

PLANNING REF : 251621
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 3 Park Road
: Wokingham
: RG40 2AH
SUBMITTED BY : Miss Amy Alexander
DATE SUBMITTED : 31/08/2025

COMMENTS:

As the close neighbour at 3 Park Road, I wish to register my strong objection to this planning application. My property will be directly affected by the proposals in terms of residential amenity, safety, access and ignores the Council's own design policies.

1. DESIGN, APPEARANCE AND MATERIALS (INCLUDING HERITAGE ISSUES)

1.1 NOT IN KEEPING.

I object on the basis that 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

- As the conclusion to the Design and Access Statement (Part 2) submitted as part of the planning application acknowledges (see page 50) the Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan "describes proposed built form for the gateway to be limited to 3 storeys and to relate to the surrounding residential developments. Materials and massing should relate to the local character with designed being conscious of key views and side elevations are likely to be important and visible".

The Masterplan limits the height of any building on the site to 3 storeys. This is not a design proposal, or goal to be achieved. Furthermore, despite quoting from the Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan in this way, the proposed development contains no sense of the heritage character of existing buildings and bears no relationship to its surrounding buildings.

- The application refers to taking 'design cues' from recent local developments, in particular Elms Field. These are not the most appropriate cues because they cannot be seen from the site. Instead, cues should be taken from existing residential properties which more immediately surround the proposed development. These properties are more traditional and two storeys. The proposed development is not consistent with or sympathetic to the properties surrounding it in Park Road and Station Road. The building is in an entirely different style to the properties in the neighbouring Park Road, Wellington Road and Station Road and unlike those properties is not set back with its own garden space and parking spaces.

R11 states that "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". This development does not do this. It is out of character with its surrounding buildings. The link to Elms Field is too distant and not relevant.

1.2 SCALE/HEIGHT/MASS

I object on the basis that the bulk/mass of the proposed building is out of character for the area and out of proportion to its surroundings and thus breaches Wokingham Borough Council's Design Guide, specifically R9 and R10 of section 4.5

- The bulk/mass of the proposed development is in line with the peak of the roofs of the surrounding buildings, then the proposed development has a roof on top. It will therefore be a storey taller than any other surrounding building.

- In particular, proposed flats 20 and 21 cause the development to be three storeys high along Park Road. There is no precedent for three storeys (plus roof) in Park Road. At the very least, the bulk and mass of the building adjacent to Park Road should be reduced in order to reflect the neighbouring properties.

- From a point of view of mass, the proposed development is significantly larger than existing properties immediately neighbouring the proposed development which are Victorian/Edwardian houses with ample parking spaces on the site of the houses. Any development on Park Road, including this one, should reflect the scale, height and mass of the existing properties on Park Road.

- As per paragraph 9.5.1 of the Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan, it could be argued that this is a landmark site and thus the building on it can be larger, but that is only the case for the part of the development facing the train station. The section of the proposed building along Park Road is far too visually dominant for a cul-de-sac of low-rise Victorian / Edwardian properties, which is what Park Road is. The plans submitted with the planning application do not give an accurate representation of the dominant impact and overbearing nature of the proposed building. The proposed east elevation plan does not show the Wellington Road properties adjacent to the proposed building, thus does not show the reality of the massing. Nor do any of the plans show the massing of the building in comparison to the properties opposite on Wellington Road. The south elevation plan shows just how significant the proposed building is compared to the other existing buildings on the same side as Park Road. Were a plan to be produced showing the 3 properties at the end of Park Road, opposite, alongside and diagonally opposite the development the overbearing mass of the building will be immediately apparent.

- Paragraph 9.3.1 of the Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan states that the Masterplan " seeks to preserve and enhance the town centre's historic pattern. It therefore adopts a coherent perimeter block structure to protect the building line of historic streets and spaces." Existing properties in Station Road, Wellington Road and Park Road are 2 storeys, so the proposed building of 3 storeys plus peaked roof, does not protect the building line of historic streets and spaces.

- For the reasons above, the development should be 2 storeys throughout (ground and 1st floor using the terminology in the planning application) and certainly should not have three storeys

(described as ground, 1st and 2nd floors in the planning application) facing Park Road.

