

PLANNING REF : 251310
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Little Foxes
: Church Road, Farley Hill
: RG71UD
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Kevin Jarrett
DATE SUBMITTED : 17/06/2025

COMMENTS:

We strongly object to any development on land which Wokingham Borough Council has clearly defined through its Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) to be a Special Landscape Area (Farley Hill Wooded Sand and Gravel Hills area).

Usefully a number of recent planning applications in Farley Hill (e.g. by Mr Roddy Woolgar of Brockendene, #223734 in 2022 & #233096 in 2023) for development of land which directly adjoins Blackcroft Farm generated an Appeal process (APP/X0360/W/23/3334221) which reported out in February 2025. The Secretary of State's Planning Inspectorate studied the land in Mr Woolgar's proposal and also the land of Blackcroft Farm very closely and provided multiple reasons why any development in this LCA area would be inappropriate and therefore Refused.

Given that this new (exploratory) application triggers all the same violations, hopefully the land development firm will realise that even an Environmental Impact Assessment would be a waste of time and money.

A subset of Appeal #3334221 rejection reasons which would apply to Blackcroft Farm too include:

- "The proposal would urbanise not only the current farmlands but also its surroundings, thus detracting from their character. Its adverse effects would be apparent during construction and for many years subsequently. The proposal would cause excessive encroachment and expansion, harming the landscape character that the LCA seeks to protect". (The LCA recommends that the key aspects to be conserved for all the area covering Blackcroft Farm are: the views, intimate pattern of pastures, tranquillity and dark skies, woodland and arable farmland and rural settlement pattern linked by narrow lanes, conserve the sparse settlement pattern, and maintain the low density of

development avoiding encroachment from the new development at Arborfield).

- "The site lies outside of the Development Limits of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (MDD), February 2014". Development of the Arborfield Garrison site has already put strain on local services and roads. Even with relocation of some schools and recreational services into their site, and changes to the A327 route, all that additional capacity will be fully taken up by the Arborfield development. 650 additional homes will not have been catered for.

- "Future occupiers of the proposal would be heavily reliant on private vehicles to access many day-to-day services. In discouraging the use of sustainable modes of transport, such reliance would ultimately cause environmental harm. This is because its location would not contribute to a cumulative reduction in carbon emissions,

or an improvement in air quality and public health". There are currently no bus services operating near to the farm at any boundary (the Access Feasibility Study has probably been done from junior, desk based research - the 145 bus service is no longer in operation and the No3 is over 1km away along a very busy road). There are also no dedicated cycle routes in the A327 vicinity to separate ~50mph traffic from bicycles.

- Accessibility to services and facilities (including the main schools in Arborfield development) would mean crossing the main A327 road - north/south traffic flows would be severely impacted by any

ground-level crossing as well as introducing significant risk for children and elderly crossing such a road in times of darkness, end of school in winter and generally poor visibility due to weather.

- The proposal would introduce urbanisation of multiple sections of a very rural PROW. This would have the effect of detracting from the experience of its users.

- "Planning history for adjoining sites includes records of roosting Brown long-eared bats, the presence of Common pipistrelle bats, a Soprano pipistrelle day roost within the dwelling at Brockendene". A Meles Meles survey in 2023 confirmed their habitat was most likely directly in the Blackcroft Farm land with runs spread all across the surrounding areas. (Recent door-bell and wildlife cam footage from neighbouring properties confirms this is still the case in 2025). Even with an area set aside for Biodiversity Net Gain, the proposal will have a harmful effect on ecology and adversely affect protected species.