

PLANNING REF : 260577
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 309 Nine Mile Ride
: Finchampstead
: RG40 3NL
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Adrian Chappell
DATE SUBMITTED : 25/04/2026

COMMENTS:

I wish to register my strong objection to the above planning application for the change of use of land from countryside with a Tree Protection Order (TPO) to a traveller pitch comprising a mobile home, touring caravan, day room, new vehicular access, parking, landscaping and associated works.

My objections are based on material planning considerations, including harm to the character of the countryside, highway safety, environmental damage, unsustainable location, and conflict with adopted and emerging planning policy.

1. Unlawful Felling of Protected Trees (TPO) and Environmental Damage

Trees on the site, protected under a Tree Preservation Order, have been felled without prior consent. This is a criminal offence and demonstrates disregard for planning control.

Further trees at the entrance to Range Road have also been removed to force access for large vehicles. This reinforces the unsuitability of the site for caravans and large vehicles.

The loss of woodland and the introduction of hardstanding will significantly alter drainage patterns, increase surface run off, and harm local biodiversity. Wildlife has already been displaced, including local Muntjac deer now forced into neighbouring gardens and onto Nine Mile Ride, increasing the risk of vehicle collisions.

This environmental harm is contrary to the Wokingham Local Plan, the Draft Local Plan Update, and the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan, all of which require protection and enhancement of the natural environment.

2. Inaccurate Claim of "Retrospective" Application

The application was submitted on the evening of 6 March, yet works commenced later that same evening and continued over the weekend. At the time of submission, no works had yet taken place, meaning the application was not retrospective.

The site was cleared overnight on 6 March, caravans were moved in over the weekend, and significant damage was caused to the lane, verges and trees. Floodlighting has since been installed and is used nightly, causing light pollution and further urbanisation of the

countryside.

This behaviour demonstrates a disregard for planning procedures and for neighbouring residents.

3. Harm to the Character of the Countryside and Green Gap

Range Road is a rural, single track, unmade lane forming an important green gap between the historic forest rides of Nine Mile Ride and Sandhurst Road. This green gap is recognised in the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan.

The proposed development would urbanise this rural setting through:

- hardstanding
- floodlighting
- domestic paraphernalia
- increased traffic
- loss of woodland
- introduction of built form and caravans

There are no comparable developments in the area, and the proposal is wholly out of keeping with the existing character of Range Road and surrounding properties.

Both the 2010 Local Plan and the 2024 Draft Local Plan require development to enhance the character of the streetscape. This proposal would do the opposite.

4. Unsuitable and Unsafe Access - Highway Safety Concerns

Range Road is a narrow, single vehicle rural track with:

- no passing places
- no paving or tarmac
- no street lighting
- unstable verges
- poor visibility at the junction with Nine Mile Ride
- no footpath or cycle path

It is already unsafe for large vehicles. The forced entry of caravans has caused damage to the lane and verges, demonstrating the unsuitability of the access.

Increased traffic will worsen the already dangerous junction with Nine Mile Ride (B3430), where sight lines are poor and vehicles often must reverse back onto the main road due to the lack of passing points. This creates a serious hazard for vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians.

Emergency vehicles, including fire engines, would struggle to access the site safely, posing a risk to future occupants and existing residents.

A previous planning application for this site was refused on the grounds of unsafe access and increased use of a substandard road. Those reasons remain valid and are now even more pronounced.

5. Unsustainable Location

The site is isolated and lacks access to essential services. There are:

- no local shops within walking distance
- no nearby schools
- no doctors or community facilities
- no safe pedestrian routes
- no convenient public transport

Residents would be entirely dependent on private vehicles, contrary to sustainability principles in the Local Plan, Draft Local Plan, and national planning policy.

6. Not Allocated for Development in Any Local Plan

The site is not allocated for development in:

- the 2010 Wokingham Local Plan
- the 2024 Draft Local Plan Update
- the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan

There are other more suitable and allocated traveller sites within the borough. Approving this application would undermine the plan led system.

7. Precedent for Further Harmful Development

Approval of this application would set a precedent for further traveller pitches along this unsuitable single track road. A second similar application has already been submitted, demonstrating the real risk of cumulative harm.

This would fundamentally change the character of Range Road and increase safety risks for all users.

8. Lack of Utilities and Infrastructure

The site has no mains utilities, including no sewage connection. The introduction of hardstanding and domestic use will alter drainage

and increase flood risk. The infrastructure required to support residential use is not present and would further damage the rural environment.

9. Noise, Disturbance and Impact on Residential Amenity

Initial works were carried out late into the night over a weekend, with no consultation or consideration for neighbouring families. This has already caused significant disturbance and demonstrates a lack of respect for the local community.

Ongoing noise, lighting and increased traffic will continue to harm residential amenity.

Conclusion

The proposal conflicts with multiple adopted and emerging planning policies, causes demonstrable harm to the countryside, highway safety, residential amenity, and the environment, and is based on unauthorised works including the felling of protected trees.

For these reasons, I strongly urge the Council to refuse this application.