

# 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 Adrian Scott

Address: 30 Loop Road, Kingfield, Woking, Surrey GU22 9BQ

## Comment Details

Commenter Type: Resident (local res.- member of public)

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

- Impact of development

Comment: I would like to object to 'The Greening Goldsworth Road Development' on the following environmental grounds

N.B. My objection is based on the following BBC News article (from today 5th August 2020):

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-53642581>

Architects are urging that old buildings should not be demolished, but should be protected - to fight climate change.

They say property owners should be incentivised to upgrade draughty buildings, not just knock them down.

That is because so much carbon is emitted by creating the steel, cement and bricks for new buildings.

The campaign by the Architects' Journal is backed by 14 Stirling Prize winners

In the past there was debate about whether it was better for the climate to demolish an old energy-hungry building and build a well-insulated replacement.

But this is now widely considered a serious mistake because of the amount of carbon emitted

during the construction of the new building.

The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) estimates that 35% of the lifecycle carbon from a typical office development is emitted before the building is even opened. It says the figure for residential premises is 51%.

These calculations suggest it will be decades before some new buildings pay back their carbon debt by saving more emissions than they created - and these are decades when carbon must be sharply reduced.

The Architects' Journal has now given evidence to the Commons Environmental Audit Committee (EAC) on the difference between operational emissions from heating and cooling a building and embodied emissions from creating construction materials.

It wants the government to change the VAT rules which can make it cheaper to rebuild than to refurbish a standing building.

Architects' Journal managing editor Will Hurst said: "This staggering fact has only been properly grasped in the construction industry relatively recently. We've got to stop mindlessly pulling buildings down."

He said VAT on refurbishment, repair and maintenance should be cut from 20% to zero to match the typical rate for new-build.

He continued: "It's crazy that the government actually incentivises practices that create more carbon emissions. Also, if you avoid demolition you make carbon savings right now, which we really need.

"In the past the government argued that the EU would forbid zero VAT on renovation - but they can't use that excuse now."

And Alex Green, from the British Property Federation, said that sometimes the different VAT level is the key factor in determining whether a building is felled or saved for a new purpose.

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What's more, ministers recently said they would ease planning rules for owners wanting to demolish offices and replace them with new-build homes.

Mr Hurst has urged them to rethink that plan. He suggested the Treasury could raise the tax on new-build projects to compensate for tax reductions from refurbished buildings.

He also suggested planning guidance should create a bias toward refurbishment.

The Architects' Journal evidence has been reviewed by the EAC. Its chair, Philip Dunne MP, told BBC News: "Prioritising retrofitting can offer huge benefits.

"It enhances energy efficiency and boosts skills and green jobs quickly in the UK. It will be a crucial component for us to move to a low carbon economy."

The EAC will report its findings on the issue in the coming months.

Surely as Woking Borough Council has such high environmental standards it should be following the best current advice to protect our environment especially since Woking Borough Council declared a climate and ecological emergency on 25th July 2019 (<https://www.woking.gov.uk/nature-and-sustainability/climate-change/climate-emergency-action-plan>), following on from the UK governments declaration of 'an environment and climate emergency' on the 1st May 2019.

We need to be doing absolutely EVERYTHING possible we can to reduce (not increase) our CO2 emissions.

This new massive development will NOT meet this target.