

PLANNING REF : 251359
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 11
: Masdar Gardens, Finchampstead, Berkshire
: RG40 4HQ
SUBMITTED BY : Mrs Gail Staves
DATE SUBMITTED : 06/07/2025

COMMENTS:

I am writing in connection with the above application for the proposed change of use and siting of a residential chalet at the above address.

Having reviewed the submission, I note several discrepancies and omissions that raise concerns regarding the accuracy and completeness of the information provided. These may inadvertently or otherwise influence the planning officer's assessment of the proposal.

Site History

The planning history indicates that the site previously held commercial status, with consent granted for a temporary office building associated with the former commercial use on the land now forming Masdar Gardens. That approval included vehicular access from the rear of the plot.

Site Use

Throughout the 23 years I have lived in Masdar Gardens, the site in question has remained unused. Given the historical context, it appears to be categorised as commercial land. The proposed change to residential use would, in principle, be more compatible with the surrounding dwellings. On this basis alone, I would raise no objection to the change of use.

Design and Form

The proposed structure resembles a mobile home or chalet-style building. However, the submitted documentation lacks the level of detail required to make a full and proper assessment against national and local planning policies. The proposal is not in keeping with the built character of the surrounding traditionally constructed properties and appears to conflict with relevant design policies. I therefore object to the proposal on design grounds.

Highways and Access

It is evident that the protected tree located at the site frontage restricts visibility and prevents the formation of safe and policy-compliant highway sightlines. This constraint likely explains why rear access was previously approved for the former commercial use. Following the development of Masdar Gardens, that rear access no longer exists. As such, the site lacks a suitable and safe vehicular access point. On this basis, the proposal should be refused on highways safety grounds.

Trees

It appears that several protected trees on or adjacent to the site have been removed. According to the submitted certificates, the applicant owns the land and would therefore be responsible for any

such unauthorised works. No evidence has been provided to suggest that prior consent was obtained from Wokingham Borough Council for tree removal. I would respectfully request that the Council investigates this matter and takes appropriate enforcement action if breaches are confirmed.

Drainage and Utilities

The existing hardstanding, which appears to cover the majority of the site, would need to be supported by appropriate surface water drainage infrastructure, aligned with SuDS principles. No evidence has been presented to demonstrate that this has been considered or incorporated. Additionally, the proposal does not appear to address foul drainage. Masdar Gardens operates on a pumped system adopted by Thames Water due to topographical constraints which prevent gravity-fed connections to the public sewer. It is unclear how this development would manage foul discharge, particularly given the lack of space for a compliant drainage field if a private treatment system were considered. The absence of an appropriate drainage strategy is a further concern and may warrant refusal.

Conclusion

In summary, the application contains a number of omissions and inconsistencies, and appears contrary to several aspects of local and national policy, particularly in relation to access, drainage, trees, and design. For the reasons outlined above, I respectfully request that this application be refused.