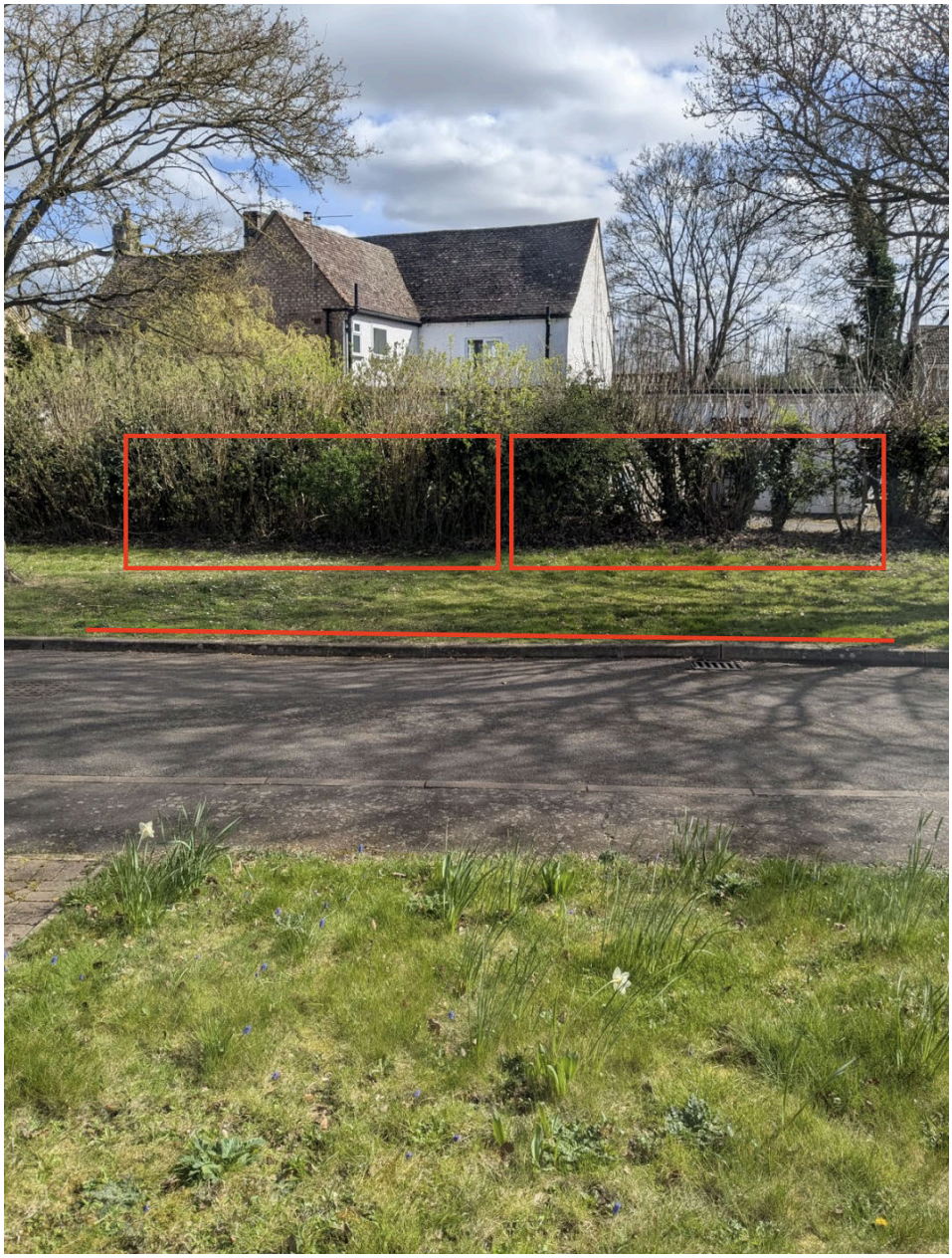
Appendix 6

Flooding on The Haycroft. This is a regular occurrence whenever we have moderate rainfall. I have blocked out the individual shown in the photograph for privacy. Part of the hedge and the grass verge would be removed to make way for the new drive.



