

THE PLANNING GROUP

Report on the letters the group has written to Guildford Borough Council about planning applications submitted during the period 1 July to 31 December 2016

During 2016 the Planning Group consisted of John Baylis, Gordon Bridger, Amanda Mullarkey, David Ogilvie, Martin Taplin, Anthony Umney and John Wood. In addition Ian Macpherson has been invaluable as a corresponding member.

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

During the final six months of 2016 there were 1,168 planning applications recorded at GBC. We sifted through these applications and looked in detail at 83 of them over this period. The Group wrote 29 letters to the Head of Planning Services on a wide range of individual planning applications.

As usual, 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. We wrote 7 such letters either because we considered they were too large or because the proposal was that they should be internally illuminated. In the period under review 4 applications were approved and 3 were refused.

Of the remaining 22 applications to which we made comment 2 were letters in support, 3 of the applications were withdrawn, 11 were refused and 6 were approved. Seven appeals were submitted against these refused applications – a very significant and unprecedented proportion. However only one appeal was successful and the remaining six were dismissed. This shows a good record of decision making by GBC on the applications where we wrote objecting to the proposals. Sometimes some of the withdrawn applications are subsequently resubmitted after amendments have been made.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> .

During the period under review there were a couple of significant planning applications considered. The first one was **16/P/01687** for the redevelopment of the H A Fox Jaguar and Hunters Land Rover showrooms and workshop complex at Ladymead. We were concerned about the proposed very large building on an extremely prominent corner which is considered a very important ‘gateway’ into Guildford. The bulky and unrelieved design would subsequently detract from the character and context of the surroundings. There is concern that the CGI images show the building would be taller than the adjacent ‘Dreams’ building, with no form of transition in scale between the two. In support of

their application the applicants pointed out that there are other large buildings on Ladymead. However, these other buildings are set back from the road frontage and/or incorporate pitched roofs into their overall height whereas the building proposed in this application will be on or very close to the frontages of Ladymead and Woodbridge Road such that, with its huge rectangular elevations it will appear very dominant in the street scene. Our view is that any new building at a “very important ‘gateway’ into Guildford”, to quote GBC’s case officer, should add rather than detract from the attractiveness of its surroundings. This proposal should seek to improve this part of our town but it does just the reverse. We wholeheartedly agreed with the officers in their pre-application letter of advice that the bulky and unrelieved design would seriously detract from the character and context of the surroundings. Whilst revised drawings were presented we felt the latest revisions provided little discernible difference to that upon which we commented in our earlier letter. It followed that all our original points of criticism equally applied. Regrettably, the planning committee thought that the revised plans were better and the application was approved. It is interesting to note that at the time of writing this report (January 2018) a new application has just been submitted and we shall consider these new proposals very shortly.

The other application of note was the revised plans for **15/P/02284** relating to the application for 134 new dwellings on the land at the Cathedral Church of the Holy Spirit on Stag Hill. Rather than repeating the comments against the application the reader is encouraged to look at the details below on page 9.

Prior to July 2016 there were still many applications which had been submitted but not resolved before 2017. Updates on these outstanding applications follow on page 12 after the list of July to December 2016 applications. The reader’s attention is particularly drawn to **15/P/00012** (Wisley Airfield), **16/P/00027** (Dunsfold Airfield), **16/P/01290** (Guildford Park Road surface car park) and **14/P/02168** (Guildford Railway Station).

The case officers at GBC do take our letters into consideration but 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.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS submitted from 1 July to 31 December 2016

16/P/01440: Guildford College Stoke Park Campus, Stoke Road, Guildford

We considered this proposal for an additional car parking area was wrong because of the loss of green open space and trees, and the consequent damage to the setting of the College, the war memorial, and this green approach to Guildford. We believed that space can be found elsewhere on the College site for the required extra parking. We were surprised that this application did not precede the leasehold agreement with Eagle Radio which gave rise to the need for the extra parking.

(Withdrawn)

16/P/01482: Tunsgate Arch, Tunsgate, Guildford

We had no objection to this application for two temporary hanging banners provided that it is temporary. We considered that the words “duration of development” in the application are not sufficiently clear’. We therefore suggested using a more precise condition “until practical completion of the development approved under planning application numbers 15/P/01388 and 14/P/02078.

Approved. Our objections were noted and approval was given for a one year period only.)

16/P/01518: 91 Haydon Place, Guildford

We strongly objected to this application for a 6m wide advertising sign. The proposed hoarding, both by its nature and size, would be visually intrusive and totally inappropriate on York Road which is an important and well-used approach to Guildford town centre.

(Refused, but see also 16/P/02285 below.)

16/P/01660: 92-94 Haydon Place, Guildford

We felt this application for three flats stacked one above the other on a very small site was too much, in particular it would lead to a cramped nature of the individual flats/bedsits. We also commented on the design of the windows and a 'Rights of Light' issue.

(Refused)

16/P/01663: Prestons, 94 High Street, Guildford

We objected to this application for a hanging sign in the cobbled High Street. The sign was too large, positioned too high and was a product advertisement (for Rolex) rather than an advertisement for a shop or service.

