

Planning Application: 251621

From: Ms Melanie Stevens

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Please accept the information below of my continuing OBJECTION to planning application: 251621

I write as a resident close to the proposed development and as a long-standing resident of Wokingham. My objection is not to housing per se, it is this development. In my view, the height and sheer mass, limited on-site parking, access and unrealistic use of the highways, the neighbouring residential amenity, loss of established green space, not to mention a rare and protected poplar tree species and vegetation, in my opinion, is not the way forward.

I respectfully ask Wokingham Borough Council to refuse planning permission in its current form.

How is this still continuing? The application process began on 8 July 2025 with the original consultation period to end on 10 December 2025. The fact that this is continuing is questionable. The parking consultation was both inaccurate and misleading and should not be taken into account, or seriously.

The Government's planning guidance states that the statutory determination period for a major application is normally 13 weeks, unless an extension has been agreed in writing. Where a major application goes beyond the statutory period and no extended period has been agreed, the Government's planning guarantee policy expects a decision within 26 weeks. The guidance also makes clear that the planning guarantee does not replace the statutory time limit. I ask the Council to explain the agreed determination timetable for application 251621, including whether any extension of time or planning performance agreement exists, and to place that information to be readily available in the public domain.

I do not suggest that delay, on its own, is a reason to refuse planning permission. However, the exceptionally prolonged process and continuing submission of revised plans make it particularly important that the final decision is based on the current architectural plan, that all affected residents have an opportunity to understand material changes, and that unresolved planning issues are not continuing with constant revisions.

The proposed site of 21 residential units is an overdevelopment of a constrained site. The junction of Wellington Road and Station Road, with access associated with Park Road is immediately adjacent to established residential streets and properties and is not in keeping with the current surroundings.

The Council's plan evidence identifies this site (5WK046) as a housing site and specifically records a number of matters that need to be addressed: development should be guided by the wider Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan SPD; opportunities for vehicle access from Park Road should be correctly investigated; mature and protected trees should be retained where possible; safe access should be demonstrated during surface-water flood events; appropriate landscaping should contribute to the Wellington Road green route; and archaeological and heritage assessments should be undertaken.

Those site-specific considerations reinforce, rather than diminish, the need for a design that responds carefully to its surroundings. The fact that the site is accessible to the town centre and railway station does not remove the requirement for the development itself to be appropriately designed, safely accessed, adequately parked and compatible with neighbouring residential amenity.

I remain strongly concerned about the height and massing of the proposed building. A part of the building adjacent to No. 4 Park Road is shown as two storeys, although the proposed development shows a substantial three-storey development along with a pitched roof. In the context of the surrounding residential properties, this creates a building that is overwhelming dominant for the area.

The current National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026) requires development proposals to respond to context and to integrate with and enhance their surroundings. It also identifies liveability, nature, movement, built form, public space and identity as key principles of well-designed places. It states that development proposals should be refused where, without clear justification, they conflict with the relevant design principles or explicit development-plan design standards.

The neighbouring residential streets are of a domestic scale. The existing Jewson redevelopment at the corner of Oxford Road and Barkham Road is overwhelming and overshadowing of its neighbouring properties. Its existence should not be treated as a justification for introducing another building of excessive scale immediately beside established houses. Planning should respond to the character of the site and its immediate residential context, not establish a cumulative precedent in which each previous large building is used to justify the next.

I respectfully ask the Council to consider whether a genuinely lower-rise solution, with a reduced ridge height, reduced massing and a form that steps down towards Park Road and neighbouring houses, would better respond to the area. In my personal opinion, the current proposal has not demonstrated that the additional height and density are necessary to achieve an acceptable development.

The balconies shown on the north, south and west elevations are a huge concern. The proposal has the potential to create direct and oblique views towards neighbouring properties, including 1A, 4 and 8 Park Road. This is not simply a matter of whether individual windows are obscure-glazed: balconies create outdoor elevated positions from which people can look towards neighbouring gardens and windows.

