

The Planning Inspectorate

COMMENTS ON CASE (Online Version)

Please note that comments about this case need to be made within the timetable. This can be found in the notification letter sent by the local planning authority or the start date letter. Comments submitted after the deadline may be considered invalid and returned to sender.

Appeal Reference: APP/X0360/W/25/3371069

DETAILS OF THE CASE

Appeal Reference APP/X0360/W/25/3371069

Appeal By DANDARA SOUTHERN LTD & ELSTREE LAND LTD

Site Address
Land North of Reading Road
Arborfield
RG2 9HN
Grid Ref Easting: 475452
Grid Ref Northing: 167524

SENDER DETAILS

Name MS SUSAN HUGHES

Address
Woodside
Church Lane
Arborfield, Reading
Berkshire
RG2 9JA

Company/Group/Organisation Name Church Lane Residents

ABOUT YOUR COMMENTS

In what capacity do you wish to make representations on this case?

- ☐ Appellant
- ☐ Agent
- ☒ Interested Party / Person
- ☐ Land Owner
- ☐ Rule 6 (6)

What kind of representation are you making?

- ☐ Final Comments
- ☐ Proof of Evidence
- ☐ Statement
- ☐ Statement of Common Ground

☒ Interested Party/Person Correspondence

☐ Other

YOUR COMMENTS ON THE CASE

RESIDENT COLLECTIVE OBJECTION

Appeal Site: Land North of Reading Road, Arborfield
WBC Application Ref: 243099
Applicant: Dandara (Elstree Holdings)
Proposal: Residential development of up to 111 dwellings
Local Planning Authority: Wokingham Borough Council

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Introduction

We are residents and neighbouring households living in and around Church Lane, Arborfield, a narrow rural lane forming part of the eastern boundary of the appeal site. We submit this collective objection on behalf of those who would be directly affected by the proposed development.

Our objection relates solely to material planning considerations, including compliance with the Local Plan and Arborfield & Newland Neighbourhood Plan, the principle of development, cumulative impacts with other committed and emerging schemes, highway safety, flood risk and drainage, effects on residential amenity, village character, and pressure on local infrastructure.

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Principle of Development and Spatial Strategy

The appeal site lies within land designated as countryside and is not allocated for housing in the adopted Wokingham Borough Local Plan, nor within the emerging Local Plan currently under review. It sits outside the defined Strategic Development Location at Hall Farm, now referred to as Loddon Garden Village.

While significant growth in this area has been planned through the Local Plan process, this appeal represents additional and unplanned development beyond that spatial strategy. It would extend high-density housing into a sensitive edge-of-settlement location that was not identified for growth, undermining the plan-led approach and eroding the clear transition between settlement and countryside.

The proposal therefore conflicts with Local Plan policies CP1, CP3 and CP11, draft Local Plan policy SS13, and Arborfield & Newland Neighbourhood Plan policies IRS1 and IRS2.

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Safe Access / Egress and Cumulative Impact on Highways

There are significant concerns regarding the safety and suitability of the proposed access and egress arrangements, particularly their proximity to the Church Lane and Walden Avenue junctions and interaction with existing traffic calming features.

A central and unresolved issue is the failure to properly assess cumulative transport impacts arising from this proposal when considered alongside other major committed and emerging developments in the locality. The appeal seeks to assess impacts largely in isolation, contrary to the well-established planning principle that the combined and compounding effects of multiple developments in the same area must be properly considered, rather than addressed piecemeal.

The surrounding road network — including the A327 Reading Road, the B3030 Sindlesham/Mole Road, Church Lane, and the village centre around The Bull public house and Arborfield Cross conservation area — already experiences congestion, poor visibility, speeding traffic, hazardous pinch points, and conflicts between vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. These conditions reflect daily lived experience, not theoretical modelling.

To the north, Sindlesham/Mole Road suffers from constrained visibility and dangerous narrowing near Lockey Farm and the Church Lane junction. Church Lane itself is a narrow rural lane subject to a motor vehicle prohibition, yet experiences regular pressure from displaced and diverted traffic. To the south, traffic calming measures near The Bull further restrict carriageway width in an already sensitive village environment. To the west, congestion at the Observer Way roundabout is already evident and would be exacerbated by additional development traffic.

The appeal fails to demonstrate that:

- transport modelling reflects full occupation of all major developments in the area;
- construction traffic from multiple schemes has been assessed cumulatively;
- indirect impacts on surrounding village roads and pinch points have been adequately considered;
- safe operating conditions would be maintained for vulnerable road users; or
- realistic and deliverable alternatives to private car use would exist.

When considered alongside the proposed Loddon Garden Village and other committed and emerging development in the Arborfield area, this appeal represents a further concentration of growth in a single, constrained location, resulting in a cumulative saturation of development that places an unacceptable and inequitable burden on local roads, village environments and infrastructure, contrary to the spatial strategy and objectives of the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan.

This is contrary to Local Plan policy CP6, Arborfield & Newland Neighbourhood Plan policy GA1, and the Local Transport Plan objective of improving safety and the perception of safety.

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Flood Risk and Drainage

Parts of the appeal site and surrounding land are well known locally to experience surface water flooding, water-logging and pooling during periods of heavy or prolonged rainfall. This reflects repeated and consistent lived experience of residents.

Residents are concerned that:

- known localised flooding has not been fully accounted for;
- increased hard surfacing will exacerbate runoff onto surrounding land;
- drainage solutions rely on indicative or future measures rather than certainty;
- foul water infrastructure is already close to capacity, presenting an unacceptable risk of pollution.

These concerns align with the Environment Agency's objection dated 23 January 2025.

The proposal does not provide sufficient certainty that drainage solutions would be effective, deliverable or sustainable for the lifetime of the development. Deferring such fundamental matters to condition would be inappropriate and contrary to Local Plan policies CP1 and CP3.

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Infrastructure, Residential Amenity and Village Character

Local infrastructure improvements have been planned primarily to serve the Strategic Development Location at Loddon Garden Village. The appeal fails to demonstrate that sufficient capacity exists to

accommodate additional unplanned development beyond that strategy without undermining service provision.

St Bartholomew's Church on Church Lane, which is subject to a motor vehicle prohibition and is access-only, is central to village life and regularly experiences parking overspill during services and community events. Further cumulative development will intensify congestion, conflict and safety risks around this important community asset.

The proposal would extend development beyond planned boundaries, eroding the transition between settlement and countryside and resulting in incremental urbanisation not envisaged by the Local Plan. These impacts conflict with policies CP3 and CP11.

Residents are also concerned about loss of privacy, increased noise and disturbance, light pollution arising from new street lighting, vehicle movements, access points and prolonged construction activity, and drainage impacts on neighbouring land. The introduction of increased artificial lighting in this edge-of-settlement and rural context would materially harm residential amenity and the character of the area, particularly when considered cumulatively with other nearby development.

Taken together, and compounded by long-term construction associated with other major schemes in the area, these impacts would result in material harm to residential amenity.

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Conclusion

For the reasons set out above, residents consider the proposal to represent unsustainable and unplanned development, resulting in a saturation point being reached with unacceptable cumulative impacts on highway safety, drainage, village character and residential amenity.

We respectfully urge the Planning Inspectorate to dismiss this appeal and uphold the decision of Wokingham Borough Council to refuse planning permission, giving due weight to the Local Plan, the Neighbourhood Plan, cumulative impacts, and the lived experience of the local community.

Jill Woods
Director and CEO
Jigsaw Creative Care
A family founded business