

Re; Planning Application PLAN/2020/0568.

Application Summary

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 Bounague
[Click for further information](#)

Customer Details

Name: Mr S R Price
Email: [REDACTED]
Address: 27 Wheatsheaf Close, Horsell, Woking GU214BL

Comments Details

Commenter Type: Resident (local res.- member of public)
Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application
Reasons for comment:

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

Comments: 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, this would appear to be without the knowledge of residents. A few residents eventually became aware, 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. Since then of course we have

been in lockdown due to covid 19, with many reticent to venture to Public sites in order to view potential plans, this means that an inadequate consultation period has resulted. Some 'near neighbours' have been advised of the very short 4-week period allowed for comments for this complex development. The majority of the 100,000 or so Borough residents will be unaware of this 4 week opportunity.

The developer has been presenting their plans to a 'Design Review Panel', who in reality are a Design South East panel. DSE have historically actively encourage tall building developments and commented 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 estimated eight year construction period, which is likely to be extend due to Covid related construction issues. In parallel to this there will be much additional disruption if WBC go ahead with other Town Centre developments they have in mind. Many (anecdotally) are already voting with their feet and shopping in near by Guildford.

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 limited – and weighted heavily towards 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.
- Resultant visual impairment for residents living in the areas surrounding the Town Centre
- Excessive visual over-dominance of tall tower blocks.
- Visually 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, and indicates in

particular the potential for lack of good sunlight in some rooms , and at ground level due to sun shadows. It is, therefore surprising that the 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 Day Aggregates 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 elected to provide a very small amount of car parking for current and proposed Town Centre residential blocks, this is justified by the statement that for leisure, residents use the railway which in reality is route limited, likewise the current bus systems are unpopular and route limited, what will change to promote this? Walking or cycling;. 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 this. The provision of 1064 cycle racks it appears is a pointless and empty exercise. Taking the above public transport/ limited safe cycling routes realities into account the provision of 263 car spaces without

charging facilities is very low, and does not take into account The Government's drive for electric cars to be the norm within the near future. If this development does go ahead, future residents will find themselves potentially trapped in their leisure time and 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 potentially created, especially during heavy traffic times. In addition at this geographical point and as indicated above, wind tunneling and traffic emissions will be at their worst here.
- Infrastructure. The developer's description of social, medical, schooling, etc infrastructure provides an unconvincing realistic portrayal to current local residents.
- Other points - **High Tower Blocks.**
- New reports are appearing daily relating to the problems of people living in high tower blocks. Historically it has also been linked with behavioral problems, lack of open spaces to promote communal living, potential for exacerbating Pandemics, and inflexibility of providing a mix of single people, families, and older people in the same building block, which is beneficial for quality of life and mental health. (Mimicking the extended family concept.)
- Town Centre and Approaches Master Plan –

For some years now residents have been requesting the Council, to consult and work in a more cohesive way with residents to construct a Master Plan for the Town Centre which would encompass the spatial relationship between lower height residential and office block developments, road, footpath and cycle routes. The provision of additional social, and in particular medical, and schooling infrastructure to support the new developments.