(Refused)

16/P/01666: 111 Epsom Road, Guildford

We opposed this application for a block of eight flats following demolition of an existing bungalow. We considered it important to maintain the ‘greening’ of the approaches to the town and considered that the proposal provided an inadequate amount of space for a tree screen between the public highway (Epsom Road) and the proposed car parking area. We were also of the view that the development should respect the building line which has been established with the adjoining property (No. 115 Epsom Road), and that it will be important to take account of the impact of the development on the adjacent properties in Guildcroft.

(Refused and appeal dismissed)

16/P/01687: H A Fox Jaguar and Hunters Land Rover, Ladymead, Guildford

The Society strongly objected to this application for the redevelopment of the existing motor dealership, to include a new 3-storey showroom, workshop, MOT facility and associated car parking and landscaping. Essentially, what is proposed is a multi-storey car park mainly for display of used cars. The design is awful. Pre-application advice from GBC was set out in a letter from GBC dated 26th May 2016. The Society gave its full endorsement to the concerns expressed by the officers of GBC in their letter. We are of the view that the revisions made to the design following the letter dated 26th May 2016 do not address or resolve the issues of concern.

(Approved. The case officer’s report did mention our concerns and went through our points one by one. Slightly amended plans had been submitted later and, on balance, they were thought to be acceptable by GBC. The new construction will create a very strong “in your face” building right to the corner of the pavement at this important junction into Guildford.)

16/P/01693: 90 The Mount Guildford

We felt the proposed new 2 storey replacement dwelling would be on a ridge and thus the additional height and 2 storey facades would adversely impact on the street scene and on distant views.

(Approved. It was clear from the case officer’s report that she did not agree with us.)

16/P/01698: 28-30, 32 AND 34-36 Chertsey Street, Guildford

We objected to this planning application for an additional dwelling because it makes an already complex scheme of very small dwellings over complex with an unsuitable additional dwelling in these listed buildings.

(Withdrawn)

16/P/01785: 17 Warwicks Bench, Guildford

We considered the stated risk of children falling over the existing steel railings for this planning application for a wall and entrance gate was spurious. The railings exceed the height required by building regulations for public safety. The height of the wall exceeds

the permitted development height for residential walls on street boundaries and it will be out of the character with the local area. It will set an undesirable precedent and if repeated on the other side of the road it will result in valuable views being lost. The access is on a dangerous blind corner with the gate being close to the boundary.

(Refused. Appeal upheld.)

16/P/01880: 178-184 London Road, Guildford

We objected to this planning application for two two-storey blocks of nine flats following demolition of existing buildings. This application proposed too much development on too small a site. The proposals would have resulted in a cramped development of flats with limited areas of open land providing insufficient amenity space for the occupants of the flats; the development would be out of character with other development in the area; would provide inadequate landscaping along the London Road frontage, and would result in an access and egress to the car park which would be potentially dangerous.

We also pointed out that Guildford Borough Council proposes that London Road will form part of the town's Sustainable Transport Route. With the proposed flats located so close to the London Road frontage, this application demonstrated the need for the Council to adopt a building line which protects the achievement of the Route.

(Refused and appeal dismissed.)

16/P/01886: Alvaston, Clandon Road, Guildford

We strongly objected to this application for a block of 14 flats on the corner of Clandon Road and the London Road: the site abuts two Conservation Areas. The site lies outside the (GBC) defined town centre boundary in recognition that the area of Clandon Road is of a different (residential) character. Because of the design, height and bulk of proposed building, the levels of the site and because it is proposed to bring the development in advance of the established building line of other properties on the north side of Clandon Road, the proposal for a four-storey flat-roofed design would result in an intrusive and unacceptably prominent development incompatible with the established character of this part of the town. We note that the proposed building sits on a podium which means the effective height of the western end is five storeys. The height of the roof ridge of the proposal is 4.6 metres higher than the existing building to be demolished. The proposal is also hugely higher than 54 London Road, located on the other side of Clandon Road opposite the proposal. There were 50 other letters of objection and 6 in support.

(Approved after amending plans were received. The amendments included:

- *building height reduced by 500mm*
- *top (fourth) floor reduced by 49%*
- *set backs introduced at every level facing London Road*
- *increased eastern facade setback to 5 Clandon Road*
- *removal of second lift and stair core*
- *extent of basement elevation reduced*

We wrote again (as did 27 other objectors) accepting the amendments were better but that the proposal was still too overpowering. The case officer appeared to give significant weight to the fact that the proposal would provide a net gain of thirteen new dwellings which would make a

positive contribution towards meeting the under provision of housing in the borough. She therefore recommended it be approved.)

16/P/01901: Summer Court, Northdown Lane, Guildford

We objected to this application for a three storey building comprising of six two bedroom apartments following demolition of existing detached dwelling. The location is just off Echo Pit Road, a well-established, low density residential area which is characterised by large individual houses of traditional design. The site itself immediately abuts land designated as part of the Green Belt, the Surrey Hills AONB and the AGLV.

The development would be over-dominant and distinctly out-of-character with the area.
Refused and appeal dismissed.)

16/P/01915 and 16/P/01916 (LBC): 28-30, 32 and 34-36 Chertsey Street, Guildford

This was a complex proposal to convert existing office space to create 1x one bedroom and 7x two bedroom apartments. We were concerned with the poor detailing of the windows and of the door on the side elevation which do not appear to be in sympathy with this listed building.

