

PLANNING REF : 260089
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Rowans
: Rowans Gipsy Lane, Wokingham, Berkshire
: RG40 2HP
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Laurence Heath
DATE SUBMITTED : 01/02/2026

COMMENTS:

Application 260089 - 10 South Close

First of all, I have some confusion regarding the application. The proposal is for 10 South Close to be enlarged to become a 3 storey house, but there is also a plan shown to enlarge the property but remaining as 2 storey only. It is not clear what is the status of this alternative plan. I will address my comments primarily to the 3 storey option, though they are also to some extent pertinent to the other one.

I also note that the summary on the WBC website states that the proposal includes front dormer windows, but the plan shows the dormers to be on the rear elevation.

I object to the proposal on the grounds of:

1. Overlooking
2. Overbearing impact
3. Conservation and heritage issues

Overlooking

The rear of 10 South Close faces across Gipsy Lane to my house, Rowans. My front garden is only about 4 metres deep and the lane itself is only narrow, being a single track road. I estimate that from the rear of 10 South Close can be little more than 20 metre away from the front of Rowans.

There is already an issue that 10 South Close overlooks our house from the two rear bedrooms and they must be able to see into our upper storey rooms and part of our side garden. (Conversely the occupants of South Close must be aware that from Rowans, we can see into their bedrooms, lounge and study.) The addition of rear dormer windows exacerbates this situation with extra windows looking down on Rowans.

Overbearing impact

The proposal results in 10 South Close having an overbearing impact on Gipsy Lane, especially as the existing property is already much taller than numbers 2, 4, 6 and 8 South Close which were built as bungalows, with some having been extended into the roof space. The adjacent houses in Gipsy Lane are also relatively low, effectively 1 storeys.

It should also be noted that the existing hip roof of 10 South Close will be replaced by gable ends, further increasing the mass of the building.

There is some alleviation because the rear of 10 South Close is partially screened by some conifer trees. These are rather tatty and I fear that at some point in the near future, they may be removed. This will afford 10 South Close with a grandstand view of Rowans, which is not something I would appreciate. It will also result in a much more overbearing impact on Gipsy Lane.

Whether or not the proposal goes ahead, it would be desirable if the applicants committed to a plan of planting. For example, some new trees should be established before removing the conifers. This would improve the appearance of the southern boundary of the plot. This would also serve to improve the outlook from 10 South Close.

Conservation and heritage issues

Gipsy Lane was once used by drovers, apparently to avoid paying the tolls charged to pass through the centre of Wokingham. It has the character of a country lane despite being only a ten-minute walk from the town centre. It is a narrow single track lane, with banks and hedges for most of the middle section running from Langborough Recreation Ground and Southlands Road. It is consequently a well-used amenity for walkers. To allow such an overbearing development would only serve to erode the unique character and amenity value of Gipsy Lane.