

## **THE PLANNING GROUP**

### **Report on the letters the group has written to Guildford Borough Council about planning applications submitted during the period January to June 2014**

*During 2014 the Planning Group has consisted of John Baylis, Gordon Bridger, Ian Macpherson, Amanda Mullarkey, David Ogilvie, Martin Taplin, Anthony Umney and John Wood.*

The Planning Group has continued to meet every three weeks at the Guildford Borough Council ("GBC") offices.

During the first 6 months of 2014 there were 1,215 planning applications recorded at GBC. We sifted through these applications and looked in detail at 121 of them over this period. The Group wrote 38 letters to the Head of Planning Services on a wide range of individual planning applications

The most in a single category was about signs, mainly hanging or projecting, in and around the High Street Conservation Area. We wrote 9 such letters (12 in the previous 6 months) either because we considered they were too large (there is a general presumption that the maximum size should be no larger than 600mm x 600mm) or because the proposal was that they should be internally illuminated (GBC policy precludes such illumination in this area). The officers in GBC universally agreed with us and thus, of those 9 applications, 2 were approved only after amendments were made to the size and/or illumination to accord with our concerns, 5 were refused and 2 were withdrawn.

Of the remaining 29 applications to which we made comment 4 were withdrawn, 11 refused and 14 were approved, but 5 of those were approved only after amendments were received to satisfy our objections. Appeals were submitted against 6 of the refused applications and, of these, so far 1 appeal has been upheld, 2 appeals dismissed and one has been withdrawn.

It can be seen that only 9 of our 38 letters of objection were approved without satisfying our concerns. Of those 9 applications 3 of our letters were not recorded as having been received and one letter was received too late. In all instances, other than the 4 applications just mentioned, the planning officer referred to our objections in his/her report to the Councillors. Most of the time the reports showed that due consideration to our concerns was given but, for those applications which were approved, the officer did not agree with us. The officer therefore recommended those applications should be approved and either the local Councillors or the full planning committee agreed.

It is interesting to note that three applications for substantial development in the Green Belt were submitted during this six month period. These applications were 14/P/00135 for 16 houses in Normandy; 14/P/00219 for 25 houses in Ripley; and 14/P/00779 for a mix of 90 flats, houses and 3 shops in Normandy. We objected to all three applications as shown below principally because the developments were on the Green Belt and no very special circumstances were put forward for these developments. All three were refused, the Ripley application was appealed and then the appeal was subsequently withdrawn. Eric Pickles, the current Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, last year wrote to all councils urging them to refuse encroachment onto Green Belt land unless the new Local Plans have agreed to delist certain areas from that designation or that very special circumstances give sufficient weight to

allow an application to succeed. We have since seen a plethora of further such applications around the country which shows developers are pressurising local authorities to allow planning on Green Belt sites. The vast majority have been refused as premature.

It is pleasing to be able to confirm once again that the case officers do take our letters into consideration but they do not always take the same view as us. Nevertheless, overall we believe we do make a difference because in the majority of cases the applications are not approved without subsequent amendments to the original application being made or conditions are attached to the planning consent. Where applicable these amendments are shown below.

The details of our letters follow below and if any reader wishes to look at any of the applications, the plans, the design and access statements, the officer's report to the planning committee and the decision notices they can find all the information required at <http://www2.guildford.gov.uk/publicaccess/search.do?action=simple> Type in the application number, click "Search" and click on "Documents" when the Summary page has been loaded. You will then be able to click on the information you are seeking and it usually downloads a pdf document.

## **PLANNING APPLICATIONS between 1 January to 30 June 2014**

### **14/P/00060 – 14a North Street Guildford GU1 4AW**

We were concerned about this retrospective application for the installation of a perforated lathe security shutter across the shop entrance because we felt the proposed shutter was too opaque (a trellis type security shutter would be preferable) and that the red was too vibrant a colour and a more subdued colour would be preferable.

