

Philip & Maxene Davis,

Hennerton Beeches,
Hennerton, Wargrave,
Berks. RG10 8PD



Wokingham Borough Council,
Planning Services Department
Council Offices, Shute End,
Wokingham, RG40 1WH

11 December 2024

Dear Planning Officer,

Re Planning Application No. 242951, The Coppers, Penny Lane, Wargrave, RG10 8PB

We wish to inform you of our strong objections to proposed further development of the above property. As adjacent residents, we hold a view that the development if approved, would significantly and negatively impact our quality of life. The basis for our specific objections are set out as follows:

1: Green Belt - National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

i: Government guidance advises planning authorities that, in general, development on the green belt is “inappropriate” and “harmful to the Green Belt”. It goes on to say that development on the green belt should only be allowed “in very special circumstances”. There is nothing exceptional in Planning Application 242951. It proposes a property which is six or seven times larger than the original bungalow approved for the site. This clear example of desire to expand urbanisation within a green belt environment is regrettable and clearly contrary to policy. We therefore urge your summary rejection of Planning Application 242951.

ii: We respectfully draw your attention to several planning applications which are on the planning file in association with the subject property. These individual proposals to the extend the property were each reasonably refused on grounds of an inappropriate mass increase to the green belt. We present wording from application F/2000/1218 as just one example of many refusals you have communicated to past owners of the same property:

Location:	The Coppers, Penny Lane, Wargrave, Reading.
Proposal:	Proposed single storey and two storey extensions to dwelling

The Wokingham District Council in pursuance of their powers under the above Acts and Regulations hereby **Refuse Permission** for carrying out the above development in accordance with the application and the accompanying plans submitted to the Council.

Reason

1. The proposed development by reason of its, scale, massing and location would result in an unacceptable cumulative change in the scale of development upon the site, to the detriment of the open character and amenity of the Green Belt. As such, the proposed development is contrary to Policy 9 of the Green Belt Local Plan for Berkshire and Policies WOS3, WGB1 and WGB3 of the Wokingham District Local Plan for Berkshire.

Reason

2. The proposed two storey, front development by reason of its scale, massing and location would form an obtrusive, incongruous feature to the detriment of the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the open character and amenity of the Green Belt. As such, the proposed development is contrary to Policy 9 of the Green Belt Local Plan for Berkshire and Policies WOS9, WBE1, WGB1 and WGB3 of the Wokingham District Local Plan.

iii: We ask you to take special note that planning application 242951 cites percentage increase in footprint and volume over the property's existing footprint and volume. This basis for calculation ignores the fact that green belt scale and massing should be calculated by referencing the original dwelling. In 2000, the property had already been increased by 138% of original building's footprint. If approved 242951 would grossly and unreasonably exceed that historical calculation.

2: Impact on safety.

i: There is no conventional highway access to the site. Access to the property is served only by an ancient bridlepath (Penny Lane). This unconventional access to a domestic dwelling has been the case since and before a 325m³ bungalow cottage was originally approved for the site in 1956. The comparatively small size and the associated numeric residency of the original dwelling when combined with then current lifestyles, did not present in those days any unreasonable or unacceptable stress to the substance of the bridleway. The situation in 2024 is very different. The current 1511m³ property is supported by parking for six modern motor vehicles serving a household living in a modern digital shopping lifestyle age. This results in multiple daily 'white van' delivery visits to the site. Consequential traffic stress on the part of bridleway, which is adjacent to the entrance of the site, causes the ground to routinely suffer excessively muddy conditions, particularly after heavy rains. Therefore, there are resultant negative safety, and convenience impacts on the broader community who use the public bridleway. Further development of the site, if approved, would inevitably significantly impair that adverse situation further. *(Note: We have personal experience of rescuing a distressed driver whose vehicle had become unmovable in thick mud at the entrance to the site. We can therefore attest to personal experience of the seriousness of this hazard.)*

ii: The application under consideration proposes a large swimming pool to be dug at comparatively low elevation below upland containing the Hennerton residential estate. Hennerton (RG10 8PD), comprises thirteen independently owned dwellings served by a private community road with associated amenity land. The road and amenity land is owned by Hennerton Residents Association. It seems highly unlikely that the applicant's proposed swimming pool could be built without removal of substantial spoil consisting of chalk, flint and soil etc. There appears therefore to be a significant subsidence risk to the hillside above the dig site. We therefore ask that the proposal be rejected. Or approved only after security and safety assurances have been provided.

