

PLANNING REF : 242654
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Thatch Cottage
: Limmerhill Road, Wokingham, Berkshire
: RG41 4BU
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Andrew David Wright
DATE SUBMITTED : 23/11/2024

COMMENTS:

I object to this planning application for the following reasons:

* Development in the Countryside

The site mainly lies in an area of Countryside outside the development limits for both Wokingham and Barkham. Allowing development in this location would be a violation of WBC policy CP11.

It should also be noted that, despite the loss of green space on the site, the proposal will result in a net loss of car parking spaces whilst changing the business such that it will require more!

* Ecological Impact

There is a question on the application form as follows:

"Has there been any loss (or degradation) of any onsite habitat(s), resulting from activities carried out before the date the onsite pre-development biodiversity value was calculated.

Either:

- on or after 30 January 2020 which were not in accordance with a planning permission; or
- on or after 25 August 2023 which were in accordance with a planning permission?"

The applicant has ticked 'No'. This is incorrect. Five mature oak trees were felled on this site on or around 27th June 2023. The Wokingham District Veteran Tree Association website (<https://www.wdvta.org.uk/>) provides some detailed information about these 5 trees (see WDVTA tree records: 3206, 3207, 3208 and 3209).

Oak trees are a vital part of the ecosystem and as such provide a habitat for many species of plants, animals, and fungi. This habitat was permanently destroyed. Removing the trees represented a huge loss which the applicant is either unaware of or is trying to disguise.

Any additional removal of trees and shrubs on this site, including some trees that are protected by TPOs, in The Countryside should not be allowed to happen. The remaining vegetation does a reasonable job of screening the pub car park and enhancing the overall feel of the area. Under this proposal there would be more tarmac and less mature vegetation.

* Questionable requirement for the development, especially in this location

Assuming Wokingham did need more hotel accommodation, which is doubtful, this location is only really accessible by car and as such will only encourage car use both on Barkham Road and in the wider area.

* Impact on the safety of users of Barkham Road

The proposed new junction is at a point of Barkham Road with double white lines in the middle. These are present due to the bend and hill brow to the west, towards Barkham. This application seeks to move the pub entrance onto Barkham Road closer to these features.

The existing junctions (pub car park entrance and Limmerhill Road) exit onto sections of road with solid/dashed lines in the middle. Whilst these junctions don't offer ideal visibility themselves, they are further from the bend and hill brow than the proposed new junction would be.

Moving a junction to a more dangerous position on a road makes no sense.

* Unnecessary tarmacing over the Countryside.

The 'residential development' referenced in the application is not included in the current version of, or update to, the Wokingham District Council Local Plan. Planning application 232621 was rightly refused by the council. Therefore, creating a new access road and repositioning the entrance to the pub car park is unnecessary -- as also shown by the refusal of planning application 231990.