*(Refused in March 2014. An appeal commenced in August and a decision is awaited)*

### **14/P/00080 – 8 Flower Walk, Guildford, GU2 4EP**

This application sought retrospective planning consent for the provision of an access way from Flower Walk. Given the planning history of this site, in which the creation of a new access onto Flower Walk has been refused and dismissed on appeal, the Society could not see how this application could be described as "retrospective" since the applicants did not have a 'lawful access' for which they appear to be claiming retrospective consent. The Society had previously objected to applications which provided for the creation of a new access onto this part of Flower Walk. We pointed out that Flower Walk is a very important part of the Millmead and Portsmouth Road Conservation Area, being a road well known for bringing the 'green' right into the town and it was our view that the creation of a new access in this position would be incompatible with the desire to preserve the pleasant character of Flower Walk.

*(Refused)*

### **14/P/00090 – 8 Flower Walk, Guildford, GU2 4EP**

The Society objected to this application for the erection of three dwellings and provision of new vehicular access from Flower Walk (southern end - scheme A). It was our view that the creation of a new access in this position would be incompatible with the desire to preserve the pleasant character of Flower Walk.

*(Refused. Appeal upheld)*

**14/P/00091 – 8 Flower Walk, Guildford, GU2 4EP**

This proposal was similar to the Scheme A proposal above except for the provision of two new vehicular access points from Flower Walk (southern end and opposite 11 Flower Walk - scheme B). We therefore objected to this application for the same reasons as the application above.  
*(Refused. Appeal dismissed)*

**14/P/00092 – 8 Flower Walk, Guildford, GU2 4EP**

This application was similar to the above two applications except that the erection of three dwellings would be accessed by a new vehicular access from Flower Walk (opposite 11 Flower Walk - scheme C). The Society therefore objected to this application for similar reasons. The Society does however recognise that, one way or another, access needs to be provided to the proposed new dwellings.

We took the view that in order to minimise the impact of the proposed new dwellings on Flower Walk it would be better to have a single point of access to serve both the existing dwelling (No. 8) and the three new houses. We considered this application should not be approved in its present form but that consideration might be given to amending the submitted application so as to provide for the access to No. 8 to be taken off the proposed new access serving the three additional dwellings. On construction of the new access the existing access to No. 8 should be permanently closed and planted up with trees to help restore and retain the attractive character of the road. If amended in this way it would be essential that any approval should be subject to a planning condition requiring the permanent closure of the existing access and the planting up of the opening following the construction of the new opening.

*(Refused. Appeal dismissed)*

**14/P/00108 – Croquet, Upper Guildown Road Guildford, GU2 4EZ**

We did not like this application for a new dwelling because the site is cramped and out of keeping with Upper Guildown Road; the first floor living rooms overlook neighbouring gardens; the parking arrangement is unsatisfactory; and the new house has little amenity space.

*(Approved on 2 May 2014 following receipt of revised plans reducing the amount of glazing and the erection of a dividing fence. However, our letter dated 6 April was not referred to in the officer's report, nor has it been recorded on GBC website.)*

**14/P/00135 – Fiddlers, 140 Glaziers Lane, Normandy, Guildford, GU3 2EB**

The Society considered this outline application for the construction of 16 residential dwellings was inappropriate for the following reasons:

1. These dwellings will be in the Green Belt and there is a presumption against development in the Green Belt
2. These dwellings will be well outside the settlement boundary and any loosening of settlement boundaries in the Green Belt, if necessary, should await the adoption of the new Local Plan so that they can be planned in the optimum locations
3. There are no very special circumstances put forward for this incursion into the Green Belt.

*(Withdrawn)*

**14/P/00139 – Armour Buildings, Bridge Street, Guildford, GU1 4SB**

We considered the size of the proposed hanging sign and concluded that whilst the width of 600 mm was acceptable, the height of 1,500 mm was excessive in this conservation area.

*(Part approved and part refused. The part refused was the subject of our concerns)*

**14/P/00146 and 14/P/00147 (Listed Building Consent) – Wagamama, 25-29 High Street, Guildford, GU1 3DY**

We considered the proposed internally illuminated individual built up lettering on the fascia and concluded we preferred to see halo lighting in this part of the conservation area. We also felt that the proposed graphic vinyl for the end window was inappropriate.

