

PLANNING REF : 260613
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Handpost House
: Barge Lane, Swallowfield, Berkshire
: RG7 1HZ
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Tim Allen
DATE SUBMITTED : 09/04/2026

COMMENTS:

To: Wokingham Borough Council Planning Department

Re: Objection to Planning Application P/1476034 - Change of Use to B2/B8 at Unit 13, Wyvols Court Farm, Swallowfield

I write to formally object to the above planning application.

1. Unsuitable Location - Direct Impact on Residential Amenity

The application site is immediately adjacent to residential properties, including my own home. The proposed (and already ongoing) use as a uPVC window manufacturing facility introduces significant industrial activity in extremely close proximity to housing.

This is fundamentally incompatible with residential amenity and conflicts with planning policy which requires that development must not result in unacceptable impacts on nearby residents, particularly in respect of noise, disturbance, and hours of operation.

2. Existing Use Already Causes Significant Harm

The current operation functions effectively as a sawmill-type environment, producing constant high-pitched cutting noise throughout the day.

- Noise occurs daily from approximately 07:00 to 17:00, and
- Saturdays from 08:00 to 12:00
- The tonal, high-frequency nature of the machinery makes it particularly intrusive

This has resulted in a continuous and unacceptable loss of residential amenity.

The applicant's claim that there have been no complaints is incorrect. Concerns have been raised directly with the landlord on multiple

occasions, including requests to:

- Prevent early start times
- Keep doors closed to reduce noise breakout
- Install sound mitigation (e.g. acoustic barriers)

These requests were refused.

3. Breach of Original Planning Use (Key Point)

Planning history shows that the lawful use of Unit 13 was B1(c)/B8 (now Class E(g)(iii)/B8)

Critically, Class E(g)(iii) explicitly requires that:

industrial processes must be capable of operating without detriment to residential amenity

The current use clearly fails this test.

The application is therefore attempting to retrospectively legitimise an inappropriate and harmful use, rather than proposing a genuinely suitable development.

4. "Time in Use" Is Not Justification

The applicant references that the tenant has operated since 2017.

This is not a valid planning justification.

The length of time an unauthorised or inappropriate use has occurred does not make it acceptable, nor should it override the clear and ongoing harm being experienced by neighbouring residents.

5. Inadequate Noise Mitigation

The application suggests the building includes insulation to reduce noise

This is clearly insufficient in practice.

- Noise breakout remains severe
- Doors are frequently open during operation
- No meaningful acoustic mitigation (e.g. barriers or enclosures) has been implemented

The refusal by the landlord to install additional soundproofing demonstrates a lack of willingness to mitigate impact.

6. Conflict with Planning Policy

The proposal conflicts with both local and national planning policy, including:

- Requirement to protect residential amenity
- Requirement that rural employment development must be appropriate in scale and impact
- Requirement that development must not result in significant adverse impacts from noise or operations

Even the applicant's own supporting statement acknowledges that developments must not adversely affect nearby residents

In this case, that threshold has clearly been exceeded.

7. This Use Would Not Have Been Approved

Had a B2 (General Industrial) use been applied for at the outset, it is highly unlikely that permission would have been granted given:

- The immediate proximity to residential dwellings
- The nature of the industrial process (cutting/manufacturing noise)
- The rural setting

This application is effectively an attempt to regularise a use that would not have been acceptable if properly assessed from the beginning.

8. Precedent and Cumulative Impact

Granting permission would set a dangerous precedent for:

- Intensification of industrial activity in close proximity to housing
- Erosion of protections for residential amenity in rural areas

9. Noise Impact - Technical Planning Concern

The noise generated by the current use is not typical background industrial noise, but consists of high-frequency, tonal cutting noise associated with uPVC fabrication.

This type of noise is widely recognised in acoustic guidance (including BS4142 principles) as being particularly intrusive and more likely to cause disturbance, even at lower overall decibel levels.

Key concerns include:

- The tonal and intermittent nature of cutting machinery
- Noise breakout due to doors being open during operation
- The prolonged daily exposure (up to 10 hours per day)
- Operation during early morning and weekends

Given the immediate proximity to residential dwellings, this results in a significant adverse impact on living conditions, including the use of gardens and enjoyment of homes.

No formal acoustic assessment appears to have been provided that reflects real-world operating conditions (i.e. doors open, active cutting periods). Any such assessment would likely demonstrate that the impact exceeds acceptable thresholds.

Accordingly, the proposal fails to demonstrate compliance with accepted noise standards and should be refused on this basis.

Conclusion

The current use has already caused sustained and unacceptable harm to neighbouring residents. Granting B2 permission would formalise and potentially intensify that harm.

For the reasons outlined above, I strongly urge the Council to refuse this application.