

PLANNING REF : 253110
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Braunwald
: Heath Ride, Wokingham, Berkshire
: RG40 3QJ
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Stuart Robinson
DATE SUBMITTED : 09/02/2026

COMMENTS:

I wish to register strong objection to this application on the following grounds:

1. Design and Character

The proposed development does not respect the unique character and style of the area. The Rides area is characterised by largely individually designed properties. This development is more akin to a small 'estate' of largely identical properties set right at the heart of Heath Ride.

It may well be that only two houses will be visible from Heath Ride, but this will be a side view of these properties which will do little for the existing community and security of the Ride. Existing properties with road frontage look out over the Ride. It is also clear, with the number of properties proposed, that visibility and privacy for neighbouring properties will be adversely affected.

Elements of the planning application still refer to a scheme of eight properties which is confusing.

That the proposed new access road extends well beyond the seventh property, and beyond the rear building line, gives rise to a risk that future permission will be sought to extend this high density scheme yet further.

Point 15 of the Design and Access Statement appears to indicate that roof voids are extension-ready without the need for additional structural or design work. There are no 3 storey buildings on Heath Ride, and indeed most two storey buildings are chalet style or of restricted ridge height. The proposed properties in this application are therefore not in keeping with their surroundings, and have the potential to become even more overbearing on neighbouring properties than currently conceived.

2. Highways and Traffic

Heath Ride is a Restricted Byway. It is unadopted. The Ride is unlit, has no pavements, and in the winter is prone to flooding, significant leaf litter/mud and potholes. It is enjoyed by cyclists, walkers, runners, and horses, who share the road with residential (and associated) traffic.

At a push, it may be possible to walk to some, but not all amenities. However, in reality, the vast majority of journeys will be made by car, particularly at night or in poor weather. It is unrealistic to suggest otherwise. It is reasonable to calculate that seven additional properties, each with two vehicles, will significantly increase traffic on Heath Ride, Hollybush Ride, and potentially Roman Ride (which is fully unmade). These lanes are all Restricted Byways whose upkeep is entirely funded at residents' expense.

There is no clarity over how the new properties will contribute to the ongoing upkeep of Heath Ride, beyond the proposed new access road.

There is also no outline of how the cost of additional maintenance to Heath Ride will be met by the developers to support the volume of heavy vehicles and construction traffic required during site clearance and build.

The proposed development site is located at the narrowest part of Heath Ride. The entrance to the site, as conceived in the scheme plans, will remain poorly sighted even during daylight hours. In particular if approaching from the east, the turning will be very tight especially for large vehicles (e.g. refuse lorries). This proposed new junction risks adversely impacting existing users of Heath Ride, with commensurate risks to congestion and safety.

3. Site issues

The development density for this scheme is too high. Median plot size figures referenced in the application take into account properties along the full length of Heath Ride, and paint a picture of these new plots as being larger than average. However, at this end of Heath Ride, the existing property plot sizes are almost universally bigger than those proposed in this new development. In the context of its immediate surroundings, this scheme constitutes overdevelopment.

The maximum depth of backland development along Heath Ride is, in general, two properties deep. This scheme would constitute backland development four properties deep, setting an unwelcome precedent. As outlined in the (refused) application at Broughton Farm, this is a layout inconsistent with Heath Ride, which is "incongruous within the area, failing to maintain the low density pattern and strong linear character of the area and the high quality of the environment. The introduction of residential development on to the site would fail to preserve the semi-rural setting".

The (refused) application in respect of a much smaller scheme at Broughton Farm found that adverse impacts would "significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against policies in the [NPPF] Framework when taken as a whole". This application should be considered in a similar light.

4. Environment and Policy

The application is not located within the local development area and is contrary to the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan. This development would set an unwelcome precedent for inappropriate development in countryside areas.

The access road proposal (Lighting Strategy) appears to include lighting to the access road provided by directional bollards. There is no lighting of that nature on Heath Ride or surrounding areas.

The application refers to high speed broadband provision as a mitigation for transport impacts. High speed (full fibre) broadband is not available at this end of Heath Ride.

The Flood Risk Assessment appears to have been conducted during the driest part of the year (May). Even so, it is notable that the

bore holes dug during the survey did not drain. In addition, there is constantly standing water at the bottom (Heath Ride) end of the site during wet weather and throughout the winter months. It would be

advisable to conduct a survey during the winter months. Indeed, the Botanical Survey as part of the application indicates that the site has a "high water table and poor drainage". The water run off from the site regularly flows onto Heath Ride, contributing to the poor state of the carriageway. This situation will not be improved with an increased number of buildings on the site. The existing drainage ditch along Heath Ride is already routinely at capacity, and will not cater for discharge from seven additional properties. There is no mains sewer, nor any realistic prospect of one being available in the near future.

5. "Public Consultation"

The private event - held incidentally on the Saturday of a May bank holiday weekend when many were away - cannot be reasonably considered to be a public consultation.

Support for regeneration of the site (which could undoubtedly be improved) and/or interest in what a developer may be planning, does not equate to full support for this scheme.

Survey response from 11 properties is statistically insignificant, and are not a representative sample of local feeling. The questions in the survey were at best constrained to particular subject areas, and at worst deliberately seeded with leading questions designed to support the developers' intent, providing "least worst" alternatives from which to select. The results of this survey have been presented as "neighbourhood support" for this application. This is not the case.