*(Approved, but the advertisements and fascias were taken out of this application and resubmitted under 14/P/00350 [see below] and 14/P/00351. We did not object to the remaining issues and therefore had the omissions taken place at the outset we would not have written.)*

**14/P/00150 – Land rear of 10-16, Guildford Park Road, Guildford, GU2 7ER**

**Proposal:** Outline application for erection of two semi-detached houses.

We objected to the previous application 13/P/01141 due to the lack of amenity space for two dwellings and we also believed that the application was premature pending a solution to Guildford's town centre traffic problems and the future possibility of a second road crossing of the railway to relieve these problems. We considered that the new application still provided very little amenity space and continued to believe that the application was premature.

*(Approved. The officer considered our concerns but commented in his report that the saved local plan is the current development plan and the application would be assessed against this and the NPPF.)*

**14/P/00161 – 25-26 Friary Street, Guildford**

Although the proposal was ostensibly for alterations to the existing shopfront it nevertheless showed on the drawings a number of proposed signs. We felt the huge 'FIVE GUYS' lettering and the red background of the signs at first floor level were oppressive, more so than the signage on the neighbouring shops. In some ways the style of the revamping of Friary Street (large plate glass) lends itself to this form of signage, although not necessarily so large. We noted the problem seems to be that every time a new proposal for signage comes in for Friary Street it appears to be larger than the last. The ever-increasing size of advertising in Friary Street is becoming far too dominant.

*(Approval was given for the alterations to the existing shopfront. It was specifically noted that any advertisements would require a separate application.)*

**14/P/00184 – Former Dreams Store, Woodbridge Road, Guildford, GU1 1DX**

Over recent years we have objected to several planning applications for signage on premises on Woodbridge Road and we consider that there is a continuing need to restrain property owners from plastering their buildings with large signs. There is a drift towards an ever more commercially garish environment which is unwelcome at this approach to the town and ill attuned to most of the rest of the town. We therefore drew attention to this application as being an example of over-signage, well beyond what the previous occupant 'Dreams' was allowed and well beyond what is needed to draw the public's attention to the presence of the

store. We asked that the signage be reduced in scale to that of the previous Dreams. We specifically objected to the high level signs numbers 5, 6 and 7 on the north side of the building as being visible from Ladymead and we also considered that totem 10 in front of the building was an unnecessary intrusion on the Woodbridge Road street scene.

*(Refused)*

**14/P/00203 – Hitherbury House, 97 Portsmouth Road, Guildford, GU2 4DL**

We drew attention to this application for twelve 2 bedroom apartments, following the demolition of the existing office building, that there were grounds of over-development of the site. 12 dwellings on 0.1219 hectares gives 98 dwellings per hectare and we considered this to be well above what is acceptable in this conservation area outside the town centre boundary. The high density leads to several undesirable features: the height and bulk are out of scale with its neighbours, and the parking provision is insufficient.

*(Refused)*

**14/P/00210 – 35-39 North Street, Guildford, GU1 4TE – DW Sports Store**

We felt this application for two internally illuminated fascia signs was too brash in its colouring and they had over-large lettering. They were significantly more blatant than the new Metro signs next door and they do not accord with the aspirations for North Street. For similar reasons, we considered that fascia signs in North Street should not be internally illuminated.

*(Withdrawn)*

**14/P/00219 – Oldlands, Burnt Common Lane, Ripley, Woking, GU23 6HD**

The Society objected to this outline application for the erection of 25 new dwellings for the following reasons:

1. These dwellings will be in the Green Belt and there is a presumption against development in the Green Belt.
2. These dwellings will be outside the settlement boundary and any loosening of settlement boundaries in the Green Belt, if necessary, should await the adoption of the new Local Plan so that they can be planned in the optimum locations.
3. There are no very special circumstances put forward for this incursion into the Green Belt.

