

PLANNING REF : 252407
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 6 North Court
: The Ridges, Finchampstead, Berkshire
: RG40 3SJ
SUBMITTED BY : Ms Sharon Baynham
DATE SUBMITTED : 20/11/2025

COMMENTS:

I am a resident owner of one of the apartments at North Court and I would like to object to the Planning Application 252407 due to the following:

1.0 The Proposed Build is not in line with Finchampstead and Wokingham development plans

1.1 The Planning application is inconsistent with both the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan (FNDP) and the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Development Plan.

1.2 Wokingham's core strategy CP11 which covers Proposals outside Development Limits (including countryside) states that proposals outside development limits will not normally be permitted except where certain criteria are met. The criteria are largely focussed on redevelopments or extensions.

1.3 In relation to the FNDP, at LPU/H/14 Development of Private Residential Gardens, the document states that development proposals for new residential development will only be supported in certain circumstances. The document stresses that a development must make a positive contribution to the character of the area in terms of build forms and space and that it integrates well.

1.4 What is clear is that from both documents is that proposals outside of development limits are focussed on extensions or redevelopments of existing properties and do not extend to completely new builds. Wokingham's core strategy states that "Restricting development outside of development limits also helps protect the separate identity of settlements and maintain the quality of the borough's environment".

1.5 I do not consider that the proposed build meets either Finchampstead or Wokingham build policies. It is a new build as opposed to a redevelopment and it does not contribute positively to the character of the area in terms of build forms and space. It does not integrate well as it is not in keeping with existing buildings on the North Court Estate.

2.0 Proposed Build is not in keeping with existing buildings on the North Court Estate

2.1 The North Court estate has made an important contribution to the history and heritage of the local area. Its owners have included the grandson of the founder of the Times newspaper and the granddaughters of the founder of the Salvation Army. During the Second World War it played a strategic role, as did other manor houses in the area, as an outpost of the military. Just a couple of years ago a local historian (randomly) knocked on my door to ask what I knew anything of the activities that took place at North Court during the

war as he wanted to write a book on the role of the large houses in the area and the impact they had on the war effort. This vital portion of land must be preserved not build on so that the rich heritage of the local area is maintained in as complete a fashion as possible.

2.2 The North Court estate consists of three properties, the main house (now a development of 12 exclusive apartments), the Coach House and the Lodge (or gate house). These three properties represent the core North Court estate buildings and encompass its history and as such it is important that the integrity of these three properties, and only these three properties, is maintained. A new build would disrupt significantly the landscape of this important Victorian estate.

2.3 The two previous development projects within the North Court boundary have been redevelopments rather than new builds. They have followed strict planning conditions based on the character and history of the existing buildings. When the main house was sold to Millgate Homes their original plans were for a very different structure. They were required to rework plans so that the apartment build was on the footprint of the old main house (that had been destroyed by fire) and that it retained similar characteristics. Similarly the redevelopment of the Lodge/Gatehouse incorporated many features that rendered it in keeping with the existing buildings.

2.4 This current proposal is for a new build in a 'modern contemporary design'. A cursory comparison of the proposed build with recent apartments that have been on the market will show the radically different style of the proposals. Examples can be found at this link [House Prices in RG40 3SJ](#). Even if this were a redevelopment as opposed to a new build it would not meet the requirements of Paragraph 131 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPT) which encourages innovative designs 'so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings'.

2.5 I believe that allowing this new construction would be harmful to the integrity of the site because it is a completely new build and it is not in keeping with or sympathetic to the design and architecture of the existing buildings.

3.0 Concerning matters in the submitted planning documents

3.1 There are a number of inaccuracies and concerning matters in the submitted planning documents:

3.2 The planning application states that the proposal only includes one more parking space. However, the site plans show a double garage and parking for 3 cars together with a storage space which could be converted into garages later on and lots of drive space which would allow many more cars. The assumption that a property of this size with the garage and drive space planned will only lead to one additional car on the premises is not believable.

3.3 The document prepared by ET Planning 'Planning, Design and Access Statement' is misleading in its assessment of local amenities and bus routes.