The Council should require a clear, three-dimensional assessment of overlooking, including the actual eye-level views from balconies and upper-floor windows, rather than relying solely on plan distances. Any assessment should consider direct views, angled views, cumulative overlooking from many of the apartments, and the relationship between the proposed building and the rear and side elevations of neighbouring houses.

The proposal should not be approved unless it can be demonstrated that neighbouring residents would retain an acceptable level of privacy, adequate daylight and residential amenity. If screening is proposed, its height, permanence, maintenance, effectiveness and visual consequences should be clearly specified rather than left to a future condition without adequate detail.

The proposed development has an overwhelming loss of daylight, sunlight and overbearing impact. The issue is particularly important where a taller building is introduced beside established houses that were not designed in anticipation of a three-storey block immediately adjacent to them.

I request that the Council carefully scrutinise the submitted daylight, sunlight, overshadowing and visual impact information, including the effect of seasons on relevant habitable rooms and private gardens. Where the evidence does not demonstrate an acceptable outcome, the design should be significantly reduced.

The parking provision of 21 homes with only 6 spaces is one of my strongest objections. That is a ratio of approximately 0.29 spaces per dwelling. Even allowing for the site's proximity to Wokingham railway station and town centre, this is unrealistic.

The projected parking plan allegedly recognises that parking pressure will be an issue. This does not however, create physical parking capacity that the development does not possess. If residents, visitors, carers, tradespeople, delivery drivers and other legitimate visitors cannot park onsite, the obvious consequence is pressure on the surrounding and in most cases, private residential roads.

The adopted Wokingham Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy CC07 requires proposals to demonstrate that parking meets the Council's standards and retains an appropriate overall level of off-street parking so that unacceptable impacts on on-street parking conditions are avoided. The Council's current planning guidance also identifies parking as a material planning consideration.

The current NPPF does not require every dwelling to have one car space. However, it does require development to provide a suitable number of parking spaces having regard to location, nature, connectivity and locally set standards, and to integrate transport considerations into the design of development. It also requires transport assessments to consider reasonable future scenarios and cumulative impacts.

In reality, assuming the fact that the proposed development is close to the train station or town centre would eliminate car ownership, is unrealistic. Considerations should include visitor parking, accessible/Blue Badge parking, deliveries, carers and service visits, moving-in activity, trades and refuse/maintenance vehicles, and future residents who own cars despite having good access to public transport.

Park Road and Park Avenue must **not** be treated as available parking. The parking survey recently carried out is incorrect and misleading. It should not assume that residents, visitors, carers, delivery drivers or workers associated with the development can rely on parking in Park Road or Park Avenue. The availability of private parking spaces cannot be assumed without the agreement of those who own or control them. Please correct any description or assumption that treats Park Road and Park Avenue and surrounding roads as a general-purpose public parking resource and to reassess the parking position on that basis.

Additional concerns are for Park Road, Wellington Road and Station Road. The public-access record shows that revised swept-path analyses for a 7.5-tonne box van and a large refuse vehicle, together with a revised fire tender strategy and visibility review, were submitted on 3 September 2026. The fact that these documents have been revised so late in the application process demonstrates the importance of ensuring that the final configuration is fully tested and understood before determination.

The current NPPF requires transport considerations to be integral to design, including safe and inclusive movement, efficient access for goods, service and emergency vehicles, and suitable parking. It also states that transport impacts should be assessed using reasonable future scenarios and cumulative impacts. Development should be refused where it would have a severe adverse impact on the transport network or an unacceptable impact on highway safety.

May I ask the Highway and Planning Authorities to confirm that the final development provides safe and practical access for refuse vehicles, blue light and delivery vehicles, and moving/servicing vehicles without relying on residents' private road space or creating conflict with pedestrians and cyclists.

