

## THE PLANNING GROUP

### **Report on the letters the group has written to Guildford Borough Council about planning applications which were submitted during the period 1 July to 31 December 2017**

*During this period the Planning Group consisted of John Baylis, Gordon Bridger, Amanda Mullarkey, John Harrison, David Ogilvie, Martin Taplin, Anthony Umney and John Wood. In addition Ian Macpherson has been invaluable as a corresponding member.*

Abbreviations:

AONB: Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty  
AGLV: Area of Great Landscape Value  
NPPF: National Planning Policy Framework

The Planning Group meets every three weeks at the Guildford Borough Council (“GBC”) offices.

During the period under review there were a potential 1,286 planning applications we could have looked at. We sifted through these applications and considered in detail 81 of them. The Group wrote 34 letters to the Head of Planning Services on a wide range of individual planning applications.

By a large margin the most applications in a single category we wrote about was about signs, mainly hanging or projecting, in and around the High Street Conservation Area. GBC have published design guidelines for adverts and signs in this conservation area but many applications do not fit the criteria laid down. We wrote 14 such letters mainly because we considered the signs were either too large or because the proposal was that they should be internally illuminated. For this category in the period under review 2 applications were approved as submitted, 5 were approved after amended drawings were received to satisfy our concerns, 6 were refused and 1 was withdrawn.

Of the remaining 20 applications to which we made comment 2 of the applications were withdrawn, 6 were refused and 7 were approved. 1 appeal was submitted against these refused applications but the outcome has not yet been decided. Sometimes some of the withdrawn applications are subsequently resubmitted after amendments have been made.

Any reader who wishes to see how this 6 month period compares with previous periods should look at the “Summary of Outcomes” which follows the appropriate report on the Society’s website at <http://www.guildfordsociety.org.uk/planning.html>.

The case officers at GBC do take our letters into consideration but naturally they do not always take the same view as us. However, we are pleased to report that in the majority

of cases where we made an objection to an application, those applications are either refused or, alternatively, are only approved following subsequent amendments to the original application either to take account of our objections or have conditions attached to the planning consent.

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> . Type in the application number at the bottom of the page that opens, 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.

We would draw the reader's attention to a couple of particularly significant planning applications which we have considered and the details of these applications follow. On page 4 application 17/P/00920: Guildford Plaza (former Burymead House), Portsmouth Road we had already strongly objected to a previous application for 106 residential units at this site as we felt it was simply too large, too high and too close to the main road leading out of Guildford to Godalming. We sustained our objection and reiterated our view that we considered the bulk and height of the proposed buildings were too large and that Pegasus was trying to squeeze too much development onto this small sensitive plot. Regrettably this application for 100 units was approved. The applicants used the "viability" argument that they could not afford to provide any S106 financial obligations. We believe this is a poor way to have to consider planning applications because if the figures are correct then invariably it means the developers have paid too much for the site. Why should Guildford suffer as a result? Following approval of this application the applicants, Pegasus, more or less immediately placed the site onto the market for sale and the site now has permission for a scheme of overbearing density and heights and they have created a precedent for the future.

The other site you should look at is 17/P/00801: Treetops Kennels, Treetops, Old Portsmouth Road, Peasmarsh on page 13. This application had been refused but the applicants appealed. The site for the development of 39 residential dwellings is in an area with significant national designations (Green Belt, AONB and AGLV) and we felt that it should be refused because of them. We did not see any overriding reasons for giving approval as these designations make the site subject to the highest levels of protection. However the Inspector upheld the appeal even though he agreed that the development would create harm to the Green Belt but he felt that the harm would substantially reduce over a period of many years.

## **PLANNING APPLICATIONS submitted from 1 July to 31 December 2017**

### **17/P/00347: Wanborough Business Centre, West Flexford Lane, Wanborough**

We objected to this application for eleven dwellings. It was adjacent to an AGLV and would be detrimental to the openness of the Green Belt. It is not scheduled for housing in

the Local Plan and the site is distant from the nearest station, Wanborough. In addition the site is the current location for a number of residential caravans that, whilst not ideal dwellings, do provide homes for people on low incomes and that would be lost if this proposal was approved.

