

PLANNING REF : 241567
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Monks Hall
: Lower Sandhurst Road, Finchampstead, Berkshire
: RG40 3TH
SUBMITTED BY : Miss Megan Ingham
DATE SUBMITTED : 30/07/2024

COMMENTS:

I am writing to formally object to the planning application referenced above for the development of 40 houses in Finchampstead. My objections are based on several significant concerns, as outlined below:

1. Non-Adherence to Wider Planning Commitments and Strategies:

The proposed development does not comply with the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan (FNP), which was approved by local residents and adopted by the Council last year. This plan, being the most recent and relevant within the borough, clearly outlines the vision and strategies for the area's development. Approving a project that falls outside this plan undermines the democratic process that established the FNP.

Furthermore, the site lies outside the accepted settlement boundary of Finchampstead. Approving this development would reduce the buffer zone between Eversley and Finchampstead and set a dangerous precedent for future expansions beyond the village boundaries.

2. Unsuitability and Impracticality of the Location:

The location of the proposed development is unsuitable for several reasons:

Flood Risk: The recent restoration of the land by Cemex has not been thoroughly assessed for flood risk. There is evidence of significant flooding on either side of the Blackwater River and boggy ground in the surrounding fields, indicating a high and unquantified flood risk for any new development.

Lack of Public Transport: There is a distinct lack of public transport options in the area. The FNP emphasizes reducing car usage, but the proposed development would increase car dependency, leading to higher traffic and associated risks, particularly at the already dangerous Finchampstead War Memorial junction.

Traffic Safety: The site is located at a speed transition point between a national speed limit and a 40 mph zone. Increased traffic turning here would be unsafe, both during construction and upon completion, further jeopardizing road safety.

Sewage System Overload: The local sewage treatment plant is already overwhelmed, and this development would exacerbate the pressure on the system, requiring significant infrastructure upgrades before any such development could be considered.

3. Significant Environmental Impact:

The proximity of the proposed site to the Moor Green Lakes Nature Reserve poses a serious threat to the local environment. This area, soon to become a Country Park, is vital for local wildlife, including protected species like Barn Owls, slow worms, lizards, and bats. The development would disrupt these habitats and diminish the ecological value of the reserve.

4. Incompatibility with the Look and Feel of Finchampstead Village:

The proposed development is not in harmony with the character of Finchampstead Village. The urbanization of Cricket Hill Road, as suggested in the developer's prospectus, is illogical and inappropriate. The village's rural charm is one of its most valued characteristics, and introducing street lighting and dense housing would significantly alter this.

Moreover, the field proposed for development is a cherished local spot for recreational activities such as dog walking and hiking. The loss of this countryside setting would be detrimental to the community's well-being and lifestyle.

In conclusion, the proposed development is fundamentally flawed in terms of location, environmental impact, and alignment with local planning strategies and the community's character. There are more suitable locations within the borough that could meet housing needs without compromising the integrity of Finchampstead.

For these reasons, I strongly urge the council to reject this planning application.

Yours faithfully,

Megan Ingham