The September 2026 public-access record identifies a revised 'Extension to Cycle Lane' drawing. This should be considered alongside the revised visibility and swept-path information. The proposal must not solve one transport issue by creating another, particularly at a location where pedestrians, cyclists, vehicles, station users and residents already interact.

Any cycle and pedestrian arrangement should be continuous, safe, legible and accessible. The development should not create unnecessary conflict between vehicles entering and leaving the site and people walking or cycling along the Wellington Road/Station Road frontage.

The loss of established trees and vegetation is another significant concern. The proposal involves the loss of an established protected Poplar, which has reportedly been subject to a Tree Preservation Order since 1989. The loss of a mature tree cannot be equated simply with the planting of a replacement tree at a later date.

A mature tree provides immediate visual screening, shade, habitat, carbon storage, ecological value and character. A newly planted Hornbeam may be an appropriate replacement species, but it will take many years to provide equivalent canopy, screening and habitat value. I therefore support retaining as much existing vegetation as possible and ask the Council to require additional native tree planting wherever practicable.

The adopted MDD Policy CC03 requires development proposals to protect and retain existing trees, hedges and other landscape features, incorporate high-quality ideally native planting and landscaping, and avoid unacceptable loss, fragmentation or isolation of green infrastructure. Policy TB23 also requires development to provide opportunities for biodiversity features and ecological permeability.

The current NPPF similarly emphasises conservation of established trees and appropriate landscaping, and requires provision for the long-term maintenance of existing and newly planted trees. The submitted scheme should therefore include a robust landscape management and replacement plan, including watering, establishment, inspection and replacement of failed planting for at least five years.

I also ask the Council to examine whether the entrance area around the proposed Hornbeam could accommodate additional native tree planting so that a stronger wooded feature is created alongside Park Road. This would help restore screening, soften the development and strengthen biodiversity and green infrastructure.

The biodiversity assessment should be considered in the context of the existing mature vegetation, trees, gardens and ecological connections around the site. The relevant question is not simply whether a numerical biodiversity net gain can be calculated, but whether the development protects existing ecological value and creates a functioning, maintainable network of habitats.

The current NPPF states that development proposals should conserve and enhance existing natural features of visual, historic or nature conservation value, including established trees and hedgerows, minimise adverse biodiversity impacts and incorporate features supporting priority or threatened species. It also requires appropriate long-term management to reduce the risk of green infrastructure and nature features failing.

I have previously been unable to identify sufficiently clear information regarding lifts and associated plant within the application material. If lifts, mechanical plant, ventilation equipment, pumps or other building services are proposed, their location, operating characteristics and noise/vibration mitigation should be clearly established before permission is granted.

This is particularly important because plant located close to residential boundaries can create a persistent source of mechanical noise. The adopted MDD Policy CC06 requires development to demonstrate how noise impacts will be addressed and to protect existing and proposed noise-sensitive receptors.

Any approval should therefore be based on a clear acoustic assessment of fixed plant, lift equipment and other mechanical services, with suitable limits and maintenance requirements secured by condition where necessary.

The emerging site-specific allocation evidence for this location expressly identifies the need to demonstrate safe access and egress during surface-water flood events on adjacent roads for both residents and emergency vehicles. That is a significant site constraint and should not be treated as a secondary technical matter.

I ask the Council to ensure that the final drainage design demonstrates that surface water can be managed without increasing flood risk elsewhere and that safe access remains available during relevant rainfall events. The effect of increased hardstanding, parking and built footprint should be assessed together with the capacity and maintenance arrangements for sustainable drainage systems.

I remain concerned about the financial and delivery position of the scheme, particularly in light of the Open Spaces Provision Statement dated 14 August 2026. If the development depends on contributions or other measures to deliver landscaping, open space or mitigation, those obligations need to be properly secured and deliverable.

I appreciate that a neighbour's concern about a developer's finances is not, by itself, a planning reason to refuse an application. My concern is narrower: where infrastructure, landscaping or mitigation is necessary to make the development acceptable, the Council should ensure that it is properly secured through the appropriate planning mechanism and that the scheme is capable of being delivered as approved.

