

PLANNING REF : 251621
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 18 Park Avenue
: Wokingham
: RG40 2AJ
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Michael Thomas
DATE SUBMITTED : 20/08/2025

COMMENTS:

This planning application should be refused because the scale, design, parking provision, and impact on neighbours are inconsistent with Wokingham Borough Council's own Town Centre Masterplan and planning policy. The proposal represents overdevelopment, threatens residential amenity, and creates highway and safety risks outlined further below.

1. Parking and Highway Safety

- The "car free" concept is unrealistic and no process for guaranteeing its enforcement has been set out in the planning application; local public transport is too infrequent and slow to be a viable substitute for car ownership.

- With only two disabled bays and four visitor spaces for 21 flats, overspill parking is inevitable, worsening congestion on Park Road.

- The adjacent roads, Park Avenue and Park Road, are private roads maintained by an incorporated company (Park Road and Park Avenue Limited). As private property, the public is not permitted to park on these roads. Any intended development cannot result in parking on

private property. The proposed parking in the planning application is grossly insufficient for residents, visitors and carers associated with the proposed 21 flats. It is a certainty that the proposed development will result in parking on Park Avenue and Park Road during construction and post construction as explained further below.

- Construction access, delivery lorries, and increased traffic will heighten risks at the already hazardous Park Road/Wellington Road junction.

2. Scale, Height, and Design

- The Council's Design Guide has not been adhered to. Wokingham Borough Council's Design Guide, paragraphs 2.6 and 3A.2.6, state that there must be an inclusive process, engagement and consultation as part of the design process. There has been no consultation with the owners/occupiers of neighbouring properties who will be affected by the development.

- The proposal exceeds the Masterplan guidance that development on this site should be limited to three storeys and sensitive to surrounding 2-storey Victorian/Edwardian houses.

- Its bulk and massing would dominate Park Road, Wellington Road, and Station Road, harming the established historic character.

- Residents of Park Road and Park Avenue maintain the ridge-line rule - the highest horizontal point of a roof where the two roof planes meet at the top.

- The design takes cues from developments that are not visible from the site, rather than from immediate neighbours.

3. Environmental and Infrastructure Concerns

- The removal of a significant protected tree (with TPO) and green space is unacceptable given the loss of open land elsewhere in the town centre.

- Highway damage during construction will fall on residents, who currently maintain Park Road and Park Avenue at their own expense.

- The application lacks clarity on Council adoption of Park Road, undermining enforcement of proposed double-yellow lines.

- Significant loss of green space attached to wildlife and subsequent landscape degradation. If maintained this green space would contribute positively to the local area.

4. Local, national policy

- Overdevelopment of a small plot, as proposed, is not value for money given there will be minimal economies of scale associated with the development of only 21 flats. Consequently, the proposed development does not represent value for money or a sensible use of council funds. The Council should be seeking to develop larger, vacant plots so as to ensure taxpayer value for money.

5. Probity in the planning process

- To quote from the Local Government Association's 'Probity in Planning' guidance, "planning issues must be assessed fairly and on their planning merits, even when there is a predisposition in favour of one side of the argument or the other". I trust that this application will be considered impartially despite the applicant being the Council and the fact that it has been publicised by the Council as though planning permission has already been granted. To quote, for example, from the 'Residents' Round Up' email update of 8 August: "A transformative new housing development is set to be built in Wokingham town centre, providing 21 high-quality, affordable homes for residents." Only in the third paragraph of the article is a reference made to a planning application being submitted. I do hope that the presumption that consent will be given does not indicate bias towards the application within the Planning Committee.

6. Impact on Neighbours' Amenity

- Overlooking from balconies and windows will severely affect privacy at 1 and 4 Park Road.

- Light loss and an overbearing building will reduce quality of life for surrounding residents.

- Noise and disruption from 21 flats is disproportionate to this quiet cul-de-sac setting.

- The current carwash business and other local businesses that use the proposed development site for carparking will be negatively impacted resulting in loss of earnings and local employment. The carwash

business will effectively be 'boxed in' by the development - it is unclear how it can possibly remain a viable business if planning permission is granted.

Conclusion

The proposal is contrary to local planning policies on design, amenity, and transport. It represents overdevelopment of the site, poor value for money for council tax payers and will cause long-term harm to the character and safety of the area.

Furthermore, the parking, environmental and infrastructure concerns, in particular, align with material planning considerations and council precedent supports refusal on the very grounds being raising.

I therefore respectfully request that the Council refuse this application.