

PLANNING REF : 250517
PROPERTY ADDRESS : The Shieling
: Lambs Lane Swallowfield, Reading, Berks
: RG71JB
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Roderic Vaughan
DATE SUBMITTED : 18/07/2025

COMMENTS:

I wish to register my objection to the reiteration of planning application (250517).

In addition to comments already submitted objecting to the original planning application, I wish to comment further and highlight the applicant's failure to address some serious issues relating to the proposed development.

- Leaving access points to the site unchanged overlooks the need to move them north along the B3349 to obviate serious highway safety issues approaching the roundabout at junction with B3349 and Back Lane. Furthermore, in the event of permission being granted at some point, Back Lane should be closed with access only for vehicles travelling to and from Lambs Lane School.

- Failure to address the certain creation of a rat run along Back Lane and Lambs Lane to the Beech Hill Road Crossroads and beyond along

Whitehouse Farm Lane to the A33 demonstrates the applicant is not focused on community consultation and bringing about meaningful mitigations.

- Trashing the AWE Burghfield response to the proposed application is another example of the refusal to accept there are good reasons for the safety zone.

- The Medical Centre referred to in the proposal will be limited to a consulting room.

- The need for an employment area at a location surrounded by four sites within 50 to 300 metres of the site is not justified when none currently operate at 100% occupancy. Another point: the excessive height of the business units is unsuited to its countryside location.
- The quick turnaround between the original application and the latest reiteration has not left adequate time to properly address community concerns about this very large scale 'blob' development on the edge of Spencers Wood, thus creating a very hard edge of the built environment in open countryside.

- Should this application be granted permission to develop the site it will give carte blanche to other random and opportunistic developments in the west of Wokingham Borough. Plans are at an advance stage to deliver 3,900 houses within the emerging Local Development Plan a short distance away.

- Comments below were submitted in April, but remain valid and should again be considered and taken as valid reasons for refusing planning application 250517.

The site is not included in the Local Development Plan (LDP) and, is therefore opportunistic/speculative. It is also not sustainable. The local road network is inadequate for an additional daily 1,000 vehicle movements, posing severe highway safety risks, particularly in the vicinity of Wellington Industrial Site and the various retail outlets on the east side of the B3349 in Spencers Wood and further along to the north towards Three Mile Cross. The mitigation schemes for this development do not integrate with and, are not required by the local community. There is already adequate provision of sports pitches at the Shinfield, Strategic Development Location.

It refers to reliance on existing services such as Lambs Lane Primary School which is virtually full and Swallowfield and

Shinfield Medical Centres which are at capacity where it takes weeks to arrange an appointment.

It is a stand-alone development that is random in nature and contiguous to an area of low housing density that currently provides a smooth transition into the open countryside. This development will lead to a hard urban edge close to the river Loddon and rural village of Swallowfield.

In addition to vehicle movements generated by 420 new homes, the 1hectare business park would impact road safety negatively with increased commercial and heavy goods vehicle movements in close proximity to the local primary school in Back Lane. The proportion of children walking to the school is already very low and, will inevitably reduce further, as the local road network will not cope with its inadequate provision for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists.

The business park, east of the B3349 and, to the south of the site, is opposite the long established and much expanded Lambs Farm Business Park, which is no longer operating at full occupancy following more recent expansion, with numerous units regularly available to let. Thus, clearly demonstrating provision for business space is exceeding demand.

Plans for a Garden Village comprising circa 4,000 homes at Hall Farm (around 3 miles distant) are included in the Local Plan, with integrated infrastructure schemes for roads and other services. Thus, providing a sustainable development for much needed homes in the right location.

The area has with the Shinfield and Arborfield Strategic Development Locations and continues with the Hall Farm Garden Village to make a huge contribution to the provision of homes in a planned manner in this part of the borough.

The site is within the enlarged Burghfield AWE, DEPZ (detailed emergency planning zone), which prohibits major residential developments. A High Court Judge rejected an attempt by developers (including Crest Nicholson) in February 2021 to overturn the enlarged planning zone to allow planning to proceed for a Garden Settlement in Grazeley. These zones are extremely rare and are there for

exceptionally sound reasons and, in a world of heightened security risks, their purpose should be respected at all costs.

Such a development, at this location would impact very badly on the local environment and landscape habitat. Its elevation north to south and proximity (approx. 100 metres) to river Loddon would result in run off and river pollution. It would also lead to the displacement of wildlife and diminution of wildlife corridors. Furthermore, the biodiversity in this rural location would be degraded and no amount of offsetting in other locations justifies the damage that would be done here.

Thank you for reading and considering my comments.

Objections 2.0

1. AWE (DEPZ); the site is within the zone and the proposal comprises a major development and is contrary to the requirements in the council's policy TB04 (MDD Local Plan. The applicant's evacuation plans are inadequate for this largescale development with all routes out being towards AWE a short distance to the north west.

2. Does not accord with council's policies on development; for example, CC01 (presumption in favour of sustainable development), CC02 (development limits), CC04 (Sustainable design and construction). The site was excluded from consideration for the Local Plan and, although it is contiguous with the settlement of Spencers Wood, the village only has moderate development status; the proposal is for a major development that would normally only be allowed if included in the local plan. Planning permission for proposals at the edge of settlements will only be granted where they can demonstrate that the development, including boundary treatments, is within development limits and respects the transition between the built up area and the open countryside by taking account of the character of the adjacent countryside and landscape. This is not the case here. Moreover, planning permission will only be granted for proposals that seek to deliver high quality sustainably designed and constructed developments appropriate for its location. This is not the case here. If sustainable is to mean what is defined by sustainable, that developments undertaken will not have a negative impact on its local environment after completion, then this proposal fails that test. Improvements to road junctions leading from the site at Body's Farm entrance and with the B3349 and Back Lane won't on their own solve the problem of traffic backing up on the ancient B3349 due to bottlenecks along the route to the M4 to the north.

3. Impact on local road network; the scale of the proposed development with its 420 dwellings, 80 bed care home and employment area, primary school, service hubs is bound to result in at least a further 1,500 plus daily vehicle movements. This would be intolerable at this location. Should the proposal be allowed, then a number of measures should be introduced to mitigate the negative impacts on the local road network: i) 30 mph speed limit extended south to the junction of B3349 with Swallowfield Street; ii) close off Back Lane immediately past the entrance to Lambs Farm Business Park to all commercial vehicles including heavy goods vehicles, with speed humps and width restriction at junction of Back Lane and Lambs Lane. This would stop what is now a rat run to becoming a major route to and from the A33. Thus avoiding the use of roads that are in effect unclassified and not intended for major routes.

4. The site is on good agricultural land that has been used for arable farming up to 2024. Securing adequate levels of food production in England has preoccupied successive governments in recent years due to very low self-sufficiency levels of less than 60%. A 25 year plan to increase production was published in autumn 2024 to meet the challenges of changing world with its fragile supply chains.