

PLANNING REF : 242043
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 170 Finchampstead Rd
: Wokingham
: RG40 3EY
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Clive Chafer
DATE SUBMITTED : 06/09/2024

COMMENTS:

While I understand the owner's desire to potentially make a great deal of money by developing this plot, and the need for more housing in this area, this development is a bad idea. The main reason is simple: access to Finchampstead Rd at this location will be dangerous and will exacerbate an already extremely problematic traffic issue. Building three houses means allowing for up to 9 vehicles that will need to exit the property onto Finchampstead Rd. The access point will be exactly where Molly Millars Lane joins the A321, and where a major new roundabout is to be built to try and address the massive congestion issues that already exist on this stretch of road. When the Southern Distributor Rd is opened, there will be hundreds, even thousands more vehicles coming onto Finchampstead Rd in this vicinity, particularly in the morning and evening rush hours when the traffic is already backed up in each direction for half a mile and more. Adding to this chaos is an absurd suggestion. The A321 is already effectively sold out at peak times. It cannot be widened, and yet Wokingham is (understandably) calling for more people to use bicycles, etc. This cannot be achieved safely on Finchampstead Rd. because a bike lane cannot be added. WBC needs to put an embargo on all development along the A321 corridor until or unless it can come up with a reasonable plan to divert traffic away from this oversold two-lane road.

Additionally, it is impossible to envision how cars will be able to exit this development safely right on the new roundabout. WBC has already accepted that the zebra crossing at this location cannot safely remain there: it has to be moved further down Finchampstead Rd. The danger of accidents as vehicles try to emerge from this property is extremely high. I have already witnessed several near-misses and one major accident in this location within the last 3 months.

Additionally, the existing property is not in need of demolition. It is a well-built 4-bedroom house in a prime location with a very nsive garden. It clearly needs some improvements to bring it up to contemporary standards, but it would be a highly desirable property for someone who has the means to remodel it. The garden is highly attractive and one of the last remaining plots of this size in this neighbourhood. It would be perfect for a keen gardener and it would be a great shame to lose it to further development.

I really think WBC needs to think hard about the appropriateness of developing this plot, particularly in the way proposed. Wokingham needs affordable housing, which this clearly will not be. And the liabilities presented by its location and access make it entirely unacceptable.