*(Refused. The officer's report is extensive and gives a very good insight into the way GBC is considering applications for new housing within the Green Belt. Appealed and appeal subsequently withdrawn)*

**14/P/00253 – Unigate Dairy, Walnut Tree Close, Guildford**

We met with the developer's team for a pre-application discussion on 17<sup>th</sup> January. We were disappointed to see that this application, for the demolition of a distribution centre and the construction of a three / four / five storey student accommodation building differed little from what we discussed. The consequence of putting so much accommodation on this small site is that the proposed building has excessive bulk and height with respect to its neighbourhood, and that it comes much too close to the boundaries of the site. It would prevent a mirror-image development on the Topps Tiles side, and is very much 'on the street' on the Kernal Court side. Aside from the size of the proposed development, we considered the elevational treatment to be austere and this makes the building appear unduly oppressive.

We also felt there was almost no outdoor amenity space for the students. Thus the quality of the environment provided is poor, especially compared with that of the University's student accommodation on Manor Farm. *(The officer's report stated that an offsite contribution has been secured by legal agreement.)* As a general point, we put down a marker that we prefer new student accommodation to be on campus, and not to use land that could be developed to help meet Guildford's housing needs.

*(Approved)*

#### **14/P/00271 – Lanesborough School, Maori Road, Guildford**

Our letter about this application showed we appreciated the care which had been taken to develop satisfactory plans for a new sports hall. We still had some reservations to some ancillary aspects of the application. In particular there was already provision for a caretaker's flat and we thought the application would benefit if the proposed additional one were to be removed. This might permit re-allocation of floor space to help enable the hall to be brought somewhat nearer to Maori Road and thus reduce the considerable depth to the rear, where at present it projects well behind the existing rear building line. The depth of the gables in front could be reduced to achieve this.

In addition, while the proposed hall respects the character of the present school buildings and the residential neighbourhood, the proposed building between it and the existing buildings does not. It is extremely mundane and 'nineteen fifties'. We recommended it be redesigned with more sympathetic materials and brought down to one storey in height so as to maintain visual separation between the new hall and the existing buildings.

*(Approved following significantly amended plans being received which have gone a long way to satisfy our concerns.)*

#### **14/P/00350: Wagamama, 25-29 High Street, Guildford**

See our report on 14/P/00146 above. The above application appeared to be for the same signs and hence we repeated our concerns which were we concluded the proposed internally illuminated individual built up lettering on the fascia was inappropriate but we did suggest we preferred to see halo lighting in this part of the conservation area. We also felt that the proposed graphic vinyl for the end window was inappropriate.

*(Approved, but only after revised plans were received replacing the internally illuminated lettering with external trough lighting and the graphic vinyl window proposals were removed.)*

#### **14/P/00353 (Listed Building Consent) – The Fountain Head, 20 Quarry Street, Guildford**

We welcomed this application to return this historic building from office to domestic use. However it was clear from the drawings that a considerable amount of internal adaptation is proposed [eg installation of bathrooms] which would probably involve work on the existing historic structure. This is not detailed except as outline pencil sketches and we asked that the conservation officer requested more detail and/or monitors the work in progress.

*(Withdrawn, but see application 14/P/00504 below)*

**14/P/00357 – St Nicolas House, 14 The Mount, Guildford**

When we wrote in October 2013 on a previous application to convert St Nicholas House into two 2-bed self-contained flats we said that we could not comment on the proposal due the lack of detailed information. We noted that following comments from the Conservation Officer the application was withdrawn and the applicant was advised to contact the Conservation Officer. We could find no reference to such contact in this new application and we asked that the Conservation Officer ensures that the internal Listed Building features are respected.

We further commented that conversion to a single dwelling might better enable conservation, though this was not the building's original use.

*(Refused)*

**14/P/00396 & 14/P/00397 (Listed Building Consent) – 55-56 Quarry Street, Guildford**

This application was to convert Barlow's old offices into two dwellings. We wrote that these listed buildings are historically important and a significant part of the Quarry Street scene. They would require close supervision by the conservation officers to ensure this character was retained. We noted that the site has a rear access, a coach house and room for parking at the rear. However the application states that no parking will be provided. We considered this to be unsatisfactory.

*(Approved. The officer's report suggests there are two car parking spaces shown on the plans but there are none on any plans uploaded onto GBC's website.)*

**14/P/00430 (Listed Building Consent) – 138, High Street Guildford**

This application was for internal and external refurbishment and repairs including replacement signage. We noted that the signage will be new and not a like for like replacement. Furthermore there was no information on materials, colours or lighting of this new signage. We therefore believed that an application to display an advertisement will be required.

