

PLANNING REF : 251621
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Springfield
: 14 Albert Road, Wokingham, Berks
: RG40 2AL
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Marc Maynard
DATE SUBMITTED : 05/09/2025

COMMENTS:

Summary of Objection

I object to application 251621 as the proposed development would result in unacceptable loss of green space, poor provision for vegetation and tree replacement (including loss of a tree subject to a Tree Preservation Orders), and would exacerbate traffic congestion and parking stress in the area. The proposal fails to accord with national and local planning policy, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Wokingham's Managing Development Delivery (MDD) Local Plan, the Borough Design Guide SPD, and Green Infrastructure principles. The space would be far better utilised as a green gateway to the town (as a "pocket park" originally promised by the Council during the Elmsfield Development).

Loss of Vegetation, Trees, TPOs and Green Infrastructure (Green Routes)

The proposal involves the removal of almost all the existing green space and trees, including a tree under a Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). The loss of mature trees and green buffer is both environmentally and visually harmful. It would undermine policy CC03 (Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping) within the adopted MDD Plan, which expects proposals to consider integration with green corridors. The offset planting is likely be inferior to that planted on the nearby cricket pitch which in itself remains a poor substitute for what once stood there. The area has also already suffered loss of green space with the development of the retirement flats opposite. The NPPF emphasises the importance of protecting and enhancing biodiversity and landscapes; Paragraphs regarding natural environment protections including networks of green infrastructure. If TPO trees are affected, the applicant must demonstrate compelling reasons why retention is not possible. The application, however, provides no detail on how trees could be retained - it simply makes the assumption they "must" be removed.

Loss of vegetation at the site would degrade the green routes network key corridors of ecological and visual significance across the borough.

Furthermore, the site sits at a gateway into Wokingham Town Centre; the removal of tree cover and their replacement with built form would weaken the town's character and entrance quality.

Traffic, Access, and Parking

The site lies at the busy junction of Wellington Road and Station Road an area already experiencing significant traffic flows. The addition of an apartment building with 21 residential units would likely intensify traffic generation, worsen congestion, and demand higher parking provision. The proposal as submitted has no resident car

parking with just four visitor spaces and two disabled bays, and fails to demonstrate that that provision is adequate (leaflets with public transport details will not deter car ownership), nor is it in align with WBC's parking standards. The MDD Local Plan and Borough Design Guide SPD expect developments to demonstrate safe

access, sufficient parking, and minimal congestion especially in constrained or congested urban locations. The NPPF requires that all development proposals that present any severe residual cumulative impacts on the road network be refused. The application lacks a Traffic Assessment quantifying expected additional vehicle movements, including turning, parking occupancy, or impact on peak-time flow at the junction. Without this, the Council and consultees such as Highways cannot conclude that the scheme would avoid severe impacts. The lack of parking provision risks displacement of cars onto surrounding streets, adversely affecting existing residents' amenity and highway safety. The over-development of the cricket pitch has already led to nuisance parking (that has prevented access). The further lack of parking provision in the new development at Carnival Pool is likely to make the situation worse and this proposal is obviously going to further compound the problem. The very poor design of the existing road layout at the level crossing inexplicably restricts access to the lower station car park (preventing a right turn from Station Road, or access from Station Approach) which has set a precedent for nuisance u-turning (off camera) on Park Road at the location of the proposed site, and also Wellington Road and Albert Road. This development will likely concentrate u-turning on Wellington Road and Albert Road where it is more hazardous.

Design, Context

Under the Borough Design Guide SPD, developments must respond positively to context, integrate landscaping sensitively, and contribute to the character of the borough. (Another) proposal fails to reference the important Victorian and Edwardian design cues that up until five years ago dominated and defined the area, such that the area's valued heritage is now at risk of being completely unreadable from any public vantage point - dominated by contemporary continental style balconies fronting the carriage way that contradict the market town heritage.

Policy Context and Lack of Justification

The MDD Local Plan operates to 31 March 2026 and continues to apply in determining applications. The Plan sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development (Policy CC01), but also makes clear that planning permission should be refused where adverse impacts significantly and demonstrably outweigh benefits. On balance, the loss of important amenity trees, risk of highway safety/parking issues, and failure to support green infrastructure appear to result in significant environmental and public amenity harm, which would outweigh the benefits of new homes in this location.

Without detailed transport, or landscape strategy documents, the application fails to meet minimum evidential requirements necessary to enable proper assessment.

Conclusion and Request

For the reasons above, I respectfully request that Wokingham Borough Council:

Refuse planning application 251621 on material grounds:

The unacceptable loss of protected and valued trees and vegetation, especially in the absence of a convincing mitigation strategy;

The inadequate demonstration that significant traffic, access, and parking impacts can be avoided;
The failure to meet design standards, Green Infrastructure expectations, and the Borough Design Guide's guidelines.

Alternatively, if the Council considers the scheme acceptable in principle, that before determination it requires:

a consultation with residents;
Transport Assessment or Statement, demonstrating traffic generation, access arrangements, and safe parking provision;
Green Infrastructure / Green Route impact analysis showing how the development preserves or contributes to ecological and visual corridors.

If the council still approves the application, I think it is reasonable that it is on the condition that restrictive covenants legally prevent occupier car ownership and restrict visitor parking to nearby designated car parks - and these are enforced.