

PLANNING REF : 252407
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 6 North Court
: The Ridges, Finchampstead, Berkshire
: RG40 3SJ
SUBMITTED BY : Ms Sharon Baynham
DATE SUBMITTED : 20/06/2026

COMMENTS:

I am a resident owner of one of the apartments at North Court and I would like to strongly object to the revised Planning Application 252407.

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

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. This is a huge new build project and is clearly not in line with Wokingham's core strategy.

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. This new build destroys the heritage of an important Victorian estate and therefore does not, in any way, make a positive contribution to the area.

1.4 What is clear from the policy 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 FNDP Policy IRS3 seeks to protect the historic environment and any designated heritage assets in the Parish and their settings. This huge new build destroys the historic Victorian character of the North Court estate.

1.6 The revised build proposal breaches both Finchampstead and 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 which is an established Victorian estate.

2.0 Proposed Build destroys the important heritage of 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 found 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 built 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 following the destruction by fire of the original manor house), 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 character and 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 and have been on the footprints of existing buildings. This current proposal is for a new build which does not sit on any existing historical building footprint and therefore is unacceptable and out of line with housing policy documents.

2.4 Allowing this new construction would be harmful to the integrity of the historical site of North Court and is not, in any way shape or form, on the footprint of one of the original historical buildings.

3.0 Impact on local traffic

3.1 The revised plan shows planned parking for 5 cars at the proposed build. This is at least more honest than the original plans which showed only 1. However, the expansion to the planned number of cars underlines the negative contribution this build will make to the area. Leaving the North Court Estate involves turning onto a 50 mph road with limited visibility and heavy traffic use. The traffic in the area has increased substantially in the last two years prompted by increased building in the surrounding area. This is set to continue with existing planning approvals.

3.2 North Court's entrance is less than 100 yards from the junction of jubilee Road with The Ridges where there have been a series of bad traffic accidents over the last 18 months. I have lived at North Court for almost 10 years and there has been a significant increase in the number and seriousness of accidents at that junction. It

is, in my view, only a matter of time until there is a fatality.

3.3 Adding a further 5 cars into this dangerous traffic area would be irresponsible from a safety point of view.

4.0 Inaccuracies and misleading statements in the submitted planning documents

4.1 I note that no revised CIL data has been submitted for the new proposal meaning that it is not possible to judge how the size of the revised build compares with the original planning application in terms of volumes and floorspace. This should be provided.

4.2 Many of the planning documents have not been updated meaning that the inaccuracies and misleading statements highlighted in my previous objection remain as follows:

4.3 The document prepared by ET Planning 'Planning, Design and Access Statement' is misleading in its assessment of local amenities and bus routes. 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 knows 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 race down. I have walked down the road and it is not a comfortable walk. It involves crossing a busy 50 mph road and involves navigating the accident blackspot at the junction where the old war memorial used to stand. 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. It is not credible to say that the facilities are sufficient to service 'day to day living'.

4.4 The nearest shops are at California Crossroads and 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 limited 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.

4.5 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.

4.6 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 - not least because the number of busses and routes that pass North Court are scant.

4.7 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 not impact on any supply shortfall. Secondly, the build is a proposed 4 bedroom property. A simple Rightmove search today showed 23 properties with 4 (and only 4) 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 almost two years. This indicates there is no supply shortfall of substantial properties of this size in this area.

4.8 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.

5.0 Environmental concerns

5.1 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.

5.2 The revised proposals indicates parking for up to 5 cars. Five more cars on the road will represent a negative outcome for pollution levels.

5.3 Wildlife is in abundance at North Court. We have roe deer, muntjac deer, foxes, rabbits, squirrels, red kites, and bees to name a few. Any build process will disturb the natural habitats of these creatures and should be resisted.

6.0 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.

Thank you.