*(Withdrawn)*

**17/P/01365: Units D & F, Tunsgate Shopping Centre, 98-110 High Street Guildford  
Proposal: Advertising Consent for 1 internally illuminated hanging sign, 2 internally illuminated fascia signs, 4 No. signage on awnings together with a menu box sign.**

We were concerned that the planning application described the signage as internally lit whereas the drawings illustrated halo lit and externally spot lit signage. We were content with the proposal as shown on the drawings but we would object to internally lit signs for they would be inappropriate in the heritage setting opposite Guildford castle. See also 17/P/01508 below.

*(Approved following receipt of amended plans which alleviated our concerns)*

**17/P/01508: Units D & F, Tunsgate Shopping Centre 98-110 High Street**

We noted that the proposed awnings do not appear to be retractable as required by Guildford Borough Council guidelines. However the awnings project only 0.9m, and in this instance and in this location we find them acceptable.

*(Approved following receipt of amended drawings reducing the number of awnings from four to one)*

**17/P/01449: 11A Clifford Manor Road, Guildford**

We objected to this application for a single new house because the site is very cramped and the proposed building will be out of character in the neighbourhood. It is on the fringe of the urban area and adjacent to an AGLV. The ridge height is excessively high. There is no indication regarding how the loss of garage and parking space will be provided for in the existing house "Copperfields".

*(Approved at full planning committee following its submission to the committee at the request of the Ward Councillor who did not agree with the case officer's recommendation to approve. In addition, more than 20 letters of objection had been received. Amended plans were submitted reducing the size of the building and these new plans went some way to satisfying our concerns.)*

**17/P/01458: Pilgrim Wood, Sandy Lane, Guildford**

We could not agree to this planning application for a three storey new specialist dementia wing. We understood the urgent need for this type of facility but this was the wrong location. The proposed extension was a disproportionate extension to an existing building in the Green Belt and in the Surrey Hills AONB also an AGLV. The special circumstances in this instance and location were, we considered, insufficient to overcome

the damage to the Green Belt and the restrictions of the Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan.

*(Refused, despite more than 20 letters in support being received and these letters were contrary to the case officer's recommendation. The case officer's comments mirrored our concerns and the planning committee agreed. This is a case of where the need for expanded care facilities was accepted but the proposals were just too large to be acceptable in this location.)*

**17/P/01539: Pizza Hut, 237 High Street, Guildford**

We could not accept this planning application as the existing fascia sign was already one of the largest in the High Street and this proposal would have been excessively large. The proposed roundel sign was larger than normally acceptable in the High Street and the projecting sign was also too large.

*(Refused)*

**17/P/00920: Guildford Plaza (former Burymead House), Portsmouth Road**

We wrote at length to object strongly to the 2016 application for this site (16/P/00923) and we wrote again to object strongly to the present application. Pegasus had submitted a new set of plans with minor changes. We sustained our objection and reiterated our view that we considered the bulk and height of the proposed buildings were too large and that Pegasus was trying to squeeze too much development onto this small sensitive plot.

*(Approved. The case officer considered that the applicants had worked hard with the planning department to come up with an acceptable scheme which would satisfy both parties. We accept there was a reduction in height of one storey in one of the four blocks and a few other minor alterations were made but we considered this did not make sufficient difference to the overall very large size of the buildings. The applicant sought to prove that they could not afford to reduce the number of units any further because the scheme would not be viable. They also used this as an argument that there would be insufficient funds available to pay for any S106 financial obligations. Their arguments were backed up again by another viability report which we have not been allowed to see. The society believes this is unacceptable. In any case, if the figures are correct then it merely reinforces our view that the applicant has overpaid for the land and that is his problem – the viability should have no bearing on whether a scheme is acceptable or not in planning terms, nor should it be cited as a reason for normal S106 financial planning obligations to be waived. It is interesting to note that following approval of this application the applicants, Pegasus, more or less immediately placed the site back onto the market for sale. Although currently we do not believe they have received an acceptable offer for the site they now have permission for a scheme of overbearing density and heights and they have created a precedent for the future.)*

**17/P/01574: Barbour, 160 High Street**

We objected to proposed illumination of the proposed projecting sign and also to the illuminated lettering on the fascia. Illuminated signage and illuminated fascias are in conflict with the Council's own policy for the 'cobbled' section of the High Street.

