

PLANNING REF : 251774
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 11
: Rowan Drive, Crowthorne, Berkshire
: RG45 6RY
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Peter Mayley
DATE SUBMITTED : 01/10/2025

COMMENTS:

Dear Sirs,

The current application 251774 would appear to be a re-working of refused application 153409 only with twice the number of dwellings and very similar to the many applications repeatedly made over the years for sites along Old Sawmill Lane, all of which have been rightly refused as garden infill sites.

The photo attached is taken facing west along the lane and was taken prior to tree and undergrowth clearance by the current site owner. The site of the current application 251774 is to the right of this view.

To the left of the view is land subject to refused application 0/2005/6572

Further along to the right is land subject to the refused application F/2007/0322 and earlier refused applications: -

1965/222 1970/70 1970/147
1974/00532 1978/08347 1979/11556

1980/14161 1987/27450 1991/37631
1992/40067 2005/6572 2007/0547
2007/0322 2013/1351

There is no precedent of any residential house to the north side of the un made part of the lane (the even numbered side judging by the few properties at the metalled extremities of the lane) and, I am reliably informed, no property abutting the north (right) side of the lane has right of access to the lane, contrary to what is stated in the application. I have a gate onto the lane, but no right to use it.

Should two new houses be built, there will be an increase in the traffic along and out of Old Sawmill Lane which in itself will be detrimental to the area, and you can see from the minimal tyre tracks in my photo the lane is hardly used for vehicle traffic, and completely unsuitable should a fire engine or rubbish collection vehicle every try to traverse it. This problem was commented on by Mr Mark Cupit in the contrary judgement of application 0322 for a site further along the lane. He found that it would be contrary to section WT7 of the Wokingham District local plan and section T1 of the Berkshire Structure plan.

I would normally comment on the Design and Access statement point by point, however, the developers have given almost no detail in their application, presumably to deter any objector from making constructive comment! The one thing I would say is that from the plan submitted, the two dwellings are proposed to be extremely close together and of a design completely alien to their rural location, risking them becoming an eyesore!

However, the Assessment Statement does state that there is no flooding risk and has been no flooding in the area. This is completely contrary to the facts and indeed, my neighbour at No 13 Rowan Drive, a property which also backs onto Old Sawmill Lane had so much water on his garden this last winter that a pair of Mallard ducks took up residence swimming on his lawn and only left in early June! The water courses around the rear of the gardens in Rowan Drive and Ellis Road backing onto Old Sawmill Lane are completely disturbed and the lane now frequently floods, as has been reported to the Council. This has been exacerbated by ditch works on Old Wokingham Road which, during heavy rainfall, cause excess water to flow into and down Old Sawmill Lane which used to have a stream at its far westerly end for drainage, but this is now blocked.

The Assessment Statement also makes light of the need to connect to a foul sewer. The properties on the south side of Old Sawmill Lane all drain to a deep holding tank which is then pumped up to the foul sewer on Old Wokingham Road, this installation having been built by their developers but subsequently adopted by Thames Water. Something similar would be required for this proposed development.

In addition to points specifically in relation to the Design and Access Statement, I should also like to raise the following points highlighted in the various previous application refusals relating to Old Sawmill Lane. These are pertinent as, once the principle of developing on this un-adopted lane is established, there will be high pressure from the applicants for previously refused applications to develop the entire lane. This will happen rapidly as most of the gardens fronting the lane are owned or partially owned by or held in the favour of local development consortia. These arguments are generally practical arguments related to the principle of development in Old Sawmill Lane and remain as true today for application 251774 as they were when they were originally made for previous applications. Mr Mark Cupit's refusal judgement in 2007 of application 0547 highlights most of the problems which have only been scantily addressed in the current application. Inspector Ingram in her judgement on application 37631 stated that domestic development in Old Sawmill Lane would "completely change the character and appearance of the area from a tree lined track to a suburban cul-de-sac" which would be "harmful to the character and appearance of the area". This certainly applies to application 251774 as can be seen from my photo Fig 1. This would clearly contravene section WT7 of the Wokingham District local plan and section T1 of the Berkshire Structure plan. In Mr Mark Cupit's refusal judgement in 2007 of application 0322 he considered intensification of use of this site to be contrary to policy WOS3 of the Wokingham plan which should also apply to this application for similar reasons.

Overall, this application would seem to fail all current tests and development rules. May I therefore request that it be robustly refused to send a strong signal to this and any other developer waiting in the wings?

Yours Faithfully

Peter Mayley
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