(Approved. It is disappointing to record that our letter is not amongst the papers on the website and it was not mentioned in the case officer's report.)

16/P/02008: Land bound by Commercial Road and, Woodbridge Road, Guildford

We considered that this proposed hoarding signage for the Pop Up Village is of a fairground character and has no precedent in the town centre: it is quite out of character with its surroundings. The hoardings themselves are oppressively high and we would strongly object to the whole assembly were it not temporary. We therefore would like to see firm conditions attached to any approval that the whole assembly is removed upon commencement of construction of the North Street development, or after five years, whichever is the sooner.

(Approved, but conditioned including that all advertisements must be removed immediately the pop-up village ceases.)

16/P/02013: Basement and Ground Floor, 22 Haydon Place, Guildford

We considered the accommodation of the proposed studio flat was too cramped and that the application was an example of over-development. We noted that the shop unit does not have a toilet. We believe the Workplace (Health Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 require all workplaces to have staff toilets.

(Approved. The case officer agreed the internal floor area and private amenity area is relatively small but with no adopted minimum space standards and its town centre location he felt it was acceptable. It is interesting he noted that our concern for the lack of toilet facilities for the shop was not a material planning consideration.)

16/P/02045: Skoda Lookers Guildford, Astolat Way, Old Portsmouth Road, Guildford. Advertising Consent for one internally illuminated static fascia sign, one internally illuminated static pylon sign, one non-illuminated direction sign, one internally illuminated static communication wall sign, one internally illuminated static logo wall sign, one illuminated static entrance portal sign and one illuminated static highlight wall sign.

The application is for extensive new signage at this Green Belt site. We considered that large internally illuminated signs do not ‘contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the use of land in Green Belts’ and do have ‘greater impact than the existing development’. We therefore objected to several of the larger signs.

(Approved, but conditioned that the illuminations could only be switched on during their opening hours. The case officer stated that Green Belt policies do not apply to Advertising Consent applications.)

16/P/02069: 157 High Street, Guildford

We trusted that the Design and Conservation Officer will give close attention to this application for internal modification to this listed building. We fully understand the desire to install staircases but regret the loss of the fireplaces.

(Refused and appeal dismissed.)

16/P/02070: 13 Lower Edgeborough Road, Guildford

We objected to this application for 14 flats on grounds of over development. An indication of this is the density proposed: 100 dpha which is very high for this residential area of loose-knit housing. More specifically we considered that the development was too deep. The proposal comes too close at full height to Cross Lanes. It also overlooks its neighbours, and the consequences for the proposed fenestration on the south east and north west elevations are quite severe.

(Refused and appeal dismissed.)

16/P/02116: The Friary, Onslow Street, Guildford

Proposal: Advertisement consent for the installation of illuminated fascia signs, non illuminated fascia signs, frosted logos and vinyl panels applied to glazing throughout the perimeter of the site for a period of ten years.

We found these proposals for a large set of new external signs and fascias generally acceptable. However we objected to Sign 9, the very large 5,200 x 3375mm vinyl panel high above the Friary entrance by the taxi rank, is too large and is inappropriate at this junction of Onslow Street and North Street. We also objected to Sign 12, the large advertising individual letters to be fixed high up on the brickwork at the same location, should not be illuminated for the reason that this may create a precedent for North Street.

We also expressed concern that the plain panels at low level that were approved in a previous application have now been used to display advertisements. We could not find an application for consent to display these advertisements and we consider that they detract

from the street scene. We would prefer to see the original landscaped bays reinstated or shop window displays added to improve and enliven this long blank façade. We asked that our letter to be sent to the Enforcement Officer as well as the Case Officer.

(Approved. The case officer not only did not agree with the concerns raised in the first paragraph above but I could find no mention made of the other concerns we expressed in our second paragraph and no action appears to have been taken.)

16/P/02285: 91 Haydon Place, Guildford

This application was for a large hoarding facing York Road on a building near Waitrose. We had strongly objected to a previous application (see **16/P/01518** above), which was refused. This new application was for a somewhat smaller hoarding, but we still judged that its effect would be to downgrade and disfigure the area.

(Refused. The case officer continued to agree with our concerns.)

16/P/02375: The Three Pigeons, 169 High Street, Guildford

This application sought Listed Building Consent to paint the exterior of the building and the existing fascia sign with like for like colours; internal alterations including redecoration, changes to light fixtures and general fittings.

The Three Pigeons PH is an important listed building. Its front elevation was designed by T. R. Clements in the Arts and Crafts style for Friary Brewery (circa 1918). An earlier application (16/P/01467) was refused by GBC because of an indeterminate intention.

We asked that care will continue to be taken to ensure protection of the architectural features of interest of this attractive and interesting building.

(Approved, but neither the case officer's report nor the decision notice has been uploaded onto the GBC website.)

16/P/02383: The Players Lounge, the Casino Nightclub, Onslow Street, Guildford

We objected to this application. It seeks consent to add 'hotel' use to the list of permitted uses for the building following redevelopment of the site. Our view is that the use of this building as a hotel cannot satisfactorily be accommodated with the designs for the building as presently approved. In particular we consider that for a hotel there will be a need for a designated 'drop off' facility which will need to be provided on land outside the limits of the public highway. Furthermore, in the interests of pedestrian safety, better and wider footway provision is required on Onslow Street and Bedford Road. For use of the building as a hotel, there will need for better car parking provision for guests and this should all form part of a comprehensive 'Travel Plan'.