*(Withdrawn)*

**17/P/01580: Bell and Colvill (Horsley), Epsom Road, West Horsley**

We were aware that planning consent had been granted on appeal for the erection of 9 dwellings on this site. However, we could not accept the proposal to subdivide plot 5 to create an additional dwelling. This would result in a cramped layout and it would have no offstreet parking space. This would not only be inconvenient for the occupiers of this particular property but it would also result in cars being parked on the access road close to the A 246.

*Approved. Our concerns were considered and the officer's report stated "It is acknowledged that some of the parking spaces are not ideal, as they are a significant distance away from the properties they would serve. For instance, parking for plot 5 would be one space within the car barn approximately 30 metres away and one surface space in the north-east corner of the site approximately 45 metres away. This parking arrangement is not considered to be overly convenient for the future residents and is acknowledged to be a failure of the proposed scheme. This will need to be balanced against the benefits of the proposal."*

**17/P/01643 and 17/P/01644: Hilarys, 191 High Street**

We objected to the externally illuminated aluminium lettering on the shop front fascia and also the internally illuminated bus stop sign. The site is within the town centre Conservation Area and we draw attention to the Council's Guidelines for Adverts and Signs. The proposed illumination will detract from the historic buildings of Guildford Grammar School.

*(Refused)*

**17/P/01753: St. Mary's Church, Quarry Street**

This application was an improvement on the previous application 16/P/02433 to which we objected. However we still had serious concerns on several points. We were of the view that the east wall should be a solid wall as this would better balance the design. We considered the three large full height windows to the toilet lobby facing the approach to the church to be excessive, a single half height obscure window would be sufficient. We considered the access to the boiler to be sub-standard. Our previous concerns regarding the boiler room ventilation and boiler flue location did not seem to have been addressed. If this application was to be approved then we considered a condition should require the boiler to be relocated to a more accessible location.

*(Approved without amendments)*

**17/P/01761: 2A-2B Opus Park, Moorfield Road**

This proposal was for awful signage on the first building to the left entering Slyfield. The Council have made considerable and effective effort to upgrade the image of the Slyfield estate and this application for 13 excessively large and garish advertisements on a large building at the entrance to the estate was out of keeping, unacceptable and degraded the approach to the estate. See also 17/P/02382 below.

*(Refused)*

**17/P/01795: Decathlon, 13 North Street**

This is one of the better designed recent buildings in Guildford and we were therefore disappointed to see that the awning, part of the original design, had been removed to make way for advertisements. This awning should be reinstated. The proposed advertisements are of excessive size and out of keeping with the design of the building. We disliked the large sign above the fascia line and considered that any signage on the face of the building should be kept below fascia level. In addition, we disliked the vertical banner sign that is far too large and would be over dominant and thus detrimental to the character of North Street. We considered that any signs should be in keeping with the building and be of modest size and halo lit or externally lit but not internally illuminated.

*Approved, following receipt of amended plans which largely satisfied our concerns.)*

**17/P/01820: Summer Court, Northdown Lane**

We objected to this application for a block of five flats: this is a residential area of large detached houses close to and adjacent to an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and every effort should be made to retain this character in this location.

*(Approved)*

**17/P/01552: Anderton's, 58-59 Woodbridge Road**

We had no objection, but we would not like the 'painted lettering above main sign' to be used as a precedent for any other less subdued new signs at first floor level along Woodbridge Road.

*Approved following receipt of amended plans removing the painted lettering above the main sign)*

**17/P/01826: Solicitors office, 172-174 High Street**

We objected because the proposed hanging sign was 670mm x 670mm and was thus 25% larger than the usual 600mm x 600mm in the historic High Street.

