

PLANNING REF : 232490
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Arborfield Village Hall
: Eversley Road, Arborfield
: RG2 9PQ
SUBMITTED BY : Arborfield & Newland Parish Council
DATE SUBMITTED : 05/12/2023

COMMENTS:

Arborfield and Newland Parish Council

Application number:
232490

Conclusion of Arborfield and Newland Parish Council.

This is an inappropriate development in this location for the reasons outlined below. Arborfield and Newland Parish Council (The Council) believes that Wokingham Borough Council has no option but to refuse this application.

The proposed development contravenes policies IRS1, IRS2, IRS4, AD1, AD2 and GA3 of the adopted Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan and, policies CP1, CP2, CP3, CP4, CP6, CP9, CP11 and CP18 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy. These policies set a position against development outside the settlement boundaries, development in the countryside, degradation of the identity, historical and rural character of the area, and require applicants to demonstrate sustainable development, appropriate developments to meet the local housing need and sustainable transport.

The application submitted by Anwyl Land Ltd does not comply with these policies nor does it demonstrate how it would mitigate the harms of the development. As the housing need identified in the Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan has already been more than delivered, and the Arborfield Garrison SDL is ahead of planned completions, there is no discernible benefit from this development for the local area. As a result of the significant harm this development would cause while delivering no benefits to the area The Council believes WBC has no option but to refuse this application. The application is a ribbon development and seeks to link Arborfield Cross village with Arborfield Garrison SDL and coalesce both settlements into one.

The development will sit adjacent to Langley Common Road between two roundabouts on a route that is already experiencing significantly elevated traffic volumes as a result of the closure of School Road.

The development is outside the curtilage of Arborfield Cross and the addition of 50 houses would substantially increase the developed area and change the rural character and setting of the historic village irrevocably.

The development is outside the Arborfield Garrison strategic development location and is wholly a greenfield development site outside the current settlement boundaries which would result in a net loss of agricultural land and green field open space which is the predominant character of this area outside the settlements.

The site for development also fails to provide a sustainable location and supports no improvements to the local amenity, facilities, or transport links that this development relies on to support the 'sustainable' nature of its planning application. Bus journeys to Reading station are 40-50 minutes and buses to Wokingham station infrequent. Existing experience demonstrates that the majority of commuting for school and education is by car because of inadequate public transport links. The site is more than a comfortable walking distance from the amenities proposed for Arborfield Garrison SDL which will require use of a car for shopping and leisure trips. There are no public transport routes to local medical facilities and no safe walking or cycling routes to reach the medical facilities at Swallowfield or Shinfield; there is no proposed medical facility in Arborfield Garrison SDL. The assumed car trip rate is significantly lower than that measured on similar developments locally which will put increased congestion onto a road network that is already approaching capacity at peak times.

The parish council therefore does not believe this proposed development is consistent with WBCs planning objectives, is contrary to the Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood plan and also fails to meet national and local sustainability criteria. The Parish council strongly objects to this development.

Arborfield and Newland Parish
Council.
20/11/2023

Supporting Evidence

Arborfield and Barkham
Neighbourhood Plan

Policy IRS1 - preservation and separation of settlements so as not lead to the physical, visual or perceived coalescence of existing settlements - The proposed development by Anwyl Land Ltd is in stark contrast to this policy, it seeks to join Arborfield Cross to Arborfield Garrison SDL, using both areas in support of its plan. The development will coalesce the 2 settlements along Langley Common Road and will be visible from all directions, very obviously joining the 2 settlements together.

Policy IRS2 -
Recognise, Respect and Preserve Identity and rural setting of settlements - The scale and form of the proposed development is out of character with the village of Arborfield Cross. The proposed number of properties would substantially increase the size of Arborfield Cross and alter the character of the rural village irrevocably.

Policy IRS4 - Protection and enhancement of historic character of the area - demonstrate how the development would protect or enhance the historic natural character of the area specifically Arborfield Cross Conservation Area - the proposed development would be in juxtaposition to the old character of the village with the new housing estate built at its boundary with no recognition by the developer for the character of Arborfield Cross village.

Policy AD1 - New developments within settlement boundaries - this proposed development is outside the settlement boundary of the Arborfield Garrison SDL and outside the settlement Boundary of Arborfield Cross and does not meet the criteria within the Neighbourhood Plan for development.

Policy GA3 Public Transport Improvements with Long Term Viability - The development does not propose any improvements to public transport for the local area and will inevitably focus residents on the use of the car rather than alternative forms of transport around the local area.

Wokingham Borough Core Planning Strategies

CP1

Sustainability - Increase in local traffic volumes on already busy roads, likely to be around 300 vehicles to site if not more as most properties would have two cars due to the absence of sustainable travel routes to and from the site.

CP1 Sustainability - No

sustainable transport system, local buses to Wokingham run only once an hour with the majority connecting the area to Reading. Does not support the use of buses over cars for local travel such as doctors or supermarkets. Any amenities are a car journey away from the site, dentists, supermarkets, doctors - minor local amenities little more than modern corner shops.

CP1 Sustainability - There are no walking routes or cycle routes to get to local towns. There are Greenways to Wokingham but they are not connected to the site, neither are they fully finished; they are more of a recreational route than a transport route. There are no cycle routes to Reading. The paths to local amenities are all along main roads and generally unlit for large parts of the routes which is discouraging to pedestrians and cyclists to use them. The cycle routes are non-existent; specifically, there are no designated cycle routes leading away from this site; and not one of the roads in the vicinity has a cycle lane.

CP2 subsection b - Inclusive communities - nothing in application for families, no additional infrastructure or facilities for families.

CP3 General Principles of development subsection a - 2 and a half story developments. Massing of properties will be juxtaposition to buildings currently in Arborfield Cross, mix of bungalows and houses and listed properties keeping in character with the village aspect.

CP3 General principles of development subsection h - No community infrastructure provided to support families at this site. This site offers no further community infrastructure or benefit to either the Garrison SDL or Arborfield Cross.

CP4 Infrastructure - Offers nothing to either the garrison

development or Arborfield cross village in terms of amenity or infrastructure and piggy backs that already planned for the garrison while offering nothing in itself.

CP4 Infrastructure - requirements for the entrance to be between the Biggs Lane roundabout and the Eversley Road roundabout on Langley Common Road will lead to an already busy stretch of local roads to become worse as vehicle access into and out of the development will feed directly into this section of road.

CP6 Twenty-minute walking time. The objective for a twenty-minute walking time to local amenities is not fulfilled. There are very few amenities or employment opportunities within walking distance.

CP9 Scale and location of development proposals - Arborfield Cross is designated as a limited development location; Arborfield Garrison is designated as modest development. This development is outside the settlement boundaries of any of these areas and is therefore inappropriate as it sits between limited and moderate development locations.

CP11 Proposals outside development limits - Loss of distinctiveness of Arborfield Cross as this is infill and coalescence between Arborfield Cross and Arborfield Garrison development. Land on application joins Arborfield Garrison to Arborfield Cross which would lead to the loss of identity of Arborfield Cross as unique Berkshire village.

CP18 Arborfield

Garrison SDL - Not part of Garrison SDL and is outside boundary of Arborfield Garrison SDL and hopes to use the Garrison as support for this development and facilities, though there are limited facilities in the Garrison at present and the majority of the facilities will be more than a twenty-minute walk from the proposed site. Garrison SDL has not completed its overall development with some parcels of land still pending development; these include brownfield sites to be developed ahead of this agricultural land development.