Refused. The case officer agreed that this S73 application was not the appropriate application because that method is for "minor amendments". They asked for the application to be withdrawn because a full application with proper drawings for the hotel concept would be required. The applicant refused to withdraw the application and asked for it to be determined. Accordingly, it was refused by way of a notice dated 18 January 2017. It is now too late for the applicant to commence an appeal.)

15/P/02284. Land at the Cathedral Church of The Holy Spirit, Stag Hill, Guildford

We were concerned that the majority of land for this residential development proposal is on land zoned as open space in the current Local Plan and that therefore this proposal in contrary to policy R5 Protection of Open Space. It is in the public interest that designated open space is preserved and it would be unfortunate to set a precedent for this type of development on designated open space. If the Council considered that this application is a very special case of overriding public interest sufficient to set aside Policy R5 of the Local Plan then the reasons why should be clearly stated and the Council should also satisfy itself that overall provision of open space remains adequate for communities in the vicinity taking account of anticipated growth.

If the Council decided that the development of this land is acceptable in principle then we are pleased to see that our suggestion that there should be a pedestrian processional way created to link to the town centre via the university site and the Council owned site at Guildford Park car park has been included in these revised drawings. We hope that the University and Borough Council will cooperate in this endeavour with respect to their own land holdings. However, please see **16/P/01290: Land at Guildford Park Road surface car park** on page 16.

We noted that the 27.6% of affordable housing does not quite meet the 30% currently required in the Local Plan, falls short of the 35% mentioned in the Planning Statement and provides no social housing. The 27.6% translates to the 37 affordable homes in the application's Masterplan, out of a total of 134 homes. The balance of 97 homes is 81 private homes and 16 tied homes for the cathedral. The scheme also provides a £15,000,000 endowment fund for the cathedral. Again, the Council has to decide whether these provisions are acceptable to the extent that infringing the affordable housing requirement is justified.

There was a further meeting in December 2016 between the society, the Dean and developer's representatives to discuss Linden Homes amended application. The new documents submitted in support of the application did not, as far as we could see, set out any specific information or any quantified arguments relevant to the issues we raised regarding use of open space or affordable housing provision. Therefore we repeated our previous comments. Whilst we did not have objections to the concept of development on this site we did have a couple of new comments on the proposed layout:

- (a) Some dwellings appeared to have hardly any back garden. Given the size of these dwellings, we considered that such lack of amenity space was unacceptable.
- (b) We noted the path between dwellings runs eastward to the edge of the site. This path is very welcome as part of the process of linking the Cathedral to the town and to Yorkies Bridge, but to be useful must connect to a public path or roadway beyond the site boundary. The path is shown to stop at the boundary with the Scholars Walk site. We did not know who owns the triangle of land but it would be helpful if it was aligned to run down the edge of the University land so it would be possible to negotiate the extension with a single party. We asked that a connection is assured as part of the approval, if such be given.

(Refused. As can be expected there were many conflicting comments. Whilst Historic England, Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England and the Archbishop of Canterbury all supported the application Twentieth Century Society did raise objection. They said they remain of the opinion that the proposed development would cause substantial and irreversible harm to the exceptional setting of this rare example of a twentieth century English cathedral, and that this harm is not outweighed by the claimed public benefits arising from the proposal. Much was made of the argument by the applicant that they needed approval to try to raise around £15m to provide an endowment for future expenditure needed on the cathedral. There were a further 111 letters of objection but conversely there were 81 letters written in support. To be fair to the case officer she did take into consideration all the various arguments both in favour and those who objected. In the end her 49 page report concluded that approval should be given, although there were many proposed conditions to be applied. The councillors on the planning committee, however, did not agree and a refusal notice was issued on 20 February 2017 stating that it was considered “the development proposed is of a poor quality and is out of character with the surrounding residential area appearing as an overly prominent and incongruous development in both short and long distance view”.)

16/P/02433: St Mary's Church, Quarry Street, Guildford

This proposal to remove the existing north porch and install a replacement porch and adjoining single storey extension gave rise to much debate. St Mary's Church, dating from the 11th Century, together with the churchyard, is within a Conservation area and makes a very significant contribution to the historic character of the town. The north elevation, with its north porch, is prominent as the principal approach to the building from the direction of the High Street. We had no objection to the concept of a replacement north porch incorporating a glazed door in order to allow views through to the Gothic door arch. However we were of the opinion that the porch, being an addition to the historic structure, should be as unobtrusive as possible and therefore that the ridge line of the proposed gable should be somewhat lower. We were uneasy about the proposal to provide, to the side of the new porch, a flat roofed extension to accommodate toilet facilities. In our view, the proposed single-story addition would have an adverse visual impact on the historic structure. We commented we would much prefer it if these facilities could be accommodated in some other way.

(The application has been withdrawn pending discussions with Historic England who wrote a highly critical letter on 23rd January 2017.)

