

PLANNING REF : 260439
PROPERTY ADDRESS : redacted Nine Mile R
: Finchampstead, Wokingham, England
: RG40 3NL
SUBMITTED BY : Ms redacted redacted
DATE SUBMITTED : 17/04/2026

COMMENTS:

Planning application 260439 - Range Road

As a local resident I wish to object to this planning application for a gypsy/traveller pitch on Range Road. I also feel that this application should be considered alongside the impact of the adjacent "sister" site (Planning Application 260577) as the combined and cumulative impact will be even more severe.

This development is unsustainable and should be rejected due to harm to highway safety, the countryside, wildlife and local amenity. My objections are listed below.

1. Road Safety and Access

Range Road is a narrow, single-track rural lane that is unsuitable for the passage of large vehicles and caravans. This was amply demonstrated by the damage caused to the lane by the attempted movement of caravans/static homes recently onto the land opposite (Planning Application 260577).

The proposed application would increase traffic at the junction of Range Road and the Nine Mile Ride. This junction has previously been deemed substandard (Ref: F/2006/8196) and a risk to road safety. 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.

This junction safety was a key factor in refusal of application F/2006/8196. Traffic volumes have increased substantially without any improvements to the junction.

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

2. Ecological Harm and Biodiversity Loss

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 planning permission or carrying out an effective ecological survey. The applicant proposes a "no-dig" solution (in the Agent's Planning Statement) to protect TPO-covered trees. This is probably technically impossible to protect the long-term safety of the protected trees and their roots through digging, compaction and drainage run off from the proposed development. The site 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.

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

The site is home to many species including Bats, Roe Deer, Badgers and Tawny Owls. The loss of woodland threatens these habitats and damage to the site has already seen an impact to wildlife. Floodlighting from the adjacent site (Planning Application 260577) already demonstrates extreme light pollution visible from afar. This "urban glow" is out of character with the rural identity of this historic forest and constitutes a major change in character.

3. 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 260577, 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.

The proposal describes this as a "suitable windfall site" which I contest. Under Wokingham Policy TB10, a site must be 'adjacent to an existing settlement' and 'avoid impacting the separate identity of settlements'. 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.

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.

4. Conclusion

This is the first of two similar planning applications along Range Road. However, if successful, there will probably be many more similar applications leading to a massive traveller site and complete destruction of the woodland. Therefore, I urge the Council to reject this proposal and prevent irreversible "rural creep" and harm to the Finchampstead countryside and green belt.