

PLANNING REF : 261809
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 2 Northam Close
:
: RG6 3AJ
SUBMITTED BY : Mrs P Kelly
DATE SUBMITTED : 03/09/2026

COMMENTS:

I wish to register my strong objection to planning application 261809 for the demolition of the existing building and the erection of a detached dwelling, detached double garage with first floor habitable accommodation, cycle storage, new boundary wall and access gates, hardstanding and associated landscaping.

I ask that Wokingham Council refuse this application .

This is not simply an objection to the principle of one additional dwelling. My objection concerns the particular form, scale, design and relationship of this proposal to the surrounding area, and critically, to the established Earley Home Guards Social Club adjoining the site.

The application should be considered as a whole. The substantial dwelling, detached two storey garage/ancillary accommodation, hardstanding, boundary wall and gates collectively represent an intensive and visually intrusive form of development which does not satisfactorily respond to its surroundings.

1. THE AGENT OF CHANGE PRINCIPLE - THE EXISTING SOCIAL CLUB MUST BE PROTECTED

The most serious concern is the relationship between the proposed dwelling and the established social club. EHGSC is an existing community facility . The proposed residential dwelling is the new, noise-sensitive use.

WBC must therefore apply the agent of change principle in the NPPF. The relevant NPPF provision makes clear that existing businesses and/or community facilities should not have unreasonable restrictions imposed upon them as a result of a development permitted after they were established.

Where mitigation is required because of the effect of an existing use upon the new development, the applicant as the agent of change should provide suitable mitigation. Another important factor is that WBC must not approve a new dwelling in a location where its future occupants could reasonably be expected to complain about noise or disturbance from the established social club and subsequently seek restrictions upon the club's lawful activities.

The planning system should not create a conflict in which an established community facility is effectively required to change its operation to accommodate a new residential development.

The new dwelling must be designed around the established Earley Home Guards Social Club and NOT the social club around the new dwelling.

2. NOISE - THE APPLICATION MUST DEMONSTRATE THAT THE TWO USES CAN COEXIST

The proposal introduces a noise sensitive residential use immediately adjacent to the established community facility. This raises a fundamental question; Can the proposed dwelling provide an acceptable standard of residential amenity without placing pressure or

restrictions upon the existing social club? This needs to be answered through proper evidence and not just assumption!

Wokingham's MDD Policy CC06 - Noise is directly relevant. The

Council must consider noise impacts and the use of layout, internal layout and physical mitigation to prevent unacceptable effects. I therefore request that WBC does not determine this application without a proper independent acoustic assessment which treats the social club as the existing noise source and the proposed dwelling as the new sensitive receptor.

The assessment should consider, as a minimum, the following:

- *all proposed bedroom windows
- *bedroom windows in their open position

- *the proposed rear and external amenity areas
- *the garden, patio and balcony
- *evening and night-time conditions
- *normal activities and events at the social club
- *people arriving at and leaving the social club
- *outdoor activity
- *music and amplified sound where applicable

*the cumulative effect of these sources

The assessment must reflect the actual established use of the social club, rather than an artificially restricted or hypothetical version of its activities. If the proposal cannot provide an acceptable living environment without placing restrictions upon the existing club, then planning permission should be refused.

3. THE APPLICANT, NOT THE CLUB, MUST PROVIDE THE MITIGATION

If the Council concludes that acoustic mitigation is required, it should be incorporated into the proposed development and funded by the applicant.

There should be consideration of the following:

- *appropriate orientation of the dwelling
 - *use of the dwelling and detached garage as acoustic shielding
 - *acoustic glazing
 - *appropriate ventilation where necessary, including mechanical if required
 - *appropriate internal room layout and positioning of bedrooms
- EHGSC should not be required to fund mitigation for a dwelling which is being introduced after the club's established use. Nor should the grant of permission create an expectation that the club will subsequently have to reduce its hours, activities, events or lawful operation because of complaints from future occupiers.

4. EXCESSIVE SCALE AND MASSING

I have serious concerns regarding the overall scale and bulk of the proposed development. The Council should not consider the dwelling in isolation. The main house, substantial detached double garage with

accommodation above, hardstanding and boundary structures must be assessed as one development. The resulting amount of built form is considerable and risks creating an overdeveloped and visually dominant plot.

This is particularly concerning in a street where the character is derived from the relationship between building, gardens, open areas and the established rhythm of development.

Core Strategy Policy CP3 requires development to have an appropriate scale, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character, and to avoid detriment to the amenities of the adjoining land users. In my view, this proposal fails that test.

5. THE DETACHED DOUBLE GARAGE IS NOT A MINOR ANCILLARY FEATURE The detached double garage is a substantial component of the proposal and includes first floor habitat accommodation. It should therefore be assessed as an important element of the development rather than

being treated simply as a conventional domestic garage. Its height, footprint, roof form and relationship with the main dwelling increase the overall visual and physical intensity of the development. The Council should specifically explain why such a substantial

detached building, including habitable accommodation at first floor level, is necessary and appropriate for this site.