*(Approved. The site is not in the cobbled part of the High Street and the case officer reported that there were larger signs in the immediate vicinity and therefore it was felt that the size of the sign was acceptable.)*

**17/P/01898: Bravissimo, 25-27 Market Street**

We had no objection to the proposed signs as shown on the drawings but noted that the fascia sign was described as 'internally illuminated' on the planning application. The drawings show halo lighting, which to our minds is not 'internal'. We would object to internal illumination of any sign in the historic town centre conservation area.

*(Approved. Whilst our letter is recorded on the website no mention was made of our concerns.)*

**17/P/01952: 18 Tunsgate Square, Guildford**

This is an improvement over the previous application 17/P/01398 for OKA. However we considered the proposed size of the hanging sign, at 800mm x 800mm was about 75% larger than the usual 600mm x 600mm found in the historic High Street. Our objection was in the context of the Council's plans to much improve the character and quality of Tunsgate and to bring it up to the standard on a par with that of the High Street.

*(Refused. Despite receiving amended plans reducing the size of the hanging sign to 600mm x 600mm the application for the hanging sign was refused because it was decided the internal lighting was not acceptable.)*

**17/P/01977 and 17/P/01989: Tesco Superstore, Egerton Road**

This application was for a portacabin-sized photographic shop in Tesco's car park. We expressed our concern that the proliferation of these types of small scale retail outlets, e.g. key cutting, shoe repair, photo shops etc, at out-of-town supermarkets was resulting in increasing amounts of retail trade being 'lost' to the town centre. We referred to the sequential test, though we acknowledged that it would be inappropriate to apply the test to such small developments. However, we are mindful that, cumulatively, small-scale retail developments such as this will remove types of small-scale retail use which one not only expects to be located in town centres but which all help to maintain vitality.

The sequential test is in Para 24 of the NPPF:-

"Local planning authorities should apply a sequential test to planning applications for main town centre uses that are not in an existing centre and are not in accordance with an up-to-date Local Plan. They should require applications for main town centre uses to be located in town centres, then in edge of centre locations and only if suitable sites are not available should out of centre sites be considered. When considering edge of centre and out of centre proposals, preference should be given to accessible sites that are well connected to the town centre. Applicants and local planning authorities should demonstrate flexibility on issues such as format and scale."

*(Approved)*

**17/P/02088: 63 Cranley Road**

We wrote that replacement of a single dwelling in this residential area by a block of flats needs to be done with great respect for the spacious character of the area, the scale of its buildings and its green nature. We objected to the proposed removal of the tree in the

front garden. Our objection would be met if the applicant undertakes to plant and maintain another tree of eventual similar size.

*(Not yet decided)*

**17/P/02193: Unit 4, 75-78 Woodbridge Road**

This proposed a new restaurant with ancillary takeaway. We were concerned about the parking provision. People wishing to pick up a takeaway will be tempted to park in the road causing an obstruction to the bus lane. They will not find the five parking spaces round the back.

*(Refused. This application was considered at full planning committee as the case officer recommended approval but there were 31 letters of objection submitted.)*

**17/P/02214: The Founders Studio, The Guildford School Of Acting, Millbrook**

We have been involved with this site for five or six years with meetings and previous letters. The original plan proposed demolition of the existing building and replacing it with shops and flats above. This culminated in an application 12/P/00636 to which we did not object and which was approved. The present application is very similar. One difference is the replacement, at the Planning Officer's suggestion, of the hipped roof on the western side by a gable in order to provide symmetry. The hip was introduced no doubt to improve the view line to St Mary's from Millbrook to the east. We would like the hip to be retained and hence raised an objection.

*(Approved)*

**17/P/02248: Automatic Telling Machine, 1-B, Friary Street**

This proposed a new shop front with an unusual folding shutter which formed a canopy when open. We objected to the canopy which projects over Friary Street and would break up the clean line of the street's façades. It would be out of keeping with the street scene. We also objected to the size of proposed signage, which should match that of Cotswold above and next door. If the premises are used to sell food and/or drink then there could be a conflict between the need to provide space for people being served at the proposed on-street counter and the almost inevitable wish to put tables and chairs on the pavement. This could cause unacceptable blockage of the street.

