

PLANNING REF : 251862
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 80a Reading Road
:
: RG404RA
SUBMITTED BY : Ms w Rawso
DATE SUBMITTED : 02/10/2025

COMMENTS:

Dear Planning Officer,
Re: Objection to Planning Application 251862 at Land at 78 Reading Road and to the Rear of 80 Reading Road, Finchampstead. RG40 4RA
I am writing to formally object to the above planning application on the following grounds, based on material planning considerations under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024) and Wokingham Borough Council's adopted development plan. This proposed site is not suitable for change of use and hopefully this application will not be considered:

1. Impact on Residential Amenity (Noise and Disturbance): The proposed change of use to light industrial (E(g)) and storage/distribution (B8) would introduce additional vehicle movements and activities, leading to a substantial increase in noise and disturbance to myself and for nearby residences. The Noise Impact Assessment (dated 25 July 2025) indicates a +2 dB rating level above background, which BS4142:2014+A1:2019 suggests could indicate low impact, but in this quiet countryside context, even minor increases would be perceptible and adverse. This contravenes Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy (2010), which requires developments to protect residential amenity, and MDD Local Plan Policy CC06 on noise. The Applicant submits a 'Noise Impact Assessment; Headed (Indicative Site Plan 25 July 2025) This document shows the two positions of the noise monitors used to obtain the current noise level reports. 'Monitoring Position 1' is very misleading and irrelevant as it has been located to maybe obtain false high readings. Had it been located east, within the 'Application Site Boundary' and between 'building I & 2' the readings would be significantly less and show the level to be that of normal greenbelt countryside. The area benefits from little to no noise pollution with mainly the ambient sound of wind and wildlife. If this application was granted the noise levels would be very detrimental to my health and to that of the surrounding residence.

2. Highway Safety and Traffic Impacts: The Transport Statement (dated June 2025) predicts ~19 daily vehicle trips, (How would this be Policed?) including OGVs, (Other Goods Vehicles) but underestimates the noise intensification in a rural setting as they can be up to 6.6 metres long with a width of 2.55 meters and a weight of 44 tons. The access track that is owned by British Telecom and not by the applicant, is shown outlined in red measures just 4.75 metres wide narrowing down to 4.10 meters. It is not 6550mm (6.55 metres wide as stated and shown on the application 'Block Plan - Rev A) It is already in disrepair mainly to the applicant's illegal activities on the areas outlined in Red and blue over the last ten years. The track

has no pedestrian pathway. Currently it is accurately estimated to be used by twenty seven light vehicles a day and very seldom used by lorries. Any increased movements would exacerbate congestion and safety risks on Reading Road (A327), where ATC data shows 85th percentile speeds of ~39-40 mph. This conflicts with NPPF Paragraph 111 (safe access) and Core Strategy Policy CP6 (managing travel demands).

3. Compatibility with Countryside Character and Local Policies: The site is outside development limits in the countryside, per the Policies Map and Core Strategy. Intensifying commercial use on brownfield land may conflict with Policy CP11 (proposals outside limits must protect environment) and Finchampstead Neighborhood Plan (2023) Policy AHD1 (development outside limits only if policy compliant). While precedent exists (lapsed ref. 193059), the Emerging Local Plan Update emphasizes protecting rural areas. This breaches NPPF Chapter 6 (rural economy) by not fully demonstrating sustainability.

4. Environmental and Sustainability Concerns: The proposal risks harm to local biodiversity and landscape without demonstrated net gain, despite claiming de minimis exemption. This is contrary to NPPF Paragraph 174 (biodiversity protection) and Core Strategy Policy CP7. The Emerging Local Plan (weight per NPPF Para 48) focuses on green communities. Incorporating enhancements like habitat creation or confirming no impact via a full BNG assessment could resolve this.

5. History of Planning Breaches and Enforcement Issues: The applicant (Palmarium Properties Ltd, linked to Collard Group Ltd) has a documented history of non-compliance with planning controls on this site, including enforcement notices APP/X0360/C/15/3138106 and APP/X0360/C/15/3138109 issued in 2015 for unauthorized hard-standing and operational development on land rear of 76 and 80a Reading Road. Despite a 2017 court case where the applicant pleaded guilty and was fined (13,670 and 8,670), full compliance has not been achieved - e.g., hardstanding was not removed and reinstated with topsoil to 20cm depth, and land was not sown with grass seed as required. As a direct result of this my garden and the BT track often flood with rain water runoff. Recent complaints (e.g., refs RFS/2022/087752) highlight ongoing unauthorized storage and use, with the Council failing to escalate enforcement despite risks to highway safety (e.g., unwidened access leading to reversing onto A327). This pattern contravenes NPPF Paragraph 59 (effective enforcement essential) and the Council's Local Planning Enforcement Plan, undermining confidence in future compliance. Given the lapsed approval for similar use under 193059 (approved 11/03/2020, expired March 2023), granting permission here risks repeating failures.

6.

Within the submitted documents (Planning Statements and Reports 'Transport Statement (redacted)') It is stated that; 'The site is currently vacant but was last used for a roofing contractors and minibus storage. This is not true as 'Building 1' shown in 'Planning Plans Location Plan - Rev A' was used many years ago for some storage of roofing materials but did not have planning consent to do so and was made to clear the land by Wokingham Borough Council. Since then it remained empty.

The larger of the building (Building 2) has only been used to briefly store small minibuses of under 3.5 tonnes, (Three & Half) long before that was a chicken shed. Furthermore, part of the land outlined in 'Blue' directly adjacent to the area in 'Red' was a wonderful established fruit orchard with much wildlife of about three acres. This was completely bulldozed by the applicant. As above should have been reinstated by order of WBC but has not been done so to date. This document also omits the entrance to 80a Reading Road that is to the right of the proposed site entrance and at the end of the British Telecom track. When leaving by car or foot, vehicles passing the concealed entrance will be a great danger to me and my guests. (Please see my enclosed plan)

I urge the Council to refuse permission in full.

If however it is granted in full or part: Constructively, impose stringent conditions [mirroring 193059 (e.g., hours of use: 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 8am-2pm Sat, no Sunday or Bank Holidays; external storage 2m height; no external operations; boundary fencing to prevent expansion; noise controls; visibility splays; permeable surfacing) plus additional safeguards: limit vehicles >3.5T Category B (as per prior 2008 permission for minibuses); specify B1/B8 use (e.g., no waste transfer or skip hire); require environmental survey for contamination (evidenced by raised ground and debris near Banisters Copse); and written Council assurance of timely enforcement for breaches.]

Adding further restrictions:

This will not and can not ever set any planning precedent for any form of expansion outside of area 'Marked in Red'.

Site Operation Times for week days 8.30am to 5.30pm

No more than one 6-yard skip to be on site at any given time, including other enclosed skips and or holding containers. No external storage. A maximum of 16 vehicle movements along the British Telecom's Track per day. (Subject to BT's approval and a road maintenance contract)

Full reinstatement of the grassland and orchard as stipulated by WBC. (Blue & Red Areas)

This site is largely agricultural (Agriculture Act 1947) & so landscaping to Policy TB21 standards would be imperative. However, this is not a 'Business Park' and should not be allowed to become one.

With Regards