*(Approved on 19 June, but there is no record of our letter dated 6 April being received and it was not referred to in the officer's report.)*

**14/P/00477 – 15 Chapel Street, Guildford**

We considered this application for tables and chairs in Chapel Street to be inappropriate use of the roadway and were in agreement with the comments made by HTAG and by Design and Conservation.

*(Approved. Whilst a small amendment to the plans was made which satisfied part of the objection the officer considered that the proposal was acceptable because the pavement widens at this point.)*

**14/P/00504 and 14/P/00505 (LBC) – The Fountain Head, 20 Quarry Street,**

Generally we welcomed the previous application (see 14/P/00353 above) to convert the offices into a dwelling and return this historic building to domestic use. This application makes some minor changes and as only outline pencil sketches had been submitted for the considerable amount of internal adaption proposed we repeated our view that the conservation officer should request more detail and/or the officer should monitor the work in progress.

*(Approved, after revised drawings and details of the work involved were received in response to our concerns.)*

**14/P/00538 and 14/P/00539 (LBC): Wetherspoons Rodboro Buildings, Bridge Street**

Wetherspoons has a history of sensitive and respective reuse of historic buildings and we were surprised to find that this application conflicts with these approaches, particularly because this building is Grade II listed. The brick and horizontal features represent a very important part of these historic buildings and care was taken in their current restoration. We therefore felt obliged to object to the erection of 6 foot high pavement screens which would destroy the openness of the street scene: these should be very low level demonstrably comparable with other town centre cafes. In addition, the proposed vertical 'Wetherspoon' illuminated fascia sign on the Bridge Street elevation is considerably larger and we considered that a somewhat smaller lettering would be better. We also noted that the vertical 'Wetherspoon' illuminated fascia sign on the Onslow Street elevation is wider than the existing sign and it encroaches even more over the brick and windows on the first and second floors, and as noted above interferes with the historical features of the building.

*(Refused. It is good to find that GBC agreed with our views.)*

**14/P/00567 (Prior Notification (Demolition)): The Clockhouse, 140 London Road and 72 Boxgrove Road,**

This was a Prior Approval application Under Part 31 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 for demolition of the building and any proposed restoration of the site. We requested that the Clock House and Statue should be handed over to the Council with the right to determine what might be the best use for them for the public benefit.

*(Approved. The officer's report stated that the Clock House and Statue are not protected and their retention cannot be conditioned. The applicant is, however, fully aware of local feeling with regard to these two features and has indicated these will be incorporated into the landscape scheme of any redevelopment.)*

**14/P/00580: Peacock Wood, Lido Road, Guildford**

We considered these proposed totem signs to be grossly oversized and contrary to the Council's policy to de-clutter the Guildford streets. The signage should be simple directional signs.

*(Withdrawn)*

**14/P/00612, 14/P/00613 (LBC) and 14/P/00614: 146 High Street**

We noted that this is an important Grade II listed building and we asked that Conservation carefully monitor the proposed repair and refurbishment work in a building of such importance.

*(Approved)*

We also noted the hanging sign is 772 x 772mm and it should comply with the limit of 600 x 600mm.

*(Withdrawn)*

**14/P/00655 and 14/P/00656 (LBC): 170 High Street**

This application was for new fascias and signage for Constitutional Hall/Thorpes, now to be Timberland and North Face. We objected to one high level sign as being inappropriate on a listed building and noted that the hanging should be limited to 600 x 600.

*(Approved, after amended plans received removing the high level sign and reducing the hanging sign to 635 x 635mm.)*

**14/P/00663: 78 Epsom Road**

The Society is pleased to see that the proposals in this application for a three storey block of nine x two bedroom flats with car parking represented a reduction in size over earlier schemes. However, we made the comment that there are significant trees on the Albury Road frontage and at the rear of the site which we feel should be retained to help maintain the character of the area. We also noted there were no car parking spaces designated for use by the disabled.

