

PLANNING REF : 251632
PROPERTY ADDRESS : St Sebastian's Court
: Nine Mile Ride
: RG40 3HA
SUBMITTED BY : Miss Beth Langley
DATE SUBMITTED : 05/08/2025

COMMENTS:

We write to object to the new application seeking Permission in Principle (PiP) for the development of one residential dwelling on the land at St. Sebastian's Close, Nine Mile Ride, Crowthorne. We previously objected to the larger proposal for six dwellings on this same site, which was refused. While this current application is for a single dwelling, many of the fundamental issues remain and the downsizing does not address the following concerns:

1. Breach of Prior Planning Commitments

This land was previously designated to be returned to amenity space for St. Sebastian's Court (applications F/2004/1718 and F/2005/5297). This commitment was never implemented, and the current proposal seeks to overwrite that original obligation. Granting PiP would reward the applicant's failure to honour prior planning agreements.

2. Inappropriate Use of Countryside Land

The site lies outside defined settlement boundaries, where development is strictly controlled under Core Strategy Policy CP11. While the applicant argues that local policies are out of date due to housing land supply shortages, this does not justify piecemeal erosion of countryside land especially when the proposed development does not meet any of the exception criteria for isolated homes in the NPPF.

3. Loss of Community Green Space and Character

Although the land is not actively managed, it forms part of the green setting enjoyed by residents of St. Sebastian's Court and contributes to the overall character of the area. Even one dwelling would irreversibly change this landscape and reduce the shared visual amenity. Not to mention, threaten to disrupt the peace that is currently present within this space.

4. Trees and Biodiversity

Two trees (T1 and T2) are subject to Tree Preservation Orders, and while the applicant claims these would be retained, there is no binding commitment to protect them at this stage. A full ecological assessment is still absent and should be required before PiP is granted, not delayed until the TDC stage.

The site has naturally rewilded over time and is now a habitat for a variety of wildlife. This should be properly surveyed and considered upfront to ensure no protected species are affected.

5. Highway Safety and Traffic Impact

Access is proposed via St. Sebastian's Close a narrow and already busy residential road. The Inspector's prior comments downplayed safety risks, but residents continue to observe congestion and poor visibility, especially during school hours and events at the nearby sports clubs. Even a single dwelling adds to cumulative risk, especially given the lack of visitor parking provision.

6. Sustainability and Over-Reliance on Cars

As acknowledged previously, the location relies heavily on private car use due to inadequate bus services and lack of nearby shops and services. The limited pavement and lighting also raise safety concerns for pedestrians, particularly in winter or poor weather.

7. Loss of Privacy and Amenity

The proposed house would be located directly opposite existing flats, including and especially ours at St. Sebastian's Court. This creates mutual overlooking between our windows and the proposed garden or rear elevation of the house, compromising both our privacy and the future residents'.

8. Precedent for Further Development

Approving even a single dwelling on this plot could set a dangerous precedent for future applications to intensify development here particularly given the applicant's previous intent to build six homes.

Conclusion:

We respectfully request that Wokingham Borough Council refuse this Permission in Principle application on the basis that:

- The proposal fails to honour historic planning obligations,
- It remains an inappropriate and harmful use of countryside land, -
- It risks undermining the character and amenity of the area,

- It introduces ongoing traffic and safety concerns,
- And it sets a precedent for creeping development on a site that should be preserved as open space.