

PLANNING REF : 250415
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Oakside
: Shinfield Road, Shinfield, Reading, Berkshire
: RG2 9BE
SUBMITTED BY : Mrs Rachel Moore
DATE SUBMITTED : 18/03/2025

COMMENTS:

1. I accept that redevelopment of the site is inevitable. However, this is a wasted opportunity with the site better considered for other uses eg mixed housing / hotel / leisure / local healthcare provision. The site is visible from some distance away notably as a feature building as you drive north along the A327 towards Shinfield (from Observer Way).
2. The current application sadly demonstrates that the applicant has no interest in the local area. As is common with so many developer applications, the public webinar consultation was a tick box exercise and none of the concerns raised in that meeting have been reflected in the final submission. The papers have been cut and paste from previous applications eg reference to access to the A10 in para 2.4 of the Transport Statement!
3. There is no evidence that there is demand for the intended use of the proposed buildings. Had the applicant prepared properly, one possible group of users might be small businesses who might support the film studios eg lighting companies. I would have expected research of that type to feature within the application.
4. The challenge is that the applicant has to accept that they have no intended users in mind, and therefore it is difficult for anyone living in the immediate vicinity to know what they might expect, particularly those residents of Shinfield Park immediately adjacent to the site.
5. As a general point though 24/7 working should not be entertained because of the close proximity to residential areas. If the application is granted there should be a limit on the size / type / number of any vehicles using the site say between 9pm and 7am.
6. The main issue with the proposed use of the site is in relation to traffic. I have lived on the Shinfield Road for 14 years and therefore have knowledge of the local traffic dating back to the census of 2011 which is being relied upon as a base for the transport statement. The recorded population in 2011 of Shinfield was 11277 and by 2021 was 17595 as a result of significant building in the area. The prediction for 2025 is about 19000 and building continues. In addition, there has been the construction of the Thames Valley Science Park including Shinfield Studios. Therefore the number of residents / potential workers in the area and using the roads are nearly double that in 2011. In that 14 year period I have seen the traffic increase year on year with regular gridlock of the Shinfield Arms roundabout as well as the B3270 towards the M4 and the A327 Shinfield Road into Reading at peak times. There was an obvious quieter period during the lockdown period but traffic levels have steadily increased since then and regular queues build up along the A327 and B3270 in the morning peak 8-9am and then again in the afternoon peak which is 3.30pm-5.30/6pm because of the number of schools in the vicinity. The traffic has become so bad that crossing the A327 has become so challenging that we have been spending the last few years campaigning for a crossing in the vicinity of Crosfields School.
7. Against that background, I consider that the trip rates estimated

for the site if it was still being used an office are unreliable. They are based on random office locations in uncomparable areas. It also fails to recognise that a significant number of those working at the site when it was council offices or later an engineering company, used public transport. The suggestion that the trip rates for the proposed new development will be less than would have been the case for the office are unsustainable and therefore you have to consider that the additional traffic generated by the site will have to be accommodated within an already saturated transport network at peak times.

8. Cycle network - the plans show that there is no designated cycle route along Shinfield Road. The designated cycle route is through the Lower Earley estate exiting back onto Shinfield Road near the Reading boundary. However, the reality is that cycles habitually use the pavements along the southern stretch of Shinfield Road on a pavement that is far too narrow and barely has enough room for pedestrians in places. An increase in cycle use from the proposed development will make an already dangerous situation worse for pedestrians.

9. Bus routes - the Shinfield Road is only served by the Leopard 3 bus whereas in the past we also had the number 9 bus route. At peak times the bus is often standing room only or full. A commitment to additional services would be required to make this viable as a transport mode for the site.

10. Transport infrastructure - if permission is granted the developer should be asked to contribute to infrastructure improvements in the area such as a roundabout at the B3270/Whitley Wood Lane junction

which is an accident hotspot and, to fund the proposed crossing on the Shinfield Road near Crosfields School (which has passed the feasibility study but has not yet received confirmation that it will be progressed despite the urgency and current need for the crossing; a situation that will only be worsened by the proposed development).