



Head of Development Control
Wokingham Borough Council

10th October 2025

(by email only)

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Application 243125 at Thamesfield, Wargrave Road, Henley-on-Thames

Following the submission of amendments to the above planning application which proposes the redevelopment of the existing Retirement Home at Thamesfield, I write on behalf of Remenham Parish Council in order to object to the proposed development. For reasons explained below, it is strongly considered that the application should be refused due to its conflict with Development Plan policy and material considerations also indicating the inappropriateness of the scheme. The recent amendments have made no fundamental difference to the scheme and as a result the objections raised by the Parish Council in the letter on their behalf of 11th February 2025 still apply.

Rather than repeat all the content of the previous objection letter, a summary of the points is made below.

The fundamental concern raised is that the scheme remains poorly designed. Despite the minor amendments undertaken, it has not given due consideration to the constraints and context of the site and surroundings. In particular, it will have a significant adverse impact upon the amenities of neighbouring properties, it will detract from the character of the environment, and openness of the Green Belt and will deliver insufficient parking provision. Taking these points in turn.....

Impact on Neighbouring Properties

Detailed submissions (dated 30.01.25 and 02.10.25) have been made on behalf of the residents at Remenham Row, who directly adjoin the site to the northwest. It is not considered necessary to repeat the objections made on their behalf, but the Parish Council fully endorses the points made by them.

In summary, the scale, orientation, elevational openings and location of the proposed accommodation will have a substantial adverse impact upon the outlook and privacy levels of the neighbouring residents at Remenham Row. As a result, the proposed scheme is in direct conflict with Policy CP3 of the Council's Core Strategy, which advises that developments will be supported if they do not have a detrimental impact on the amenities of the adjoining land users. There is no doubt that the proposal will have a significantly detrimental impact on the adjoining land users in this instance, and there is clear and direct conflict with Policy CP3 as a result.

In addition, the proposed development continues to fail (by a significant margin) to adhere to the separation distances set out within the Council's Design Guide, providing a further material consideration to demonstrate that the scheme is unacceptable as proposed.

Impact on the Environment and Openness of the Green Belt

The application site lies in the designated countryside, outside of any settlement boundary. As a result, Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy is applicable and constrains development in such locations in order to protect the identity of settlements and maintain the quality of the environment. The Policy sets out a number of criteria that development proposals need to adhere to if they are to be considered appropriate in such locations, including;

2) It does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings;

The previous objection letter on behalf of the parish Council explained why the initially proposed development will result in an increase in floorspace of 660% beyond that of the original building on site from 1981/82. And it is the increase beyond the 'original' building that is relevant in policy terms and within the NPPF.

The amendments to the scheme will result in a very small reduction in the proposed footprint of development. The previously proposed GIA of 4,722 sq m is now reduced to 4,662 sq m according to the revised DAS. Such figures exclude any allowance for the basement floorspace.

On this basis, the scheme will now result in a 652% increase beyond the original.

The Applicant's own Planning Statement, at 6.3.5, acknowledges that the proposed development does not fall within any of the categories of development listed at Policy CP11 that are considered to be appropriate in the countryside. However, the Statement then suggests that this should not be of concern because the proposal aligns with the principles of the policy. Such a position is strongly contended. One of the underlying aims of the policy is to maintain the quality of the environment outside of settlements, and this is enabled by the principle of controlling development in a number of ways, one of which is how the new development compares to that originally on site. There can be no doubt that the proposed scheme will result in a development that bears little resemblance to that of the original buildings on site. It will cause excessive encroachment of the site and expansion of development beyond the original buildings, and as a result is in clear conflict with both the detailed requirement and underlying purpose of Policy CP11.