16/P/02467: Guildford Boat House, Millbrook, Guildford

This application proposed a large two storey building for mixed used comprising 'Halow' charity headquarters, boat hire, café and office space following demolition of the existing Leroy's boat hire premises. We welcomed the return of boat hire from this location, and had no objection to the provision of a café to improve the financial viability of a boat hire business. We also welcomed the proposal to involve Halow in the running of both the boat hire and the café. However this application proposed 667 sq m of commercial office space and 336 sq m of 'other' space. The result was a building that is considerably larger

than the present one or its neighbours. We therefore objected to the present application on grounds of excessive size at this very sensitive location on the inside of a bend in the river. Its visual impact, especially from the towpath on the other bank of the river, would be out of character with the local environment. We considered that a scheme rather less commercial and thus less charitable to Halow could nonetheless achieve an outcome satisfactory to all.

Revised drawings were submitted but regrettably they were, in our opinion, if anything worse than the previous set and thus we objected once again in June 2017.

(Approved. There were many letters of objection but there were also many letters in support of the application. On balance the case officer felt that the benefits outweighed the harm that would be caused by allowing the development to proceed and the Planning Committee agreed with this view.)

16/P/02563: 2 Tangier Road, Guildford

We objected to the previous application (16/P/01243) for a block of six flats on this site and we objected to this new application. The development was still for 6 dwellings and thus the car parking provision remains the same. The areas for car parking between the proposed development and the highway will leave no space for adequate provision of landscaping to offset the detrimental urbanising impact on the residential character of Tangier Road. We considered this development would be out-of-character with Tangier Road and we generally endorsed the objections made by Downsedge Residents Association.

(Refused and appeal dismissed)

16/P/02564: Basement and Ground Floor, 22 Haydon Place, Guildford

This application proposed conversion of a basement store into residential use. We objected to the previous application, 16/P/02013 on the grounds of over-development. The window provision to give light and air into this new proposed accommodation is seriously sub-standard. This present application includes digging out the floor in order to give the accommodation adequate ceiling height. For the same reasons as we set out for the previous application we remain concerned and objected to this application. We also noted and endorsed the concerns of the Environmental Health Officer.

(Refused)

16/P/02557: Connaught House, 255 High Street, Guildford, Guildford

The proposed development comprised an extension of the existing building by the addition of two recessed storeys for office use, with alterations to improve the existing elevations. Various revisions have been made to the scheme, which are proposed in order to address the (design-related) reasons for refusal of the previous application by the Council in October 2016 (see 16/P/01168). We met with the owner, agent and architect and we acknowledged the improvements made with this current submission, in particular the addition of vertical mullions at the two new upper storeys to vertically integrate these levels with the existing storeys below, the reduction of the height of the upper storeys and

the further setting back of the top floor from the High Street frontage. We noted the proposals now result in a development which, overall, will be no higher than the adjacent hotel in Alexandra Terrace. However, that reinforced a general concern we have that permitting high buildings can result in the 'raising of the (height) benchmark' thus making it difficult to refuse subsequent unacceptably high developments on nearby sites. We therefore on these grounds continued to object to this application.

(Approved. The case officer felt that the applicant had made sufficient amendments to the previous application, such that he could recommend the revised proposals for approval.)

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

15/P/00012: Land at Wisley Airfield, Hatch Lane, Ockham, GU23 6NU

Proposal: Phased development of a new settlement of up to 2,068 dwellings incorporating up to 100 sheltered accommodation units and associated infrastructure including accesses onto the A3 (Ockham Interchange), Ockham Lane and Old Lane and revised access to Elm Corner, a primary/secondary school, community provision, nursery provision, health facility, a local centre (incorporating food & drink, retail, a visitor centre and offices), employment area, 8 travellers pitches, sports and recreational facilities (incorporating a floodlit sports pitch and pavilion).

We had written in February 2015 to object to the original proposal and amended plans had been submitted. Most of our objections still stood. These were:

1. This site is in the green belt, albeit significant parts of the site are previously used land and are laid to concrete.
2. The appropriate approach to realigning the boundaries of the Metropolitan Green Belt is through the medium of the Local Plan – exposed thoroughly to public scrutiny in a way that the treatment of planning applications to the Local Authority do not begin to facilitate. We therefore considered the application is premature.
3. The Society is concerned that this development may be too large to be assimilated as a housing scheme and yet too small to be a viable new community. This is a further aspect which needs to be addressed as part of the assessment to be made in the review of the local plan. A key part of the evaluation of whether this site is suitable for it to be included in the Local Plan will be an assessment of issues relating to access and transport. Wisley Airfield is located in a rural area relatively remote from other settlements such as Woking and Guildford. The evaluation will need to consider the extent to which bus services and cycle routes to neighbouring towns and railway stations can realistically be achieved in order to ensure that, in terms of transport, a sustainable development can take place such that the traffic generated by this major development will not have an adverse impact on the character of the surrounding area.

4. We have several strong reservations on the proposed layout, but note that this is only an outline application. We are troubled that the linear nature of the proposed development, whilst broadly following the alignment of the runway, will not contribute to a cohesive community, will spread the visual impact from its surroundings and, therefore, will have a substantial adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt which is not demonstrably outweighed by the benefits of consenting to the proposals.

