

PLANNING REF : 241567
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 18 Cricket Hill
: Finchampstead, Berkshire
: RG40 3TN
SUBMITTED BY : Mrs Georgina Chalfont
DATE SUBMITTED : 26/07/2024

COMMENTS:

I am writing to formally object to the planning application referenced above for the proposed development of 40 houses in Finchampstead. My objections are based on several key points:
Non-Adherence with Wider Planning Commitments/Strategies The proposed site is not included in the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan (FNP), which was approved by local residents and adopted by the Council last year. This plan, being the most recent and relevant, should guide development in the area. Approving a development that falls outside of this plan, especially so soon after its adoption, undermines the democratic process and the strategic planning framework set by the community and the Council. Furthermore, the development lies outside the accepted settlement boundary of Finchampstead. The proposed site encroaches on the buffer zone between Eversley and Finchampstead, setting a concerning precedent for future expansions that could significantly alter the village boundaries and character.

Unsuitability and Impracticality of the Location

The location of the proposed development is unsuitable for several practical reasons. Firstly, there has been inadequate assessment of the land's flood risk, particularly given its recent restoration by Cemex. Observations of significant flooding in the area suggest that the land may not be stable or safe for new housing developments. Additionally, the area suffers from a distinct lack of public transport options. The FNP emphasizes reducing car usage, but the proposed development would likely increase traffic, exacerbating issues at key junctions, such as the dangerous Finchampstead War Memorial junction. This site is also situated at a transition point between a national speed limit and a 40mph zone, further complicating traffic management and safety.

Local infrastructure, including the sewage treatment plant, is already under significant strain. Adding more properties would exacerbate these issues, potentially leading to unsustainable pressure on local services and facilities.

Significant Environmental Impact

The proposed development is adjacent to the Moor Green Lakes Nature Reserve, soon to become a Country Park. This proximity poses a risk to the protected habitats and wildlife, including species such as Barn Owls, slow worms, lizards, and bats, as well as a badger sett identified within the development plans. The environmental significance of this area cannot be overstated, and any development here would likely cause irreversible damage to these important ecosystems.

Incompatibility with the Look and Feel of Finchampstead Village

The proposed development does not align with the established look and feel of Finchampstead Village. The rural character and scenic landscapes that define the village would be disrupted by this development. The introduction of street lighting, necessary for such a development, would alter the village's character and contribute

to light pollution, affecting both residents and wildlife. Moreover, the field proposed for development is a cherished local spot for dog walking, hiking, and enjoying the countryside. Any construction here would significantly detract from the village's aesthetic and recreational appeal.

Conclusion

In summary, the proposed development is not in adherence with the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan, the location is impractical and unsuitable, it poses significant environmental risks, and it is incompatible with the village's character. There are more appropriate locations for development within the borough that align better with strategic planning and community interests without such detrimental impacts.