

PLANNING REF : 251621
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 1a
: Park Road, Wokingham, 1A Park Road, Wokingham
: RG40 2AH
SUBMITTED BY : Mrs Rebecca Galbraith
DATE SUBMITTED : 02/09/2025

COMMENTS:

I am one of the owners of 1A Park Road, which will be directly overlooked by this development. I strongly object to the development as it stands, on the following grounds:

1. Overlooking and loss of light

I object to this development because the side of our property will be significantly overlooked which will block light to our back garden, dining room (via skylight), first floor study, and second floor bedroom. This is particularly the case for our first floor room, where the only window to this room will be blocked by the new development. This room is our study where both myself and my husband are based in our home office. The loss of light to this room will significantly affect our working day. I believe I have deciphered that this window will lose 13% of its light - this is an unacceptable loss for a working environment. I also object on the grounds of relevant case law regarding right to light, since if we or a future resident wished to convert the two rooms on our first floor into additional rooms, the windows to these rooms would also suffer an unacceptable loss of light.

2. Scale, height and 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 proposed development is significantly larger than existing properties immediately neighboring the proposed development which are Victorian/Edwardian houses. The bulk/mass of the proposed development is NOT in line with the peak of the roofs of the surrounding buildings. Along Park Road all buildings are 2-storey, and whilst a small part of the development is 2 storeys high to try to reflect its adjacent neighboring property, the rest of the Park Road-facing building is 3 floors high, plus a roof. Our property (1A) is the highest on Park Road and is still only 2 storeys high with a roof. The part of the development facing (flats 20 and 21 it seems from the plans) our property is three storeys high, PLUS a roof. It will therefore on the Park Road frontage, be a full storey higher than our property or any other surrounding building - how can this be in keeping with Park Road? There is no precedent for three storeys (plus roof) in Park Road. This will be an over massed and overhigh eyesore. 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. At the very least, the bulk and mass of the building adjacent to Park Road should be reduced to two storeys as it is now

next to number 4, and to two storeys plus roof opposite our property (1A) to reflect our roof line. Any development on Park Road, including this one, should reflect the scale, height and mass of the existing properties on Park Road

3. Overlooking

As I reference in point 6 below, I requested a discussion to understand which parts of the development will face my property - specifically the windows on the first and second storeys of my property - as the submitted documents do not show this comparison. This is a critical omission. I strongly object to the current design of the development as it appears that windows and balconies of the development will directly face the window of my property on the first and second floors so we will be overlooked by the development -
equally, we will be able to see into the windows and balconies of the unfortunate residents of the development.

4. Green space

As I reference in point 6 below, I have tried to contact the planning application team to clarify green spacing plans, to no avail. The plans state that the hedge and greenery that provide vital green space to Park Road and screening of my property from the road and now, this development, will be "cut back to boundary". Firstly, I object that anyone would touch our hedge - by what authority would anyone touch any of these hedges given that the road and hedge does not belong to the council? The hedge forms our boundary and has been maintained by us for over 10 years.

The "Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Tree Protection Plan" document, in appendix 1 contains the recommendation that the hedge (H2) should be "trimmed back to allow the pavement to be constructed (but no further than the green foliage)." We may be able to agree to this as long as this recommendation is observed, however, again we object to anyone touching this hedge without consulting us, as it does not belong to the Council. I would also point out that when we applied for our kitchen extension we were required to secure a costly assessment of the impact of the works on the surrounding green area including the hedge to ensure that this valuable hedge, which enriches the appearance of Park Road and the road from Wellington Road, was not adversely affected. I would trust the same care for this green asset would be true for this development.

I also strongly object to the removal of the Poplar tree on the proposed development, which is subject to a TPO, the condition and preservation of which are rigorously enforced by the Council for other trees in the vicinity. The proposed replacement is nowhere close to the same maturity and size and this would result in an unacceptable detriment to the area.

5. Traffic and parking and adoption / non adoption of the first part of Park Road

I object to the development which despite the laudable aim of being car free, is entirely unrealistic. I point to the comments of the

residents' committee here and the failure of this strategy in many other developments. This development will see an unacceptable increase in nuisance parking along Park Road.

I also object to the assumption that yellow lines painted on the first part of Park Road will deter traffic since the Transport Statement draft Proposed Site Plan indicates that "The new tarmac surface (will be) finished to adoptable standards" and section 3.1.4 of the plan mentions "...markings include double yellow lines up to the site entrance on both sides of Park Road." The proposed application lacks clarity on the Council adopting the first part of Park Road, thereby undermining enforcement of the proposed double yellow lines up the main entrance. The adoption of the road would be essential in order to enforce parking restrictions. However, I also challenge by what precedent or authority the Council will be able to adopt the road of not all residents fronting this piece of road, agree? Our views on this matter, or agreement, have not been discussed or sought.

I also object to the development based on the clear inability of the plan to accommodate the parking of site traffic. 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 - indicating a lack of thoroughness or consideration for the true impact of the project on its neighbours.

6. Overall planning process

I would also like to object to the administration of this process which has not supported residents to fully analyse the complex set of documentation and assessments on the impact of the development on our homes. The consultation period commenced without any prior discussions with residents, and was held during the summer when many families are occupied with childcare responsibilities and holidays. I trust this timing was unintentional, given the anticipated volume of objections based on previous application challenges.

Additionally, the information package provided lacked a key or reference guide, requiring each resident to individually and laboriously piece together the picture of the development and its impact through many different documents. Many of these materials are highly technical, making it unreasonable to expect all residents to easily interpret them for instance, the tables evaluating loss of light are complex and difficult to understand, though they contain critical information relevant to our property and others in the vicinity.

On 5 August, I contacted the council planning department to request

an in-person discussion to clarify certain aspects of the documents. I received a response on 15 August stating, "I am the case officer dealing with this application and I am currently in the process of reviewing it. I will contact you once I have completed the review of this proposal, which is likely to be towards the end of next week or early on the following week." After receiving no further communication, I followed up on 25 August and was subsequently informed by another team member that the application had been re-allocated to them, but they had not yet reviewed it due to their pre-booked annual leave. I was finally, having been given the impression that we could have a discussion and having held off on submitting my objections until this happened, advised that discussing these technical documents with residents was not feasible due to time constraints for the planning team, but that my questions would be forwarded to the Council as the applicant. Unfortunately, I did not receive any further contact from the Council.

The timeline and handling of communications raise concerns about the timing of the consultation during holiday season - both for residents and it seems, the planning team - and the accessibility of essential information. Residents are being asked to interpret complex documentation without adequate support, potentially impacting our understanding of the development's effects on our properties.