*(Refused)*

**17/P/02280: 4 Guildford Business Park, Guildford Business Park Road**

This was an outline application to consider scale, access and layout for the erection of an enlarged office building to replace the existing one. We expressed concerns regarding the existing car parking with respect to the long white facade of the multi story parking being prominent in views from Pewley Down. Should this application be approved we suggested a condition that the south façade of the car park be made a green façade with suitable planting.



Traffic congestion on the roundabout and A3 slip road access to the site is already severe. Gridlock is common at this junction and has knock on effects on the wider road network. We therefore suggested that car sharing and park and ride be increased and a contribution be made by the applicant towards the sustainable movement corridor and exploring the opportunity for a footbridge link over the railway line to Reading from Guildford to link Business Park Road and Middleton Industrial Estate to the university grounds. This footbridge would then link with the existing footbridge over the A3 and a footpath to Guildford mainline station thus encouraging modal shift.

*(Approved. The case officer ignored our suggestions.)*

**17/P/02326: The Elms Centre, Glaziers Lane, Normandy**

We considered this application for access to a proposed estate of 30 dwellings to be inappropriate. The site is in the Green Belt and is not a designated site in the Draft Local Plan. The location of the site would not consolidate the village and was an example of fragmented and sporadic development in the Green Belt that was the antithesis of proper planning. The 2 storey pitch roofed houses would reduce the openness of the Green Belt to a greater extent than the existing buildings.

*(Refused)*

**17/P/02341: Bury Fields House, Bury Fields**

We did not believe this application to add another extension to this block of flats was acceptable. The previous extension to this building had little architectural merit but was a small addition and well set back. This much larger and bulkier addition to the existing building would adversely impact on the conservation area and on the adjacent listed building “The Court” by architect Hugh Thackeray Turner.

*(Refused)*

**17/P/02382: 2A-2B Opus Park, Moorfield Road, Guildford**

See also 17/P/01761 above. This was a retrospective application to replace the current un-granted scheme for the huge garish fascia signs fitted in April 2017. We objected because in recent years great strides had been made with respect to the improvement of the quality of buildings and the general appearance of Slyfield Industrial Park. This building stands at a prominent location at the entrance to the park and the proposed 10 signs are too large, too many and too garish.

*(Approved following receipt of amended plans reducing the number of signs, reducing the internal illuminations to only one sign and reducing the size of the proposed banner)*

**17/P/02469: Bishops Nissan of Guildford, Walnut Tree Close, Guildford, GU1 1TX  
Proposal: Demolition of existing building and redevelopment of the site to provide 191 apartments (use class C3) including communal facilities, along with associated basement car park, landscaping and access.**

The Society objected most strongly to this application. The application site occupies an extensive area of land with a long frontage to the River Wey and it falls within the River Wey Corridor (Policy G11), the floodplain of the River Wey (Policy G1(6)) and overlooks Dapdune Wharf, an historically important area of open land which is in the ownership of the National Trust. Policy G11 states that development within the River Wey Corridor will be permitted provided it protects or improves the special character of the River Wey and Policy G1(6) identifies the need to safeguard areas that would increase risk to people or property from flooding.

The Society considered these proposals for development to be totally unacceptable. The proposal, which included a proposal to build up to a height of 12 stories, would be harmful to the setting of the River Wey Navigation Conservation Area. They would have a severe over-dominant impact on the River Wey which would be incompatible with the provisions of Policy G11. Furthermore, the proposals would have a serious adverse impact on the setting of the National Trust-owned land at Dapdune Wharf on the opposite bank of the river.

