

PLANNING REF : 260577
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 304 Nine Mile Ride
: Finchampstead, Berkshire
: RG40 3NN
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Gareth Davies
DATE SUBMITTED : 09/04/2026

COMMENTS:

Application 260577 - Caravan Site, Land South of Valois
Finchampstead RG40 3NR

I am writing to formally and strongly object to the planning application for a Caravan Site, Land South of Valois Finchampstead, RG40 3NR. My family and I have lived at 304 Nine Mile Ride for the past six years, and we are deeply concerned about the severe and negative impact this inappropriate development would have on our local community, environment, and road safety.

My primary objections, which are all material planning considerations, are as follows:

1. Severe Impact on Highway and Public Safety

Range Road is a narrow, single-track rural lane with no footpaths and is fundamentally unsuitable for the large vehicles associated with this development.

Unsuitability for Caravans and HGVs: The road is already used by residents, walkers, and horse riders. Its narrowness means it is completely inappropriate for the manoeuvring of large vehicles such as mobile homes or touring caravans. This would create a significant and unacceptable risk to all road users. The applicant's own recent attempts to scrape the verges to widen the road access demonstrate its existing inadequacy.

Inadequate Access and Visibility: The creation of a new vehicular access onto this narrow lane is unlikely to meet the required "visibility splay" standards for safe entry and exit, creating a clear and present danger.

Emergency Vehicle Access: I have serious concerns about whether emergency service vehicles could reliably access the site, particularly if other vehicles are parked on the lane. This poses a direct risk to the safety of any future residents as well as existing ones.

2. Fundamentally Unsustainable Location

This proposal is in direct contradiction to the principles of sustainable development outlined in both local and national planning policy.

Increased Car Dependency: The site is isolated from all essential local services, including shops, schools, and doctors' surgeries. With no public transport links, no footpaths, and no safe cycling routes, any occupants would be entirely dependent on private cars for every journey. This promotes unsustainable travel patterns and increases traffic on already busy local roads like Nine Mile Ride.

Conflict with National Traveller Site Policy: The government's "Planning policy for traveller sites" explicitly states that new sites should be sustainable. This location is the antithesis of a sustainable site due to its isolation from services and facilities. Approving it would go against the core principles of national policy.

3. Direct Conflict with Local and Neighbourhood Planning Policy

This speculative application is in clear violation of the statutory development plan.

Outside Settlement Boundaries: The site lies outside the defined settlement boundary and is designated as countryside in the Wokingham Local Plan (2010), the emerging draft Local Plan (2024), and, most importantly, the made Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan. This land has not been identified or allocated for any form of development.

Harm to the Green Gap: Range Road is identified as a key "green gap" in the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan. This proposal would erode that gap, leading to "urban creep" and having an urbanising effect on the countryside, which the plan specifically seeks to prevent.

Out of Character: The Local Plan states that all development should add value to the character of the streetscape. A traveller pitch, with its associated mobile home, caravan, and hardstanding, is completely out of character with the surrounding rural, wooded landscape and would detract from, not add to, its value.

4. Irreparable Harm to Biodiversity and the Natural Environment

The development would cause significant and lasting damage to the local ecosystem.

Loss of Habitat and Wildlife: The felling of trees, which has already occurred without any apparent consent, and the removal of woodland to accommodate hardstanding and buildings will have a severely detrimental effect on local wildlife. This land serves as a habitat and corridor for numerous species.

Lack of Ecological Assessment: Given the nature of the site, a full Ecological Impact Assessment and a Biodiversity Net Gain statement should have been submitted with this application. To my knowledge, this has not been done. The development is in direct contravention of Policies IRS5 (biodiversity) and IRS6 (trees) of the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan.

Drainage and Utilities: The addition of significant hardstanding will alter the natural drainage properties of the area, potentially leading to flooding and other harmful effects. Furthermore, the site lacks connection to mains utilities such as sewerage and drainage, which is a fundamental requirement for new residential development.

5. Detrimental Impact on Residential Amenity

The proposal would unacceptably harm the quality of life for existing residents.

Noise and Disturbance: The introduction of residential activity into this quiet, rural lane will inevitably lead to an increase in noise and disturbance, from vehicle movements to domestic activity, at hours that are uncharacteristic for the area.

Light Pollution: The addition of external domestic lighting into what is currently a dark, unlit lane will destroy the rural, dark-sky character of the area, constituting a form of light pollution that harms residential amenity.

6. The Precedent and Five-Year Land Supply

While I understand the council has a duty to provide sites, this must not be at the expense of proper, plan-led development.

Setting a Dangerous Precedent: Approval of this application on an unsuitable, unallocated site would set a dangerous precedent, inviting further speculative applications in other parts of the lane and the wider countryside, leading to the piecemeal erosion of our local environment.

Site Suitability: The council should focus on identifying and allocating suitable and sustainable sites through its Local Plan process, rather than approving an ad-hoc application on a site that is so clearly inappropriate and contrary to multiple local and national policies.

For all of the robust planning reasons outlined above, I trust that the council will refuse this inappropriate and damaging application.