3: Change of Use:

i: We respectfully draw your attention to that part of application 242951 which introduces what is described as a "replacement annexe". Our interpretation of the applicant's submission is that the proposed annexe represents a very clear change of use from an outbuilding to a residential building. The existing building in the garden is not a residential building, although the application implies that it is!

ii: While annotations on the submitted plans are indicative of an office building, the drawn character and content seem to describe what appears to be a 2-bedroom cottage or bungalow. This leads to genuine concerns that there may be plans to exploit the 'annexe' by sale, rent or use as an independent domestic dwelling. Our clear preference is for approval of the replacement annexe to be denied. However, if it is to be approved, we would ask for a restriction or covenant to be placed upon the approval such that it

prevents that annexe from being sold or let separately from the main house. The potential change of use adds further to concerns that we have expressed in other parts of this submission, such as effects on green belt, stressing of bridleway etc.

ii: The current replacement annexe application arises chronologically after previous successful applications 10591 (1979) for a double garage (37 m²) and 16064 for a 2-horse stable block (18 m²). We ask you to note paragraph 3 below from the notice you provided regarding permission for application 16064 (erection of stables). This unambiguous wording shows that the stable outbuilding was approved conditionally on it being used for domestic purposes and should not be occupied separately from the existing dwelling as living accommodation. That condition surely applies also to the proposed replacement annex, particularly in the context of it appearing to be a 2-bedroom dwelling.

To: Mr T R Tinson
Coppers
Penrys Lane
Wargrave
Berks

WOKINGHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL
COUNCIL OFFICES
SHUTE END
WOKINGHAM, BERKS., RG11 1BN

Application No. 16064

Proposal Erection of two stables at Coppers, Penny Lane, Wargrave

The Wokingham District Council under the above Acts hereby PERMIT the above development to be carried out in accordance with the application and the accompanying plans submitted by you to the Council subject to compliance with the following conditions the reasons for which are specified thereunder.

1. The development hereby permitted shall be commenced within five years from the date of this permission.
REASON This condition is deemed to be attached by virtue of Section 41(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1971.
2. All the materials to be used in the elevations of the proposed development shall match those on the adjoining garage to the satisfaction of the District Planning Authority, and this condition shall apply notwithstanding any indications as to these matters which have been given in the current application.
REASON To ensure that the materials are in keeping with those existing. (6)
3. The development hereby permitted shall be used only for domestic purposes ancillary to the enjoyment of the existing dwelling as such on the site. No trade or business of any kind whatsoever shall be carried out in the building and it shall not be occupied separately from the existing dwelling as living accommodation.
REASON In the interests of amenity. (164) /...

iii: We ask that you also note that the garage permission (10591) states that it was approved only as a garage. Para 4 of the approval notice states that “there shall be no structural alterations to the elevations of the building... and no further addition or alterations (including windows) ... without prior written permission of the planning authority. The current situation therefore is not of a poorly built residential building but that it is not a residential building at all. It is specifically approved as a stable and a garage. The current lean-to addition and windows have been built at variance with the written permissions.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT, 1971

To: Mr. T. R. Tinson
Coppers,
Penrys Lane,
Wargrave,
Berks.

WOKINGHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL
COUNCIL OFFICES,
SHUTE END,
WOKINGHAM, BERKS.

Application No. 10591

Proposal Single storey extension and double garage at "Coppers", Penny Lane, Wargrave.

The Wokingham District Council under the above Acts hereby PERMIT the above development to be carried out in accordance with the accompanying plans submitted by you and approved by the Council on the 4th day of May 1979, subject to compliance with the conditions specified hereunder:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be commenced within five years from the date of this permission.
2. All the materials to be used in the elevations of the proposed development shall match those on the existing dwelling to the satisfaction of the District Planning Authority, and this condition shall apply notwithstanding any indications as to these matters which have been given in the current application.
3. The garage hereby permitted shall be used for domestic garage only and it shall not be used for anything else.
4. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Order, 1977), there shall be no structural alterations to the elevations of the dwelling as shown by this condition and no further additions or alterations (including windows) shall be constructed without the prior written permission of the district planning authority.

iv: The combined footprint for these two approved buildings measures just 55 square metres. During interim years a 'lean to' has been added to the garage, such that it now comprises a footprint of 74 m². That 'lean to' appears to have been built without planning permission. The proposed annexe measures 72 m² and shows what appears to be a 2-ensuite bedroom-bungalow. If so, the proposal presents a clear change of use in circumstances when no change of use has been applied for. It also presents the prospect of an additional separate property on land, already having separate vehicular access. It thus presents unambiguous potential for the 'annexe' to be sold as a separate property. In this context it seems important to ask you to note that there have been several past applications for separate dwelling properties on the site, all of which have resulted in failure, including one that was taken to appeal. In this regard we bring to your attention the following refused applications: 0/254/61, 0/282/61, 0/16/62, 0/91/64, 0/2/69 including appeal refused 20.08.69. 38684 (1992)

v: We also draw your respected attention to the established precedent of two comparatively recent near vicinity applications which were refused. These relate to proposals to build on green belt land to the south of Kentons Lane, RG10 8PD. Please review applications 190454, 172421. We see no reason why application 242951 should not be similarly rejected.

