

28 APR 2026

Peter Fraatz,


27/04/2026

Objections to Planning Application 260577: Caravan Site, Land South of Valois Finchampstead RG40 3NR

I object to this planning application and respectfully request that the Council refuses this application.

My objection is made with reference to the development plan and material considerations, including the policies of the Wokingham Borough Local Plan (Core Strategy and Managing Development Delivery DPD).

More suitable location for Gypsy/Traveller pitches should be considered. The emerging Local Plan update contains provisions for additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches, notably at High Barn Farm, Barkham, within a few miles of this location.

The proposed planning application does not meet Sustainability requirements. It will have a detrimental impact on Highways, the Countryside, is in a poor location and conflicts with local planning policies.

The proposal fails to meet the requirements set out in the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan (FNDP) IRS1, IRS2 and IRS3.

Development of this site would have an urbanising effect on the countryside and encourage urban creep.

The site lies within designated countryside and is outside the settlement boundary, contrary to FNDP Policy AHD1, with no allocation for development in the 2010 Wokingham Local Plan, the 2024 draft Local Plan nor the FNDP.

The proposal contravenes the Managing Development Delivery Development Plan – Local Plan 2012 which states that planning permissions for a Gypsy/traveller site may be granted where it can be demonstrated that it avoids impacting on the separate identity of settlements.

I have lived at the above address for 44 years and during that time Range Road and surrounding countryside has not seen any development and maintained a rural green gap. Range Road is sparsely populated with only 5 dwellings

Inaccuracies in Planning Application 260577

The site has never, in the last 44 years I have lived here, been a garden. A Donkey grazed on the field for many years.

There has never been any access to the site from Range Road.

There has never been any previous development on the site.

The applicant states that there is no delivery development by WBC for gypsies and travellers – this is incorrect.

The applicant said nobody objected when the land was purchased. Obviously, nobody objected because nobody knew the applicant's intention then was to live on the site.

The proposed development is not compliant with the Local Plan.

The applicant says the development would have no adverse effect on the area's landscape – again, false. Caravans are not dwelling houses and are totally out of character with long established dwellings on Range Road.

The applicant states that access from Range Road onto Nine Mile Ride is fine. This is FALSE, it is potentially hazardous. A previous planning application (061483) in 2006 along RR was refused due to highway safety.

Highway Safety (CP3 / MDD DPD Policies)

Access to the application site is via an unpaved Byway with substandard road junctions and is not designed to accommodate the size or frequency of vehicles associated with caravans and additional traffic.

Policy CP3 requires development to provide safe and suitable access for users. The increased use of this road by large vehicles raises clear concerns about highway safety, congestion, and potential damage to the road infrastructure.

Range Road is a narrow single-track Byway (BOAT) which is completely unsuitable for large vehicles such as caravans. Allowing this development would create a risk to road safety (Section 66(1) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 which defines a byway open to all traffic as: "a highway over which the public have a right of way for vehicular traffic, but which is used by the public mainly for the purpose for which footpaths and bridleways are so used"). Additional traffic and use of caravans is contrary to the accepted use of this Byway.

The proposal will create highway safety risks due to increased vehicle movements associated with residential occupation and the towing of caravans. Planning application 061483 (2006) was rejected on grounds of highway safety.

Since 2006 Traffic volumes on both Nine Mile Ride and Sandhurst Road (50MPH) have increased considerably in the last 20 years.

The proposed development would result in the increased use of substandard road junctions of Range Road with B3430 Nine Mile Ride and A321 Sandhurst Road, which would adversely affect road safety **and** the flow of traffic. As such it is contrary to policies CP3 and CP6.

The proposed planning application would generate additional traffic on Range Road, and this would result in an increased risk of accidents to users of the Byway.

Poor visibility when accessing/exiting Range Road from NMR & Sandhurst Road increasing risk of accidents. The sight lines for accessing and exiting Range Road are very poor. It is incredibly difficult to see what's coming from the right in NMR when exiting Range Road. Equally, you can't see what is coming up Range Road until you turn onto it from NMR, resulting in cars having to reverse onto NMR as there are no passing places on Range Road into which to reverse. This is dangerous for pedestrians and motorists.

Additionally, there are no safe places for pedestrians, bikes or horse riders to get away from vehicular traffic for the following reasons:

When attempting to get a wide static caravan onto the site, Gypsies/Travellers illegally widened Range Road, causing huge devastation to the verges. Roots of mature trees have been left exposed, felled trees, soil and vegetation have been piled high.



Picture 1 – Range Road prior to devastation



Pictures 2 - showing some of the devastation

Development (Core Strategy CP3 / CP11)

The site lies within the countryside, where development is strictly controlled. Policies such as CP3 (General Principles for Development) and CP11 (Distribution of Development) seek to protect the intrinsic character and beauty of rural areas. The stationing of caravans for residential use represents an urbanising and intrusive form of development that is fundamentally at odds with the rural character of the area. It fails to respect the landscape and cannot be considered sustainable in this location. Access to the site is via a narrow Byway that is not designed to accommodate the size or frequency of vehicles associated with caravans and residential occupation. Policy CP3 requires development to provide safe and suitable access for all users. The increased use of this road by large vehicles raises clear concerns about highway safety, congestion, and potential damage to the road infrastructure.

Harm to Ecology and Biodiversity (CP7)

Over the last 44 years I have observed an abundance of wildlife, e.g. Badgers, Deer, Foxes, Bats and a huge variety of birds.

Policy CP7 seeks to conserve and enhance biodiversity across the borough.

Development of this site undermines the objectives of policies CP3 and CP7, which seek to protect and enhance the natural environment.