This site is not within the town centre. It is the view of the Society that any development of this site should not exceed 3 ½ stories as confirmed by decisions on several previous planning applications for developments along the river. Whilst the Society's principal concern is about the amount and, in particular, the height of what is proposed, the Society would wish to see more land along the river frontage to be set aside for public access and we were further concerned that the proposals made no provision for social/affordable housing. Finally, given that the site is located within the flood plain, we had doubts about whether the proposed development complied with the provisions of Policy G1(6).

*(Withdrawn)*

**17/P/02488: The Tyrrell Building, Long Reach, Ockham, Woking, GU23 6PG  
Proposal: Erection of 25 new dwellings, redevelopment of the existing dwelling, with vehicular access, together with internal access roads, parking and secure cycle storage, hard and soft landscaping and an equipped children's play space following demolition of existing buildings and the relocation of the 'Tyrrell shed' off site.**

The application site is located within the Green Belt in an area of sparse and fragmented development between Ockham and West Horsley. We noted the site is 'brownfield' land and it already had an extant permission for the construction of a further commercial building. Even so, our assessment was that this new proposal would have a 'greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt'. The Application Planning Statement itself recognised that it is difficult to substantiate the 'very special circumstances' necessary for a case for permitting this amount of development as an exception to Green Belt policy. We agreed there was no case for permitting this amount of development as an exception to Green Belt policy as the site is in a very rural, non-sustainable location well away from public transport which would result in the occupiers of the dwellings being totally dependent on travel by car.

*(Refused)*

**17/P/02561: Land east of St Johns Close, The Chase, Guildford**

A development of 25 student bedrooms arranged in two 2 storey blocks is proposed. We objected to this application for a sliver of roadside overdevelopment. We consider that the proposal will have an unacceptable impact on the street scene, which at present is open and typical of the Cathedral and Onslow Village area. The proposal is way out of character with its surroundings and the local building styles: it might fit in an urban terraced environment but not here. Furthermore, the closeness of the proposals to the road creates great difficulties.

*(Refused)*

**17/P/02579: The Pirbright Institute, Ash Road, Pirbright**

This was a reserved matters application for the erection of a new 4 storey building, with ancillary structures. We wrote on the original outline application 15/P/00604. We did not object but commented that “rigorous investigation needs to be made of the case for approving such a major development such as to justify setting aside the prima facie conflict with Green Belt policy.” We found it disappointing that the detailed proposals of the current application are for starkly dark cuboid blocks which make no attempt to harmonise with the countryside.

*(Not yet decided)*

**17/P/02605: H A Fox Jaguar and Hunters Land Rover, Ladymead**

We objected strongly to the previous approved scheme 16/P/01687 for a new showroom. We commented that “The choice of material for the elevations is totally unsuitable”. This comment pertained in equal measure to the new proposals. We therefore continued to object. The proposals sit on an extremely prominent corner site on a very important ‘gateway’ into Guildford. We objected to the gloomy impression which the proposals would make, with their oppressively black facades, and lack of articulation and relief. The inclusion of more glazing is one modification that could help offset the adverse impact of the proposals. We welcomed the reduced height and mass of the new proposals, but remarked that they left the western end of the site free for further development.

*(Approved. The case officer did consider our concerns but felt that the proposals were acceptable in this area, despite the acknowledgement that the site is on a very prominent corner of one of the major roads into Guildford.)*

**17/P/02641: National Tyre Service, Woodbridge Trade & Retail Park**

We objected strongly to this proposal for illuminated displays. At 20’ x 10’ plus wide border it is not only a very large sign but, importantly, is totally out of character with the street scene of Guildford. This kind of proposal for large hoardings with intermittent displays changing every ten seconds is perhaps common on the outskirts of American towns, but is wholly alien to even the outskirts of Guildford. This animation is also a dangerous distraction to drivers. We use the word ‘intermittent’ deliberately, because we consider once every ten seconds to be so. The Council’s Guidance states that intermittent

illumination should be avoided. [Intermittent means ‘not continuous or steady’ according to the OED.]

We urge Planning Officers to resist the temptations offered by modern electronics. It is now relatively easy to create what are in effect huge public TV screens based on LED technology. These are acceptable in Las Vegas, but not in our town. They usually have a colour palette and content quite at variance with the local built environment. They also introduce light pollution at night.

