

PLANNING REF : 261171
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Grange Cottage
: The Street, Swallowfield, Reading, Berkshire
: RG7 1RE
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Peter Allen
DATE SUBMITTED : 16/06/2026

COMMENTS:

I am writing to object to the proposed development on the land opposite Charlton Lane, Trowes Lane.

My objection is based on the fact that this proposal would introduce a permanent residential development into an area of open countryside that forms an important part of the rural setting of Swallowfield.

Anyone familiar with this area will know that the countryside between Swallowfield and Riseley is one of the last remaining stretches of open rural landscape around the village. The application site is currently untouched and forms part of a wider landscape that remains unchanged despite increasing development pressure in recent years.

When viewed on an aerial photograph, it is very apparent that this site sits squarely within open countryside. Whilst the approved Croudace development and the proposed City & Country development have already pushed the village boundary further south, this proposal goes considerably further. The existing woodland belt currently provides a clear visual and physical separation between those developments and the wider countryside beyond. This proposal effectively leapfrogs that natural boundary and introduces permanent residential development into an area that remains distinctly rural in character.

I am also concerned about the precedent this could set. Once development is permitted beyond the existing woodland buffer, the distinction between the village edge and the open countryside becomes increasingly blurred. This creates pressure for further applications on land between the existing developments and this site, resulting in the gradual erosion of the open countryside that currently separates them.

The Swallowfield Village Statement describes this area as follows:

"The southern edge of Swallowfield village overlooks the farmed clay lowland that stretches to Riseley. Here the landscape is predominately large open arable fields bounded by hedgerows and fences. The rural character is emphasised by single track rural roads lined with deep ditches and often edged with mature trees including 'cricket bat' willows. This area provides a vital habitat for wildlife including bats and free roaming deer."

This description perfectly captures the character of the area surrounding the application site and remains as relevant today as when it was written.

Whilst the site may appear relatively small in isolation, it would nevertheless result in the loss of countryside and its replacement

with caravans, day rooms, parking areas, hardstanding, access works and the activity associated with a permanent residential development. Once developed, this piece of countryside will be lost permanently.

I am also concerned that Swallowfield has already absorbed a significant amount of development, with further large schemes approved or proposed nearby. Although this site is physically separate from those developments, the cumulative effect is a continuing erosion of the rural character of the area.

The suitability of Trowes Lane and the surrounding road network is another concern. These are narrow rural lanes, often bordered by ditches and vegetation, and they were never designed to serve significant levels of development.

Unlike the approved and proposed developments to the north, where much of the traffic is likely to access the network via The Street and the main village roads, traffic associated with this site is far more likely to use the narrow rural lanes around Trowes Lane, Charlton Lane and the surrounding countryside because of the site's location. Additional vehicle movements, deliveries, visitors and servicing traffic will inevitably place further pressure on roads that already have significant limitations.

I am also concerned about the practicalities of foul drainage in such a rural location. If foul waste is to be stored on site and removed by tanker, this will require regular service vehicle movements along the same narrow rural lanes. Given the location of the site and the nature of the surrounding road network, the Council should be fully satisfied that these arrangements are practical, sustainable and will not create additional infrastructure, environmental or highway concerns.

Finally, the Village Statement identifies the importance of this area for wildlife, including bats and free roaming deer. The introduction of permanent residential development, lighting, vehicle movements and increased activity has the potential to diminish the value of this important habitat and further fragment the rural landscape.

For these reasons I respectfully ask the Council to refuse this application and to protect this important area of countryside for future generations.