

PLANNING REF : 251310
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Merryfields
: Church Road, Farley Hill, Berkshire
: RG7 1TU
SUBMITTED BY : Mrs Sandra Woodley
DATE SUBMITTED : 25/06/2025

COMMENTS:

I wish to object very strongly against this development of 650 homes plus a retirement village and care home as the area is already becoming over developed. Farley Hill is a rural hamlet and is proposed development would undermine its rural identity, alter its character and overwhelm its infrastructure. There would be increased traffic, noise and the light pollution would permanently damage the tranquillity and rural value of the area. There are no safe walking or cycle links which would increase the dependency on cars, a fact acknowledged in similar past refusals

This proposal also contravenes the local planning policies protecting agricultural land and rural settlement boundaries. The proposal

itself also contains incorrect information as the site address is listed as Arborfield when it is actually located in the civil Parish of Swallowfield and not Finchampstead

The environmental impact of this development on Farley Hill would be irreparable as it is a sensitive environmental area and designated an Area of Special Character locate in a rural landscape and rural settlement boundaries

The scale of this proposed scale poses a threat to wildlife and birds directly contradicting biodiversity goals. The threat to the Birds of Prey and Biodiversity is significant as the proposed site includes Ancient woodlands at Westwood Copse and Claypits Wood, hedgerows and open fields all of which are essential to sustaining the local raptor and owl population.

There has been a significant return of Red Kites (a great conservation achievement in the UK) and Farley Hill provides essential nesting and foraging grounds supported by protected woodlands and open

countryside. Further the local food chain would for these birds of prey would be disrupted and will have ongoing ecological effects

We are lucky in Farley Hill to offer a haven to diverse wildlife including great spotted woodpeckers nuthatch, water voles and the rare red squirrel. We have already lost much of our farmland to development and should this proposal be accepted it would devastate the last remaining contiguous habitat. Ancient woodlands and hedgerows which are listed as Habitats of Principal Importance would be impacted despite proposed retention. The loss of fields and meadows would reduce the foraging ground for animals and birds. It is noted that the developer has had ecological surveys carried out which suggest that further assessments should be done on the breeding of birds and other species - suggesting the sensitivity of the site

The proposal includes leisure and community facilities less than a mile from an existing leisure centre and a retirement village and carehome. There are already retirement flats and a care home in Jouldings Lane Farley Hill.

There is a clear precedent already set for refusal as this has been done recently in Arborfield (May 20th 2025) because it was deemed that the development site was a greenfield in open countryside and the character and scale we out of keeping. The refusal also cited

unsustainable car reliance and flood risks due to close river proximity - the same applies to Blackstock Farm
In conclusion only 899 houses were needed and planned up to 2036, yet 3500 are already in progress causing a huge environmental impact on the area already
97% of developments have already happened in to the South of the borough in Arborfield, Shinfield and Barkham adding extreme stress to the landscape around this proposal
There will be increased light, noise and emission pollution with the proposed destruction of ancient woodlands, hedgerows veteran trees and bio diversity of flora as well as the threat to all wildlife