

PLANNING REF : 251621  
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 18 Park Road  
: Wokingham, Berkshire  
: RG40 2AH  
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Daniel Spencer  
DATE SUBMITTED : 27/08/2025

COMMENTS:

Objection to Planning Application 251621 (Station Road / Park Road Development)

I wish to register my objection to the above planning application. The reasons for this are numerous and are documented below:

1. Design, appearance and build materials

The proposal to build for 21 flats at the junction of Station Road and Park Road does not meet the criteria as set out in the council's own Wokingham Borough Local Development Framework Adopted Core Strategy (January 2010). It is clear in that document that Planning permission will be granted for proposals that: a) are of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area together with a high quality of design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users including open spaces or occupiers and the quality of life (CP3). Park Road and Park Avenue is a road of historic significance in Wokingham with a number of mainly detached houses, set back from the private road as noted in the Wokingham Town Centre Master Plan (June 2010) which describes the architectural character of the area as follows 'Albert Road, Park Road and Park Avenue are fine, nineteenth century and Edwardian properties. Properties along Park Road are built of red brick and have fine Edwardian detailing (3.5.76 and 2.5.79). It is clear when set against this backdrop that the design of the proposed flats does not meet planning expectations to 'blend in strongly with the existing character' and do not 'relate well to neighbouring land use'. In fact, the opposite will occur! In comparison to Park Road, Park Avenue the proposed structure and design of the proposed building will "jar" enormously with over a hundred years of architectural design history of Park Road/Park Avenue. The proposed building is in complete contrast to the surrounding existing residential housing and can only refer to cues from developments such as Elms Field which isn't visible or adjacent to this proposed development. The adjacency is, in nearest building terms, those houses on Park Road and Park Avenue, so it is impossible for this development to comply with additional guidance in the council's own Wokingham Borough Design Guide which states that 'New housing should respond to its context relating well to neighbouring land uses and properties' (R2).

Furthermore, the Borough Design Guide also refers to the height of residential buildings, emphasising that any developments that are intended to be higher than surrounding buildings should be of 'exceptional design quality' (R9) and list a number of circumstances where buildings higher than their surroundings may be acceptable, none of which apply in this case. The proposal states that they have adapted previous plans to take account of the height of buildings in Park Road, however the plans still show two second floor flats on Park Road (numbers 20 and 21), only after which the

building height reduces. In other words it remains non-compliant and flawed when set against the council's own guidance.

## 2. Layout and density of buildings

The Borough Design Guide states that 'the assessment of an appropriate density must be design-led as well as considering the number of units per hectare to ensure that the 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' (R10). The residential accommodation in Park Road and Park Avenue is detached housing, historic in nature, with clear margins between each dwelling, gardens to the front and rear and most importantly driveways and on street parking for the numerous vehicles that are part and parcel of living in any type of accommodation used as a primary residence. This proposal would be in complete contrast to that local character.

## 3. Parking, traffic and highway safety

Wokingham Borough Development Plan - Adopted MDD local plan (2014) states that Planning Permission will only be granted where the proposal demonstrates the following: a) How the proposed parking provision meets the standards set out in Appendix 2 of the MDD and b) that the new scheme retains an appropriate level of off street parking. (Policy CC07). I singularly fail to understand how it is possible that this planning application can seek to dodge the above criteria by simply submitting the proposal for this development as "car free". How can such a thing be considered when friends, family, delivery drivers will all have cars and will all be wanting to visit people within these flats. It is complete nonsense to determine that any residential property can be car free because it cannot be guaranteed that the dwellings will be car free 100% of the time. There is no precedent for this in Wokingham and no realistic detail as to how this will be managed or what levels of control are inherent within the design of the proposal to ensure the development is 100% car free, 100% of the time. If one delivery driver dumps their van half on the pavement and half on the road of Wellington Road to deliver a parcel to one of the properties in this development, then it fails in its assertion to be "car free" and in doing so runs the serious risk of an accident or injury occurring on Wellington Road whilst that vehicle is parked on it, however temporary that might be. Simply put it is complete and utter nonsense, with potentially very dangerous consequences for road users and pedestrians on Wellington Road in general and those exiting Park Road, to declare a residential building of multiple lots, to be "car free". To illustrate the last point, it can be evidenced that Wokingham has high levels of car ownership with vehicle licensing data from 2023 stating there had been a 5.1% increase in car ownership over 5 years in the borough and an average of 1.2 cars per household. Only 14% of households did not own a car. There are no other developments that have been approved without car parking provision. The Elms Field development included a dedicated 88 space car park, Latimer Road flats included 34 spaces for 42 flats, the Carnival Place residential scheme includes 55 car parking spaces and the Outfield Road development provided 18 car parking spaces for 18 flats. The Transport Statement refers to options to hire cars from two local providers, both of

