

Comments for Planning Application PLAN/2020/0568

Application Summary

Application Number: PLAN/2020/0568

Address: Land To The North And South Of Goldsworth Road Woking Surrey GU21 6JT

Proposal: Demolition of all existing buildings and redevelopment of the site for a phased mixed-use scheme, comprising 929 residential units (Class C3), communal residential and operational spaces, commercial uses (Classes A1/A2/A3/A4/B1/D1/D2) at ground floor and homeless shelter (sui generis) within 5 blocks of varying heights of between 9 and 37 storeys (including rooftop amenity) to the north and south sides of the site together with soft and hard landscaping including public realm works, highway alterations to Goldsworth Road, car parking, cycle parking, bin storage, ancillary facilities and plant (Environmental Statement submitted) (amended plans and reports received 13.11.2020).

Case Officer: Brooke Bougnague

Customer Details

Name: Miss CHIARA CADEI

Address: 6 De Lara Way, Woking, Surrey GU21 6NY

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Resident (local res.- member of public)

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

- High-over density of development
- Highway reasons - parking
- Impact of development
- Out of Character
- Overlooking
- Traffic Volume

Comment: Messy townscape

Woking Core Strategy 24 requires good design that supports the townscape. This development overshadows Victoria Place which was supposed to be the aesthetic focal point of the town centre and creates a messy skyline which contradicts CS 24.

Towers are too high

Woking Core strategy 23 states that all developments need to be carefully considered regarding height, design and location. These tower blocks would be likely higher than any other building in Woking and do not represent a good design decision for this or any other location in Woking town centre.

Not in keeping with surroundings

Woking Core strategy 1 and 21 state that new developments need to fit with the surroundings. This development with up to 37 (formerly 41) storeys dwarfs the adjacent 3 and 4 story buildings in Goldsworth Road as well as surrounding residential areas with 2 storey victorian cottage style buildings and therefore is in violation with CS 1 and 21.

Extreme Density

Core Strategy 10 states that a density above 200 dwellings per hectare (dph) would be acceptable in Woking town centre. But this development has a density of ca 807 (formerly 839) dph which is higher than any other building in the area and could be expected in inner city London. This is not justifiable for Woking.

Not enough accommodation for families

Woking Core Strategy 11 states that the housing mix should meet local needs as per latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). The SMHA recommends around 40% of 3 bed flats. This development offers only 2% 3 bed flats but 61% studios and 1 bed flats. This is in violation to CS11. Woking's overview and scrutiny committee report (14 Sep 2020) also identified a significant need for 2 and 3 bed homes at 31% and 20% respectively. With the current situation and with working from home becoming the norm, people will not need to commute from and to London. Woking needs families homes with space for working and living not a huge bed sit.

Issues with parking

The development expects to sell 216 parking spaces for the estimated 2,400 residents. Woking Parking SPD (2018) allows to go below the minimum standard in the town centre but this falls very short of the required minimum of 676 spaces. The surrounding roads require residents permits and are already stretched beyond capacity. There is not enough parking provided for the new residents and their visitors.

Affordable housing is a massive need in our area but most of these developments are not geared up to be affordable family homes. Skyscrapers are not the answer. They are not what Woking needs.

Furthermore Woking has been known as an area with terrible traffic congestion for years now. To support this number of new homes serious investment is needed in roads and public transport in the area. This includes rail services to London which have seen some of the worst overcapacity in the country. Woking has seen no investment in public services such as additional GP provision, school places, council services etc. GP practices are already stretched (lead-times for a GP appointment is now a minimum of 4 weeks, when I moved to Woking 15 years ago, it was next day) and will be unable to support hundreds of new residents. These high-rises are a blight on what was a nice landscape, it is disgusting to be able to see them from as far as Guildford. Woking is a town, not a city. Please stop ruining it and using 'affordable housing' as an excuse, there are other solutions that don't add to congestion in an already congested place.