(Refused and appeal still continuing at 6 January 2018)

16/P/00027: Land at Dunsfold Park, Stovolds Hill, Cranleigh

Proposal: New settlement with residential development comprising 1,800 units (Use Class C3); 7,500sqm care accommodation (Use Class C2); a local centre to comprise retail, financial and professional, cafes/restaurant/takeaway and/or public house up to a total of 2,150sqm (Use Classes A1, A2, A3, A4, A5); new business uses including offices, and research and development industry (Use Class B1a and B1b) up to a maximum of 3,700sqm; light and general industry (Use Class B1c and B2) up to a maximum of 7,500sqm; storage and distribution (Use Class B8) up to a maximum of 11,000sqm; a further 9,966sqm of flexible commercial space (B1(b), B21(c), B2 and/or B8); non-residential institutions including health centre, relocation of existing Jigsaw School into new premises and the provision of a new community centre (Use Class D1) up to a maximum of 9,750sqm; a two-form entry Primary School; open space including water bodies, outdoor sports, recreational facilities, canal basin and nature conservation areas; public transport routes, footpaths and cycle ways and landscaping; removal of three runways; all related infrastructure including roads, car and cycle parking, energy plant and associated equipment, water supply, telecommunications, drainage systems and waste water treatment facilities; and the demolition of 8,029sqm of existing buildings and the retention of 36,692sqm of existing buildings, for their future use for a specified purpose as defined by the Use Classes as specified in the schedule of buildings and their uses.

As can be seen, this was an application which, if approved, would have far reaching consequences for the borough and the local villages. We considered the application is premature with respect to Waverley's Local Plan. In the context of the Local Plan it would be quite wrong to consider this application for 1,800 new homes when the application itself states the opportunity to increase this to 3,400. This greater total would provide 34% of Waverley's requirement and at one third of the total is surely very substantial. It is one of the key functions of the Local Plan to consider infrastructure requirements, and the fully developed Dunsfold site would be of strategic importance in the Borough and a major driver of new infrastructure. The damage which granting permission to this application would cause is that infrastructure appropriate to 1,800 dwellings (and the considerable increase in commercial space) would be out of place and inadequate were the number of dwellings to be increased to 3,400. The Local Plan will set the long term housing on the site and the infrastructure required for it.

(This application has been made to Waverley Borough Council and we have become involved in view of the impact such a large development would have on traffic in and

around Guildford. GBC have also commented and raised a number of additional concerns as this development would affect the wider Guildford area. Waverley BC has decided that, subject to referral to the Secretary of State and no receipt of a direction calling-in the application, permission be GRANTED. The public inquiry ended on 3 August 2017 but as at 6 January 2018 the Inspector's decision had not been made known.)

16/P/00120: Warren Farm, White Lane, Ash, Guildford, GU12 6HW

We did not object to this application for 58 houses but we did believe that more of the group of trees in the centre of the site should be retained as part of the layout. This is partly to enhance the attractiveness and character of the housing layout but also as a means of achieving an immediate environmental benefit for the development through the retention of more mature trees.

(Approved)

16/P/00222: Land at Manor Farm, The Street, Tongham, GU10 1DG

Proposal: Hybrid application for a) Outline application for the development of up to 254 residential dwellings on 13.15 ha of the site and b) Full planning permission for the change of use from agricultural land to use as a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) on 17.7ha of land to the east of Tongham Road.

The Society objected to this application because it proposes a major housing development on a large 'green field' site. The application site is designated in the adopted Local Plan as 'Countryside beyond the Green Belt' (Policy RE4) and it also forms part of the 'Blackwater Valley Strategic Gap' (Policy R11). This proposed development is clearly in direct conflict with the planning policies which relate to this land and, in consequence, the application should be refused.

The Society is mindful that GBC is in the process of reviewing its Local Plan. However, prior to the adoption of a reviewed Local Plan, we are firmly of the view that it is premature to permit any development which is in such fundamental conflict with the present adopted Plan.

(Refused in October 2016. It is interesting to note that the case officer recommended approval. Appeal commenced with a hearing scheduled for 21 November 2017 but still awaiting Inspector's decision.)

16/P/00662: The Casino Nightclub, Onslow Street, Guildford

The proposal was for a variation to approve revised drawings showing the removal of the double height lower basement, addition of two set back floors of the building, revisions to the design to incorporate the need to cater for progressive collapse and internal layout changes.

We considered the proposed increase in height and bulk shown in the elevation drawing to be unacceptable and so great as to warrant a new application. They are so different to those of the previous 03/P/02069 that they are not at all what the inspector saw when deciding the appeal on 3/P/02069. The height has increased by over 10m, from 58.05 to

68.65 above the datum, 32.6m. The increase is about 40%. Furthermore the step-backs at the left hand side of the drawing have been removed. This is very much more than a variation of condition. We consider that a new application should include a new Planning Statement and Visual Impact Assessment, especially because the site lies in a Conservation Area.

(Refused and appeal dismissed. The case officer agreed completely that the amendments sought by this application were so different to that originally approved that it could not be considered under the “non-material amendment” system (S73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. They went further to say that even if it could have been considered as a full application it would fail to succeed. Interestingly, the appellant’s principal argument in the appeal documents is that the application should be considered under S73.)

