

PLANNING REF : 251621
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 18 Park Road
: Wokingham, Berkshire
: RG40 2AH
SUBMITTED BY : Mrs Louise Spencer
DATE SUBMITTED : 26/08/2025

COMMENTS:

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

I wish to register my objection to this planning application. The reasons for this are outlined below:

1. Design, appearance and materials

Wokingham Borough Local Development Framework Adopted Core Strategy (January 2010) states 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). The proposal for 21 flats in this area does not meet this criteria. Park Road and Park Avenue is a cul de sac 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). The proposed flats do not meet planning expectations to 'blend in strongly with the existing character' and do not 'relate well to neighbouring land use'. The proposed building is a complete contrast to existing residential housing and refer to cues from developments such as Elms Field which is not visible or adjacent to this proposed development. This proposal also does not adhere to the Wokingham Borough Design Guide which states that 'New housing should respond to its context relating well to neighbouring land uses and properties' (R2). Park Road and Park Avenue is a quiet cul de sac with mostly families and older residents. Building 21 flats in a small footprint of land at the end of the road will result in increased noise and traffic disturbance, impacting on the quality of life of existing residents.

The Borough Design Guide also refers to the height of residential buildings, emphasising that they any higher than their surrounding should be of 'exceptional design quality' (R9) and list of 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.

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). As previously stated, residential accommodation in Park Road and Park Avenue is historic detached housing, well spaced out, and 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). The proposal has failed to demonstrate it meets either of these criteria because it is being submitted as a 'car free development'. There is no precedent for this in Wokingham and no realistic detail as to how this will be managed or enforced. 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). 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.

As a result, visitors to the residents, and the residents themselves, will continue to need to own and use cars and will need to park in the nearby area, 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 summary, whilst I acknowledge the need for affordable housing in the Borough, as described in the Topic Paper (2024), this proposal is clearly contrary to Wokingham Borough Council's policies and as a result, I request that the Council refuse the application.

Louise Spencer