

PLANNING REF : 260577
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Redacted Nine Mile Ride
: Finchampstead, Wokingham, Berkshire
: RG40 3NL
SUBMITTED BY : Mr redacted redacted
DATE SUBMITTED : 17/04/2026

COMMENTS:

Planning application 260577 - Range Road

As a local resident I wish to formally object to this planning application for a gypsy/traveller pitch on Range Road. I recommend that this application must be considered alongside the impact of the adjacent "sister" site (Planning Application 260439) as the combined and cumulative impact will be even more severe. The site is classified as countryside in the Wokingham District Council local plan.

In addition, it is concerning that works have already taken place which have damaged the site and access road prior to any planning permission being granted. This demonstrates a complete disregard for proper planning controls and undermining confidence in any of the two proposals.

Fundamentally this development, alongside it's sister application 260439 is unsustainable and should be rejected due to harm to highway safety, the countryside, harm to wildlife and local amenity. Also, I fear this is the first of a number of planning applications that will ultimately cause "rural creep" and irreversible damage down Range Road and to the countryside and green belt. My objections are based on the following planning policy and safety concerns, which I trust the Council Planning Team will uphold.

1. Wokingham Strategic Plan

Fundamentally this proposed development is at conflict with Wokingham Local Development Plans - the site is situated within the countryside and sits outside the settlement boundaries defined in the 2010 Wokingham Local Plan, the 2024 draft Local Plan, and the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Range Road serves as a key green gap between historic forest rides like Nine Mile Ride and Sandhurst Road. This development would erode this gap, as defined in the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan. Together with Planning Application 260439, these applications represent a substantial and harmful encroachment into the "green gap", so must be considered together.

The loss of woodland and countryside with the installation of hardstanding and caravans would have a detrimental impact on the look and character of this lane and surrounding area.

This planning application contradicts all these issues and should be rejected outright. Alternate sites should be identified in the strategic plan to accommodate the travellers' requirements.

2. Road Safety and Access

Range Road is a narrow, single-track and unmade rural lane that is structurally unsuitable for the passage of large vehicles and caravans. This has already been demonstrated by the damage caused to

the lane by the attempted movement of caravans/static homes recently. The damage has included unauthorised widening of the lane into verges (owned by residents), removal of trees and extensive damage to tree roots.

This proposed development would increase the traffic at the junction of Range Road and the B3430 (Nine Mile Ride). This junction has previously been deemed substandard (Ref: F/2006/8196) and a risk to road safety as it is severely constrained by restricted sight lines and gradient. The alternative access of Range Road onto Sandhurst Road exits onto a fast-moving main traffic road.

Movement of large vehicles such as caravans / static homes down the Range Road would not allow for easy passing for local resident cars (or emergency services), forcing anyone trying to access the lane to reverse dangerously back onto a very busy Nine Mile Ride.

The road junction is too narrow to accommodate the turning circle of large vehicles and caravans. This was recently evidenced when a mobile home on a low loader caused chaos and obstructed traffic for several hours on Nine Mile Ride, forcing other vehicles to dangerously mount the footpath to pass the obstruction.

This junction was a key factor in the refusal of application F/2006/8196. Since then, traffic volumes have increased substantially, but the conditions of the junction have not improved, exacerbating this huge safety risk that is already recognised by the Council.

3. Personnel Safety

There is no safe pedestrian access or cycleway along Range Road, so the site is not a genuinely sustainable location.

4. Ecological Harm and Biodiversity Loss

The ecological impact of this proposed development is severe and irreparable. Fundamentally, under Wokingham Policy TB23 and MDD Policy TB10, the proposal must avoid adverse impacts on the Special Protection Area (SPA). The proposal fails this test. In addition;

The applicant has already felled many trees on the site, prior to requesting retrospective planning permission or carrying out an effective ecological survey. The proposed "no-dig" solution (in the Agent's Planning Statement) to protect TPO-covered trees is probably technically impossible to protect the long-term safety of the protected trees and their roots via digging, compaction and drainage run off from the proposed development. It will require utilities (water, power, sewage) to be installed. This will require digging through protected root zones, leading to the eventual death of the woodland screening.

The site is home to many species including Bats, Roe Deer, Badgers, Rabbits and Tawny Owls. The loss of woodland threatens these habitats and damage to the site has already seen an impact to wildlife

species such as owls and deer (one has recently died as it was frightened out onto Nine Mile Ride unable to find its way back to the woods). Floodlighting from the adjacent site (Planning Application 260439) already demonstrates extreme light pollution visible from afar. This "urban glow" conflicts the rural identity of

the historic forest and constitutes a major change in character.

There are already existing drainage and surface water concerns in the area, which risk being exacerbated by development of the site.

The current proposal ignores how the development will meet Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements. This, along with digging through tree roots and the probable removal of more trees will lead to future wildlife degradation.

5. Windfall Classification

The proposal describes this as a "suitable windfall site" which I totally contest. Under Wokingham Policy TB10, a site must be 'adjacent to an existing settlement' and 'avoid impacting the separate identity of settlement'. This proposal fails both - it encroaches into an established and recognised green gap and impacts the rural identity of Range Road as a woodland corridor.

6. Other Concerns

It is concerning that works have already taken place which have damaged the site and access road prior to any planning permission being granted. This infers a disregard for proper planning controls and undermines confidence in any of the two proposals. They have removed trees on the site, installed extensive hardstanding, widened the lane (removing trees and damaging tree roots), tapped into a private water supply, built what I understand to be a septic tank of unknown design (Have they taken steps to stop sewage and waste-water seeping into the local water table?), installed and operated extensive floodlights in the area in the middle of the night / early hours of the morning and tapped into electricity supply from the SSE electricity network.

7. Conclusion

This is the first of two known, but could be a number of additional potential similar, planning applications along Range Road. Therefore, I urge the Council to reject this proposal and prevent irreversible "rural creep" and harm to the Finchampstead countryside and green belt.