

PLANNING REF : 261059
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Hill View House
: School Road, Barkham, Wokingham, Berkshire
: RG41 4TN
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Matthew Arris
DATE SUBMITTED : 22/05/2026

COMMENTS:

Dear Planning Officer,

I am writing to object to the proposed Barkham Square development.

I live on School Road, very close to the proposed site, and would be directly affected by the cumulative impact of further large-scale development in this part of Barkham and Arborfield. My objection is not a general objection to housing, but to the scale and location of this proposal, given the existing pressure on local roads, limited realistic alternatives to car travel, and the semi-rural character of the area.

The applicant's own Masterplan Framework Document confirms that the site is approximately 45 hectares of mainly agricultural land, with mature trees, ancient woodland, hedgerows, ditches, ponds and Barkham Brook. The proposal is for residential dwellings, elderly care accommodation, open space, allotments, green and blue infrastructure and SANG. It is therefore a major development, not a modest infill scheme.

1. Cumulative overdevelopment and loss of rural character

Barkham and Arborfield have already absorbed substantial new development, particularly around Arborfield Green. The area has changed significantly in recent years, and further large-scale housing would continue the erosion of the remaining rural gap between Barkham, School Road, Langley Common Road and Arborfield Green.

The applicant's own material recognises Barkham's historic rural character, scattered settlement pattern and agricultural setting. It also identifies the importance of conserving rural lanes, hedgerows, wooded boundaries, landscape separation and the open character of the farmed landscape. A development of this scale would conflict with those aims and would further urbanise a semi-rural edge-of-settlement location.

2. Unsustainable transport location

The application presents the site as sustainably connected, but this does not reflect the reality for local residents. Outside the newer Arborfield Green estate roads, pavements are intermittent or absent on many routes towards Barkham, Arborfield and surrounding villages. School Road, Barkham Road, Barkham Street and Langley Common Road were not designed for large volumes of pedestrian, cycle and vehicle traffic.

The nearest railway station is around 4km away in Wokingham, which

is not a practical daily walk for most people. The bus service is limited, and even with proposed improvements, it is unrealistic to assume that a development of this scale would not be heavily car-dependent. Most households would still need cars for commuting, schools, shopping, healthcare and access to nearby towns.

3. Highway congestion and safety

Traffic congestion is already a significant local problem. The surrounding road network is constrained, semi-rural in character and already busy at peak times. Additional traffic from a major development, elderly care accommodation, visitors, deliveries, refuse vehicles and construction traffic would worsen congestion and increase pressure on roads that are not suited to this level of growth.

The impact should be assessed cumulatively, not in isolation. Recent and ongoing development around Arborfield Green has already increased traffic across the area. Even if individual junction modelling suggests technical capacity, that does not mean the wider local road network is safe, suitable or sustainable for further large-scale growth.

4. Infrastructure and mitigation are not yet proven

The proposal relies heavily on future mitigation, sustainable travel assumptions and integration with Arborfield Green. Local experience suggests that infrastructure often lags behind housing delivery. Before any further large development is permitted, there should be clear and enforceable evidence that local roads, pavements, public transport, schools, healthcare, drainage, ecology and community facilities can support the additional population.

Particular attention should be given to School Road, Barkham Road, Langley Common Road, Barkham Street, Biggs Lane and nearby junctions. Construction traffic should also be treated as a serious issue, given the scale of the site and the limited rural road network.

5. Residential amenity

Existing residents would experience increased traffic, noise, disturbance, congestion, light pollution and pressure on local facilities. The construction period would also be significant, with potential impacts from HGV movements, dust, mud on roads and disruption to nearby homes.

Requested decision

For the reasons above, I respectfully request that the Council refuses this application.

If the Council is minded to approve it, then approval should not be granted without robust, enforceable obligations covering highway mitigation, public transport funding, safe pedestrian and cycle routes, construction traffic controls, phasing, landscape

protection, ecological protection and delivery of infrastructure before occupation. However, my primary position is that the proposal is not acceptable in this location at the scale proposed.

Yours faithfully,

Matthew Arris
School Road, Barkham, Wokingham