16/P/00805: Hare and Hounds, 57 Broad Street, Guildford

We considered the demolition of the existing restaurant/bar and construction of 10 new houses showed a poor layout resulting in very short gardens, some as little as 6.5m long. The basement bedrooms and resulting need for sunken courtyards are over contrived for a site where the development should be straightforward. For example if the three houses in the centre of the site were redesigned to back on to those facing Broad Street there would be no need for basement bedrooms and the gardens could be longer.

(Approved, following extensive new plans being submitted to take our concerns into account.)

16/P/00821: 178-184, London Road, Guildford

We considered this planning application for the erection of 10 flats following demolition of the existing buildings was not acceptable as the development is too close to London Road and considerably closer than the building line established by Highclere. In consequence the proposed development represents an overdevelopment of the site that will be out of place and incompatible with the established character of this area of London Road.

(Refused. Appeal dismissed.)

16/P/00921: Reve Pavilion Surgery, 2A Guildford Park Road, Guildford GU2 7ER

We objected to this application for two dwellings because: there will be a lack of amenity space; the planned accommodation is very cramped; and this land should be safeguarded to allow for a second road crossing over the railway.

(Refused. Appeal dismissed. It is disappointing to report that our letter was not recorded nor was it referred to in the officer’s report.)

16/P/01290: Land at Guildford Park Road surface car park

Proposal: Demolition of existing garage buildings and redevelopment of the site to provide 160 residential apartments and houses with associated facilities including private and community amenity space, together with a 5 storey 541 space multi-storey car park (sui generis) and 825 sqm. flexible commercial floor space (Use class A1, B1, and D2) on the ground floor of the multi-storey car park.

We approved, in principle, the development of this GBC owned site for the proposed use. However, we objected to the current proposal due to the design and layout as follows:

1. The car park and apartments make an almost continuous wall of development up to seven stories high about 220m long. They form, on a slightly smaller scale but on higher ground, a wall of development similar to that proposed by Solum for the station that was recently unanimously refused by the Council.
2. The layout does not provide for a tree lined pedestrian link from the station and town to the University and Cathedral a concept supported by both these important stakeholders.
3. The houses are not integrated with the existing Guildford Park Estate.
4. The parking for the housing is too remote for family dwellings.
5. There is no provision for the possibility of a second road crossing over the railway linking York Road to Madrid Road a route that should be safeguarded, in fact the access to the proposed car park will preclude this.
6. The design and colouring of the car park and apartments is not in keeping with Guildford's Palette of materials.

We understood that new drawings had been submitted but we found it very difficult to ascertain what had been changed. We therefore repeated our previous objections.

(Approved. This is an example of the Council giving approval for Council owned land and we do not believe sufficient weight has been given to the many objections submitted as a result of this application. It is regrettable that the Case officer's report has not been displayed on the website and therefore we are unable to ascertain whether or not our concerns were considered. This is very disappointing. Guildford Vision Group had written a powerful letter to Councillors expressing as principal concern that approval should not frustrate the new East/West crossing over the river that they had proposed. Our Chairman wrote to the leader of the Council deploring approval of this short-termist and wasteful application.)

16/P/01397: Fairlands Farm, Holly Lane, Worplesdon

Proposal: Outline application for the demolition of existing buildings, retention of Fairlands Farmhouse and mixed use development of the site to comprise a new school/education facility with multipurpose sports and community facilities, highway improvements to the A323 including construction of new roundabout, provision of new bus interchange and cycle and ride facility, new community hub with children's nursery, community offices, children's play centre and commercial units, up to 370 residential dwellings, provision of SANGS and landscaped open space.

We objected because the proposed development is in the Green Belt, adjacent to an AONB and it will obstruct the openness of the Green Belt. Furthermore, the site is not

identified for development in the Draft Local Plan: it is designated NE3 in the saved 2003 Local Plan relating to sites where “planning permission will not be granted for proposals that are likely to materially harm the Nature Conservation
(Refused in July 2017)

14/P/02109: Howard of Effingham School, Effingham:

We objected to this proposal to build a new school and dwellings on green belt land contrary to the saved 2003 Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework. No very special circumstances had been put forward to justify this development in the Green Belt. We particularly objected to the Effingham Lodge Farm site for it is also outside the Settlement Boundary. We noted that the Brown’s Field site is within the conservation area and part of the site is an area of High Archaeological Potential. In our view this proposal was premature and should await the adoption of the new Local Plan.
(Refused and an appeal is still ongoing as at 6 January 2018.)

15/P/01317: University of Surrey, Manor Park: increase in car parking spaces up to 2418.

We objected because when the university was granted outline approval for its Manor Park site we understood that it entered into firm commitments regarding parking to be entirely within its own site and traffic in full knowledge of its planned expansion of faculty buildings and accommodation up to and beyond what has and is taking place. At the very least, we would expect the university to meet all its parking requirements on its own sites and never to request permission to use land outside these sites for parking. In the area of the RSCH there is an extreme shortage of parking for hospital staff and visitors. We would, for example, consider it entirely wrong for the university to be allowed to use any part of the land assigned to the Manor Park P&R, the one planning gain to the town from the Manor Park approval.
(Approved, despite many objections. Although this application was received in July 2015 a decision on the application was only decided in July 2017)

15/P/01980: Carter and Son Scrap Metal and Breakers Yard, Aldershot Road, Worplesdon, Guildford, GU3 3HF : Erection of 27 dwellings (including 13 affordable homes), accommodation for up to 5 people with autism and an 80 bed dementia care home with all associated development following demolition of all existing permanent and temporary buildings.

