

PLANNING REF : 250733
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Arborfield Village Hall
: Eversley Road, Arborfield
: RG2 9PQ
SUBMITTED BY : Arborfield & Newland Parish Council
DATE SUBMITTED : 29/04/2025

COMMENTS:

Planning Application - 250733 - Land at Ducks Nest Eversley Road Arborfield

Arborfield and Newland Parish Council strongly objects to this planning application and recommends this planning application is refused.

The proposed development contravenes a number of the policies contained within the Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan: the key policies including sustainable development, Identity and rural setting, appropriate developments and getting around.

The application submitted by Barratt David Wilson Homes does not meet the development plan for Wokingham Borough Council. The application is a ribbon

development and seeks to visually link Arborfield Cross village with Arborfield Garrison strategic development location (SDL) and coalesce both developments into one. The development will sit adjacent to Eversley road which is designated as a Green Route. The development is outside the curtilage of Arborfield Cross village and the addition of 135 house would increase the size of Arborfield village

sustainably and would irrevocably change the rural character of this Berkshire village.

The development is outside the Arborfield SDL and is wholly a greenfield development site within the boundaries of Arborfield Cross. This would result in a net loss of agricultural land and green field open space around the village of Arborfield Cross. The developer's own report on soil type highlights the quality nature of the site for moderate field crops if farmed and the current grasslands provide good pasture for cattle and sheep and high-quality grass for cutting.

The development abuts two listed buildings, Ducks Nest Farm and Arborfield Court, and will have significant impact and proximity to both buildings.

The documentation provided from the travel assessment is inaccurate as refers to pavements that simply don't exist as part of its sustainable alternatives to private car use. It appears the creators of the documents have not been to the location to see for themselves. The transport assessment, as with the sustainability assessment, uses numbers for its access to local facilities that are inaccurate to say the least.

The site for development also fails to provide a sustainable location and supports no improvements to the local amenity, facilities or transport links that the development needs to rely upon to support the 'sustainable' nature of its planning application. This development would rely solely on the use of cars to travel around the area and as such demonstrates its unsustainable nature.

The sustainability report from BDW is weak in its efforts to support the site as sustainable and includes some very fanciful numbers when outlining walking access to facilities.

The documents provided by BDW are inaccurate and speculative, for instance, they state that the development is a 10-minute walk to Arborfield Surgery, a doctor's surgery that does not currently exist

and a 49-minute walk to Swallowfield Surgery, which, in reality, would be a 2hr walk across open countryside or using unlit country roads to get there. Many of the routes outlined for walking in the document involved using unlit public rights of way or roads without pavements and as such are not suitable or safe to be used.

The travel

documentation seems to lack any clear demonstration of how another road leading off the roundabout at Eversley Road will be added. The intended access point to the proposed development is outlined as an additional road leading from the roundabout at the Eversley Road junction with Langley Common Road. This proposal is completely untenable as there is not enough room on this roundabout without huge infrastructure works to realign all of the roundabout inputs/outputs and cause massive amounts of disruption at an already overly busy

pinch point on the local traffic network. The second access point of a junction off Observer Way, close to the roundabout with Eversley Road, would be dangerous in the extreme due to its location and speed of vehicles passing the junction.

The development at a minimum would need to install multiple sets of pedestrian crossings along Eversley Road and Langley Common Road to allow any foot traffic from the

development to access the pedestrian footpaths in the Arborfield SDL site otherwise pedestrians will likely pick their own routes and attempt dangerous crossings. Adding pedestrian crossings to these roads would cause the area to incur even worse traffic congestion at peak times due to the nature of this pinch point in local vehicle routes.

Therefore, Arborfield and Newland Parish Council believes this proposed development is not consistent with WBC's planning objectives, is contrary to the Arborfield & Newland Neighbourhood plan and also fails to meet national and local sustainability criteria. The Parish council strongly objects to this development.

Supporting

Evidence

Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan

Policy IRS1 -

preservation and separation of settlements - not lead to the physical, visual or perceived coalescence of existing settlements - The proposed development by Barratt David Wilson Homes is in stark contrast to this policy, it seeks to closely combine Arborfield Cross with Arborfield Garrison SDL, using both areas in support of its plan. The development will coalesce the 2 settlements along the Eversley Road with a minimal gap between settlements and will be visible from all directions, very obviously combining the 2 settlements together.

Policy IRS2 - Recognise, Respect and Preserve Identity and rural setting of settlements - The scale and form of the proposed development is out of character with the village of Arborfield Cross. The proposed number of properties is currently 135 which would

substantially increase the size of Arborfield Cross (currently at circa 300 properties) and alter the character of the rural village irrevocably.