*(Refused and an appeal has been commenced.)*

**17/P/02655: land to the rear of, Claremont, 4 Guildown Avenue, Guildford**

This must be one of the last applications for houses fronting onto ‘Green Lane’ along the top of Guildown. We had written on eight previous applications and there were several precedents to show what is acceptable. The inspector guidance is that houses should in effect be no more than 1½ storeys high and that they should be landscaped into the southern flank of the hillside so as not to be visible from the north. The most striking thing about this application was its size (six bedrooms). The proposal is a full two storeys high with a high roof line. We objected to this and urged that the development be one and a half storeys. We considered the application paid scant attention to its visual impact. We therefore considered that the present application is unacceptably prominent and will detract from the rural character of the area, especially of the Green Lane. We considered it important that conditions ensured that the promised new hedge and tree planting use indigenous varieties so as to maintain the rural character of Green Lane and to screen the house.

*(Approved. Our concerns were ignored by the case officer.)*

**DECISIONS ON APPLICATIONS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED BUT NOT FULLY RESOLVED AT THE TIME OF THE LAST REPORT**

**17/P/00509: Land at Guildford College Campus, Stoke Road, Guildford, GU1 1EZ  
Proposal: Demolition of existing buildings and redevelopment to provide purpose built student accommodation with 553 bed spaces, 149 sqm D1 floor space, and 969 sqm of student amenity space including a gym and student hub and associated works.**

We wrote objecting to the proposal as first submitted. Our main objection was the proposed height. At seven stories and combined with considerable bulk, the proposed development was too high and would have a detrimental ‘urbanising’ impact on the adjacent Stoke Park. We suggested that five storeys would be more appropriate. We examined the amended documents and noted the removal of the glazed blocks between buildings, the reduction in height of the North East block from seven to six stories and the reduction in student beds by 5% were all moves in the right direction. However we still considered that the building was too massive given its close proximity to Stoke Park. As Guildford town grows upwards with most new buildings exceeding their predecessors

in height, we considered it of the utmost importance that Stoke Park maintains its character as the largest open space in the town. Large buildings on its perimeter diminish its apparent scale, and hence our judgement that the height of such buildings should be kept down to five stories.

*(Refused and Appeal still in progress)*

**17/P/00801: Treetops Kennels, Treetops, Old Portsmouth Road, Peasmarsh**

The site for the development of 39 residential dwellings is within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV). It therefore is subject to the highest levels of protection. We objected to the previous 16/P/00141 on the grounds that the proposal conflicted with policies on Green Belt, AONB, AGLV and Conservation Area. The proposal would have had a detrimental effect on the rural character of the area. We noted that the current application extended to the south although the density was reduced from 30 to 20 dwellings per hectare. However the proposed houses were still two storeys, some with rooms in the roof. We considered that this would still conflict with the above policies, especially AONB. Surrey Hills AONB wrote objecting to 16/P/00141 and we agreed with the ‘Suggested more appropriate site future’ paragraphs at the end of their letter. They referred to the SHLAA allocation of 12 dwellings to the site and went on to recommend that they be at the northern end of the site and should be single storey.

*(Appealed for non-determination and the appeal has been upheld. The Inspector agreed that the development would create harm to the Green Belt but felt that the harm would substantially reduce over a period of many years.)*

**17/P/01315: Land north of Poyle Road, Tongham, GU10 1DY**

**Proposal: Outline application for up to 150 residential dwellings, including provision of up to 35% affordable housing, creation of new vehicular access off Poyle Road, and provision of public open space with associated infrastructure and earthworks. All matters reserved except accessibility to the site, for vehicles in terms of the positioning and treatment of the access to the site.**

The Guildford Society objects to applications for development on Green Belt land except where very special circumstances pertain. In the Local Plan currently being considered it is proposed to designate land including the proposed site as Green Belt. We saw no special circumstances and therefore would support the Council if it objected to the application.

*(Refused and an appeal is still running)*

John Wood

October 2018