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##### **Emmbrook Residents’ Association**

#### ONE VOICE

###### REPRESENTING EMMBROOK RESIDENTS

30th July 2019

Development Management,

Wokingham Borough Council,

Shute End,

Wokingham,

RG40 1WR

Dear Sirs,

**Planning Application No. 191024 Revised**

**Site Location: Matthewsgreen Farm Development**

**Proposal: Revised Reserved matters application for the Local Centre**

I am writing in response to the revised plans submitted by the applicant consisting of a reduction in the number of residential units from 19 to 16, a redesign of the service yard/car parking and the submission of a technical note on car parking for the whole of the local centre.

In our original submission we objected to the four storey height of the proposed combined retail and residential building, so we welcome the reduction of it to three storeys by the removal of the three residential units originally planned for the fourth floor.

In the redesign of the service yard to the rear of the building, the residential car parking has been reduced from original 16 bays for the 19 flats to 11 bays for 16 flats. As we argued in our submission dated 4th June 2019 that the original parking provision was inadequate it is clear that the reduced parking provision will be even more so. We make this statement, irrespective of what figure the Council’s car parking calculator may give, bearing in mind that this local centre it is located in an edge of settlement development, where the variety and frequency of public transport services will not match those of a public transport hub such as the Town centre. Indeed, we understand that the only public transport to be made available is one local bus service. It is also noted that:

* 6 of the 12 two bedroom flats are shown as being suitable to accommodate four people, which will increase the demand for car parking over and above that allowed for in WBC’s parking calculator, and
* As stated in the Technical Note “Parking Demand Assessment” submitted with this revision the adopted Managing Development Delivery Document states that the “parking standards should be regarded only as a starting point in any discussions with the Borough Council” and that its tables “set out suggested parking standard for new developments with Wokingham”; they are not mandatory.

Although the application is now more acceptable in terms of scale and impact, due to the fact that the car parking provision is worse than that initially proposed, and as the lack of acceptable amenity value provided by the residential units brought up in our original response remains unchanged, it is concluded that the current proposal fails to conform to the following planning guidelines and policies and consequently is not acceptable in its current form:

* Core Strategy CP6 d) provision of appropriate vehicular parking, having regard to car ownership;
* MDD Local Plan CC07 - Planning permission will only be granted where the proposal demonstrates the following:

b) That the new scheme retains an appropriate overall level of off-street parking.

* MDD Local Plan TB07 regarding the failure to meet internal space requirements in all cases; and the failure to comply with Paragraph 3 of this policy regarding the provision of two social spaces in all cases.

With regard to the Technical Note “Parking Demand Assessment” it can be seen that it does not deal specifically with this application but assesses the overall demand generated by the school and community centre together with the retail outlets; it does not consider the demand for residential parking. However, as it has been published here we make the following comments on it.

The assessment concludes that the 57 spaces provided would adequately meet the parking demand generated by the local centre, although WBC’s standalone demand calculation for the retail and community centre combined totals 77 spaces. This conclusion is based on an assessment that the demand would be lowered by *“the effects of cross-visitation - where a single journey (including by car) may be made to several buildings, or shared parking arrangements”.* Although this may be so in general, it would appear that the Assessment has failed to take into account the spikes in demand that will be generated by the community centre. This will clearly be able to host events that could attract participants and/or audiences from a far wider area than the current development. The main hall of the centre could easily accommodate an audience of over 250 people to an event that could last for hours rather than the minutes a trip to the retail outlets could take. In fact, the centre could host events like the music festivals currently held in the Emmbrook School, which last all day, and could run concurrently with other activities in the other facilities of the centre. It is thought that the management of the centre would be keen to promote such events to ensure its viability. The additional impact such activities will have on parking demand has clearly not been properly addressed.

The Assessment’s conclusion that the parking demand for the school given in sections 2.4.5 and 2.4.6 will be met by the proposed provision is optimistic, as it assumes that the demand will be spread over an extended period of time. Although activities such as breakfast and after school clubs will split up the demand for parking, experience has shown that the main surge in demand will occur over short periods just before the start of the school day and around the end of it. The efficacy of the kiss and drop facility at reducing the morning school parking is open to question as guardians would be reluctant to use it for the age groups involved here, and it would be more appropriate in a senior school setting. Bearing this in mind and the shared use of the parking and the occurrence of cross visitation trips, the Assessment fails to demonstrate that the facility will cope adequately with the demand at those times.

Yours faithfully,



Paul Gallagher

Chairman

Emmbrook Residents Association