Policy IRS4 - Protection and enhancement of historic character of the area - demonstrate how the development would protect or enhance the historic natural character of the area specifically Arborfield Cross Conservation Area - the proposed development would adjoin the

Arborfield Cross conservation area and be in juxtaposition to the old character of the village with the new housing estate built at its boundary with no recognition by the developer as to the importance of the character of Arborfield Cross village.

Policy AD1 - New developments within settlement boundaries - this proposed development is outside the development boundary of the Arborfield Garrison SDL and outside the settlement boundary of Arborfield Cross and does not meet the criteria within the Neighbourhood Plan for development.

Policy GA3 - Public Transport Improvements with Long Term Viability - The development does not propose any improvements to public transport for the local area and will inevitably focus residents on the use of the car rather than alternative forms of transport around the local area.

Wokingham Borough Core Planning Strategies

CP1 Sustainability - Increase in local traffic volumes on already busy roads, likely to be around 200 vehicles to site, if not more, as most properties would require 2 cars due to the absence of sustainable travel routes away from the site.

CP1 Sustainability -

avoid areas of most versatile agricultural land - the development is on a greenfield that has been farmed and in BDW's own documents they state it as arable and pastureland. The report from Strutt and Parker shows that the fields are farmland and capable of 'moderate yield' when farmed but are allowed to be laid fallow currently. However, the report clearly states this is good pastureland for sheep and cattle

and the provision of grass for cutting meaning that it is a multi-use, productive piece of land.

CP1 Sustainability - No

sustainable transport system, local buses to Wokingham once an hour, most buses to Reading. Does not support the use of buses over cars for local travel such as doctors or supermarkets. Any amenities are a car journey away from the site, dentists, supermarkets, doctors - minor local amenities little more than modern corner shops.

CP1 Sustainability - No walking routes or cycle routes to get to local towns.

Greenways to Wokingham but not fully finished and more an access to countryside than cycle route. No cycle routes to Reading. The paths to local amenities are all along main roads and generally unlit for large parts of the routes. The cycle routes are non-existent with no routes away from the site on designated cycle ways and no roads containing

cycle lanes for cyclists from the development.

CP2 subsection b -

Inclusive communities - nothing in application for families, no additional infrastructure or facilities for families. It outlines how it will include a play park for children, which is standard for all new developments these days and is the bare minimum of facilities with little to no connection with the wider community.

CP3 General

Principles of development subsection a - Two and a half storey developments, flats and building into roof spaces are not in keeping with wider Arborfield housing, nor is it near to any of the Arborfield SDL buildings of this height. Massing of properties will be in

juxtaposition to buildings currently in Arborfield Cross, which are

a mix of bungalows and houses and listed properties keeping in character with the village aspect.

CP3 General principles of development

subsection h - No community infrastructure to support families at this site. This site offers no further community infrastructure or benefit to either the Arborfield SDL or Arborfield Cross.

CP4

Infrastructure - Offers nothing to either the Arborfield SDL or Arborfield Cross village in terms of amenity or infrastructure and piggy backs on those facilities already planned for the Arborfield SDL while offering nothing in itself.

CP4 Infrastructure - requirements for entrances to both sides of site are problematic. Eversley Road

entrance onto the roundabout is not viable as there is currently no room for a fifth exit from the roundabout and no room to change location or structure of roundabout to fit it. The proposed entrance on Observer Way is close to an existing roundabout and exiting traffic would cross carriageways and likely obstruct traffic onto and off the roundabout

CP6 is not fulfilled - 20-minute walking time is the only option to car travel based on BDW documents that comment on a surgery that doesn't exist, in addition, to very limited local amenities that would support this development. Very few amenities are within walking distance, work opportunities stated are at Hogwood Industrial Estate, which are small, limited employment volume industrial units or Thames Valley Science Park which has no safe pedestrian access directly from Arborfield.

CP9 Scale and location of development proposals -

Arborfield Cross is designated as a limited development. The SDL is designated as modest development; the proposed development sits in Arborfield Cross, not Arborfield SDL, so is in a limited development location.

CP11 Proposals outside development limits - Loss of distinctiveness of Arborfield Cross as this is an infill build and establishes a coalescence between Arborfield Cross and Arborfield SDL. Land on application can be seen virtually and visibly joining the SDL site with that of Arborfield Cross. Loss of identity of Arborfield

Cross as a unique Berkshire village.

CP18 Arborfield Garrison SDL - Not part of Arborfield SDL and is outside the boundary of Arborfield SDL, yet hopes to use the SDL as support for this development and

facilities, even though there are limited facilities in Arborfield SDL at present. The SDL has not completed its overall development with parcels of land still awaiting development and these include brownfield sites which must be developed ahead of agricultural land development.