

PLANNING REF : 250517
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 6 Barracks Lane
:
: RG7 1BB
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Tim Williams
DATE SUBMITTED : 09/04/2025

COMMENTS:

Having read through the planning application and as a resident (very near to the site) I wish to wholeheartedly object to this development and any development of similar size on this site. I urge the planning committee to not only consider the comments of my fellow residents and I, but also the impact a development of this size and scale will have on Spencers Wood and Swallowfield. The reasons for my objection are as follows:

Is a development of this size really needed in this area?
I would have to say no. I completely understand that housing is needed, but surely development should be focussed on areas where the demand outweighs supply.
Searching on Rightmove this evening for properties within Spencers Wood there were almost 100 (88 to be precise), alongside other development that are yet to be finished and sold. This does not suggest that a development of this size is needed in the area.

Transport - Spencers Wood just cannot support the additional stress on an already troubled transport system.
I completely understand that 400 homes, doesn't mean an additional 1,200 people all driving to work at the same time every day, but it must be noted that the modest numbers suggested by the developer are unrealistic.
I am one of the lucky ones, I don't have to commute every day, but I do once a week. I wanted to therefore share my experience of this commute. It has been stated that Spencers Wood is perfectly placed, close to the M4 and Reading Station. However, leaving my home at 7:30am results in a 25-35 minute drive to Junction 11 of the M4, which at just 1.6 miles is horrendous. What will be the result with another 400+ homes?!?
Basingstoke Road is the only option for those needing to head north (towards the M4 and Reading). Heading south is easier, but is this the target market for the development.
The development plan states that the closest train station is Mortimer, almost suggesting that new residents can use this station instead of needing to head to Reading.
Unfortunately Mortimer station is a 3.7 mile trek along roads with no pavement, meaning that people would drive. Mortimer station is not of a sufficient size to offer parking to those additional travellers. I think the carpark has less than 40 spaces.

Consideration should be given to the safety of pedestrians and other road users around Beech Hill Road. This area is known as an accident blackspot now. What about when you have 400+ homes who chose to use various roads in the area as cut-throughs, but also when they decide to stop off at the small shops on Basingstoke Road. Many cars are often parked alone the road outside OneStop (post office) and Warnings Bakery, essentially turning Basingstoke Road into a single track road and making pedestrian visibility extremely poor.

The development is in the AWE evacuation zone.

This is indeed true, but my understanding is that there have been permitted developments within the area. However, consideration should be given to ensure that the site is adequate to support plans issued in the event of an emergency. Should the need to evacuate arise the only exit routes is back to Basingstoke Road and in the direction of AWE. Surely for a development of this needs to have adequate evacuation routes heading away from danger?

The development site sits over a live high pressure aviation fuel line. Surely this presents a significant danger to life should something go wrong. I believe the Ministry of Defence rejected a development in Grazeley on safety grounds due to a branch from this fuel line running through the development site.

Can the Schools cope?

As it stands now the schools are struggling with demand. I worry whether access to decent education will be available, especially as those currently with children in primary schools cannot get their chosen schools and have to commute some distances, again causing traffic and congestion. We need more schools, not just a relocation of an existing one. This is not an adequate justification for building more housing.

Pedestrian access into Barracks Lane.

Barracks Lane is simply not suitable to use as an access point for pedestrians or cyclists. It's a single track lane, barely wide enough for delivery vans with an uneven surface and no lighting. Access to the lane is also between 2 high walls making visibility very poor. This is such a dangerous proposition. In addition to the above, Barracks Lane is private property (I am a resident), there is no public right of way. As a resident I am jointly responsible for the upkeep of this lane. The residents will be seeking legal action against any plan approved giving access to Barracks Lane.

The area is home to many endangered and protected species. I am certainly no wildlife expert but know the fields for development are home to Red Kites, Bats, Badgers and Quails.

Should this development obtain planning permission all of these points need to be considered and addressed prior to the development proceeding. Spencers Wood and Shinfield have already seen so much development with the promise of additional infrastructure and investment only for it not to come to fruition. I implore you to think of the community and the impact this development will have on it.