15/P/01987: Carter and Son Scrap Metal and Breakers Yard, Aldershot Road, Worplesdon, Guildford, GU3 3HF: Erection of 45 dwellings (including 22 affordable homes) and accommodation for up to 5 people with autism with all associated development following demolition of all existing permanent and temporary buildings.

Whilst we acknowledged that this large site has a long established use as a scrap metal and breakers yard, nonetheless, the site is located within the Green Belt where there is a clear presumption against residential development.

Aside from the Green Belt policy issues, this site has a long frontage to the A323 Aldershot Road. This road forms one of the principal roads leading into (and out of) Guildford and, as such, special care needs to be given to protecting the character of the area – not just in the interests of protecting the rural character of the immediate locality but also in the wider interests of protecting the setting of the town of Guildford.

Both of these applications proposed a large number of dwellings and some of the development is proposed to be of three storeys in height. Furthermore, in both applications the proposals locate dwellings (and areas of car parking) quite close to the frontage of the site. We considered the size and location of what is proposed represents an unacceptable form of development of the site.

If, given the existing land use, residential development is to be considered acceptable we are of the view that any development needs to be of a form which minimises both the visual impact on the locality and the harm to the openness of the Green Belt. To that end we consider no development on this site should exceed two storeys in height. Furthermore, and importantly, given the long frontage of the site to the A323 Aldershot Road, we considered that in order to maintain the rural character of the area any new dwellings should be set further back from the frontage to the A Class road. That will provide an adequate depth of space for landscaping to allow for more trees and other planting thus helping screen any development from the A323.

(15/P/01980 was refused in June 2016. However application no 15/P/01987 has just been approved more than a year after revised drawings were received and two years since the application was first registered.)

14/P/02168: Guildford Railway Station, Station View, Guildford GU1 4UT: A mixed use redevelopment comprising 438 residential dwellings (Class C3 use); station retail/financial and professional services/food and drink and leisure floor space (Class A1/A2/A3/Sui Generis and D2 uses); station and general office floor space (Sui Generis and Class B1 uses); station improvements including new station building with booking hall and concourse (Sui Generis use); replacement station and office car parking, new residential car parking, cycle parking, a Station Plaza including new public realm with hard and soft landscaping, new access and servicing arrangements, plant and associated works.

We considered the revised application with a new set of drawings. The amended scheme, submitted in November 2015, did not satisfy any of our concerns about the first application. The Group put much effort into the preparation of a 12 page letter of objection which was copied to all Councillors. This letter can be accessed on <http://www.guildfordsociety.org.uk/railway-station-redevelopment.html> . The Guildford Society organized a well attended public meeting in January 2016. Whilst our reasons were many the Councillors agreed with us and our principal objections can best be summarized by the reasons given in the refusal letter as below.

(Refused. The principal reasons for the refusal were “The proposed development, by virtue of its monolithic scale, unbroken length, largely uniform height and unrelieved

mass, would appear as a dominant and incongruous feature in the townscape and would be detrimental to the setting and the significance Guildford Cathedral, which is Grade II Listed, and the setting and significance of the Jellico Roof Garden, which is Grade II Listed. Furthermore, the scale, mass and height of the proposed buildings would be overly prominent and overbearing when viewed from the Bridge Street Conservation Area, would adversely impact on the setting of the heritage asset and would be detrimental to its significance. The public benefits arising from the development do not outweigh the harm that would be caused by the development.*

The development proposed, by virtue of its monolithic scale, unbroken length, largely uniform height, and unrelieved mass, fails to respect the urban grain and varied roof patterns of the town centre and would appear as an alien feature harmful to the townscape in long range views of the site. Furthermore, the scale, height and mass of the proposed buildings would be significantly out of scale and character with the adjoining buildings such as the Billings and Ranger House and would appear overly dominant and incongruous in short range views around the application site.

The development fails to secure an appropriate provision of affordable housing and therefore fails to deliver a mixed community or the affordable housing needed in the Borough.

The application fails to deliver the transport sustainability measures required to promote sustainable travel choices such as walking and cycling.

An appeal has been held by way of public enquiry recently and this took place over many days. At the time of writing the Inspector has not yet given his decision.)

15/P/02354: Ramada Jarvis Hotel, Guildford Road, East Horsley, Leatherhead. Part full, part outline application for the substantive demolition of the hotel buildings and change of use of the retained parts from hotel use (C1) to residential use (C3) (full application) and the erection of dwellings (outline application) to provide a total of 49 new dwellings.

The Ramada Jarvis Hotel (The Thatchers) occupies a large site located in a prominent position adjacent to the A 246 which is an important approach to Guildford.

The whole of the Hotel site is located within the Green Belt with the undeveloped parts lying outside the village envelope. For areas outside the village envelope there is a clear presumption against residential development. In the consideration of this application there is a need to ensure that any development does not contravene planning policy and, in particular, that any development does not have an adverse impact on the rural character of this prominent rural location.

(Refused. The principal reasons for refusal were that the application failed the Green Belt test and insufficient consideration had been given to the loss of a hotel. Appeal dismissed)

John Wood

January 2018