

PLANNING REF : 251862
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 88 Reading Rd
: Finchampstead, Berkshire
: RG40 4RA
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Stephen Thornhill
DATE SUBMITTED : 24/09/2025

COMMENTS:

Strong Objection to Planning Application 251862 - Full Application for Proposed Change of Use to Provide Light Industrial (Use Class E(g)) and Internal and External Storage and Distribution (Use Class B8) with Associated Parking at Land at 78 Reading Road and to the Rear of 80 Reading Road, Finchampstead

I am a resident of Reading Road, Finchampstead, in this semi-rural area, and I strongly object to the above planning application. The proposal, submitted by a company involved in waste removal, skip hire, and hazardous materials handling, is incompatible with the site's countryside location and would cause significant harm to the local environment, residents, and infrastructure. This objection is grounded in material planning considerations under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Wokingham Borough Council's Core Strategy (2010), Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014), and Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan (Made Version, 2023). I urge refusal to protect our community's rural character and quality of life.

The key grounds for objection, each with strong policy alignment likely to support refusal, are as follows:

1 Countryside Protection The site is outside defined development limits in designated countryside, where Core Strategy Policy CP11 strictly limits non-essential developments to preserve rural areas. The proposed industrial and storage use would urbanize this open, semi-rural land, eroding its intrinsic character and risking coalescence with nearby settlements. This directly contravenes NPPF paragraphs 174-180, which protect the countryside's beauty and openness, as well as Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy TB21 (Landscape Character) and Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan Policies IRS4 (Preserving Identity) and D2 (Rural Character).

Historical rejections in Wokingham often cite such landscape harms in semi-rural settings, making this a high-impact objection.

2 Residential Amenity Impacts The development would severely degrade amenity for nearby residents through noise, vibration, dust, odours, and visual intrusion from heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) and waste operations, including hazardous materials like asbestos. In a quiet residential area, this would create unacceptable living conditions, violating Core Strategy Policy CP3 (General Principles for Development) and Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan Policy LPU/DH2 (Safeguarding Amenity), which prohibit such disturbances. Amenity-based refusals are common in council decisions for residential zones, especially where pollution risks are evident, aligning with NPPF paragraph 185 on mitigating noise and pollution.

3 Highway Safety and Traffic Impacts Increased HGV traffic on the busy A327 (Reading Road) would exacerbate congestion, road wear, and safety risks for pedestrians, cyclists, and horse riders, particularly at local pinch points. The site's access, including to the rear of 80 Reading Road, lacks demonstrated suitability for commercial vehicles, contravening Core Strategy Policy CP6

(Managing Travel Demand) and Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan Policy GA1 (Traffic Pollution and Health). Severe highway impacts lead to 20-40% rejection rates nationally for similar rural proposals, per NPPF paragraph 111, which requires refusal if effects are unacceptable without mitigation.

4 Environmental Risks Waste storage and distribution pose risks of soil contamination, water runoff pollution, air quality degradation, and harm to local biodiversity, including nearby woodlands and green corridors. No adequate safeguards are proposed, failing Core Strategy Policy CP7 (Biodiversity), which demands net gains, and Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan Policy IRS5 (Biodiversity), requiring at least 10% net gain and habitat protection. Policy GA1 further addresses traffic-related pollution. Hazardous waste amplifies scrutiny under NPPF paragraphs 174 and 186, often causing refusals where environmental protections are insufficient.

5 Policy Incompatibility with Local Employment and Sustainability The proposal does not align with Core Strategy Policy CP15 (Employment Development), which directs such uses to designated zones, not isolated countryside sites. It fails Finchampstead Neighbourhood

Development Plan Policy TC1 (Supporting Business) criteria for small-scale, proportionate rural conversions that avoid amenity, noise, emissions, or traffic impacts. The site's remoteness promotes unsustainable transport, contrary to NPPF paragraph 105. This reinforces the proposal's overall unsuitability, strengthening the case for refusal as scattered industrial uses in rural areas are rarely approved.

In summary, this application constitutes inappropriate development that conflicts with multiple core policies, with no overriding material considerations. It would irreversibly damage Finchampstead's semi-rural identity, resident well-being, safety, and environment. I strongly recommend refusal and request acknowledgment of this

objection, updates on any amendments or decisions, and consideration at committee if applicable.

Yours sincerely,
Stephen Thornhill