Development and use of the site will further increase pressure on local habitats through noise, activity, and potential pollution. Without proper ecological assessment and mitigation, the proposal is likely to result in unacceptable harm to biodiversity.

The loss of this countryside would have a notably detrimental effect on wildlife and birds.

Sustainability – Access to Services and Facilities

The proposed site is unsustainable. It is accessed via a Byway with no paved surface. There are no local services (shop, schools, healthcare, etc) within walking distance or accessible by public transport. Future occupants would therefore rely heavily on private cars, adding traffic to busy highways. This conflicts with planning policies aiming for sustainable development.

Lack of Infrastructure and Unsustainable Development (CP1 / CP3)

No evidence that the site is served by appropriate utilities or infrastructure, including water supply, sewage disposal, and waste management. Policy CP1 promotes sustainable development, and CP3 requires adequate infrastructure provision. The absence of such services raises concerns about environmental pollution and public health, making the development unsuitable in this location.

Lack of Utilities

The long-established dwellings in Range Road have water pipes and electricity cables serving them with permission for the installation thereof granted at the time of the initial development of Range Road. The owner of Range Road is now unknown, and it is therefore not possible for utility companies to give lawful consent to install further utilities.

Impact on Residential Amenity (CP3)

The proposal will have a detrimental impact on the amenity of nearby residents due to increased traffic, noise, visual intrusion, and general disturbance. This conflicts with CP3, which requires development to be appropriate, without detrimental impacts on the amenities of adjoining residents.

A Gypsy/Traveller site would add electric light and vehicle movements to an area where there are currently none and will change the rural wooded character of the area. Range Road is a key green gap between the historic rides in the forest such as Nine Mile Ride and Sandhurst Road – development of this site would erode this green gap (as defined in the Finchampstead Neighbourhood development plan) and would completely change the character of the area.

The proposed unauthorised site, currently occupied, used long LED strips on the outside of mobile homes and an upward facing floodlight attached to the fence on the roadside, which have been left on all night, every night until 14 April 26 when SSN disconnected an illegally obtained Electricity connection.

This is already having a huge effect on the character and appearance of the area – the creeping growth of urbanization with this application (and potentially others to follow) will further erode that character and have a near-irreversible impact on wildlife and Neighbours.

Scale and Dominance in a Rural Setting

It is usual for Gypsy plots to be given permission to expand once initial planning permission is granted (A typical example of Gypsy pitch expansion, once planning permission is obtained, involves intensifying an existing site by subdividing plots or developing unused adjacent land to increase the number of pitches and utility buildings. Examples include expanding a two-pitch site to five or increasing an existing four-pitch site by adding four more, often requiring site reconfiguration).

This site could accommodate many more caravans and cars than in the proposal.

The addition of more caravans would fall within permitted use if the Application were granted and no further planning consent would be necessary. The number of caravans would soon outnumber the existing houses on Range Road, further changing the character of current local inhabitants and increasing the intensity of unsuitable traffic along Range Road.

National Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) states that such development should not dominate the nearest settled community. Give the existing high

concentration of Gypsy sites in the Finchampstead area, the further expansion would result in an over-concentration that is out of scale with the immediate rural environment.

17% of Gypsy/Traveller population in the Wokingham Borough are in Finchampstead, while Finchampstead only accounts for 10.5% of the land mass of the Borough. Any further Gypsy/Traveller pitches in Finchampstead would be disproportionate to the scale of existing settlements in Finchampstead.

There are other sites in the Borough which are far more suitable for Gypsy/Traveller developments. The emerging Local Plan update contains provisions for additional Gypsy/Traveller pitches, notably at High Barn Farm, Barkham,

Previous Decisions Consistent with Declining this Application:

- Recent appeal decisions at land east of Warren Lodge, Warren Lane ((Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/W/25/3364902 and (APP/X0360/W/17/3173546), confirmed the refusal of Gypsy and Traveller developments in similar rural circumstances. The Planning Inspectorate accepted the personal circumstances of the applicant but concluded that the harm to the character of the area and other impacts outweighed these considerations. This reflects a clear and established policy position. The current proposal would conflict with this established pattern of decision-making and should therefore be refused.

- Prior to the above, there have been specific refusals for development known as ("The Fords"). Planning application 061483, validated on the 22nd of August 2006, for the "proposed change of use of land to equestrian and erection of stables, hardstanding, new access, fencing and gates" was declined.

Reasons included that "... the proposed development would result in the increased use of the substandard road junction with B3430 Nine Mile Ride, which would adversely affect road safety and the flow of traffic" and that "... the proposal would generate additional traffic on Range Road which is substandard in respect of width and construction and this would result in increased risk of accidents to road users".

Neither of these reasons have changed. If anything, increased traffic on Nine Mile Ride with new developments in Arborfield twenty years later will have made these reasons considerably more valid in terms of access and safety.

Conclusion

For the reasons outlined above, the proposal conflicts with multiple policies of the Wokingham Borough development plan and would result in significant harm to the countryside and environment, character and appearance of the landscape

The proposed development represents inappropriate unplanned development outside of and unconnected to any settlement boundary.

Range Road is situated within a "Green Wedge" – a strategic gap re-assigned by Finchampstead Parish Council to separate Finchampstead settlements and prevent urban merging.

The area is part of the "Finchampstead Forested and Settled Sands" which is officially recognised as a **Valued Landscape** by WBC.

For the reasons outlined above, the proposed development represents an inappropriate form of development in the location and risks creating significant impacts on highway safety, landscape character and local amenities.

Yours faithfully,

Peter Fraatz