

PLANNING REF : 260439
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Bracken House
: Heath Ride, Heath Ride, Finchampstead, Berkshire
: RG403QJ
SUBMITTED BY : Mrs J Jones
DATE SUBMITTED : 01/04/2026

COMMENTS:

Planning Objection - Application 260439 (and related proposal 260577)

I wish to object to this application on the following planning grounds:

1. Conflict with development plan policy

The site lies outside the defined settlement boundary and is designated as countryside in the adopted 2010 Local Plan, the emerging 2024 Local Plan, and the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan. Development in such locations is strictly controlled, and this proposal does not meet the policy tests for exceptions. It would therefore conflict with the statutory development plan, contrary to Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. Unsustainable location

The site is not in a sustainable location as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It is not within reasonable walking distance of essential services (shops, schools, healthcare), has no realistic access to public transport, and lacks safe pedestrian or cycling routes. Future occupiers would be heavily reliant on private vehicles, which conflicts with NPPF objectives to promote sustainable transport.

3. Inadequate and unsafe access

Access is via a narrow, rural, single-track road with limited capacity and no proper surfacing in parts. This road is unsuitable for the level and type of traffic likely to be generated, including larger vehicles such as caravans. The proposal would intensify use of a substandard junction with the B3430, raising highway safety concerns, contrary to NPPF paragraph 115 (safe and suitable access).

4. Harm to rural character and landscape

The introduction of caravans, hardstanding, access works, and associated activity would urbanise a currently rural, wooded lane. This would erode the character of the countryside and conflict with policies seeking to protect landscape character and local distinctiveness.

5. Loss of trees and impact on biodiversity

Tree removal has already taken place, and further development would result in additional loss of woodland habitat. This would have a detrimental impact on biodiversity, contrary to NPPF requirements for biodiversity protection and enhancement.

6. Impact on drainage and infrastructure

The site lacks mains drainage and utilities. The addition of hardstanding and development would alter surface water runoff patterns, increasing the risk of drainage issues and environmental

harm, contrary to sustainable drainage principles in national and local policy.

7. Erosion of a strategic green gap

The site contributes to an important green gap between areas of land and historic rides. Development would reduce this separation and undermine policies that seek to prevent coalescence and protect the openness of the countryside.

8. Out-of-character development

There are no comparable developments in this immediate area. The proposal would introduce a form and intensity of use that is inconsistent with the established rural character, contrary to design and place-making principles in the NPPF.

9. Precedent and cumulative impact

Granting permission could set a precedent for similar proposals along this lane, leading to incremental change that would significantly alter the character of the area over time.

10. Previous refusal reasons remain relevant

A previous application for the site was refused on highway safety and traffic grounds. Those concerns have not been adequately addressed and remain valid material considerations.

Conclusion

For the reasons above, the proposal conflicts with both local and national planning policy and would result in harm to highway safety, environmental quality, and the character of the countryside. It should therefore be refused.