

# 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 965 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 40 storeys (plus 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).

Case Officer: Brooke Bounague

## Customer Details

Name: Mr Malcolm Eddington

Address: 8 Ferndale Road, Horsell, Woking, Surrey GU21 4AJ

## Comment Details

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

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

- High-over density of development
- Impact of development

Comment: This project is an example of the tail wagging the dog.

The project is driven by an offshore build to rent developer constructing a project on a wave of low global yields where it is a race to monetise any opportunity.

The project itself looks marginal with the Greening Goldsworth Road Viability Statement showing that this is a poor returning project even on a best outcome. We have seen the significant cost overruns for the Victoria Square development and we have seen the costs of building materials increase appreciably from Covid19 so the comments about reducing costs looks implausible.

The financial risks involved with this project are substantial given the time to develop the project, rising construction costs from raw materials seen to date, supply chain delays and additional costs from climate change tax/ETS to attach to materials such as concrete and steel. Add to this the 100,000+ directly competing units across London currently under development and lack of comparable sales in Woking, to accurately forecast prices, means that this appears a speculative development investment. That is unless the developer has already lined up large bulk sales on a build to rent basis.

The reason I raise these issues is that high rise buildings need money through their useful lives and so they need to be fully occupied at the targeted price points. They are costly to maintain and the outcomes for poorly maintained buildings is tangible on the community who occupy and those around it.

There are no close comparables for sales as the Greening Goldsworth Road Viability Statement shows. The project is focused on a mobile occupier group (whether owner or tenant) and is unlikely to pool from the local area. If it is London professionals then this project will compete across London with the large number of projects under development. Added to this, many of these are zone 1 and 2 you add a £4000 season ticket and most likely x 2 then the attractiveness of Woking falls substantially.

Living in a high rise is not a community supporting way of living and is a functional way of living where local services and operations of the building must be at the highest standards or people will not live there. When your building is not occupied by people who want to live there you have a problem.

The land costs in Woking are not a hindrance to a development and much lower (by height) buildings should be considered. The marginal improvements to costs are not there for building higher but the risks most certainly are and so projects that de-risk the rate of development and deliver housing that you know people would like should be considered rather than this speculative high rise building.