In particular, I ask that any permission should not leave essential mitigation dependent upon unspecified future funding or discretionary implementation. Where appropriate, planning obligations and conditions should secure the delivery, timing, maintenance and replacement of required infrastructure and landscaping.

The Council's emerging Local Plan Update evidence identifies this site as allocation 5WK046 and provides site-specific expectations including retention, where possible, of mature and protected trees; investigation of vehicle access from Park Road; appropriate landscaping contributing to the Wellington Road green route; safe access and egress during surface-water flood events; and heritage and archaeological assessment.

The emerging plan should not be treated as if it were already adopted policy. Nevertheless, where appropriate, the Council should consider the evidence and site-specific requirements contained within the emerging plan alongside the adopted development plan and other material considerations. The site's identification for housing does not amount to an automatic approval of any particular design or density.

For completeness, I expressly carry forward the concerns set out in my earlier objections. These include: inadequate parking; balconies and overlooking; excessive height and scale; potential loss of daylight and sunlight; uncertainty regarding lifts and noise; the treatment of Park Road within the parking assessment; loss of mature trees and vegetation; biodiversity and landscaping; and concerns regarding consultation information and communication.

The fact that the applicant has submitted revisions does not make previous objections irrelevant. The relevant question is whether the current version of the proposal has resolved them. Where it has not, the unresolved harm should remain part of the Council's assessment.

Please confirm the current status of application 251621 and the agreed determination date, including whether an extension of time or planning performance agreement exists.

Please identify all material revisions submitted since the original consultation and confirm whether further public consultation is required or considered appropriate.

Please confirm the precise current number and location of residential parking spaces, visitor spaces, accessible spaces and electric-vehicle charging provision.

Please confirm that the parking assessment does not rely on private Park Road spaces as generally available parking.

Please confirm that the final access arrangement has been tested for refuse, fire, ambulance, delivery and servicing vehicles without compromising pedestrian and cycle safety.

Please confirm how the scheme addresses the cumulative impact on Park Road, Wellington Road and Station Road.

Please confirm how overlooking from balconies and upper floors towards 1A, 4 and 8 Park Road has been assessed and mitigated.

Please confirm the final building height, ridge height and relationship of the building mass to the neighbouring houses.

Please confirm the proposed treatment of the protected Poplar and all other existing mature trees and vegetation.

Please confirm the proposed biodiversity mitigation and enhancement measures and their long-term management arrangements.

Please confirm the location and acoustic treatment of lifts, mechanical plant and other potentially noise-generating equipment.

Please confirm the surface-water strategy and safe access/egress arrangements during flood events.

Having considered the application, my previous objections, the current public-access information and the relevant planning policy context, I respectfully submit that planning permission should be refused.

The central concern is that the proposal attempts to accommodate too much development on a constrained site, resulting in a combination of excessive height and massing, insufficient on-site parking, pressure on surrounding streets, potential overlooking and loss of residential amenity, highway and servicing concerns, loss of mature vegetation and protected tree cover, and unresolved environmental and delivery matters.

The fact that the site is close to Wokingham station and the town centre is a positive locational characteristic, but it does not outweigh the requirement for a well-designed development that works safely and appropriately in its immediate context. The current NPPF expressly requires development to respond to context and to be well designed, and Wokingham's adopted policies require appropriate parking, protection of trees and landscaping, consideration of noise and protection of the natural environment.

I therefore ask the Planning Authority to refuse application 251621. If the Council does not refuse the application, I request that it does not determine the current scheme until the outstanding issues identified above have been fully addressed, the current plans and technical information have been clearly identified, and any material changes have been subject to appropriate public consultation.

Finally, I ask that this representation and my previous objections are retained together on the planning file and that the decision notice and officer report explicitly address the material planning matters raised.