.

Planning Department,

Waverley Borough Council,

The Burys,

GODALMING. BY EMAIL

Dear Sirs,

 Planning Application 2017/0920

5 – 21 Wey Hill, Haslemere.

The Haslemere Society supports the principle of residential development on this site. However as stated for previous applications we consider that this proposed scheme with a density of 142.8 dwellings per hectare is a serious overdevelopment of this site, out of character of the town and resulting in a dominating presence in this very busy part of Haslemere notwithstanding the outcome of the previous appeal. Having made this fundamental comment The Society wishes to make the following further comments:-

1) This is contrary to the Haslemere Design Statement, to which no reference is made, calling for new developments sitting well in the street scene……… appropriate for the site in which it sits. This proposed development will be the largest construction in Haslemere and consequently requires reference to this Statement and justification of all the design aspects of the scheme.

2) Policy D4 of the Local plan 2002 states that the Council will ‘seek to ensure that development is of a high quality design’ etc. To fulfil this undertaking it is important to have full information on all external building materials for approval BEFORE any planning permission is given to ensure the required quality is provided as this will be far more difficult to ensure after approval.

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2) cont’d. Only the briefest mention of materials is given in the application form and no information or details are given on the drawings of external balcony balustrading, cladding, bricks, windows, doors, tiling etc. These are very important items for this busy town centre site which need to be agreed before any planning approval is granted. A high specification is required for this prominent site and WBC must guard against a developer choosing low cost elements, selling on the development and leaving the new owners to face the need for early maintenance and disruption or allow the early deterioration.

To emphasise this we would point out that an apartment block just off the High Street completed only a few years ago is currently fully scaffolded out to enable repainting of the cheaper timber windows and patio doors which would not have been necessary if more durable modern windows had been specified.

3) The Landscaping scheme does not make clear exactly what will be done to the existing massive green overgrowth fronting on to Wey Hill at the east end and clarifying detail is required. Also the retention of an existing concrete retaining wall on this frontage and the existing brick wall facing on to the Majestic Wine store are not consistent with a high quality project .

Reference is made to dwarf walls, railings and hornbeam hedges to the boundary of the site but no details are given. These are aesthetically very significant in this busy town centre location and details should be submitted and approved before any planning approval. Similarly details of the acoustic fence, which will not be effective for first and second floor occupants, need to be submitted and agreed.

4) The location of an electricity substation in front of the main building is aesthetically not acceptable. Surely this can be relocated to a less conspicuous location to avoid cluttering what is a limited amount of green space on the frontage to a busy road.

5) The 2008 Geotechnical investigation report which has been submitted recommends that ground water monitoring should be continued at regular monthly intervals up to the next investigation. There is no record of piezometer readings having been taken to monitor groundwater levels or a more recent investigation. These are important because of the rapid and high water ingress reported originally especially given the intended excavation for the basement car park construction. Only two boreholes are not sufficient for this size of site.

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6) It is stated that ‘servicing of the proposed development can be accommodated on the street as there are no loading restrictions, which was the accepted position under the previous appeal’. The Haslemere Society strongly disagrees with the appeal Inspector and we regret that Surrey CC Highways are sanguine about this issue. The fact that there are no loading restrictions is not a satisfactory argument. Parked vehicles delivering to Homewoods Fencing opposite and in the past delivering motor cycles to this site caused significant traffic congestion contradicting the Inspector’s view that the road is wide enough. The submitted Transport Report states and confirms that Wey Hill is a busy through route between the A3 and the town centre with 8000 vehicles passing daily in each direction. Local knowledge confirms the increasingly serious congestion and traffic tail backs occurring during the day time as well as at peak times. The increasing number of van deliveries due to internet purchasing, refuse collection for 43 apartments, furniture removals, lift, telephone and other building services maintenance vans parked in Wey Hill will all cause problems for vehicles entering and leaving the basement car park as well as exacerbating the ongoing congestion in Wey Hill. The Haslemere Society strongly argues that lay by parking should be provided on the site for this new building which will exist for many decades into the future. Given the current high level of congestion on this arterial road, traffic and servicing of this building **throughout its life** must be given full consideration and short term advantages to the developer avoided.

7) It is proposed to provide one parking space per apartment per WBC **minimum** guidelines. The Haslemere Society has argued on other planning applications (and repeats the argument here) that whilst in planning terms this is a town centre location with theoretically good public transport Haslemere is essentially a small country town and not part of a large conurbation. Consequently its population relies heavily on car ownership because travel to other towns is necessitated for services not available locally in a small town 10miles and more from other towns. There is very little local employment in Haslemere, and this is declining, requiring residents to travel to other towns for work. Much of this employment is not reached by the London – Portsmouth main line and the bus services are limited in scope and generally only hourly services. Consequently many/most apartment occupiers will have a car and many will have two leaving no spare spaces for visitors. There is a strong argument for providing more than the minimum one parking space per apartment.

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8) The public footpath on the south side of Wey Hill terminates in front of this proposed development making it necessary for pedestrians to cross the road. This development would increase this requirement to cross the road and therefore a pedestrian crossing should be provided in the interests of road safety.

 The Haslemere Society hopes that all the above points can be satisfactorily resolved and that this site can then be returned to a usefully functioning and more attractive area in the town.

Yours faithfully,

 John Greer (Vice Chairman, The Haslemere Society)

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