

PLANNING REF : 251310
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 5 The Mews
: Farley Hill, Berkshire
: RG7 1XD
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Richard David Armitage
DATE SUBMITTED : 20/06/2025

COMMENTS:

I am writing to object in the strongest terms to the proposed development (under Wokingham Borough Council Planning Application ref 251310) of 200 specialised homes to comprise a Retirement Village, in addition to 450 residential dwellings, over approximately 39 hectares of land immediately on the South-Eastern edge of Farley Hill village. Farley Hill is situated in a sensitive environmental area and is

designated an Area of Special Character. It is surrounded by agricultural land and woodland, parts of which are deemed to be ancient woodland (Westwood Copse and Claypits Wood). Its setting and immediate environs are unique within our part of Berkshire, providing a refuge for a biologically and ecologically diverse range of flora and fauna. The village is traversed by quiet, single-track country

roads often used by horses and their riders. Farley Hill houses a special needs school that benefits from this unique character, sanctity and peace that the village provides. It is therefore difficult to comprehend why such a sizeable and irrefutably impactful proposed development on the immediate boundary of the village would be the right course of action for Wokingham Borough Council to support and approve.

Transport: Public transport will be crucial for a development comprising a Retirement Village. However, the area is poorly served, with only the No 3 'Leopard' bus operated by Reading Buses running nearby, via the densely populated Arborfield Green development. It is difficult to envisage that more public transport could be adequately provided for within the current environmental constraints of the

site. Cycling and walking routes from this proposed development are also incredibly limited.

Infrastructure & services: The plans suggest a single access point into the development through a newly constructed roundabout on the A327. The A327 is already a heavily utilised road, with usage having substantially increased over recent years by residents of the Arborfield Green development on the immediate opposite side of the A327. With an assumed 1.5 cars for each of the proposed 450 residential dwellings, and two-thirds of these vehicles needing to travel to work or school during peak times, this would suggest an estimated 450 vehicles needing to join the A327 at a single point over a very short period of time. With the predominant flow of traffic

heading northward into Reading, it is not difficult to anticipate a substantial build-up of waiting traffic within the development trying to access the A327, having to give way to a sustained flow of northbound traffic.

In a development of this scale, travel needs will be in all directions from the site for work or school purposes, leisure, or otherwise. For residents seeking access to areas of northern Hampshire, such as Hook, Basingstoke, Hartley Wintney, and Odiham, the most likely route residents would understandably wish to take would be through Farley Hill and Swallowfield to join the southbound B3349. The roads in these villages are narrow and often single-track

lanes, with use of hump-back bridges not suitable for a sustained larger number of vehicles.

The proposal includes leisure and community facilities less than a mile away from the existing leisure centre in the vicinity of Bohunt School. They are simply not needed. Doctors' surgeries, dentists, local shops would appear to be more useful, but these would only serve to exacerbate the impact the broader development would have on the local environment.

Environmental: Comparable plans for development in other local areas have demonstrated significant negative impacts on local biodiversity and ecological balance. Development on a greenfield site such as this would be far out of keeping with local character and further exacerbate flood risk in an area already prone to flooding from the nearby Blackwater River. Farley Hill's unique environmental character must be preserved, not only for its current residents but for future generations. This proposal would irreparably and negatively impact the character and uniqueness that this village holds.

These objections would equally apply to a proposal consisting of far fewer dwellings than those currently being proposed. The immediate area simply cannot sustain further development of the scale we have seen in recent years. I urge those responsible for conducting the environmental impact study to fully consider these objections and to recommend that this land is not suitable or conducive to development such as that being proposed (or any revised comparable subsequent proposal) under Planning Application ref 251310.