

PLANNING REF : 250517
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Notley
: Croft Road, Spencers Wood, Reading, Berkshire
: RG7 1DR
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Adam Lowe
DATE SUBMITTED : 31/03/2025

COMMENTS:

Objection to Planning Application Number: 250517

Dear [Planning Committee/Planning Officer],

I am writing to formally object to the planning application for the proposed development of 450 homes in the area near Spencers Wood. While the intention of this development may be to meet housing needs, there are several essential and necessary concerns that must be addressed.

1. Proximity to AWE and Evacuation Plan

The site in question lies within the Evacuation Zone of AWE (Atomic Weapons Establishment), an area where an emergency evacuation plan is regularly reviewed by Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) in the event of a fire or radiation leak from the facility. It is critical that any development in this area accounts for the potential risks posed by the proximity to AWE. At present, evacuation routes from the site head towards AWE rather than away from it, a dangerous situation that

could exacerbate the crisis in the event of an emergency. This is a risk that is essential to address prior to any development taking place.

2. Insufficient and Unsafe Evacuation Routes

The evacuation routes currently proposed are inadequate, particularly in light of the high traffic volumes during peak hours. At specific times of day, such as 7:30 AM to 9:00 AM and 4:30 PM to 6:00 PM, the area experiences significant congestion. It can take upwards of 20 minutes to travel just 2 miles. This makes the evacuation of the site in an emergency situation highly problematic. Given the essential need for safe evacuation, this issue must be addressed and resolved before any homes are built.

3. Suitability of Land for Development

The land designated for this development is currently graded as suitable for "moderate development" only. The construction of 450 homes far exceeds what is considered moderate, and such a scale of development would place undue strain on local infrastructure, services, and the environment. This must be reconsidered before development proceeds.

4. Abutting Development's Unsold Capacity

The nearby development is still ongoing and has a significant amount of unsold capacity. The introduction of another 450 homes in close proximity will put further pressure on an already saturated market, raising concerns about the long-term viability of such a development and the strain it will place on the area.

5. Road Safety and Access Points

The proposed access points for the development will introduce

significant road safety issues, particularly along Basingstoke Road. These access points will likely result in "rat runs" using Kingsbridge Lane, Back Lane, and Lambs Lane, which will further exacerbate congestion and safety concerns. Specifically, the Lambs Lane School has existing parking and road crossing safety issues, which will be worsened by the influx of traffic.

Furthermore, Lambs Lane, Kingsbridge Lane, and Whitehouse Lane are predominantly single-track roads without suitable provision for vehicles to safely pass each other, let alone accommodate increased traffic volumes. These roads also lack footpaths and proper lighting, making them unsafe for pedestrians, particularly children and the elderly.

The Beech Hill Road junction with Lambs Lane and Whitehouse Lane is already a known accident black spot, with numerous severe accidents having occurred in recent years. It is absolutely necessary that these safety concerns are addressed before construction begins.

6. Inaccurate Transport Statement

The transport statement included in the planning application is factually incorrect in its assessment of the number of vehicles the development would generate. The majority of homes in this area have at least two cars per household, with many households possessing three or more vehicles. This will create a far greater increase in traffic than the proposal suggests, and it is essential that the transport infrastructure is revised and properly planned before proceeding with construction.

7. Education Provision

The current lack of sufficient educational facilities in the catchment area for children in Swallowfield must also be addressed before additional homes are built. The Lambs Lane school does not have the capacity to accommodate the increased number of pupils that would result from this development. It is essential that the construction of additional educational facilities is planned and implemented ahead of the development to ensure that the local community's needs are met.

8. Safety Concerns Regarding Aviation Fuel Line

A significant safety concern for any development in this area is the presence of a high-pressure aviation fuel line that runs through the site and extends all the way to Southampton. This fuel line, with numerous branch lines, presents a significant hazard, and it is necessary to address these risks before any development can proceed. Notably, the Grazeley Village development was rejected by the Ministry of Defence on safety grounds due to the presence of a tributary fuel line in that area.

9. Access Points and Safety Issues

The proposed access points raise significant safety concerns. The Century Drive access would create pedestrian and cycle traffic that would pass directly through an established children's play area, increasing the risk of accidents. Additionally, the Barracks Lane access is on private property and is a single-lane track without proper lighting or pavement. This track exits onto a stretch of pavement that is frequently crossed by vehicles at high speeds, creating an unsafe environment for pedestrians.

10. Environmental Impact

The proposed site is home to several endangered and protected species, including red kites, bats, and badgers, all of which are covered by protection orders and "do not disturb" legislation. The development could result in the disturbance of these species, and it is necessary to address these environmental concerns before any development occurs.

11. Infrastructure Concerns

Finally, there are significant concerns about the existing infrastructure in the area. The water pressure is already low, and the local electricity provision is substandard. These issues must be addressed before additional homes are added to the network to ensure the residents have access to reliable utilities.

In conclusion, while the intention behind this development may be well-meaning, there are numerous essential issues that must be ressed before any homes are built. These concerns span safety, infrastructure, environmental impact, and the suitability of the land for such a large-scale development. It is necessary that these issues are thoroughly addressed to ensure that any development in this area is done in a manner that is safe, sustainable, and beneficial to the local community.

Yours sincerely,
Adam Lowe