

**Reference APP/Y3615/W/18/3218093**

**Re: 1-5 The Quadrant, Onslow Street, Guildford GU1 4SQ**

**Proof of Evidence submitted by Richard Jarvis on behalf of Guildford Residents Associations**

1. Guildford Residents Associations (GRA) is an organisation whose membership comprises residents associations and several parish councils within Guildford Borough.
2. We consider that the proposed development is highly inappropriate for this important site on the grounds that it does not suit the character of the surrounding area, because of its height, scale and design. The proposal would create a radically different feature in the townscape of central Guildford.
3. The recently adopted Local Plan includes Policy D1: Place Shaping. The first sentence of this policy says that '*All new developments will be required to achieve high quality design that responds to distinctive local character (including landscape character) of the area in which it is set.*' Paragraph 4 of the policy says '*All new development will be designed to reflect the distinct local character of the area and will respond and reinforce locally distinct patterns of development, including landscape setting. Proposals will take account of local design guidance contained within conservation area appraisals, DPD's, neighbourhood plans and SPDs*'. Policy D3: Historic Environment reinforces the significance of conservation areas.
4. We submit that the fact that the site is located in the Bridge Street Conservation Area means that redevelopment of the site should take into account the character of the immediate locality, including the Rodboro Buildings (Grade II listed) and the buildings along the riverside. Clearly the current proposal is in very marked contrast to the existing local townscape.
5. The new Local Plan includes Policy S3 which includes provisions relating to place shaping and character and design of new development. In particular:
  - New development will have regard to:*
  - a) the provisions of Policy D1*
  - b) the historic environment, street pattern and topography*
  - c) important views into and out of the town centre from the surrounding landscape*
  - d) views within the town centre of important historic buildings and local landmarks.*
6. Views in and around the town centre are the subject of a draft SPD that has been the subject of a consultation conducted by GBC to which GRA responded in depth. The proposed development would have a major and detrimental impact on views from many sites across the town by day and by night by virtue of its height and location.
7. Flood risk remains a concern with this proposal. Insofar as we have been able to establish, this issue has not been resolved.
8. The Local Plan housing policies take into account the need for student accommodation within the borough, and this aspect of housing policy was discussed at the hearings conducted by Mr Jonathan Bore. Evidence submitted on behalf of GRA showed that the demand for student accommodation was likely to be lower than that provided for in the Plan. In other words, the Plan is generous in its assumptions about student housing. Accordingly, in our view, there is no need for the student accommodation in the proposed development. In addition, we note that several planning approvals have been given over the past year for student accommodation in developments along Walnut Tree Close. The site of the current proposal is surely better suited to residential use. We also agree with GBC that the quality of the proposed student accommodation is below the standard that students are entitled to expect.

9. The redevelopment of the site should be carried out in conjunction with GBC's plans for the Bedford Wharf area. GBC's recent decision to review its plans for the town centre and prepare a master plan means that there is the opportunity for coherent and coordinated planning of the redevelopment of this site.
10. We are in favour of the redevelopment of the site but wish to see a proposal more in keeping with its setting that will enhance this important part of the town centre.