

PLANNING REF : 252430
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Brambles
: Church Road, Swallowfield, Berkshire
: RG71TH
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Martyn Dadds
DATE SUBMITTED : 19/11/2025

COMMENTS:

1. Executive Summary

I object in the strongest possible terms to the proposed development of 79 dwellings on land south of Foxborough and east of Trowes Lane, Swallowfield.

The proposal is wholly inappropriate, non-compliant with planning policy, and would cause significant harm to the character, safety, infrastructure, and environmental resilience of Swallowfield - a small rural village that has already absorbed more than its fair share of development in recent years.

The application should be refused for reasons including, but not limited to:

- Non-compliance with the Local Plan and defined settlement boundaries
- Severe strain on already overstretched infrastructure (schools, GPs, utilities, transport)
- Major unresolved highways and road-safety risks
- Significant flood-risk concerns (including existing flooding worsening due to cumulative run-off)
- Lack of sustainable transport provision
- Inadequate utilities (water, foul drainage, surface water, electricity)

2. Conflict With Local Plan & Settlement Boundaries

2.1 Outside the Village Development Limit

The proposed site lies outside the defined village boundary for Swallowfield and is not allocated for development in the existing or emerging Local Plan.

This contravenes core spatial policies designed to:

- Protect rural character
- Direct development to sustainable, infrastructure-supported locations
- Prevent piecemeal urbanisation of countryside gaps

2.2 Unsustainable Expansion

Swallowfield has already experienced a 43% increase in dwellings in recent years.

Adding a further 79 homes represents unsustainable overdevelopment without any corresponding uplift in:

- Healthcare
- School capacity
- Transport links
- Road safety
- Utilities
- Flood-defence infrastructure

This scale and pace of growth is inappropriate for a rural village.

3. Impact on Community Infrastructure & Services

3.1 Healthcare

Local GP surgeries are already oversubscribed.

The development provides no realistic mitigation for increased

demand.

3.2 Education

Swallowfield falls outside the catchment of any primary school. This will force unsustainable car-based travel, worsening congestion, emissions, and inequality of provision.

3.3 Public Transportation

Swallowfield has:

- No public transport connection to Wokingham district centre

- Only a poor, infrequent, unreliable service to Reading

The NPPF requires development to be located where sustainable transport options exist. This proposal fails that test.

3.4 Walking & Cycling

Routes out of the village are:

- Narrow
- Unlit
- Without pavements
- Unsafe for pedestrians
- Only suitable for experienced cyclists

This discourages sustainable travel modes and increases dependency on the private car.

4. Highways & Road Safety (Serious Concerns)

4.1 Trowes Lane Safety Failure (NPPF Para 116)

Trowes Lane (between The Street and the proposed site):

- Fails to meet national highway safety standards
- Is too narrow for two-way traffic
- Has no footways
- Poses significant risk to pedestrians, cyclists, and horse riders
- Has limited visibility splays

- Is already dangerous during peak hours

The development would materially worsen these risks.

The NPPF is clear that proposals should be refused where highway risks are unacceptable. That threshold is met here.

5. Flood Risk & Drainage (Major Objection)

5.1 Flood Zone Constraint

Parts of the site lie within Flood Zone 2.

This introduces medium flood risk incompatible with new housing unless a clear, robust mitigation strategy is offered. None exists.

5.2 Existing Local Flooding

The field already:

- Regularly floods across Part Lane
- Becomes impassable in heavy rainfall
- Acts as a natural flood buffer which development will remove

5.3 Cumulative Impact of Other Developments

Run-off will further increase due to the existing:

- Cove development

- Croudace development

Together these add 133 new dwellings, further stressing the drainage system.

5.4 Thames Water Red Classification

Thames Water has categorised the nearby approved site as Red, meaning:

- No adequate water supply

- No capacity for surface water drainage

- No foul water disposal capacity
- No funds allocated before 2030 to upgrade infrastructure in Swallowfield

If Thames Water cannot support an adjacent site, it cannot support this one.

This alone is a compelling reason for refusal.

6. Utilities & Essential Services

6.1 Water & Sewer Capacity

Thames Water's assessments show severe deficits.

The proposal does not and cannot show:

- Sufficient potable water supply
- Capacity in foul drainage
- Sustainable surface water management

6.2 Electricity

There is no credible demonstration that the electrical supply grid can support the development.

Until proven otherwise, the application remains non-compliant with utility capacity requirements.

7. Character, Identity & Rural Integrity

Swallowfield is a village not an extension of Reading or Wokingham. This development:

- Substantially urbanises a rural setting
- Fails to respect local scale, spacing, or character
- Erodes green field and open countryside
- Contributes to settlement coalescence

This runs contrary to both NPPF guidance and local strategic planning objectives.

8. Summary & Conclusion

The proposed development represents a fundamentally unsustainable, unsafe, and non-compliant expansion of a rural village already under significant development and infrastructure pressure.

On the grounds of:

- Policy conflict
- Infrastructure deficits
- Highways dangers
- Flood risk
- Utility insufficiency
- Lack of sustainable transport options
- Environmental and community harm

this application should be refused in full.