

PLANNING REF : 251621
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 9 Park Avenue
:
: RG40 2AJ
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Mark Farrell
DATE SUBMITTED : 03/09/2025

COMMENTS:

While I am in favour of WBC providing affordable housing to the Wokingham community, due consideration of how that is provided should be given within the guidelines laid out by WBC themselves.

The proposed development is not in keeping with surrounding buildings and thus breaches Wokingham Borough Council's Design Guide, specifically R1, R2 of section 4.2 and R11 of section 4.5.

The proposed area cannot accommodate a structure of 'up to three storeys'. It is not in keeping with the local buildings on Park Road, Wellington Road and Station Road. To say that it is taking 'design cues' from Elms field is totally inappropriate. Not only is Elms Field an open space it cannot be seen from the site, therefore any 'cues' are not relevant as it is not comparable.

The proposed development is in a highly condensed space and aesthetically is not in keeping with the design and image of a market Town that Wokingham is well known for. This three storey building should not be the first thing that welcomes visitors to Wokingham who arrive by train.

In particular, the following points are not being observed within the Wokingham Borough Design Guide which it's Adopted Policy, 4.2 refers: - Character & Context R1 - Residential development should be designed to contribute positively towards the historic or underlying character and quality of the local area. This may be achieved through blending in with a strongly positive existing character, responding where relevant to the positive elements of its historic context or, where the site is large enough to allow for a distinctive identity to be created, by establishing a new character that relates well to the existing.

- R2 - New housing should respond to its context, in particular taking opportunities presented by the physical characteristics of the site and surroundings, including - incorporating existing features of value into the proposals, such as existing buildings, structures

- R9: The height of residential buildings should respond to a number of factors: - the prevailing heights and degree of variation in height in the local context; - the scale and importance of the space that the building will define or enclose; - its position in the street

hierarchy; - the position of the building line in relation to the street (ie how far back the building is set from the street frontage); and - whether it is a potential landmark location.

Buildings proposed to be taller than their surroundings, that is their neighbours or the prevailing heights in the local area, must be of exceptional design quality

- R10: The assessment of an appropriate density must be design-led

as well as considering the number of units per hectare, to ensure that development relates well to local character. This includes: - the height, bulk and massing of buildings; - the space around and gaps between them; and - the space required for parking.

- R11: New housing should be designed to create street scenes with a coherent character, that relates well to, or enhances, existing street scenes (in terms of scale, rhythm, proportion, height, materials and colour), particularly in areas where built form contributes significantly to the local character.
- R13: Retaining existing mature landscape, such as hedges and mature trees, where possible. The one hybrid black poplar has an existing TPO (ref. 514/1989), yet WBC seem willing to approve the removal of the tree if it is suitably replaced. How is that possible and why are WBC permitted to take this action when private individuals seeking TPO removal are not afforded the same consideration.

There is clearly a high density of dwellings with no resident parking. While there is a statement there will be yellow lines at the entrance of Park Avenue there is no intention to adopt the road therefore the parking restrictions are unenforceable. It is short sighted to assume that residents will not have cars or will use local public car parks. They will inevitably park in Park Road or Park Avenue, or on the double yellow lines creating a further hazard to any vehicles exiting Park Road onto Wellington Road. This junction is already dangerous as there is poor visibility in both directions, but there is no traffic calming at the junction with Station Road to reduce speed. Cars do not slow down as they come down station road and take the corner far too fast. The exiting visibility will be further impacted and the junction made even more dangerous by the proposed planting of new trees along Wellington Road.

The development must be reduced in size/number of units, with an appropriate number of parking spaces, and steps must be taken to improve the safety of the exit onto Wellington road.