The NPPF sets out a very similar approach to Policy CP11 towards the constraint of the extension of buildings in the Green Belt. As recognised at many points within the Applicant's submission, the proposed scheme will result in the 'extension' of the main building at Thamesfield. Paragraph 154 of the NPPF sets out a number of exceptions for which development in the Green Belt will not be inappropriate. This includes the following when considering developments which propose an extension;

c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

In this case the addition beyond the size of the original building is substantial. It will result in a building with over 6 times the GIA that was in place in 1981/82. It will quite clearly be a disproportionate addition over the size of the original.

The Applicant's Planning Statement suggests that the proposed scheme should be considered as a 'redevelopment', rather than as an extension, and hence makes reference to a different exception at paragraph 154 of the NPPF. The Parish Council disagree. The proposed works will quite clearly extend the existing main building at Thamesfield. The DAS refers to the works being an extension, and the Applicant's own application description is '*Part demolition of existing building and replacement with a three-storey extension to provide extra-care units (Use Class C2).....*'. (my underlining). The latest accompanying letter from Stantec dated 17th September 2025 continues to describe the scheme as a three-storey extension, and refers to the design of the extension being amended.

The proposal should quite clearly be assessed against the requirements of criterion (c) of paragraph 154 of the NPPF and it quite clearly fails to meet such requirements.

With regard to the scheme's impact upon the Green Belt, the NPPF at paragraph 142 advises that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. For reasons explained above, the openness of this part of the Green Belt will be harmed by the siting, height and scale of the proposed extension.

With regards the impact of the scheme upon the wider environment, the amendments made will have no notable impact, other than introducing a substantial dormer feature within the design, considered to be out of keeping with the surroundings. As a result, for reasons previously set out in the objection letter dated 11th February 2025, the proposal continues to be in conflict with Core Strategy Policy CP3(a) and (c) and MDDD Policy TB24.

Parking Provision

The Council's Parking Standards recommend that for Residential Care Homes 1 space should be provided per full-time staff member plus 1 visitor space per 3 residents. The Application Form advises that there will be the equivalent of 13 full-time staff if the proposal is built (compared to 8 at present). As a result, there will be a net increase of 12 additional residential units on site and 5 additional full time staff. Applying the Council's standards for Care Homes this would require an additional 9 car parking spaces. Only 8 additional spaces are proposed, hence there is conflict with the standards.

However, the standards also comment that if independent units form part of the Care Home, then the above standards might not be appropriate. This is understandable due to the use of cars by those living in independent units likely to be higher than those who are in dependent units. It follows that the deficit in provision is even more of a concern given that there are independent units proposed in this case.

The Applicant's Transport Statement suggests that the proposed parking provision will be appropriate based upon a survey of parking availability that was undertaken on a single Thursday and Friday in February. It is suggested that such a short period for a survey will not give a true reflection of the true parking requirements for the site.

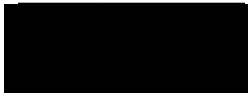
The Applicant's have not submitted any updated information on parking provision as part of the amendments undertaken. It is assumed that the previously referred to staff numbers and independent units continue to form part of the proposal. As a result the previous objection on parking grounds, and conflict with guidance as explained above, still applies.

The provision of sufficient parking is of particular importance in this location. If parking is unavailable on site, this is no alternative authorized parking provision nearby. Any shortage of provision on site is likely to encourage unauthorized parking on Wargrave Road, with subsequent highway danger caused.

The proposal is therefore considered to be in conflict with Policy CC07 of the MDD relating to parking.

This submission has explained why the recent amendments have made no significant difference to the proposal. It remains poorly designed due to it giving insufficient consideration to the impact it will have upon the site and its surroundings. It follows that the proposal is in clear conflict with relevant development plan policies and should be refused by the Council unless material considerations indicate otherwise. It is noted that the Applicant suggests that weight should be given to material considerations, including the demand for such accommodation. Others will be able to advise upon whether such demand really exists, but even if it does, there is still no justification to approve a scheme that will have such a detrimental impact upon the amenities of neighbours and appearance and character of the site in the wider environment. The recent NPPF provides further justification as to why the proposal is unacceptable and should be refused.

Yours sincerely,



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