

PLANNING REF : 242244  
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Barkham Road  
: Barkham, Berks  
: RG41  
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Alan Campbell  
DATE SUBMITTED : 27/09/2024

COMMENTS:

I am confused about why this separate and further planning application for street lighting has been submitted when proposals for the very same utilities were refused by notice under application 240343 and the matter forms part of the pending appeal made against that decision (APP/X0360/W/24/3347228). As the LPA is actively defending the appeal, it is not clear why the applicants expect it to do anything other than refuse identical proposals when submitted separately.

The tree survey (TS) and arboricultural impact assessment (IAI) are those submitted for application 240343 in March 2024. The IAI remains as inadequate now as it was then for confirming the applicants' contention in the Planning Statement (PS) that no harm was caused to the roots of protected trees by the works carried out to erect the lamp posts. The reasons for this are:

a) The TS and IAI were performed retrospectively, after the works had been completed. Paragraphs 1.3.1, 5.2.1 and 5.2.3 of the IAI make explicit that, because of this, the arboricultural consultant could base his conclusions only on assurances supplied to him by third parties. In this context, such assurances are meaningless and so it is not possible to conclude with any degree of confidence that harm did not occur.

b) It has not been demonstrated that the individual who undertook the ground excavations was qualified to operate within the root protection zones of trees subject to TPOs or followed an approved method of works. Indeed, paragraph 5.4.1 of the AIA concludes that it is likely that BS 5837: 2012 was breached by his actions.

c) Paragraph 5.2.3 of the AIA confirms similarly that it is not possible to conclude whether damage has occurred OR WILL occur from the leaching of the concrete used to create the subterranean footing pads to which the street lights are affixed. Damage could also result if ferrous fixings have been used at ground level or beneath it, a matter on which the document is quiet.

The need for street lighting in this location has not been demonstrated adequately. The development site is in the countryside, outside development limits and adjacent to a locally valued landscape, and should be returned to its previous state of relative darkness. The lights affect adversely the visual amenity of the surrounding landscape, not just as a consequence of their incongruity but light spill into woodland.

Although the suggestion of antisocial behaviour in the lane is relied upon in the PS, no evidence has ever been provided to substantiate this claim. Furthermore, there is no nationally published data which demonstrates that street lighting is an effective deterrent to ASB.

Road safety is a similarly spurious contention relied upon: no evidence of collisions or incidents involving pedestrians has ever been provided to corroborate it. Modern vehicles have extremely effective lights (indeed many would argue them to be too bright) in order to meet road safety standards adequately in unlit areas and the overwhelming majority of traffic movements along the lane occur from the applicants own business vehicles, over which they have significant control (in terms of ensuring safe driving practice by their employees).

The street lights are located on private land and intended to illuminate the unauthorised pathway laid for the exclusive use of the applicants' extended family living in the lane. They would therefore confer little, if any, public benefit and even if they did this would not outweigh the harm caused to landscape amenity, protected trees and protected species.

The impact on wildlife species, in particular protected species, has not been demonstrated whatsoever. The assertion that the street lights have been set to operate at a lower lumen level than their full capacity does not guarantee that harm has not occurred in this regard, and neither does it guarantee that they will continue to be operated at this setting, a matter which cannot be controlled satisfactorily by condition.

Consequently, I object to this application and hope it is refused.  
Thank you.