

Frances West

From: Paula Eddington [REDACTED]
Sent: 05 August 2020 13:40
To: DevelopmentControl
Subject: PLAN/2020/0568 - Objection

Categories: Frances

To whom it may concern,

Paula Eddington, 8 Ferndale Road, Woking, GU21 4AJ, Objects to PLAN/2020/0568

I generally welcome regeneration of the town, however I object to this plan based on the following:

Height & Character:

Even though the property sits within the town centre I don't think that it supports Woking BC's core strategy - CS21 or CS24 of your code, as it is out of proportion and character to the neighbouring properties. At 41 storeys it dwarfs the surrounding buildings to the north and west of the development and even overshadows the Victoria Square development (height of 34 storeys). The graduation from 41 storeys to 20 storeys at the west is still out of proportion to the neighbouring buildings, many of which are Victorian terrace houses or semi-detached homes in the residential streets down the road.

Density:

This development has four times as many dwellings as your code CS10 indicates as ideal. 839 dwellings per ha as compared to the recommended 200dph. Previously approved developments appear to have much lower density, including the 2016 proposal for the site. Why such an increase and is this desirable?

Sustainability:

Your code CS22 is looking for buildings that are sustainable regarding energy, CO₂, water etc. Recent studies have shown that high-rise buildings (over 21 storeys) are less efficient than lower buildings. Are you committed to making Woking a sustainable town?

The Guardian reported on how skyscrapers are "wasteful, damaging and outmoded" (theGuardian.com Sat 11 July 2020 by Rowan Moore),

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2020/jul/11/skyscrapers-wasteful-damaging-outmoded-time-to-stop-tall-buildings>

Another study concludes that lower height buildings can provide density without added energy costs.

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/bartlett/energy/news/2017/jun/ucl-energy-high-rise-buildings-energy-and-density-research-project-results>

Transport:

Due to the lack of parking provided, this development seems to be aimed at commuters for London and other centres. Does WBC have a plan to support the increased demand on an already above capacity train service? Pre-Covid you could not get a seat in the morning into London and often were standing packed into the train, as if it was a peak hour London tube (not worth the £4,000 annual ticket price!).

Timings:

The 2016 proposal for this site was going to take 4 years to complete. This new plan will take 7 years. I believe this will have an unjustified negative impact on the Woking residents who will be disrupted by the building works and roadblocks for a long time, especially following the impact Victoria Square has already had on traffic flow.

General:

I have concerns that building more high-rise towers in this environment will be a risk. Covid-19 will have an impact on people's behaviour and house choices going forward, and the Grenfell tower fire is also fresh in people's minds.

In addition, what happens if the development fails to meet plan and fill? Will services be maintained with body corporate fees impacted? This plan appears to be more like an investment property model (a build to rent model driven by global investor desire for yields) than something that will truly benefit Woking.

Regards
Paula Eddington