3.3.1 It states that there is a footpath that goes to Finchampstead village which would 'provide occupants with basic needs and service allowing occupants to fulfil their general day to day living'. Any Finchampstead resident will say this is not the case. The 10 minute walk mapped out in paragraph 5.53 is down a narrow pavement which only allows for single file walking and is often overgrown. It is also along a 40mph road which cars go very fast down. I have walked down the road and it is not a comfortable walk. It also involves an accident blackspot at the junction where the old war memorial used to stand. As I write this there have been three bad car accidents in the last 9 days on that junction. In addition, the road highlighted at paragraph 5.53 only takes the walker to the nearest pub (the Greyhound). Further down the road is a primary school and a cricket pitch with a small pavilion building. This is not sufficient to service 'day to day living'. The nearest shops involve, as the original Planning Officer identified, crossing The Ridges twice (a 50 mph road) and then a mile or so walk along Jubilee Road (a 40 mph road) which has no footway for large portions of it and inappropriate street lighting. Alternative facilities are at Dukes Ride which is a 1.7 mile walk along The Ridges and Wellingtonia Avenue. Again, about one third of the walk has no footpath and very uneven verges and the road has a 50 mph limit.

3.3.2 The ET Planning document also states that there are bus routes that service the property. In fact there are only two bus services; one goes once a day to Farnborough College and only on school days. The other bus service only runs once a week on a Tuesday.

3.3.3 Overall the ET planning document seeks to argue that only occasional reliance would be needed on a car if one lives at North Court. Wokingham's core strategy identifies the risk that developments away from existing developments are generally not well located for facilities and services and are likely to lead to increased use of cars. This is certainly the case at North Court where everybody has a car and uses it regularly. I do not know of any North Court resident that has used the bus.

3.3.4 There are several references in the ET planning document that references supply shortfall as a major factor in agreeing to new builds. There are two issues with these statements. Firstly, we understand that the intention is that any build would be occupied by the elderly parents of Mr and Mrs Jones for as long as they need it, and for Mr and Mrs Jones as well. We understand there are no plans to sell the Coach House. Building a second house for one family to occupy alongside their current property would have very limited impact on any supply shortfall. Secondly, the build is a proposed 4 bedroom property with potential for expansion (eg there are three separate 'lounge areas' and also a 'storage area') and the proposed site area is some 5,000 square metres. A simple Rightmove search today showed 21 properties with 4 or more bedrooms for sale within 1 mile of North Court. The two properties closest to North Court (Poor Ridge Cottage directly opposite North court and a Mediterranean style property on Jubilee Road) have been on the market for over one year. Wishing Well Cottage which abuts the Lodge at North Court is also for sale. This indicates there is no supply shortfall of substantial properties of this size in this area.

3.4 The planning application is silent on how essential services will be supplied to the property including the handling of waste water and foul water. I find this a critical missing piece in the

plans. There is a shortage of formal drainage in the surrounding local area and properties rely on private sewage facilities. Until the planning application includes this detail it is not possible to assess the impact on the other residents of the North Court estate or other premises around the boundary such as North Court Farm.

3.5 The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal report includes large portions that have been redacted. I think these sections may relate to badgers. I do not understand why the report has been redacted but they do not support a transparent consultation process. It immediately causes concern - no proper ecological assessment can be made based on a partially redacted document.

4.0 Restrictive covenants over the proposed build site

4.1 Whilst not considered as part of the planning process, it is worth noting that the proposed build is limited by a number of restrictive covenants over the land. These covenants are in place for the benefit of the owner of North Court, which currently is all of the 12 apartment owners who have shared ownership of the North Court freehold.

4.2 One of these covenants provides that no timber should be felled within one hundred feet of the driveway without consent. Based on the comments in the ET Planning document at paragraph 5.70 this covenant has probably already been breached.

4.3 A second covenant provides that no building or structure can be erected on part of the land that is 'hatched red' other than small ornamental summerhouses or a tool shed. The location of the proposed new build means that this covenant will be breached if the construction goes ahead as proposed.

Thank you.