

PLANNING REF : 260439
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Redacted
: Redacted Nine Mile Ride, Finchampstead, Wokingham, Berkshire
: RG403NL
SUBMITTED BY : Mrs N C Redacted
DATE SUBMITTED : 18/04/2026

COMMENTS:

To the planning officer/s in charge of application 260439. I am writing as a local resident to formally object to this planning application of a gypsy/traveller pitch on Range Road, land to the rear of 297 to 303 Nine Mile Ride, Finchampstead RG40 3NP. My objections are based on the following planning policy and safety concerns:

Countryside Designation

The site is within the area designated as countryside. It is listed as countryside and outside the settlement boundary in the Wokingham plan of 2010, the draft Local Plan of 2024 and the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan. The fact that the site is within the 'countryside' supports the refusal of this planning application.

Council's Core Strategy - Limited Development

Finchampstead is classed as a settlement where it is felt limited development to support the vitality of existing local services is appropriate. In areas of countryside priority should be given to repurposing existing buildings. This application is not appropriate, and no existing buildings are present.

CP1 - Sustainable Development

It is not a sustainable development.

It does not maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment. ET Planning states in paragraph 5.20 that the site "Complies with policies CP1 and CP3 and is acceptable to the character of the area". This is the opinion of ET Planning only and cannot be used in any decision making.

It will not minimise the emission of pollutants into the wider environment. There appears to be no plan to limit any adverse effects on water quality (including ground water). A soakaway is planned which could cause groundwater contamination. There will be a toilet on the site however, it is unknown how Foul Sewage will be dealt with as there is no mention of connecting foul water drains to any existing drains if there are any present. Large Septic tank emptying vehicles cannot access the lane due to the width of the lane. ET planning mentions a no-dig construction will be necessary. Will this be enforced with all aspects of the development including waste, drainage, hardstanding, fencing, new access etc?

It does not ensure the provision of adequate drainage. The alteration of the natural woodland ground surface to accommodate the touring caravans (touring and static) will change the natural drainage properties of the area having a harmful effect.

It will not provide attractive, functional, accessible, safe, secure and adaptable schemes.

It does not demonstrate how they support opportunities for reducing the need to travel, particularly by private car in line with CP6. There is no provision for alternative transport use.

It will not contribute in any way towards the goal of reaching zero-carbon developments as soon as possible. There are no provisions of appropriate on-site renewable energy features or forms of minimising energy and water consumption as required by other planning applications.

CP2 - Inclusive Communities

According to Policy TB10: Travellers Sites, it states that planning permission may be granted to new gypsy and traveller pitches or travelling show people plots or extension to existing sites where it can be demonstrated that the site is located in the Borough's existing settlements or is adjacent to an existing settlement either within or adjacent to the Borough. This is not supported in this instance. The site is located opposite an unauthorised traveller settlement with a retrospective planning application (Application 260577) which currently has an injunction on it. A court appearance has already taken place due to the unauthorised clearance of the plot through the night/weekend of the 6th March. Application 260577 cannot be used as a reason to allow application 260439 to be permitted by reason of adjacency.

CP3 - General Principles for development

The applicant has submitted the statement in support of his application, but they do not address all the factors set out in CP3 especially c, d and e.

CP6 - Managing Travel Demand

This should sway the decision towards refusal. There will be no provision for a sustainable form of transport. Cars, vans and 4WDs will be used. All points listed in CP6 provide good grounds for opposing the application.

Range Road is a narrow single-track road. It is completely unsuitable for a development of this kind which would increase risks to road safety. The lane is currently in a very poor state and wider than it was a few weeks ago due to the unauthorised activity by the residents at application number 260577. The current width of the lane should not be taken into consideration when deciding on this application. The lane's former state should be taken into consideration. A touring caravan can be up to 2.55m wide, the lane is currently only just wide enough at its narrowest point (2.8m). It is already evident that a static caravan is too wide to fit as proved by the instigator of the adjacent unauthorised development on 10th March 2026.