2. THE FALLACY OF A CAR FREE DEVELOPMENT & RESULTING PARKING ISSUES

I object on the basis that the development will result in nuisance parking both during and following the development's construction unless adequate car parking is provided and enforceable parking controls are implemented as a condition of planning permission.

- The application proposes 2 disabled parking spaces and 4 visitor spaces for 19 x 1 bed flats and 2 x 2 bed flats. This contrary to the Local Plan policy of applying Parking Standards and wholly inadequate.

- The private development of 14 flats on the former Jewsons site on Barkham Road/Oxford Road has 1 parking space per flat. Why has the same rule not been applied when the Council applies for planning of this site given its almost identical location?

- Whilst, in line with the Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan, the reduction of car movement and parking is a long-term aim of the Council, it is completely unrealistic to expect a development of 21 flats to be "car free". Paragraph 7.4.6 of the Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan states that in the medium to long-term, future developments within the town centre must seek to "materially reduce car parking provision and contribute to enhanced parking management and sustainable transport improvements that offer comparative door-to-door journey times." A reduction below the average of 1.5 spaces per dwelling (as per paragraph 10.6.11 of the Masterplan) would suffice, say to 1 parking space per dwelling. No parking provision, other than 2 disabled bays and 4 visitor bays, for 21 flats is completely inadequate and unreasonable.

- The application's premise is that parking spaces are not needed because of the location of the site and availability of public transport. Existing residents of houses in Station Road, Wellington Road, Park Road and others in the town centre own cars. The residents of this proposed development will too. Even if the development is used initially for care leavers (as claimed) who do not own cars, unless conditions are imposed there will be nothing to stop the Council changing the type of tenants and/or selling off the asset to a private landlord whose tenants are not care leavers. Inevitably, the development will create car parking overspill, just as the development on the cricket pitch/tennis club further along Wellington Road did. Slough's Borough Council has admitted that its attempt at a 'car free development' has failed, resulting 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." All the same arguments as Wokingham Borough Council is putting forward in this planning application were used by Slough Borough Council (ie proximity to town centre and public transport) and just like our own local developments, it has been proved to be an utter fallacy that people living in town centres do not own cars.

- Living in the town centre and near public transport does not stop car ownership for the simple reason that public transport does not serve where residents wish to go or does not provide "comparative door-to-door journey times. In summary, the comment expressed in paragraph 2.6.7 of the Transport Statement submitted with the application that "The site benefits from excellent rail accessibility, making travel by bus a very viable alternative to private car journeys" is both non-sensical (why does rail accessibility make travel by bus a viable alternative?) and untrue. The most cursory of review of the bus routes reference in the Transport Plan shows that they in no way offer a viable alternative to a car and, quite obviously, the train will not service everywhere the occupants want to go.

- Paragraph 3.1.14 of the planning application's Transport Statement states that "Park Road itself provides very little in the way of on street car parking opportunities which will discourage car ownership". Why will limited opportunities discourage the residents and their visitors from making use of the opportunities that do exist?

- Reference is made to double-yellow lines being painted on the first section of Park Road once it is made up to adoptable standard. But HOW WILL THE PROPOSED DOUBLE-YELLOW LINES BE ENFORCED? The application is carefully worded to state that the first section of Park Road will be made up to adoptable standard with double-yellow lines but that is of no use whatsoever if the double-yellow lines cannot be enforced as this section of the road is not actually adopted. IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT ADOPTING THE FIRST SECTION OF PARK ROAD IS MADE A CONDITION OF PLANNING PERMISSION from a perspective of enforcing no parking and maintaining this section of the road.

- HOW WILL THE COUNCIL 'POLICE' THE CONCEPT OF THE "CAR FREE DEVELOPMENT"? Previously (in 2022) Park Road and Park Avenue residents were told that the tenancies of the building proposed at that time could have a clause in them further to which tenants acknowledged that they have no right to park a car or allow their visitors to park a car on Park Road or Park Avenue and that if they breached this clause they would be at risk of forfeiting their tenancies. TO HAVE ANY CHANCE OF HAVING A CAR FREE DEVELOPMENT IT SHOULD BE MADE A CONDITION OF PLANNING PERMISSION THAT ANY LEASE OR LICENCE OF A RESIDENCE ON THE SITE MUST CONTAIN SUCH A CLAUSE AS PREVIOUSLY MOOTED.

