

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: Ms Julia Osmond

Address: 42 Dahomey Road, London SW16 6ND

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Other bodies

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

- High-over density of development
- Impact of development
- Loss of privacy
- Out of Character
- Overlooking

Comment: I do not live in Woking but for 25 years have been a frequent visitor; my sister and brother-in-law, niece and nephew have lived in Kingsway very close to this development site for 23 years and before that in another part of the town; and my mother (now 94) moved to Woking (Horsell) over 6 years ago and I frequently stay with her (mainly now to provide care when her live-in carer is away at weekends or holidays). So I am very familiar with the town centre and Goldsworth Road area in particular. I remember how much the town centre has improved over those years and how pleased we all were when the centre/shopping centre were significantly improved some 7 or 8 years ago and with the creation of the lovely 'town square' by the Peacocks. Already the impact of the twin towers currently under construction is a blight on that; and the surrounding areas. I don't have a car and often walk down the hill from Horsell (or from Kingsway) into the town centre/to the train station; and the twin towers are so clearly out of character and tend to dominate the skyline from a number of viewpoints around the town. The proposed development is extraordinarily high and dense, and completely out of character. I have read the

objections of townspeople and this is clearly not what people want to end up living with; with these huge blocks overshadowing them in their homes, and when out shopping locally, and 'crowding out' the sky, and natural light. I note that the proposals fall foul of many of the local planning development Core Strategy aims and objectives; and that must be properly addressed and taken account of, not simply given 'lip service'. The 8 year time frame for development makes my heart sink. Even as a visitor to the town centre, as a pedestrian it is soulless having to negotiate endless roadworks and obstacles to crossing the road, which now seem to have been going on for at least a couple of years - and this development would be significantly more disruptive and diminishing of local people's quality of life when going about their daily business, shopping, and using local facilities, given the sheer size and scale of this proposed development. Do local people's lives and quality of life really matter so little? Nobody wants to get in the way of genuine provision for people who are homeless or who in desperate need of new or better housing (and living in London and working in social welfare law as a housing adviser I am very well aware of the misery that homelessness, sofa surfing, insecure, unaffordable, inadequate or downright poor standards of housing have on people's lives) - but how on earth does this planned development even begin to address that? 5% so-called 'affordable' housing (which as we know in the private rented sector does not actually mean truly affordable housing but housing let at up to 80% of market rent housing) ?? 2% of flats suitable for the average sized family ?? Inadequate space and light ?? It also seems more than likely that much or most of this housing stock will fetch up in the hands of private landlords, rather than providing genuinely longer term, secure and decent homes. And such huge/sky high tower blocks for residential homes ?? Who exactly is profiting from this?: not really the people destined to live in these homes, I would guess. Perhaps the price of ruining the skyline and severely impacting on the quality of life and everyday enjoyment of daily life for Woking residents already living in this area and visitors to the town centre could be justified (if at all) if this proposal was going to provide truly affordable and secure and decent housing for future residents and generations - but it seems clear that this development as proposed simply will not meet those very genuine housing needs at all (and doesn't even seem to be trying to).