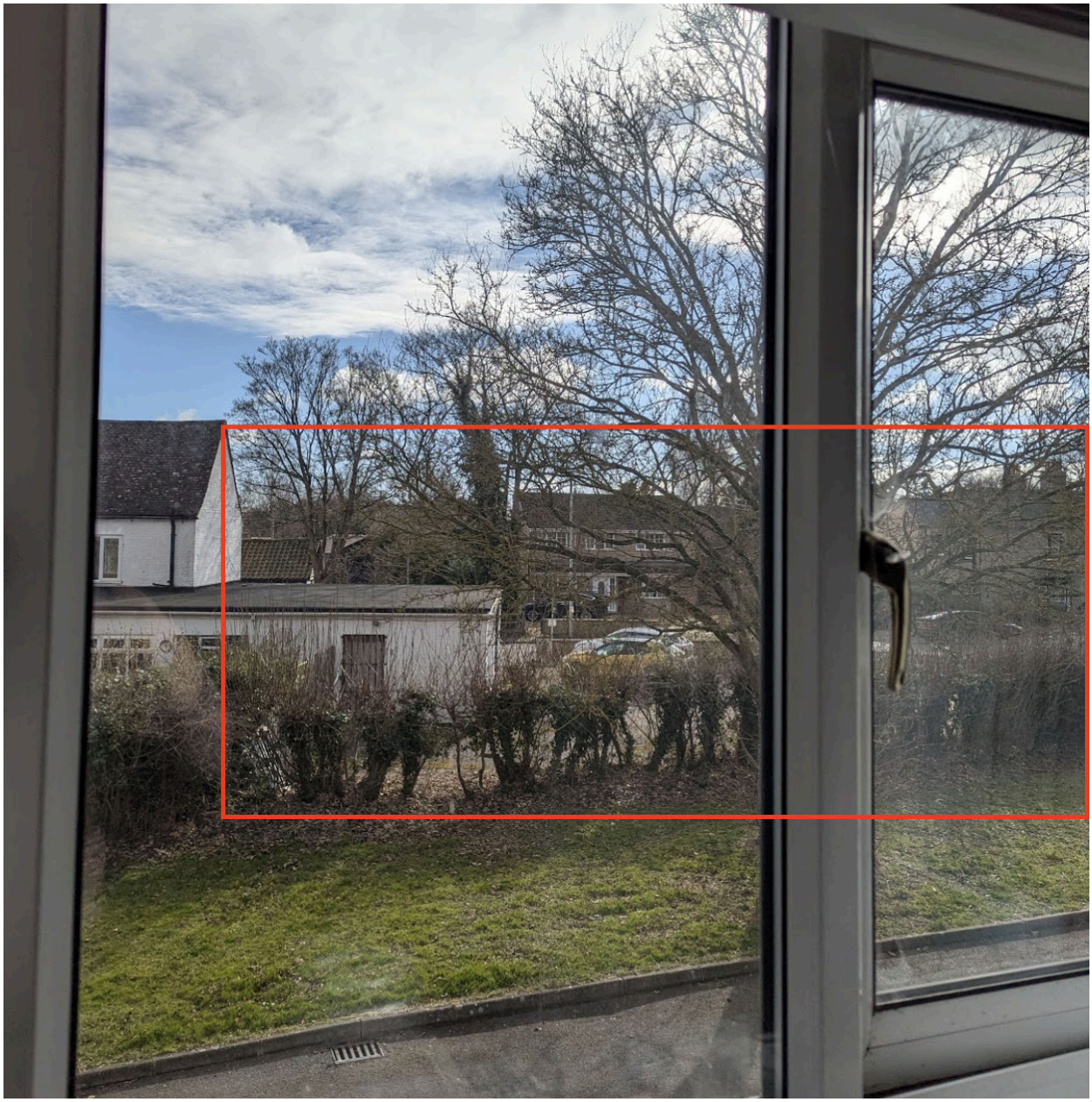
Appendix 7

Photo looking out of the dining room window onto the proposed access point and car parking spaces for 70 High Street on The Haycroft.