A legacy application for stables was submitted in 2006 by the applicant's family for the proposed site to the rear of 297 to 303 Nine Mile Ride. This was refused on the grounds that the proposed development would result in the increased use of the substandard road junction of Range Road with B4330 Nine Mile Ride, which would adversely affect road safety and the flow of traffic. Contrary to policies WOS3 and WT7 of the Wokingham District Local Plan (WDLP) and DP5 of the Berkshire Structure Plan (BSP). The proposal would generate additional traffic on Range Road which is substandard in respect of width and construction and this would result in the increased risk of accidents to road users. Contrary to policies WOS3 and WT7 of the WDLP and DP5 of the BSP.

The lane is still substandard in terms of the road junction with Nine Mile Ride, the lane width and the lane surface. This has not changed since 2006. The visibility is poor when looking to the right to pull on to Nine Mile Ride and the gradient is adverse too which will cause issues for larger vehicles. There are no passing places on the lane apart from resident's driveways. Movement of larger vehicles and an increase in traffic will further mitigate this problem. The Northern end of Range Road joins Sandhurst Road with a speed limit of 50 mph, so additional traffic pulling out onto there could cause issues too.

Traffic volumes have increased considerably since the planning application for stables in 2006 due to the housing developments in Arborfield, Buckler's Park etc. Further developments are being built on Nine Mile Ride so traffic volume will continue to increase. The sight lines for exiting and entering Range Road are poor. Sometimes traffic must reverse back out onto Nine Mile Ride if a vehicle is approaching on the lane. The sight lines for exiting properties on the lane itself mean that vehicles must be in the lane already to see if something is coming. There are no safe passing places for pedestrians, bikes or horses within the lane and this will become more dangerous with increased traffic.

Due to the distance from the site to facilities such as school, GP, dentist, shops etc. residents would more than likely drive. During the winter months the lane is extremely muddy so vehicular travel would be unavoidable.

Approval of this application WILL cause highway issues as the lane is not suitable for a heavy volume of traffic and heavy, large vehicles.

Further Issues with the Details of the Application -

- The plans do not say how many bedrooms there will be. How many people will be living there?
- The large area of permeable hardstanding covers 35% of the site. This would accommodate multiple touring caravans. If planning were approved there would be no limit on the numbers as they would be classed as permitted development.
- The proposed area is a green gap between the historic rides of Nine Mile Ride and Sandhurst Road as mentioned in the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan. Allowing this application to be permitted along with application 260577 would be detrimental to the green gap.
- There is no provision for additional planting in the plan. The

plot was cleared in October 2025 and has been done periodically through the years to prevent maturity of any trees. ET planning mentions the retention of a number of trees and significant screening but merely pushing the young trees that were destroyed during the clearance to

the site boundaries does not constitute screening. In the process, a lot of waste from previous clearances was exposed including discarded, tangled wire fencing and gas canisters etc.

- The ecology survey submitted cannot be included as valid as it was completed AFTER the clearance of many of the species on site and in the Winter of 2025 during nature's dormant period of the year. The woodlands are home to numerous species including roe deer, tawny owls, badgers, hedgehogs and bats. We have not heard the tawny owls since the clearance of the site 260577 and have had a deer die in our front garden just last week as it was displaced from the lane due to the disturbances caused by light pollution, land clearance and high fencing.

- The proposed development would utilise a new access point from Range Road, would more trees be damaged in the process?

- The area is classed as a habitat of Principal Importance (priority woodland) included in the England Biodiversity List (section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006). This was grounds for planning application 230925 to be refused in June 2023 at a nearby property.

- How will a static caravan be transported to the site? The unauthorised settlement (Application 260577) clearly demonstrated on 2 occasions (7/3/26 and 10/3/26) that the lane was not wide enough to permit the transportation of their static caravan. A great deal of damage to the verges was done and in trying to widen the lane with diggers they removed the integral concrete supports and piled everything high making the verges no longer accessible as passing places for pedestrians when a vehicle uses the lane.

Whilst I am fully aware that there is a shortage of suitable pitches for the travelling community in the wider borough, I feel the harm that would be caused by permitting this planning application (and the currently unauthorised application) would far outweigh the benefits. There would be impacts on road safety, the environment, the countryside, the community and a precedent would be set that any plot of land in any location is suitable for a traveller's pitch.

I would respectfully ask that WBC decline this application.