*(Approved. The trees at the front will be retained but the removal of trees at the rear has been accepted in view of their limited value and landscaping scheme proposed. There is no specific requirement to provide disabled parking for a residential scheme within the Vehicle Parking Standards SPD 2006.)*

**14/P/00779: North Wyke Farm, Guildford Road, Normandy**

This was an outline application for residential development to deliver 90 units comprising a mix of 1 & 2 bedroom flats, 2, 3 & 4 bedroom houses and 3 shop units. The new dwellings would be in the Green Belt and outside the settlement boundary. We objected, as we have to similar recent applications, because there are no very special circumstances. Because the Guildford Local Plan is at present still in drafting, the proposal is premature and should be refused. It is Government policy that any loosening of settlement boundaries in the Green Belt, if necessary, should await the adoption of the new Local Plan so that they can be planned in the optimum locations.

*(Refused in October 2014. The officer's report again makes interesting reading about the Green Belt issues.)*

**14/P/00783: 80 Epsom Road Guildford, GU1 2BX**

We objected to this application for a three storey block of 12 flats and two pairs of semi-detached dwellings. We considered that the provision of 14 car parking spaces is insufficient. We also noted there is no provision for parking for visitors or for the disabled.

In addition we considered it important to ensure, by planning conditions, the retention and protection of the significant trees on the site.

*(Refused 30 July 2014, but GBC considered enough car parking spaces have been provided.)*

**14/P/00823: 64 High Street Guildford, GU1 3ES**

We objected to a proposed "A" frame display board and flag because they will obstruct the footpath and would be likely to set a precedent.

*(Refused. The officer's report is dated 23 June 2014 and it advised that there were no third party comments received. However HTAG's letter written before this date is shown on the website whereas our letter dated 3 June is not even recorded. Fortunately both bodies were objecting for more or less the same reasons and the application was refused for those reasons.)*

**14/P/00847: Land to the rear of 7 Maori Road**

We wrote a strong letter concerning the proposed access to the new dwelling via Cross Lanes. For very many years, apart from its southern end, Cross Lanes has been a green lane with no vehicular use. In effect it is used as a footpath. With its greenery and trees it makes a valuable contribution to the general character of the neighbourhood and to the attractive environment of the nearby dwellings. We considered that in the interests of protecting the general character of the area and of the local environment Cross Lanes should remain as it is. Any proposals to implement works to create an acceptable highway access to this proposed dwelling – i.e. widening the present lane resulting in the removal of trees and laying a tarmac surface - would be inconsistent with that objective. In short, we considered that Cross Lanes should not be used to enable vehicular access to the proposed new dwelling. We also raised several other points.

*(Withdrawn)*

**14/P/00925: 7-8, Friary Street, Guildford**

This was yet another street café application, this time for Yo! Sushi. We objected to the proposed barriers with stainless steel uprights because of the obstruction they cause to pedestrians and the implication of 'ownership' of public space. We also strongly objected to the printed PVC panels because the design shown in the application is garish and blatant advertising: they would be seriously detrimental to the pleasant character of Friary Street. The Council have design guidance on street café seating arrangements. We agreed that it would be useful if it were extended to cover barriers.

*(Approved. Regrettably our letter was not received until a couple of days after the decision had been made.)*

**14/P/00994: 197-199 High Street, Guildford, GU1 3AW**

This was an application by Frank Knight to use the old Londis premises (change of use). The proposal covered two full units of the upper High Street frontage. We would much prefer to see these units retained as retail and we took the view that having two adjacent units in A2 use would have an adverse impact on this prominent section of retail frontage. The applicant recognises that this application infringes Planning Policy S5, Secondary Shopping Frontages.

