

I am writing to object to planning application 2022/3796 16-18 Oatlands Drive.

This application proposes to replace 2 detached houses at 16 and 18 Oatlands Drive with 2 blocks of 33 flats. These would be adjacent to the flats currently under construction, relating to planning applications 2019/0691 and its replacement 2020/3223. These are themselves replacing 4 detached family homes with 4 blocks of 51 flats. There is also another adjacent planning application 2022/2118 under review to replace 2 detached houses at 4-6 Oatlands Drive with 27 flats.

For all intents and purposes, if these new applications go ahead, the 3 applications will form one enormous development. They are all proposed or being built by the same developer, so it reasonable to assume the flats therein will be comparable.

The combined proposals should result in 111 flats replacing only 8 family homes. This application specifically seems to replace 2 family homes with 33 flats.

The huge increase in terms of cars these flats would create would significantly add to Walton and Weybridge road usage / wear and tear, traffic congestion. The many new residents would further strain the resources of schools, GPS, water, sewage etc.

However the developer, first for 2019/0691 and 2020/3223, and now for 2020/2118 and 2020/3796, has produced consultancy reports from S16 Management that suggest he is not expecting to make significant profits from these ventures, and certainly not enough to allow him to provide the required affordable housing or financial contributions to Elmbridge.

His estimates for selling his flats replacing 8-14 Oatlands Drive ranged from:  
1 bed £275,000 to £375,000 (with the majority at £325-350,000)  
2 bed £365,000 to £465,000 (with the majority at £365-415,000)  
3 bed £620,000 to £645,000

Elmbridge Council very reasonably asked for a late review process, but this was denied by the government inspector in their decision on 16/06/2021.

However, less than 2 years later, the development is being marketed on the website:

<https://consero.uk/new-homes/riverside-gardens>

The selling prices quoted for these “luxurious” flats are considerably higher than in the viability study:

- 1 bedroom flats are £350-450,000
- 2 bedroom flats are £450-725,000
- 3 bedroom flats are £975,000.

These are all at least 50% higher than in the viability study, which was used to justify not providing affordable homes or full financial contributions, despite the property market stagnating or even declining slightly over that period of time.

Not only does the developer stand to make considerable profits, while not making the full contributions to Elmbridge financially or in terms of delivering affordable housing, but as “luxurious” flats with premium prices, they will not help the first time buyers or young families and key workers that so desperately need homes in the area, and are the focus of the Elmbridge existing and emerging plans.

It is too late to review that for the development currently under construction. However both of the new proposals use the consultancy figures to suggest, yet again, that the developer will not be making enough profits so cannot meet affordable housing or financial contributions. They are basing this on comparative sales of various other properties that are different in style and location, and not the current pricing on the developer’s own website.

To compare, in 2022/3786, the figures he is suggesting he will sell the proposed 2-bed flats are mostly at £530,000 with a maximum value of £575,000, versus his currently advertised selling prices of up to £725,000. The report suggests he will sell the 3 bed flats at £600,000, but the 3 bed flats in 8-14 Oatlands Drive are advertised at £975,000. So it seems likely that the developer stands to make considerably more profit than his consultancy report suggests.

Surely, as these new proposals are almost identical flats to his adjacent Riverside Gardens development at 8-14 Oatlands Drive, which is effectively part of the same proposed larger development, he should be made to use the advertised selling prices for Riverside Gardens in his financial modelling.

We would ask you, for so many other valid reasons as detailed in the many residents’ objections to all 4 applications, to reject application 2022/3796. They are at premium prices and do not address the dire need for affordable properties targeting first time buyers and young families.

However, if it is to be approved, we would ask for the financials to be challenged to ensure the developer makes the required and appropriate financial contributions and affordable housing, and in doing so pay for the additional strain on Elmbridge services required for the several hundred new occupants of the flats.