WBC should also satisfy itself that the proposed accommodation is genuinely ancillary to the main dwelling and that the arrangement does not facilitate the creation of a separate residential unit or future intensification of the site.

I am not suggesting that future unauthorised conversion is inevitable. My concern is that the Council should not approve an unnecessarily intensive arrangement without properly considering the long term planning implications.

If permission were granted, WBC should ensure that the ancillary relationship is clearly defined and appropriately controlled.

6. POOR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CHARACTER OF PITTS LANE

The proposal should be judged against the existing character of Pitts Lane, not simply against whether a detached house could physically be placed on the land. The Borough Design Guide requires new development to respond positively to its context and to relate appropriately to neighbouring buildings, spaces and land uses. I consider the proposed dwelling to be too large and visually assertive for its settings. The combination of its size, massing and associated garage results in a development that does not appear to have been sufficiently designed around the established character of the area.

I would expect the Council to carefully assess:

- *the scale and proportions of the dwelling
- *its height
- *its roof form
- *its relationship with neighbouring properties
- *the spacing around the building
- *the amount of built footprint
- *the relationship between the main house and garage
- *the amount of hardstanding
- *the treatment of the frontage
- *the cumulative visual impact when viewed from Pitts Lane

7. THE FRONT WALL AND GATES WOULD CREATE AN UNWELCOME HARD FRONTAGE

I also strongly object to the proposed large front boundary wall and gates. This is a material planning consideration because boundary treatment forms part of the character and appearance of the development and its relationship with the public highway. The proposed wall and gates would introduce a substantial, enclosed and defensive frontage which I consider to be out of keeping with the established openness and character of the street.

The Council's Borough Design Guide makes clear that the boundary treatments should contribute positively to local character. You should therefore consider whether this wall and gate arrangement would harm the established streetscape and whether a more open and appropriate frontage is required.

8. HARDSTANDING AND LOSS OF OPEN CHARACTER

The amount of hardstanding associated with the dwelling, garage and access also contributes to the intensity of the proposal. WBC should consider the development not merely as a building but as combination of house+detached two-storey

garage+access+hardstanding+wall+gates+landscaping. The cumulative effect is important. A development can be unacceptable because of the combined visual impact of several individually acceptable components.

In this case, the cumulative effect is an unnecessarily intensive form of development which would erode the established balance between building form and open space.

9. AMENITY OF THE EXISTING COMMUNITY FACILITY MUST BE GIVEN PROPER WEIGHT

The social club provides an established community function. The planning authority should be particularly cautious about introducing a new residential receptor immediately alongside it where there is a foreseeable risk of conflict. The relevant question is not whether the future occupants might occasionally hear activity, the question is whether the development has been designed so that the established social club (which is a community facility) can continue operating lawfully without being subjected to unreasonable restrictions because of this new dwelling. That distinction is fundamental. Any decision which fails to properly address this issue risks reversing the Agent of Change principle by effectively transferring the consequences of the new residential development onto the existing community facility. 10. THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES ARE NOT SATISFIED

For the reasons set out above, the proposal fails to demonstrate compliance with the relevant adopted planning policies including:

*Wokingham Core Strategy CP3 - General Principles for development, concerning appropriate scale, mass, layout, built form, character and the amenities of adjoining land users

*MDD Policy CC06 - Noise, concerning the assessment and mitigation of noise impacts, and

*the relevant design principles within the Wokingham Borough Design Guide

The proposal must also be considered against the Agent of Change principle in the NPPF in relation to the established social club/community facility.

11. REQUEST FOR REFUSAL

For all the reasons above, I respectfully request that planning application 261809 is refused. In particular I ask the Council to find that the proposal:

- a) represents an excessive and inappropriate form of development having regard to its scale, massing, layout and cumulative built form;
- b) fails to respond appropriately to the established character and appearance of Pitts Lane;
- c) introduces an inappropriate and visually intrusive boundary wall and gate arrangement;
- d) creates an unacceptable relationship between a new noise sensitive residential use and an established social club and community facility;
- e) fails to demonstrate that an acceptable standard of residential amenity can be achieved without placing unreasonable pressure or restrictions upon the established social club;
- f) fails to properly apply the Agent of Change principle;
- g) fails to demonstrate that the substantial detached garage with

first floor habitable accommodation are appropriate and genuinely ancillary to the main dwelling;

h) creates an unnecessarily intensive combination of dwelling, garage, hardstanding and boundary structures; and
i) would cause unacceptable harm to the character appearance and amenity of the area.

FINAL REQUEST

I would ask the Council to consider this application as whole rather than considering each component in isolation. The issue is not simply whether another dwelling might be accommodated at 20 Pitts Lane. The issue is whether this particular dwelling, of this particular scale and design, together with the substantial garage, hardstanding and enclosed frontage, can be accommodated without causing unacceptable harm and without creating a future conflict with the established social club. In my view, it cannot.

I therefore respectfully request that the Council refuse planning application 261809.

Thank you.