- Paragraph 2.11 of the draft Construction Management Plan states that "There will be no on-site car parking." If that is the case, where will construction workers park? What will be done to ensure construction vehicles and construction workers do not park on Park

Road?

- The Construction Management Plan has sections that are incomplete (for example paragraph 2.1.3: "A minimal increase of traffic movements will occur along local" - this sentence is both inaccurate and incomplete) or simply copied and pasted from another report (for example paragraph 2.1.5: "On street parking is not expected to be affected during the construction period with deliveries from Brading Road using the existing access arrangements". Deliveries will be from Park Road. Where is Brading Road? It would appear that no proper consideration has been given to the impact of the construction of this development on its neighbours. The Construction Management Plan has simply been copy and pasted from another application.

3. HIGHWAY AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

I object on the basis that there is inadequate provision for delivery lorries and insufficient consideration has been given to road safety at the junction of Park Road and Wellington Road.

- Park Road will be the access point for the development. The inevitable increase in traffic will make the junction between Park Road and Wellington Road even more dangerous.

- Park Road/Wellington Road junction is already hazardous due to the speed of traffic turning from Station Road. Introducing significantly more vehicle movements from this development, including residents, visitors, and service vehicles, will increase the likelihood of accidents.

- How will delivery lorries (both to residents and to the Station Road businesses with access from Park Road) exit the site? They can access forward along the service road behind the development, but there is no turning space. Will they reverse all the way back behind the development on to Park Road and then down on to Wellington Road? This will be dangerous. Or will delivery lorries have to park on Park Road (causing a blockage) and then transport contents on foot along the access road to the rear of the proposed development?

- All construction traffic will be routed down Park Road, which is a narrow, privately maintained road not built for HGV use. This poses risks both to residents' safety and to the structural integrity of the road itself. Park Road is privately maintained at residents' expense.

Construction traffic will damage the road, yet no guarantee has been offered for its repair or long-term maintenance.

- No enforceable measures are set out to prevent workers from parking on Park Road, which would obstruct residents and emergency access.

- The proposed disabled parking spaces on Park Road will increase congestion towards the junction and increase the risk of an

accident.

4. DESTRUCTION OF THE TPO TREE AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

I object on the basis that current habitat will be destroyed with no adequate replacement provision contrary to R13 of section 4.6 of Wokingham Borough Council's Design Guide (page 45).

- There is a significant and well established poplar tree on the site. As per the 'proposed site plan' the suggestion is that this significant tree, that has a TPO on it, is replaced with a new tree on the corner of Station Road and Wellington Road. On any objective basis this is not an adequate replacement. The suggestion that the TPO can be removed as it is "not appropriate to retain in a restricted urban setting" sets a very worrying precedent for other TPOs in the urban centre of Wokingham where green space and established trees are at a premium. Would such an argument be deemed acceptable if the tree was not on land in the Council's ownership? It is also contrary to the whole ethos of section 4.6 of Wokingham Borough Council's Design Guide.

- The planning proposal dismisses the significance of the other etation currently on the site and the habitat it has offered for over 2 decades. The site does not achieve the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain of 10% uplift. Where will this be provided offsite?

- The 'proposed site plan' references "new tree planting" along Wellington Road and 5 new trees are also shown on the 'proposed west elevation plan'. The Landscape Plan indicates that these trees will be Tilia Cordata 'Greenspire'. The RHS describes this species of trees as "A vigorous and narrowly conical, deciduous tree about 15m tall and 7m wide". Such planting will negatively impact the visibility of oncoming traffic to those exiting Park Road. This planting has been shown on the plans to make the development look more attractive and to detract from its bulk and mass but it is not realistic from a highway safety point of view.

For the reasons outlined above I request that the Planning Committee refuse this application.