which have weekend closures and high rental costs (starting at approx. 68/day). Even if they do hire them is it realistic that they wouldn't return home to pick up bags or indeed drop them off before returning the car? Documents also propose that residents could purchase a season parking ticket at Wokingham Station at their own cost. The current cost of an annual parking ticket is 997.50. There is very limited on street parking in the area, and only for restricted hours. The intended purpose of the ground floor flats is to enable vulnerable adults to live independently, which will involve support from family, friends and professionals, all of whom will need to be able to park at the property.

The only example of a car free development in Berkshire is at Horlicks Quarter, where residents could also access a private car share scheme and a bike hire station, neither of which are being offered in this case. However, as reported in the Slough Observer, the Council have acknowledged their attempt at a 'car free development' has failed and resulted in dangerous parking problems. <https://www.sloughobserver.co.uk/news/24688449.horlicks-quarter-linked-unsafe-parking-slough-borough-council-says/> To quote from the Slough Observer of 30 October 2024 "Slough Borough Council's goal of encouraging people to use alternatives to cars led it to grant planning permission to new housing developments with little or no parking. But now the council has acknowledged that these efforts have 'not been successful' and have led to parking issues on and near major roads."

Access to public transport is a reason given why residents of the new flats will not need cars, however current residents in Park Avenue, Park Road and Station Road all own cars, as public transport is simply too infrequent or not sufficient convenient or accessible to enable car free living. For example, how does someone who might be vulnerable and have special needs get to Tesco supermarket? Or any other retailer that is not immediately next to a train station or bus route and where heavy bags might need carrying. They would, more often than not, have to book a taxi? Where does that taxi park when they are unloading their shopping? These very simple, real world examples have not been thought through in a trite throwaway comment of "car free".

It is also important to mention that those without cars might consider alternative transport or vehicle ownership to help them "get about" such as motorcycles, e bikes, e scooters, cycles. Again it is entirely possible that these will just be dumped in and around the dwelling on pavements, at the exit of Park and Wellington Road creating further obstacles for current residents to negotiate both on foot and their own cars, parked at their own houses.

Moreover, visitors to the residents, and the residents themselves, will continue to need to use cars and will undoubtedly park close to home, causing dangerous parking issues and putting pedestrians and drivers safety at risk, and impacting the quality of life of existing residents on Park Road and Park Avenue who will be unable to access, and park at, their own properties.

Traffic safety will also be further impacted by the lack of any turning area in the development meaning that any larger vehicles will need to reverse into Park Road or block the entrance entirely.

The Transport Statement recognises that the development is on a prominent corner with traffic coming in two lanes towards the level crossing as well as intersecting along Wellington Road and a high level of pedestrian traffic to and from the station and into town. The increase in traffic turning into, and reversing out of Park Road and on to Wellington Road, as well as the accumulated parking congestion will pose a significant risk to pedestrian safety in that area, as well as increasing the potential for traffic accidents due to parking on the pavements and on double yellow lines at an already hazardous junction. The junctions at Station Road and Wellington Road have already been recognised as areas needing enforcement to increase road safety and tackle network congestion following the introduction of ANPR cameras in September 2023.

In its conclusion, the Transport Statement states that the proposed development is highly sustainable and will have a positive impact on the performance of the local highway network with a benefit to road safety for all road users when compared to its extant use. There is no evidence to support this statement, particularly in terms of any benefit to road safety - in fact the reverse is more likely.

#### 4. Environmental and infrastructure concerns

The removal of the protected poplar tree and other vegetation is unjustified and will reduce biodiversity in an already overdeveloped town centre. The planning proposal dismisses the significance of the other vegetation currently on the site and the habitat it has offered for over two decades.

In closing it is clear that both the design of the buildings is not in keeping with the council's own guidelines and that the ridiculous impact of "car free" has not been adequately considered from a control perspective leading to the potential risk of serious injury when these 2 words are simply forgotten, and cars are parked at or around site for convenience.

Danny Spencer