

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 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

Comment: In view of the complexity and importance of this planning application it would be appropriate to ensure that all Planning Committee members had an opportunity to review resident submissions well in advance of the planning meeting.

General

This scheme replaces a 2016 planning application for a development of 125 dwellings. The July 2019 SADPD referred to a possible increase to 560 dwellings, but the present proposal, not covered by an SADPD, greatly increases the land area to accommodate a huge development of nearly 1000 dwellings occupied by 2500 residents, with five tower blocks, some retail and leisure provision, pedestrianisation of part of Goldsworth Road, and accommodation for the York Road Project and the Woking Railway Athletic Club.

The scheme has been developed in conjunction with the Council over a long period of time, totally without the knowledge of residents. A few residents eventually heard, mainly by chance, that the

developer would be holding a presentation in Woking on January 30th 2020. Just 62 Borough residents viewed the presentation. Some commented later, mostly unfavourably. Finally some 'near neighbours' have been advised of the very short 4-week period allowed for comments for this complex development, with its awkward presentation of many technical documents. The majority of the 100,000 or so Borough residents will be unaware of the opportunity at all.

In addition the developer has also been presenting their plans to a 'Design Review Panel', who in reality are a Design South East panel. DSE actively encourage tall building developments and have apparently been employed by WBC for some years. They have commented, however, on the surprising lack of a Master Plan for the Town Centre development.

The development will have a great influence on whether all residents of the Borough will ultimately have a Town Centre they will be proud to visit or live in. In addition residents will face much Town Centre disruption during the eight year construction period (probably longer). In parallel to this there will be much additional disruption if WBC go ahead with other Town Centre developments they have in mind.

Tower Heights: The development consists of 4 groups of residential tower blocks ranging in height from 41 storeys (160m : as high as a Victoria Square tower block) to 8 storeys, plus a 7 storey block for the York Road project. Two applications for high tower blocks post-Victoria Square have already been refused.

Residential Accommodation : Studio 1 person : 152 (16%), 1 bed 2 psn : 425(44%),
2 bed 3 psn : 112(12%), 2 bed 4 psn : 251 (26%), 3 bed 5 psn : 24 (2%)

Total : 964 dwellings, 2462 people, of which just 48 dwellings (5%) are affordable.

The mix of dwellings is very poor - far too many 1 and 2 person dwellings. The 48 (5%) affordable dwellings provision is nowhere near the Core Strategy requirement of 40%, but the developer declares that the profitability margin is unacceptable for higher AH provision. It's hard to understand why this was not discovered at an earlier stage of the development planning.

Visual impairment for residents living in the areas surrounding the Town Centre

Extreme visual over-dominance of tall tower blocks

Very annoying light pollution from tower block windows at night (ref Woking Design SPD)

Internal Daylight, Sunlight, and Overshadowing : The GIA report indicates a variable effect for these parameters, depending where residents are situated, particularly with respect to lack of good sunlight in some rooms , and at ground level due to sun shadows, so it is surprising that their overall conclusion says: 'As a result of the many considerations discussed above, the scheme will provide future residents with access to good levels of natural light overall'

Wind Turbulence caused by the high buildings.: The wind tunnel tests carried out show a reasonably acceptable level of comfort levels, providing certain mitigations prove practical in

reality. The tests do indicate a real problem for the very busy Victoria Way section just N of Victoria Arch.

Noise and dust from the South :The developer has identified problems, especially for South-facing residents from their near-railway dwellings, related to the noise created continuously day and night from the increasingly busy DayAggregates site, and the increasing number of through trains following the new Victoria Arch rail modifications. In addition these residents may suffer low frequency disruption, especially at night when the heavy D-A freight trains generally arrive. It is expected that dust created by the increasingly busy D-A activities will also affect residents

Noise and Traffic emissions caused by the A320 (Victoria Way) will impact on residents .

Poole Road CHP Energy Centre chimney emissions : This development, presently being constructed, will emit NOx and is situated close to the new Goldsworth development. Additional dispersion studies need to be carried out by the Thameswey consultant to predict NOx levels at a variety of heights for the new Goldsworth development.

Problems with the WBC 'Travel Plan' for Town Centre Residential Accommodation

In contradiction of SCC's normal standards WBC has incorrectly elected to provide a very small amount of car parking for Town Centre residential blocks, saying that for leisure, residents use the limited-route railway, the unpopular and limited bus systems, or walk or cycle. Safe cycling routes in and around the Town Centre (including the Canal Towpath), do not exist, and cannot be provided in the local narrow roads. It also appears that the modified A320 road system South of a widened Victoria Arch will do nothing to improve matters. The provision of 1064 cycle racks is therefore meaningless, and the provision of 263 car spaces without charging facilities is very low, and does not recognise that electric cars will eventually be the norm if this development did go ahead. In their leisure time most of the residents will be trapped, unable to visit the beautiful Surrey countryside which surrounds them.

Victoria Way Bottleneck Although the development has some retail development, many will want to cross Victoria Way to take advantage of the retail and leisure provision in the Inner Town Centre. There is no planned W-E bridge or tunnel at this point so a major bottleneck will be created. As indicated above, wind tunneling and traffic emissions will be at their worst at this point.

Infrastructure. The developer's description of social, medical, schooling, etc infrastructure is very unconvincing.

Other points

High Tower Blocks New reports are appearing daily relating to the problems of people living in high tower blocks, generally associated with behavioural problems, pandemics, and the advisability of providing a mix of single people, families, and older people in the same building

block.

Town Centre and Approaches Master Plan . For some years now residents have been asking the Council, to no avail, to consult with residents and construct a Master Plan for the Town Centre which would show the spatial relationship between lower height residential and office block developments, road, footpath and cycle routes etc, and the provision of additional social, medical, schooling etc infrastructure to support the new developments. The 'lockdown' period would be ideal for this activity.