

Ian Spain
23 Oaks Road
Woking
GU21 6DU

Wednesday 5th August 2020

PLAN/2020/0568 | 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). | Land To The North And South Of Goldsworth Road Woking Surrey GU21 6JT

Dear Sir / Madam,

I would like to register my objections to the above plan to redevelop the Goldsworth Road area between Woking Fire Station and Victoria Way, Woking. As a life-long resident of the Goldsworth Road area of Woking I strongly object to the proposal to build 965 flats, at such high density so close to the existing low-rise & low density family homes in this area of Woking. The project does almost nothing to benefit existing residents & will have a huge negative impact on the day-to-day lives and wellbeing of anyone living close to this site for the 8 year duration of its demolition and building phases and beyond, as the already overstretched local infrastructure (Doctors, schools, police & fire services, road & rail networks) then have to absorb the estimated 2400 plus new residents. The recent hi-rise developments in and around the centre of Woking have not enhanced the experience of living in, or visiting Woking and this proposal, if allowed in its current form, will be of further detriment to the lives of Woking residents.

Objections

- 1) Height & mass of the new structures contravenes CS21. The height of structure T3 at 40 stories is significantly higher than the 34 stories of the Victoria Square Tower and dwarfs all other surrounding structures. The height of structure T1 at 21 stories is disproportionately large when compared to the Fire Station at 5 stories and again will look out of place when compared with surrounding structures. The height of structure BA at 29 stories is completely out of scale when compared to all surrounding structures, including The Premier Inn, which is only 11 stories high.
- 2) Loss of light. Due to the height of the proposed structures anyone living close to the site is likely to see a significant and noticeable loss of daylight. This again contravenes CS21.
- 3) Loss of privacy. There will be a significant & unacceptable loss of privacy for existing residents of the Oaks Road & Vale Farm Road areas, in particular from structure BA but also from structures T3 & T2.
- 4) Density of proposed development. Having a density of 839 dwellings per hectare cannot be justified given the impact it will have on local infrastructure. Also, in light of the current COVID19 global pandemic, creating super hi-density structures of the type proposed here clearly goes against the local community's interest purely on health grounds alone.

- 5) Affordable housing. CS12 requires that 40% of new residential developments of this scale should be affordable homes. This proposal offers only 48 affordable homes out of a total of 965, that's less than 5%. How is this justifiable? I also think it's ironic that the proposal includes relocating the York Road Project, which helps homeless people but then doesn't provide even the minimum required number of affordable homes.
- 6) Family homes. CS11 requires that proposals provide a mix of dwelling types to address local needs. Does Woking really need an additional 152 Studio flats & 426 one bedroom flats? (That's 60% of the flats). Only 24 will have three bedrooms & of the remainder 251 will have two double bedrooms & 112 will have one single & one double. This is not meeting the local community's need for new family homes.
- 7) Dwelling sizes. Government guidance in the form of The Nationally Described Space Standard lays down minimum suggested sizes for new property developments. Whilst the proposal does appear to meet the NDSS, it does so by the smallest of margins for many of the flats. Example a) Studio Flat type 001A area 37.7m², NDSS guidance 37m². Example b) Typical Flat type 101A (1B2P) area 51.5m², NDSS guidance 50m². I believe 60% of the proposed development is one bedroom & Studio flats similar to the ones in the examples. I don't think it serves the interests of existing & future residents of Woking to back developments that only barely meet the minimum requirements specified in the NDSS. Considering all of the recent discussions on peoples' mental wellbeing and also taking into account how the COVID19 pandemic is changing working practices, with many more people working from home, we should not be creating tiny box dwellings of this type and stacking them 40 stories high.
- 8) Parking provision. The proposal includes a total of 263 spaces to serve the 839 dwellings / 2400 occupants (0.27 spaces per unit). This seems wholly inadequate and is bound to have a negative impact on all surrounding streets, which are already oversubscribed due to existing residential parking needs. It also doesn't take into account the need for parking for any visitors to the buildings. Add to that the high number of deliveries that will no doubt take place every day and it is going to cause major problems for all local residents & road users.
- 9) Traffic. Local residents have already been subjected to significant disruption, inconvenience and pollution caused by the ongoing building work taking place around Victoria Square. The new proposal will add another ten years of disruption to the lives of Woking's residents. This is unacceptable and unjustifiable. Even once the construction phases have been completed and the buildings are occupied, a new population of 2400 people living in such a small area will inevitably cause a large increase in traffic along Goldsworth Road and throughout the surrounding area. Woking's roads already struggle to cope with current volumes of traffic, so any increase will likely end up causing gridlock, particularly at peak times.
- 10) Fire safety. Surrey Fire and Rescue have the longest Aerial Ladder Platform in the country at 42m. Grenfell Tower, at 24 stories, was 67m tall. In light of the tragedy that took place at Grenfell we should not be considering building new structures of the heights being proposed in Woking. The proposed pedestrianisation of Goldsworth Road will also impact the response times of the Fire Service from Woking Fire Station, as will the inevitable increase in traffic volume along the remaining section of Goldsworth Road and Church Street West, both during the building phases and on into occupancy, potentially affecting the safety of all local residents.

11) Crime. Woking is already seeing a steady and alarming increase in reported crime, particularly around the town centre neighbourhood, which saw an almost 10% increase from 2018 to 2019. Building a super high density housing project, with over 2400 new residents in addition to the already agreed Victoria Square project will inevitably lead to another large increase in crime in the area. Existing residents should not have their safety put further at risk by this project and the excessively large increase in population density it will bring. The proposed pedestrianised section of Goldsworth Road will also likely draw people out of the town centre, leading to more crime and incidents of antisocial behaviour, adversely affecting the lives of existing residents.

Yours faithfully,
Ian Spain