

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 David Sutton

Address: Hill End House, Church Hill, Horsell Woking, Surrey GU21 4QE

Comment Details

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

Stance: Customer made comments in support of the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

- Positive support for the development

Comment: I welcome this application. This part of town is dreary, run down and pedestrian unfriendly and will hugely benefit from the proposals.

There is, of course, an already consented (subject to legal) 35 storey scheme for the Northern part of the site and while the tallest block is higher this new proposal is more holistic and brings far more benefits to the town than the existing scheme and should be judged in that context.

This proposal brings 48 affordable homes against a previous inclusion of none. While some will say that is small number in context it is better than having none and if all developers could be worked with to provide even this percentage on all proposals for the town centre then what could be delivered would eventually be in the hundreds and would make a big difference to many. The context and calculation of affordable housing must also be considered in tandem with the creation of a purpose built home for the York Road Project which will allow them to improve the lives of our towns most vulnerable and itself on the upper floors including the provision of what will be truly affordable accommodation. It will be life changing for many and is a very important part of this development; it will help make our town a better a fairer place.

The development makes sense when considered as part of the cluster around Victoria Square and

the outliers of New Central and Centrium. It is a far more sensible use of a brown field site than what was proposed at Kingfield which was rightly rejected for being wrong for the location, however we cannot have it both ways, if brown field sites in the town centre are not maximised then inevitably the precious green belt will eventually come under pressure from volume house builders.

Town centres are changing economically and are under long term pressure to maintain relevance and viability. The high street won't die where there is balance and investment. Having more people living in the town centre will add life and prosperity to retailers, service and leisure providers, restaurateurs, bar owners and employers. It will economically benefit the town and by extension benefit the lives of many residents. Yes some new residents will commute to London but whether people like it or not Woking has always been a commuter town and even in the post COVID world that we look forward to Woking will still remain a commuter town however commuting patterns may change and not everyone will continue to travel every day; that creates massive opportunity in the town for those willing to embrace it and look forward.

The generous public realm that is being created by closing of the dangerous junction from Victoria Way must be applauded. What is currently shown is very high quality public realm and it is important that in legal agreements the council ensures that the developer builds the space out to that quality (unlike the descoping that happened with the New Central public space) particularly as it will eventually transfer back to public ownership. It is also good to see from the planning documents how this public space works into a wider potential masterplan that will totally transform that part of the town and will be a significant benefit to how the centre of Woking works. Closing this section of Goldsworth Road to create a greener space that puts people ahead of cars is very welcome and as local councillors fell over each other trying to declare an environmental emergency before each other I'm sure they will support a car unfriendly solution.

Flats and apartments are homes and are family homes, there is far too much snobbery about them and towards people who live there. They create an opportunity for many to take their first steps on the housing ladder and also there are many particularly in the younger demographic who do not want to maintain garden at a particular stage in their lives, this development has interesting communal garden and shared facilities.

This is a fantastic opportunity to provide homes for many people including the most vulnerable in our society, reinvent a run down part of town, green our streets, create much needed employment both during and post construction and to show Woking is economically vibrant and a place for business to invest.