

PLANNING REF : 252498
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Carters Hill House
: Julkes Lane, Arborfield, Berks
: RG2 9JJ
SUBMITTED BY : Miss Adele Graham
DATE SUBMITTED : 09/01/2026

COMMENTS:

1. The proposed development conflicts with the Arborfield & Barkham Neighborhood Plan, approved by WBC. It does not respect the retention of the open green spaces and, specifically, does not protect the valued natural and heritage asset of Carters Hill. The creation of the proposed "garden village" will in effect join Carters Hill into a suburban area of Reading, spanning from Sindlesham through to Arborfield and Shinfield. Such urbanisation is contrary to one of the main threads of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and does not respect the individual character of the separate settlements and, moreover, is not what the residents in these communities want. These are rural communities and the people who live there have chosen to live in a rural environment.

2. Transport is not sustainable. The site is rural and as such does not have 'strong transport links'. There are no easily accessible rail links placing a reliance on car travel. The nearest station (Winnersh) is at least 2 miles away and has no car park. It is likely that each household will have an average of 2 cars so a massive increase in road congestion is inevitable in an area that is already hugely congested in peak hours. Much is made of cycle paths offering options to cycle but given even current traffic levels most people are reluctant to cycle as it is simply too dangerous. Infrastructure to create more employment opportunities is to be welcomed but this has no significant bearing on where people who take up such employment opportunities will decide to live. The reality is that most people will not work locally. They will work wherever they choose and will be likely to drive to get there.

3. Loss of amenity. The extensive series of paths and byways linking Carters Hill with the Coombes, Hall Farm, Church Lane and the surrounding villages of Arborfield, Shinfield and Sindlesham are widely used by walkers, horse riders and cyclists. The proposed EcoValley/ SANG area regularly floods which would make any community amenity unusable for part of the year. Given that flooding is likely to get worse in future due to climate change (plus the increased run off from the proposed new development) how much community amenity will such a river corridor actually provide? The new SANGs at Shinfield are frequently underwater and hence unusable. Any engineered solution would fundamentally conflict with maintaining the river ecosystems, the flood plain and biodiversity. There appears to be no provision for equestrians in the proposals. Lots of paths, cycleways but no designated bridleways. Where are horse riders expected to go?

4. Sewage provision. It is recognized that there is inadequate sewer capacity within the immediate vicinity and known performance issues at the Arborfield Sewage Treatment Works. Given the current state of Thames Water how will adequate provision be guaranteed? Or will Thames Water just dump sewage into Barkham Brook due to capacity

issues?

5. The Heritage Assessment has not adequately assessed the impact on Carters Hill House, a Grade II listed property and according to the heritage report 'a heritage asset of high (national) significance'. The assessment states the property was built in the late eighteenth century. This is incorrect. The facade was added in the 1790s - the house itself dates to the Tudor period. The report asserts that 'The Site forms much of the intermediate and wider setting, though given the scale of the Site only the relatively near surrounds afford any meaningful views of the heritage asset and much of the Site shares no intervisibility with the heritage asset' and concludes 'The proposed development will have no physical impact on Carter's Hill House and Oak Cottage. The proposals in the area of the Site closest to these assets is green open space. Therefore, the proposed development will have no impact on the significance of these assets'. This is nonsense. Carters Hill House is the highest point in the area & is clearly visible over a wide area. Views from the house are extensive. The heritage report implies the cessation of an agricultural role for Carters Hill House somehow lessens its heritage significance. Again this is nonsense. The house was a domestic property well before it was Grade II listed in 1967 - it has not been in agricultural use for decades.

I question how the heritage assessment can make any valid comment regarding the setting of Carters Hill House when the authors of the report have neither visited the property nor had any discussion or contact with the owners (i.e. myself and my partner).

The current proposals would have an unacceptable adverse impact on the setting of Carters Hill House. Paragraph 189 of the NPPF states in relation to heritage assets:- "These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations. Further note under paragraph 200, that any harm to a designated heritage asset (which includes from development within its setting) requires clear and convincing justification and that substantial harm to Grade II listed buildings should be "exceptional".

WBC, in its determination of a proposed wind farm at Rushy Mead, Shinfield (application number F/2010/2266, date 2011), refused permission because "the proposed development would have an unacceptable substantial and significant effect upon the landscape character of the site and surrounding area which is highly valued locally for remoteness and rural characteristics". Specifically, the development would result in "significant harm to Carters Hill House". It appears that WBC is now choosing to ignore this principle in favour of a large scale development. I do not think heritage aspects have been adequately assessed within these proposals.

6. In terms of landscape views from Carters Hill House and views of Carters Hill House within the landscape, the development would cause a dominant or complete change to the composition of the view, and the appreciation of landscape character, contrasting in terms of form, scale and mass, height, colour and/or texture. Views of the

scheme are unlikely to be screened to any extent.

7. There is potential for flooding due to the scale of the development proposed. Climate change will inevitably make flooding worse than at present and much of this site is flood plain. Construction will make the flooding worse when previously absorbent green fields are built on. There will be potential impact from increased surface run off, which is significant when a number of the properties or their access points are located close to Barkham Brook at Carters Hill. Bearwood Lakes Category A Dam sits above the site on the opposite side of the Mole Road.