

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: Mr Roger Nuttall

Address: 38 Orchard Drive, Horsell, Woking, Surrey GU21 4BW

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
- Loss of privacy
- Out of Character
- Overlooking
- Traffic Volume

Comment: New Goldsworth Road Planning Application : For Planning Meeting 12 January 2011

General

PLAN/2020/0568 The plan has been slightly modified following the June 2020 submission.

It is now: 5 blocks: 9 - 37 storeys, a total of 929 apartments, very many one bed and studio flats, and few affordable and family apartments, no contribution to affordable accommodation to be provided elsewhere, and very few car park spaces, a smaller York Road Project building, and the Woking Railway Athletic Club as before.

My 5th August 2020 comments are still valid and have not been satisfactorily addressed by this new submission.

The documents previously provided in June 2020 by the Developer are listed as 'amended' but their content has now been omitted. The developer's new reports often refer back to the June documents, which is not helpful for those considering the revised application within the very short time-space provided.

The present SADPD, updated recently, allowed Borough residents' comments in November 2020, has now been submitted to the Government Planning Inspector, but still refers to a development on this site of 560 apartments, not 929 apartments, and the SADPD is therefore invalid. The application should be refused on this point alone.

Document: Covering letter and appendix 13 November

This document includes Ecoworld's overall design views.

Sunlight

A new apartment sunlight review showed little improvement in sunlight problems for many residents, especially those facing North .

Wind turbulence

Further wind tunnel tests were not convincing and showed a real problem on the South and West corner of building T1 bordering the railway line, and a very awkward large canopy has been specified to try to overcome this problem.

Rail terminal and Gravel Aggregates Installation

The document does not include an important factor raised in my June 2020 submission (letter from Network Rail dated 4/8/2020, but now deleted from this planning application). The letter emphasized that the new development would fall within a 200m boundary from the Rail Terminal and Gravel Aggregates installation and that the noise level from the installation would affect new Goldsworth development residents. This will gradually increase over the years as Network Rail/ Surrey County Council are planning to expand the aggregates and terminal installation in the future. The installation will also contribute other major environmental problems impacting on existing and future residents in a wide area surrounding the site, including the Goldsworth development. These relate to dust and other carbon contaminants associated with motorized handling equipment on site, excessive lorry movements to and from the site, and many more train movements. (The present dust and noise levels from the installation are already affecting existing nearby residents). Unless this installation is relocated elsewhere in the South East the whole of the Town Centre developments, including those planned South of Victoria Arch, and the A320 and other road modifications, will be in jeopardy.

Town Centre Area Masterplan

The Ecoworld document also supports the need for a Town Centre Area Masterplan and questions why one has not been completed in the past. However, Ecoworld then assume that residents have

already accepted the heights of the Victoria Square development and any further developments can decrease gradually in height depending on their distance from Victoria Square. The flaw in this argument is that the Chief Executive, including a small group of his supporters from the Paid Council and the Elected Council, together with two successive Council Leaders, including one who is a full-time director of the Victoria Square Woking Ltd, have always minimized the involvement of residents in this huge project, both in resident consultation and in providing information regarding the original design and the many subsequent design changes. Borough residents are now horrified at the height of these towers in the centre of the beautiful Surrey countryside.

Other specific points:

Residents living within sight of the Town Centre

The majority of Borough residents do not live in sight of the present Town Centre, but sympathize with those who do. Those living in sight of the Town Centre are particularly distressed by the dominating views of the new Victoria Square Towers, both day and night. This new development, were it to be approved, would cause greater distress particularly to residents West of Victoria Square, in Horsell, and parts of Canalside. It would also encourage other high tower applications elsewhere in the Town Centre and again cause further distress to nearby residents, including those in Mount Hermon.

York Road Centre

The urgent need for a new building in the town Centre to replace the present York Road Centre is supported by many residents but should not have been included as part of Ecoworld's scope.

The Woking Railway Athletic Club

The inclusion of a Public House in a development accommodating many single people is surely a mistake.

Tower Block Roof Gardens

The planning application makes a feature of a number of tower block gardens. High roof gardens are windy, and unsafe for children and those of suicidal tendencies. Such rooftop areas in London have generally been locked-off and restricted to maintenance personnel.

Recommendation: This planning application should be refused

The Way Forward

The present Leader of the Council has recently agreed and stated in the press that an Area Masterplan will be developed for any future post-Victoria Square development in the remaining Town Centre (Inner Town Centre and its approaches), and that a limit in future building heights will be agreed. Such a plan, perhaps prepared with the assistance of an independent urban architect consultant, and with full consultation with Borough residents and elected Councillors, will allow a careful consideration of how the remaining limited Town Centre space available should be used to

reflect the changing post-pandemic needs related to retail, leisure, parking, roads etc, and working practices. It should also examine whether the Town Centre can indeed provide a proper and pleasant environment (as required by Government), for the housing and community infrastructure needs of some of our existing Borough residents of all ages and income, or perhaps should be arranged in a different way. It is suggested that following approval by the Elected Council, Government approval should be obtained by a specific compact SADPD.

Consideration at Planning Meeting on 12 February 2020

In view of the many comments received for the two submissions by the developer, the presenting Planning Control Officer will be in a difficult position to fairly represent the views of residents who have responded since June 2020. For this important Planning Committee Meeting it is suggested that the Chairman of the Planning Committee should advise Committee members to review all resident submissions for the two submissions, prior to attending the meeting. This will help all Committee members, especially those who do not live in sight of the present Victoria Square Towers.