

PLANNING REF : 251221
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 6 Woodrow Drive
: Wokingham, Berkshire
: RG40 1RS
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Edward Tilbury
DATE SUBMITTED : 25/06/2025

COMMENTS:

Re: Objection to Planning Application No. 251221 - Certificate of Existing Lawful Development for Car Repair Business
Location: Land to the Rear of 302 and 304 London Road, Wokingham, RG40 1RD

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to object to the above application for a Certificate of Lawful Existing Use for a car repair business on the land to the rear of 302 and 304 London Road.

This is the third application of its kind, following:

- Application 171226 (2017) - Refused
- Application 182277 (2018/2019) - Refused

I will not reiterate the full reasons behind those refusals, as the Planning Authority already holds detailed case officer reports. However, the repeated nature of these applications raises serious concerns.

Questionable Evidence

Letters of support and staged photographs are easy to produce and, in themselves, are not reliable indicators of continuous commercial use. Without objective documentation such as company accounts, business

rates, or tax records it is difficult to substantiate any claim of a 10-year lawful business operation.

If the applicant has genuinely operated a legitimate business during this period, they should be able to provide verifiable records, including:

- Registered company or sole trader details
- Evidence of commercial business rates paid
- Annual tax returns
- Copies of business accounts and supporting invoices
- Public/business liability insurance certificates
- Waste disposal licences (for tyres, oil, batteries, etc.) - VAT registration (if applicable)

If such documentation is not submitted, the claim of continuous lawful use should be considered unproven. I also note that in 2019, the planning department requested further evidence, none of which was forthcoming.

Several aerial photographs included in the current application show large vehicles on the site which are clearly unrelated to car repair. Large commercial vehicles are regularly parked at the rear of my

property, often blocking access to the area that the applicant now claims has been in continuous use for over a decade.

The applicant also claims uninterrupted use of the site during the COVID-19 lockdowns. I refute this. During that period, my son and daughter-in-law regularly walked past the property and observed the

front garden completely locked, with children playing on slides and other equipment effectively preventing any access to the rear of the property. Continued business use during lockdown would also have breached government-imposed restrictions.

Additionally, each year the site is used exclusively for the storage and sale of Christmas trees for several weeks. While this is not the focus of this particular application, it further demonstrates that the site has not been in continuous use for car repairs. Following the Christmas season, we are often subjected to the burning of leftover trees in the back garden, which is both unpleasant and inappropriate in a residential setting.

Land Division

It is important to note that the land behind 302, 304, and 306 London Road has historically been treated as one parcel. This new application conveniently focuses only on part of the land, raising questions about whether this is an attempt to circumvent earlier refusals.

I also question the applicant's legal standing to submit this application. I believe that Paul Stenning is no longer the legal owner of 304 London Road, as the property was transferred to a family member in 2020, reportedly valued at 300,000. If he is no longer the legal owner, he may not have the right to submit this planning application.

There is only one access point to the land at the rear of 304 London Road, via a narrow entrance beside the main house. Any business use of the site would require the use of this entrance and potentially other parts of the property, affecting the entire parcel.

History of Enforcement and Community Impact

Enforcement action was taken in 2011 (Ref: RFS 2011/00385), clearly indicating that no lawful business use existed at that time. Furthermore, had a car repair business been operating continuously for the past 10 years, local residents myself included would certainly have been aware of it due to the noise, fumes, and disruption such businesses typically generate.

Between 2017 and 2019, the area experienced loud engine noise, metal grinding, and strong fumes activities that ceased only after the previous applications were refused. Since 2019, the area has been quiet, which strongly suggests that no lawful business use has taken place during this time. This period of peace is evidence enough that business operations did not continue.

If the applicant was refused permission to carry out car repairs in 2019 (Application 182277) and has since done so, then they are in breach of that decision.

Unsuitability for a Residential Area

This site is located within a residential area. Car repair activities with associated noise, pollution, and disruption are entirely itable in such an environment. These operations belong on designated industrial estates, not in residential back gardens, particularly in a neighbourhood where many residents are retired and spend much of their time at home.

Conclusion

For the reasons outlined above, I urge the Council to reject this application, as it did in 2017 and 2019. The evidence provided does not prove continuous lawful use, and the impact on local residents

would be wholly unacceptable.

Please allow us to continue enjoying the peace and quiet of our homes during our retirement years.