

PLANNING REF : 250113
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Oakwood
: Kiln Ride Extension, Finchampstead, Berkshire
: RG40 3NU
SUBMITTED BY : Mr And Mrs J and S Easterbrook
DATE SUBMITTED : 23/02/2025

COMMENTS:

Dear Planning Department,

As a direct boundary neighbour, we are writing to formally object to the latest planning application 250113 for 252a Nine Mile Ride, Finchampstead, on the grounds that it represents a continued and contrived attempt by the developer to secure approval for an overdevelopment of the site. This application must be viewed in the context of a clear pattern of previous attempts to overdevelop the plot for commercial gain, including an application for three dwellings that was refused by Wokingham Borough Council and dismissed at appeal (Ref: APP/X0360/W/24/3339875). While this application focuses on the single dwelling even the Developer himself through correspondence with WBC indicates that's there is likely a future intention to revisit the plans for the shed and existing main building.

1. A Repeated and Contrived Attempt to Overdevelop the Site This latest application follows a series of previous applications, including Planning Application 232225, which sought permission for three dwellings and was refused by WBC on 25 October 2023. The key reasons for refusal included:

- Overdevelopment: The proposed scheme was deemed a contrived layout that failed to respect the local character.
- Harm to the Character and Appearance of the Area: The proposals were found to be an incongruous form of development, eroding the established pattern of housing.
- Highway Safety Concerns: The development failed to demonstrate adequate sight lines for safe access and increased traffic on Kiln Ride Extension.

- Environmental and Biodiversity Harm: The plans included the loss of trees, including those under Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), and failed to provide sufficient biodiversity mitigation. These concerns were upheld by the Planning Inspectorate, which dismissed the appeal on 11 December 2024, concluding that:

- The cramped nature of the proposed development would erode the spacious and verdant character of the area.
- The removal of trees and vegetation would have a significant adverse impact on the local landscape.

- The design was out of keeping with surrounding properties and would appear highly incongruous.

- The proposed development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh any benefits in terms of housing supply.

This latest application represents a piecemeal approach to achieve the same result by stealth, by seeking incremental approvals rather than a wholesale application for multiple dwellings. If approved, it would undermine the clear decisions already made by WBC and the Planning Inspectorate.

2. Contradiction of Previous Planning Decisions

The principle of multiple dwellings on this site has already been

deemed unacceptable. The proposed conversion of an ancillary building into a separate dwelling is a blatant attempt to circumvent the previous refusals and create an additional independent residential unit on what was meant to be an outbuilding for incidental use.

The Inspectorate's decision was clear: this plot is not suitable for multiple dwellings. Allowing this application would directly contradict that ruling and set a dangerous precedent for developers seeking to bypass planning regulations through incremental applications.

3. Planning Policies and Local Character

This application remains in clear conflict with key local planning policies:

- Policy TB06 (Development of Private Residential Gardens) - The development is an inappropriate use of a private residential garden and does not reflect the surrounding area.

- Policy CP3 (General Principles for Development) - The proposal does not respect the existing pattern of development, both in its box

style with flat roof, narrow windows and living wall nor in the materials it would use Timber and Metal cladding. We also noted inconsistencies in the application and supporting documents some implying a sloping roof and the use of photovoltaic panels, while plans suggest the use of a sedum roof. With the risk of further development requests into a double story building as well as revisiting the plans for the existing residence, previous applications suggesting 2 semi detached houses, would mean the plans would be in disagreement with policy with increased and excessive density and an inappropriate layout of the plot.

- Policy CC03 (Green Infrastructure, Trees, and Landscaping) - The previous application was refused due to the loss of trees, including a veteran oak protected under a TPO. The latest proposal continues to fail in mitigating environmental concerns, likely impact on RPA's of at least 1 TPO tree from the foundations and/or the likely new underground services needed. Moreover, the loss of significant hedgerow and habitat remains a material issue, as previously commented on and adversely judged against by WBC. The inclusion of a living wall and a sedum roof in the plans to us again show an attempt to play the system and make a claim for biodiversity while likely not following through or maintaining it in the future once built.

4. Highway and Parking Concerns

The highway safety concerns raised in the previous refusals and appeal remain unresolved. The access from Kiln Ride Extension was previously found to be inadequate, with poor visibility splays creating a road safety hazard on what has been a very dangerous and indeed fatal accident site in the past.

Of specific note we would bring to WBC that there are no swept path drawings with this proposal so no understanding if cars would need to reverse out of the driveway. Additionally the proposed driveway location is very close to TPO Tree8 restricting fully the line of sight to the right onto Kiln Ride Extension when exiting the driveway which would be against traffic and therefore carry significant additional danger to an already dangerous road and junction.

Appeal comments from local residents reaffirm that:

- The junction visibility splays remain substandard, with a history of accidents at the site.

- Increased traffic from additional dwellings would exacerbate existing safety risks at the exit onto Nine Mile Ride.

5. Wokingham Borough Council - Borough Design Guide - supplementary planning document

The proposed and intended future development of the plot are also contrary to a number of elements noted in the supplementary planning document, namely:

- "Whilst a diversification of house types would be beneficial in these areas, proposals should be designed to relate to the predominant architectural character, for instance with similar building and roof forms and/ or use of materials."
- "Existing trees and hedgerows should be incorporated into a development proposal as a feature that contributes to the character of the public realm, rather than being located within plots or at the rear of new housing."
- "On a piecemeal basis, 'backland' and in particular 'tandem' development will potentially erode the character of an area, in terms of the street frontage, landscape character (particularly where there is a 'green backdrop') and impact on neighbours. It may also fail to take opportunities to create a positive character in itself." - "Where there is a regular pattern to the built form, with a repeated building type on a consistent building line and with consistent gaps, then any alterations or extension that is visible from the street should not unbalance the rhythm of the frontage"

Conclusion

This latest application is simply another attempt to incrementally achieve a result that has already been deemed unacceptable. The previous refusals and appeal dismissal clearly establish that this plot is not suitable for multiple dwellings, and this application should be refused on the same grounds.

We urge Wokingham Borough Council to continue to see sense, as you have with previous applications and intent and reject this application to uphold the principles of good planning and prevent developers from manipulating the system through repeated applications.