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To Development Control

RESPONSE TO PLANNING APPLICATION No 200089: CARNIVAL PHASE 2 RESIDENTIAL AREA

I am submitting this response on behalf of the Executive Committee of the Wokingham Society.

1. General

We are glad that the opportunity has been taken to reconsider the original design of this residential area and we are grateful for the opportunity to review the revised plans in a recent Stakeholders' Meeting

2. Design

It is unfortunate that the design considerations stated in the Design and Access Statement reference the Pavilions development and the Premier Inn.

The design for the Pavilions preceded the establishment of a Council Design Guide, and indeed was one of the reasons the Guide was developed, since the developers argued that the lack of a coherent style in nearby buildings and the absence of formal guidance meant there was no template to follow.

The Premier Inn was designed as a landmark building and is thus sui generis. It should not be used as a model for domestic residences.

While the revised design of the apartments is an improvement on the earlier version, we are perplexed by the example of Georgian style followed in this case. The use of a white-rendered ground floor with red brick upper floors is vanishingly rare in buildings of this period and we believe it would be truer both to local character and to style expectations if brick were used throughout.

3. Residents' parking

We have a concern as to whether the figures cited from the 2015 town centre parking survey are still valid since, if there is now or will shortly be a shortfall, taking out 40 spaces from the MSCP for apartment residents will serve to exacerbate the problem.

We cannot find what specific provision is made for visitors with a disability and who hold a blue badge coming to stay with a resident and ask that this be clarified.

4. Short-term parking for emergency and service vehicles

Although provision has been made for access via the Wellington Road entrance, there is no provision for emergency and service vehicles to park near the entrance to the apartments without blocking that road. There will always be occasions when, eg a doctor is on call or a service van for deliveries or repairs needs to park for a while. We urge that a parking bay be provided in the vicinity.

5. Recycling surface water

Given the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency, and it's current consultation seeking ideas from the local community, we would urge that, instead of running off surface water into the main drainage system, ways be sought of recycling all grey water from the site so that it can be re-used for non-drinking water purposes.

6. Carbon-neutral energy generation and consumption

We welcome the decision to put solar panels on the roof and would urge that storage batteries also be provided in order to service the site. If the Council wishes to achieve a carbon-neutral future, the Carnival Pool site should be used as an opportunity to show how it can be done in a new development.

7. Affordable housing

There is no quantification to demonstrate why an element of affordable housing would not be economically viable, and it is always to be regretted when the Council itself fails to take a lead in these matters. We ask that every effort be made to find the means to include some affordable housing in this development.

8. Public art

We note and support the call for the installation of public art on the Carnival Pool site submitted by the Great Langborough Residents' Association, Robin Cops and Paddy Haycocks. We recognise that this should more properly have been made as part of the responses to the earlier Phase II application but we hope that this request could nonetheless be endorsed as a contribution to the Borough Council's emerging Arts and Culture Strategy.

In particular, thought needs to be given to the relocation of the Water Babies sculpture outside the Library, since its current location may well not be suitable once the Library is moved. A suitable position along the concourse outside the new leisure centre complex may well be appropriate.

Yours sincerely



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