

PLANNING REF : 261695
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Middle Oak
: 203b Finchampst Finchampstead Road, Wokingham Berkshire, Sel
: RG40 3HS
SUBMITTED BY : Mrs Clarissa Flynn
DATE SUBMITTED : 01/09/2026

COMMENTS:

I wish to express my objection to the proposed redevelopment of this land for a number of reasons, set out below.

1. This area of land was part of a planning appeal in relation to PA190286 (planning appeal reference is APP/X0360/W/19/3235572). The planning appeal by the developer was dismissed on a number of grounds by HM Planning Inspectorate in 2019. One of these was that the land is "outside of any settlement boundary." The inspector's strong view was that there were many reasons to reject an application that involved development of this site, including protection of countryside and wildlife, maintaining the settlement boundaries between Wokingham and Finchampstead, adverse impact on neighbouring properties and harm to the local landscape.

2. Whilst the current application does not include housing, it does involve significant development of a site that is designated as countryside and which is outside the settlement boundaries. These were key elements of the Planning Inspector's decision in rejecting the previous application to develop the site. Particularly egregious is the prospect of the site being surrounded by a 3.5m high acoustic screen (apparently included in order to mitigate the noise that the site will inevitably engender when in use). Whilst the Design Assessment Statement states, "This fence is kept away from the boundary with the adjoining houses and is of sufficient distance to ensure no intrusive effect upon their outlook," this statement is disingenuous. Such a high structure will clearly be a visible, extremely prominent feature on the landscape; to suggest otherwise is ludicrous.

It seems probable that the screen/fence would loom over neighbouring properties in an oppressive manner, dominating their outlook, casting a long shadow and representing something that is far beyond what any homeowner would wish or expect to see adjoining, or even visible from, their house/garden, particularly in an area of open countryside. This element of the plans alone renders the application unacceptable.

3. The proposed development will have an inevitably adverse effect on wildlife in the vicinity. It is well documented that there are bats and great crested newts in the vicinity, both protected species.

However, the Ecological Appraisal seems to have disregarded both. The impact of the 3.5 metre acoustic screen on the local bat population also appears to have been overlooked, not to mention the likely impacts of the 6.5 metre high netting on both bats and birds.

4. The Planning Inspector who rejected the earlier application to develop the site carefully considered the impacts on the trees, including four TPO-protected trees on the site. The applicant does not appear to have considered the effect of the installation of the acoustic fence on these trees, both in terms of possible adverse

effects of the fence posts on the roots, as well as the shadow that the fence will inevitably cast. It strikes me that the application has given no consideration at all to this issue.

5. There is no good reason to allow development of this site, particularly given its recent planning history. Whilst the applicant has hinted at a community benefit, it is not clear how they would offer this, particularly as their primary purpose is to the "meet the needs of the [private] school." As they state that it is envisaged that the site will only be used in daylight hours (ie generally during school hours), and the applicant considers that there will be no impact at all on highway use or parking, one wonders how this might realistically be achieved. In any event, the local authority is developing a new sports hub less than one mile from this site, which will (unlike this current application) be entirely of general use and benefit to the wider community.

For these reasons, I would urge the Planning Committee to reject this application.