

PLANNING REF : 261597
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 41
: Commons Road, Wokingham, Berkshire
: RG41 1JJ
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Karthikeya Harish Attili
DATE SUBMITTED : 03/08/2026

COMMENTS:

I OBJECT to this application to vary condition 2 of planning consent 251421.

The application description states that the variation is intended to "update the plans". However, any approval should be based on a clear and transparent assessment of exactly how the revised plans differ from those previously approved and whether those changes create additional impacts on highway safety, protected trees, residential amenity, drainage, landscaping or biodiversity.

My principal concerns are as follows:

1. Impact on mature and potentially protected trees

The proposed access from Old Forest Road appears to pass through a narrow, tree-lined lane. I am concerned that the revised plans may require the removal of mature oak trees or result in damage to their roots and canopies through road construction, widening, excavation, service installation and repeated construction traffic.

Mature and veteran trees cannot be adequately replaced by normal compensatory planting. Before approving updated plans, the Council should require clear confirmation of:

which trees would be removed or affected;
whether any affected trees are subject to Tree Preservation Orders or qualify as veteran trees;
the proposed root protection areas;
the location of underground services and drainage in relation to tree roots;
any changes from the previously approved arboricultural proposals;
and
how trees would be protected throughout construction.

The application should not be approved unless the Council's tree and ecology officers are satisfied that the revised plans avoid unacceptable and irreversible harm.

2. Safety and capacity of the proposed access

The proposed access onto Old Forest Road appears narrow and already serves existing properties. I remain concerned about whether it can safely accommodate traffic associated with 53 dwellings, together with delivery vehicles, refuse vehicles, visitors, cyclists, pedestrians and emergency services.

The Council should closely examine whether the updated plans alter:

the width or alignment of the access;

visibility at its junction with Old Forest Road;
provision for pedestrians and cyclists;
vehicle passing arrangements;
emergency and refuse vehicle access;
the removal of trees or hedgerows to obtain visibility; and
the safety of existing residents using the lane.

An access capable of carrying cars does not necessarily provide a safe route for pedestrians, including children, older people and those with limited mobility. The revised plans should provide properly designed, continuous and safe pedestrian access, rather than requiring pedestrians and vehicles to share an inadequate lane.

3. Additional pressure on Old Forest Road

Old Forest Road and surrounding routes already experience traffic and pedestrian activity, particularly around school arrival and collection periods. Introducing the movements associated with a 53-home development through a constrained access could increase the risk of conflict between vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists.

The Council should establish whether the previously accepted transport assessment remains valid for the revised plans. If the access design, parking provision, housing layout or expected vehicle movements have materially changed, an updated highway safety assessment should be required.

The availability of access from or towards the Northern Distributor Road should also be properly considered. If a safer and more suitable access option exists, the applicant should explain clearly why all development traffic is proposed to use the Old Forest Road route.

4. Construction traffic

The application should demonstrate how construction vehicles would safely enter, leave and turn within the site without damaging retained trees, obstructing existing residents or creating an unacceptable risk on Old Forest Road.

A detailed Construction Environmental Management Plan should be secured before works proceed. It should cover:

construction vehicle routes;
permitted delivery hours;
wheel washing and road cleaning;
dust and noise controls;
contractor parking;
protection of trees and hedgerows;

pedestrian safety; and
arrangements preventing construction vehicles from waiting on Old Forest Road.

5. Drainage, landscaping and biodiversity

Changes to the layout, roads, parking areas or building footprints could alter surface-water drainage and reduce the space available for landscaping and biodiversity mitigation. The Council should confirm that the updated plans do not:

- increase impermeable surfacing;
- reduce drainage capacity;
- increase flood risk on or beyond the site;
- reduce landscape buffers;
- encroach into tree root protection areas;
- weaken ecological mitigation; or
- reduce the amount or quality of usable open space.

Any ecological or biodiversity assessment should reflect the revised plans rather than relying on information prepared for an earlier layout.

6. Lack of readily understandable comparison information

A variation described simply as an application to "update the plans" does not enable residents to understand the significance of the amendments unless the applicant provides a comprehensive schedule comparing every approved drawing with its proposed replacement.

The Council should require a clear schedule identifying:

- every drawing being replaced;
- the nature and reason for each change;
- alterations to access, roads and parking;

- changes to dwelling positions, heights and designs;
- changes affecting trees, hedgerows and landscaping;
- changes to drainage and open space; and
- any consequences for previously approved mitigation measures.

Without this information, it is difficult for the public and decision-makers to assess the cumulative impact of the proposed revisions.

Conclusion

For these reasons, I ask the Council to refuse the variation unless it is demonstrated, through up-to-date and independently reviewed evidence, that the revised plans would not cause additional harm to highway safety, protected trees, biodiversity, drainage, landscape character or neighbouring amenity.

At minimum, no decision should be made until the applicant has supplied a complete schedule of changes, updated arboricultural and highway information, confirmation of safe pedestrian and emergency access, and evidence that all drainage and ecological mitigation remains deliverable under the revised plans.