

PLANNING REF : 261460
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Pinewood Villas
: 2 Old Wokingham Road, Wokingham, Berkshire
: RG40 3EH
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Dino Ilaria
DATE SUBMITTED : 06/07/2026

COMMENTS:

I am the owner and occupier of a property immediately adjacent to the application site and wish to strongly object to this application for Permission in Principle for two self-build dwellings.

Wildlife Habitat

As an immediate neighbour, I observe the wildlife diversity supported by this woodland daily: including bats, owls, deer, hedgehogs, slow worms, stag beetles, and wide array of bird species, amongst others. This woodland functions as a connected habitat corridor, and its removal would not merely displace these species but eliminate the local conditions that sustain them. It is difficult to see how the removal of established woodland - habitat that has taken decades to mature - could not materially harm this biodiversity, regardless of what mitigation planting is proposed.

The fact that this woodland is currently inaccessible to the public makes it more ecologically valuable, not less. Unlike the publicly accessible woodland to the rear and other managed green spaces in the area, this site has remained undisturbed - no footfall, no dogs, no lighting, no noise. That absence of human pressure is exactly what allows species such as bats, hedgehogs and ground-nesting birds to use it as core habitat rather than simply passing through.

Disturbed, publicly walked woodlands serve a recreational function, but it is the quiet, inaccessible pockets like this one that do the heavy ecological lifting. Introducing two residential properties - with their associated lighting, domestic noise, cat predation and garden encroachment - would permanently destroy that undisturbed character and eliminate one of the few genuinely wild refuges remaining in an area where every other green space is already subject to regular human activity.

Even if only one tree is to be removed in its entirety, that tree forms part of a connected woodland group - its loss alters wind exposure, light and moisture for neighboring trees and breaks canopy continuity. More importantly, the Council should recognise that approving residential development beneath retained TPO trees inevitably generates future pressure to reduce or remove them on grounds of shade, leaf fall and perceived danger (already evidenced by the tranche of proposed works on the remaining TPO trees on the site). The question is not whether one tree is acceptable to lose today, but whether the Council is prepared to accept the sustained pressure on the entire group that residential occupation will create for decades to come.

Flooding and Drainage

I am also concerned about flood risk. This area already experiences local surface water flooding during periods of heavy or sustained rainfall. The application site currently functions as a significant area of permeable, vegetated ground. The mature tree canopy intercepts rainfall, the root systems aid ground absorption, and the soil structure slows surface water runoff. Replacing this with

buildings, hard surfacing, driveways and domestic curtilage would fundamentally alter the hydrology of the immediate area, increasing the volume and speed of surface water runoff onto adjacent properties and the road.

Erosion of Character

Old Wokingham Road retains a semi-rural character defined by mature trees, woodland pockets and green buffers between properties. These are the defining characteristics that attracted our family to this area in the first place, and precisely what distinguishes this setting from the large-scale housing developments that have been built in the immediate vicinity over recent years and continue unabated

across South Wokingham. Those developments - opposite the site and behind it - have already fundamentally transformed the wider area. What was once a largely green, wooded setting has become increasingly urbanised.

The woodland on this application site is now one of the last remaining elements that preserves any sense of the original landscape character and natural biodiversity. Its removal would complete a process of incremental erosion that has been underway for several years. I would ask the Council to consider the cumulative effect of sustained

development in this locality. Each individual application is presented as modest - "only two dwellings" - but the collective result is the systematic loss of every remaining natural space. At some point the line must be drawn, and I would argue that point has already been reached.

Summary

This site is unsuitable for residential development in principle. It provides irreplaceable wildlife habitat that I and many local residents witness and enjoy daily, it performs a critical drainage function in an area already prone to surface water flooding, and it represents one of the last remaining elements of the semi-rural character that defines this part of Old Wokingham Road. The public benefit of two additional dwellings is completely negligible in the context of the substantial housing growth already delivered nearby. The environmental harm would be permanent and irreversible. I respectfully request that the Council refuses this application.