4: Conservation of natural environment.

i: Penny Lane, from which the site is accessed, lies in a valley between cultivated farmland and tree protected woodland. Therefore, neighbouring residents (we included, because our home is just beyond some of the applicant's woodland), share our domestic habitat with local wildlife such as deer, [REDACTED] and fox. Historically this wildlife has been encouraged to thrive in an unrestrained environment where residents are sympathetic to wildlife needs. Sadly, property development interventions inevitably impact wildlife negatively. For example, by the recent erection of a property boundary fence, the applicants of 242951 have demonstrated conduct which is directly unsympathetic to the natural freedom of the area's wildlife: recently, a free-roaming deer was witnessed to be suffering considerable distress when constrained by the applicant's fence. The animal was unable to quickly find escape from traffic. Further site development by the applicants can therefore reasonably be predicted to additionally increase stress on local wildlife.

5: Effect on landscape.

i: The development site is located close to the base of a valley. Our home sits at elevation on the neighbouring hillside overlooking the roof-ridge of the development property towards open rising farmland on the other side of the valley. The applicant proposes increasing their property roof-ridge height by 0.75m. That proposed increase would negatively impact our outlook over the open landscape, we therefore ask that its approval be declined. Additionally, the development site is clearly visible from a public footpath lying to the Northeast. The proposed increased ridge height is therefore reasonably predicted to have adverse effect on the enjoyment of the landscape experienced by the frequent users of that footpath.

6: Unbecoming conduct

i: Sadly, we feel obligated to draw your attention to what we conclude as a thinly disguised intimidation tactic. In submitting the proposal, the applicant introduces argument that the current plan (242951) should be approved because it presents a more

favourable outcome than the erection of several buildings which are already approved. The relevant planning references are 232500 (indoor pool), 233178 (home office and orangery) and 231902 (triple garage). These approved applications were each based on the erection of 'permitted development' buildings. In presenting 242951, the applicants describe the approved permitted development buildings as their 'fallback position'. We interpret this argument as an attempt to engineer approval of 242951 via a two-phase exploitation of the planning procedure in circumstances when a more conventional single-phase approach would have been unlikely to succeed. Using the permitted development facility in this exploitive way is surely to be robustly discouraged. This leads us to conclude that the planning authority should not submit to the intimidation by providing approval to 242951 but should explore opportunities for retrospectively withdrawing approval to the earlier submitted permitted development applications.

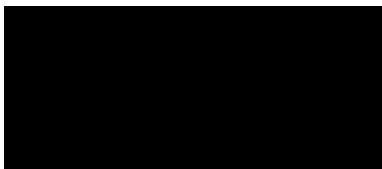
ii: It is relevant for us to note that our knowledge of 242951 has been triggered only by receipt of a Wokingham planning notice card. This has followed a welcome and necessary change in the planning authority's communication procedures because we were not similarly informed when the permitted development plans were submitted. We were therefore fully unaware of those permitted development proposals until after they had been approved. Had we been communicated with regarding them, we would have objected. We advise that the applicant has at no time chosen to communicate their planning ideas with us or to our knowledge with any other near-neighbours.

iii: We note that the planning application provides only the most minimal references to the site's location close to the Hennerton neighbourhood. The absence of that acknowledgement appears by our judgment to be tactically aimed at attempting to avoid the legitimate considerations of the considerable impact on the Hennerton Estate properties. We therefore ask you to consider 242951 within the context of the development site being near the Hennerton estate, with resultant negative impacts being inevitable

iii: We also ask you to note significant error in the submitted site location plans which fail to identify the existence of a Hennerton Residents Association owned strip of land (land registry No: BK445141) lying between the applicant's boundary and the private road serving the Hennerton Estate. We draw your attention to this significant error and ask you to seek the applicant's correction for the purpose of providing an accurate record for the planning file.

We sincerely hope that you will refuse application 242951 based on these and other grounds and are at your disposal should you wish to seek clarification or discussion.

Yours faithfully,



Philip and Maxene Davis

Original sent as a PDF file to: planning.enquiries@wokingham.gov.uk

Copies:

Hon Secretary, Hennerton Residents Association: 

Wargrave Parish Council: office@wargrave-pc.gov.uk