Appendix 8

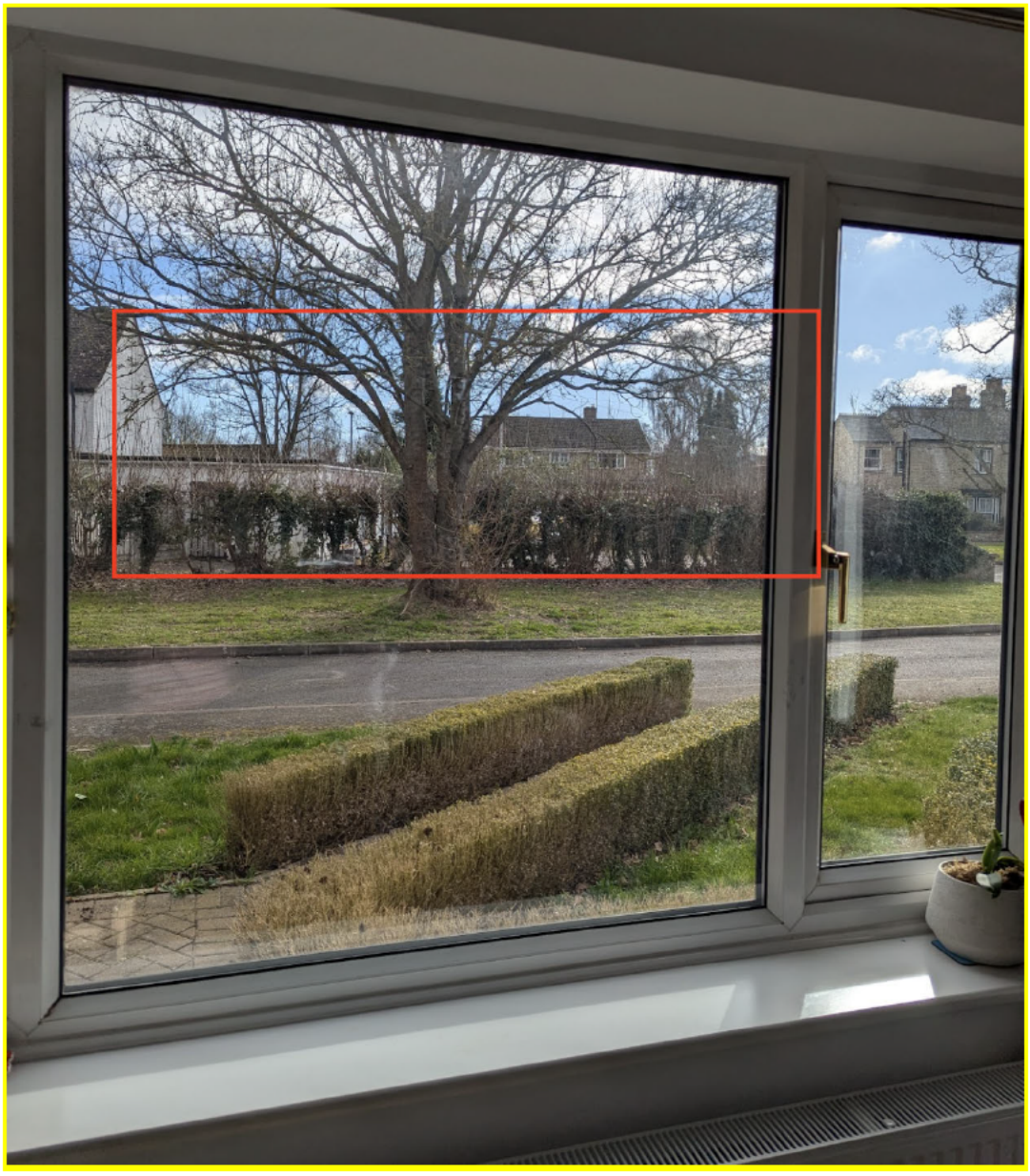
Looking out onto the proposed site of new dwelling (highlighted in red) from bedroom 1 window.



Looking out onto the proposed site of new dwelling (highlighted in red) from dining room.



Looking out onto the proposed site of new dwelling (highlighted in red) from living room window..



Looking out onto the proposed site of new dwelling (highlighted in red) from bedroom 2 window.


HEY
DUGGEE

Looking out onto the proposed site of the new dwelling from our garden.



Appendix 9

Looking out at the bedroom of 70 High Street from our master bedroom. Through the window you can clearly inside of the bedroom of 70 High Street and through the bedroom the opposite Bedroom window to see the roof files of the property opposite on High Street.

