

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 Ciaran Osgerby

Address: Greystones, Heathside Park Road, Woking, Surrey GU22 7JF

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: The proposed development will create yet more excessively tall buildings within the Woking town skyline. One of the building will be even higher than the existing Victoria Square development.

The outgoing CEO of Woking BC, Ray Morgan was quoted some years ago as saying that he wanted to see Woking become like Singapore, but the Council have so far failed to demonstrate a development strategy for the whole town centre. There has been a woeful lack of community engagement with local residents, stakeholders and neighbouring local authorities.

The proposed development will seriously impact properties around it, both commercial and residential, and the density of tall buildings in Woking has already had a detrimental impact on the

local landscape. This proposed development will not result in a good quality living environment for either new residents or existing ones.

The density and proximity of so many tall buildings will have an adverse impact in terms of access to sunlight and daylight for the surrounding area. There is already a significant wind tunnel effect from the Victoria Square development and this proposed development will exacerbate it.

The local area already has a high density of flats, many of which remain empty from previous developments. The letting market in Woking was poor even before the impact of Covid-19 was felt as many large businesses have moved away from the local area and so they do not need to house their staff in the town.

The mixture of dwellings seems to put a heavy reliance on 1 bedroom and studio flats which are not needed in order to meet the Council's needs. The allocation of 5% for affordable housing does not meet the Council's own benchmark of 40%. This proposed development would appear to give the developer a built-in profit of around 20% of cost. There do not appear to be any suggestions of a financial contribution in lieu of providing the 40% level of affordable housing. Profit for investors has, once again, been put before the needs of the town and its residents.

Woking BC should tackle the issue of local homelessness which necessitates having the need for the excellent York Road Project. They should be properly funded.

The Council claim that they already have a 10-year supply of housing land and so there does not appear to be a pressing case for building here. Given that the town already has a large amount of unoccupied office space then surely more could be done to renovate and convert existing buildings.

Once again there is extremely poor allocation for parking which is already in short supply in the town centre. The proposal has seen the number of parking spaces drop from 395 spaces for 560 units in 2016 to 263 spaces for 965 flats. This presents an exceptionally large reduction.

Local disruption will be huge given the level of traffic on the A320 and the fact that there has already been a significant overrun on the Victoria Square development. Local infrastructure and public services are already struggling and they will not be able to cope with such a large super density development.

We cannot ignore the fact that Woking Borough Council has looming and significant financial problems and a burden of debt from property development, speculative investment via ThamesWey Developments Ltd and overspending which would appear to rival that of Croydon Council who recently filed a s114 notice under the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

Once the impact of this and Covid19 is felt there will no doubt be significant cuts to budgets and local services that will impact both existing Woking residents and any future occupants of this

proposed development.

The application should be rejected.