*(Approved. The officer's report stated "The comments of HTAG and The Guildford Society are fully acknowledged and understood and ideally the unit should be retained for A1 use. However, given that the proposal is compliant with the Council's adopted policy, the Government's desire to promote sustainable economic growth and the lack of any material harm to the vitality and viability of the town centre there are no grounds to refuse the proposal". The officer had recalculated the implications of Planning Policy S5 and concluded that the applicant had made an error in their calculations and that, in fact, the application did comply!)*

**14/P/00998: Guildford Methodist Church, Woodbridge Road**

This was a proposal to demolish the church and to build a block of flats. During the pre-application public consultation we considered their plans in detail and wrote to Shanly Homes. We considered the density of 150 dwellings per hectare to be far too high and demonstrated that the development represents an over-intensive development of the site. Also, the use of brick on the elevations is pleasing but we were concerned that the proposed development appeared to be of significantly greater bulk than the already large building which exists on the

site. We considered that there should be a higher percentage of social/affordable housing and we also had concerns about the parking provision.

The application responded to some of these points. However the reduction from 27 to 25 units did not alter our view that the development represents an over-intensive development of the site. The external dimensions of the block have been changed so as to reduce the impact in some respects, but with some concomitant increase in other dimensions.

We also were very concerned to find that Shanly Homes offered to provide £60,000 instead of affordable dwellings and this was not in the pre-application details. This sum is trifling compared with the cost of 30% affordable, i.e. 8 of the 25 flats. If this is allowed we considered that most applications for blocks of flats on brownfield sites in the Borough will make similar claims, with significant damage to the chances of the Council meeting its needs for affordable housing. We can see no special circumstances warranting departure from the usual 30% requirement, now proposed to be increased to 40% in the draft Local Plan.

*(Refused. There were 135 letters of objection. Appeal commenced)*

#### **14/P/01082: 252 High Street, Guildford, GU1 3JG**

We objected to the proposals in this application to internally illuminate the fascia sign and the projecting sign as internal illumination of signs is inappropriate in the High street. We also pointed out that the proposed size of the projecting sign at 915 x 480 mm is significantly larger than the usual maximum of 600 x 600 mm.

*(Refused)*

### **DECISIONS ON APPLICATIONS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED BUT NOT FULLY RESOLVED AT THE TIME OF REPORTING**

#### **13/P/02097 – 67 Farnham Road, Guildford, GU2 4LS**

The Society considers that 30 dph is the normal density for residential areas and, in the control of development, 40 dph is considered to be the acceptable upper density limit. This proposed development, of two pairs of semi-detached houses and two buildings comprising a total of ten flats, at 56 dph represents over development of the site. We therefore objected to this application.

In addition, this proposed development is too close to the Farnham Road frontage and the flats have no useful outside amenity space. A lower density scheme would reduce the size and bulk of the built development and should allow for more landscaping/amenity space along the Farnham Road frontage. This would be desirable to help maintain the attractive character of Farnham Road as an important approach road into the town.

*(Refused. An appeal was running but at a late stage the appeal was withdrawn.)*

**13/P/02143 – 193 High Street, Guildford, GU1 3AW**

The Society objected to this application for new signage in consequence of the intended occupation by Morrisons Supermarket of the former Argos Store. The applicants pointed out that the space for the proposed new fascia is available in consequence of the approval of application no. 13/P/00084. However, we took the view that it does not follow that the new fascia sign needs to fill the whole of the 'available' space. At 1.1m deep, we considered it to be too big.

*(Refused on 23 June 2014.)*

**13/P/02216 – 77-83 Walnut Tree Close Guildford, GU1 4UH**

The Society did not consider this application for the demolition of the existing buildings and the erection of 34 flats (use class C3) and 431 sq. m of office space (use class B1) should be approved for the following reasons:

1. The residential density at approximately 113 dph. is excessive, it should be lower in order to allow more amenity space along this important riverside frontage.
2. This side of Walnut Tree Close floods. The cross wall construction of the undercroft of the flats will impede river flow in time of flood. "Pilotis" would be a preferable form of construction for this reason.
3. The Society approves of residential use in this area and believes that the whole Walnut Tree Close and Woodbridge Meadows area should be comprehensively planned for optimum residential use and to create a linear riverside public park at least 15m wide.

We considered therefore this application was premature for it would jeopardise the creation of the riverside park and should therefore await the adoption of the new Local Plan that will hopefully show the area of Walnut Tree Close rezoned for residential use and show the creation of a riverside linear park.

*(Refused on 28 August 2014. No appeal recorded.)*

John Wood

January 2015