

PLANNING REF : 261059
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 29
: 29 Archer Grove, Reading
: RG29TB
SUBMITTED BY : Mr And Mrs M & G Sweeney
DATE SUBMITTED : 18/06/2026

COMMENTS:

OBJECTION TO BARKHAM SQUARE PROPOSALS - ALLOTMENTS AND ASSOCIATED ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

To: Wokingham Borough Council Planning Department

I wish to formally object to the proposed Barkham Square development insofar as it relates to the provision of allotments and associated access, parking and infrastructure arrangements.

My objection is based on material planning considerations and the apparent conflict with both national and local planning policy.

1. Inadequate Assessment of Traffic and Highway Impacts

The proposal includes vehicular access serving the allotments and associated recreational uses from Commonfield Lane. The submitted consultation material provides insufficient evidence regarding likely vehicle movements, parking demand, peak usage periods and the cumulative impact of allotment users, visitors to the Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), and residents of the wider development.

Paragraph 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires development to provide safe and suitable access for all users and to avoid unacceptable impacts on highway safety.

The current proposals fail to demonstrate that the local highway network can safely accommodate the additional traffic generated by the allotments and associated recreational facilities.

2. Insufficient Parking Provision

The consultation material lacks sufficient detail regarding parking provision and management for allotment users. Experience elsewhere demonstrates that allotments can generate significant vehicle movements, particularly at weekends and during growing seasons when users transport tools, compost, manure, plants and harvested produce.

Without adequate parking provision there is a risk of overspill parking onto surrounding roads, creating inconvenience and potential safety issues for existing residents.

3. Lack of Detail Regarding Allotment Management and Environmental Health

The proposals do not appear to include a detailed allotment management plan covering:

- Composting arrangements;
- Storage of manure and organic material;
- Waste management;
- Pest and vermin control;

- Enforcement and site maintenance responsibilities.

Whilst allotments can provide community benefits, poorly managed allotments can result in nuisance, odour and increased vermin activity. The absence of a comprehensive management strategy prevents residents and decision-makers from properly assessing the likely impacts of the proposal.

The Council should require a detailed management plan prior to determining the application.

4. Potential Harm to Ecology and Biodiversity

The site lies within an area containing valuable habitats associated with Barkham Brook, woodland corridors and wetland features.

The NPPF requires planning decisions to contribute to and enhance the natural environment and minimise impacts on biodiversity. It is not clear from the consultation material that the cumulative effects of increased recreational activity, vehicle movements and allotment use on nearby habitats have been fully assessed.

The Council should be satisfied that the development will deliver measurable biodiversity gains and avoid adverse impacts on protected habitats and species.

5. Landscape Character and Rural Setting

The proposals risk eroding the rural character of this part of Barkham through the introduction of additional infrastructure, parking areas, fencing, storage facilities and associated activity.

The Council's Local Plan seeks to protect the character and appearance of the borough's landscapes. The cumulative effect of these changes should be carefully assessed before any permission is granted.

6. Reliance on Outdated Baseline Information

I am concerned that a number of the reference documents underpinning the consultation appear to be significantly out of date and do not accurately reflect the current character and occupation of the surrounding area.

In particular, the assessments appear not to fully recognise the presence of the Archer Grove residential development, which was completed in 2019 and lies immediately adjacent to the proposed allotment site.

As a result, the baseline against which impacts have been assessed appears flawed.

This raises concerns regarding the accuracy of conclusions relating to:

- Residential amenity;
- Traffic generation and parking demand;
- Noise and disturbance;
- Visual and landscape impacts;
- Environmental health considerations, including the management of composting, waste and potential vermin issues.

The National Planning Policy Framework requires planning decisions to be based on proportionate and up-to-date evidence. Where supporting assessments rely upon outdated baseline conditions, there is a risk that the true impacts upon existing residents are underestimated.

The Council should therefore require all assessments to be updated to reflect the current built environment, including the presence and proximity of Archer Grove, before any determination is made.

Failure to do so would result in the application being assessed against a site context that no longer exists and would not provide decision-makers with a reliable basis upon which to reach a sound planning judgment.

7. Failure to Properly Assess Impacts Arising from the Intended Use of the Allotments

Page 78 of the Barkham Square consultation document identifies the allotments as a location for "socialising" and community interaction, thereby recognising that the allotments are intended to function as more than simply a collection of growing plots.

Whilst community interaction is a legitimate planning benefit, the application appears to place significant weight on these social benefits without adequately assessing the corresponding impacts on neighbouring residents.

The allotments are proposed immediately adjacent to the established Archer Grove residential development. The consultation material does not appear to contain any detailed assessment of:

- The frequency and duration of social gatherings associated with the allotments;
- Potential noise and disturbance arising from group activities;
- Vehicle movements associated with social events and community activities;
- Parking demand generated by users and visitors;
- The cumulative impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents.

This omission is particularly concerning given that Archer Grove was completed in 2019 and is now a well-established residential community located directly adjacent to the proposed allotment site.

If the allotments are being promoted as a community hub and social destination, rather than solely as growing spaces, then the assessment of impacts should reflect the full extent of their intended use. It is inconsistent to rely upon the social and community benefits of the allotments while simultaneously failing to assess the implications of those activities for nearby residents.

The Council should therefore require an updated assessment which properly reflects the current residential context and evaluates the likely amenity impacts arising from the allotments' stated social function.

Conclusion

The current proposals fail to provide sufficient information to demonstrate that the allotments and associated infrastructure can be

accommodated without adverse impacts on highway safety, parking, local amenity, ecology and landscape character.

Given that the neighbouring Archer Grove development has been occupied for several years, it is concerning that the consultation material appears to assess the site as though this substantial residential community does not exist. The resulting underestimation of residential impacts calls into question the robustness of the evidence base supporting the proposals.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the Council refuse the application.

Yours faithfully,

Mr & Mrs Sweeney