
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 September 2025

by A Oyebade MSc FCILT

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 March 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/W/25/3360923

Pine Copse, Nine Mile Ride, Wokingham RG40 3NQ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mrs C Reed against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 240958.
 - The development proposed is full application for the erection of a single-storey barn and relocation of existing kennels and canine food storage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. The Council draws attention to a previous application (Ref. 231144), referenced in the appellant's statement, which sought permission for the change of use of part of the appeal site for the siting of kennels and was refused in July 2023. In view of this, the Council considers that the aspect of the current proposal relating to the relocation of the kennels ought to have been accompanied by an application to change the use of the land from commercial to residential.
3. The Council further notes that revised plans were submitted by the appellant on 29 July 2024, reducing the scale of the proposed barn. The amended drawings indicate a reduced depth of 8 metres, compared with the original 10 metres, and a width of 15 metres in place of the previously proposed 20 metres, while retaining the same ridge height of 4.8 metres. These revised plans have not, however, been subject to public consultation. Notwithstanding this, I have determined the appeal based on the reasons for refusal, the modified plans, and the evidence before me.

Main issue

4. The main issue is whether the proposed development is appropriate for a countryside location and compatible with the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site lies within a semi-rural suburban landscape defined by woodland, creating a sense of calm, privacy, and greenery. The surrounding area contains dispersed pockets of quiet residential development and benefits from convenient access to nearby nature reserves and walking trails. Its immediate context is predominantly low-rise residential in character, comprising a mobile home park and detached dwellings set within extensive woodland, which contributes to a

secluded and verdant setting. Small clusters of commercial and light-industrial buildings are located nearby but do not dominate the local environment.

6. The appeal site sits within an enclosed, predominantly hard-surfaced area designated as countryside and outside settlement boundary, visually and physically separated from the neighbouring residential properties comprising the host dwelling, by dense boundary vegetation, including at the entrance, where a car mechanic's workshop occupies one side. The host dwelling adjoins a mix of caravan site, kennels, stables and parking spaces in the preceding area.
7. During my site visit, approaching the appeal site from the left-hand side of the neighbouring properties revealed a small cluster of modest containers and several parked vehicles arranged along that boundary. These sit parallel to an open field containing a green, low-profile barn positioned against the site's edge. Along the far boundary, facing the site entrance, are additional workshop units that appear to function as car repair facilities. Behind these units, dense countryside vegetation forms a natural backdrop and a gentle transition into the wider landscape. A tall hedge line runs along the right-hand side, with several vehicles parked beside it. The appeal site itself lies to the left, where the limited number of modest structures are located.
8. Policy CP11 of the Wokingham Core Strategy Development Plan (Adopted January 2010) sets out the circumstances in which a development outside of development limits may be supported. Such proposals will generally be acceptable where:
 - it contributes to diverse and sustainable rural enterprises within the borough, or in the case of other countryside-based enterprises and activities, it contributes and/or promotes recreation in, and enjoyment of, the countryside;
 - it does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings; and
 - it is contained within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion, or in the case of replacement buildings would bring about environmental improvement.
9. The appeal proposal, owing to its scale and height, would create a substantial structure occupying a significant portion of the site's left-hand side. The kennels positioned alongside it would also take up considerable space, and their siting would place them at a noticeable distance from the host dwelling, extending well beyond the site entrance and the adjacent car mechanic workshop.
10. I understand that the area is currently laid to hardstanding. However, the proposal would introduce development into an area which is generally open and relates more to the surrounding countryside than the existing development on site given the conditions I describe above. Consequently, the development would encroach into the countryside, and the cumulative impact of permitting additional inappropriate built form in this rural location would be materially harmful. Each incremental intrusion erodes the site's countryside character and rural qualities, contributing to an increasingly urbanised appearance on what was formerly a green and undeveloped area.

11. The development would reflect the design of existing built form noting its metal cladding, shallow-pitched roof, and similar height to existing buildings together with limited visibility from Nine Mile Ride. Nonetheless, even though on existing hardstanding, the proposal would extend built form away from the host buildings and further into the countryside, resulting in additional encroachment and consequential harm caused. This intrusion would have a detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the area.
12. The appellant refers to a previous appeal decision (Ref: APP/X0360/W/21/3288075), allowed in 2022, arguing that the Inspector in that case considered the proposal to be an appropriate form of development within a countryside location and that the same approach should be applied here. Nevertheless, the circumstances of that decision differ materially from the current proposal. In the cited case, the development involved a change of use of existing agricultural land to residential garden, and the Inspector noted that much of the site was already enclosed by surrounding development rather than open countryside. By contrast, the present appeal concerns the erection of new structures within a countryside setting that contains only a small number of existing commercial units. The context and degree of countryside encroachment are therefore not comparable.
13. The appellant further contends that the proposed building would occupy a hardstanding part of the site where lorry bodies and containers have previously been used for ancillary storage, and that it would therefore replace existing equipment serving the same function. In any event, the existing structures are modest in scale and of an impermanent nature.
14. The buildings would not promote recreation in or enjoyment of the countryside nor would the proposal be contained within suitably located existing buildings nor would there be any environmental improvement. However, the relocation of the kennel and canine storage facility is required to ensure that noise does not cause disturbance. This could tenuously contribute to diverse and sustainable rural enterprises, given that the noise could disturb the occupants of the holiday park. Furthermore, the proposed barn building would provide a storage facility for the existing industrial units to accommodate existing equipment which is currently stored externally.
15. From the evidence before me there is no definition of a rural enterprise and paragraph 88 of the Framework supports the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of businesses in the rural area. I also note that reference is made to the Council officer report for application 230831, which records that the site has been regarded since permission F/2004/2736 as an “established rural employment site” consistent with the provisions of Policy CP11 relating to rural enterprises. Moreover, the Inspector in their decision (ref: APP/X0360/A/05/1192150) describes that part of the site as a rural employment site. However, even if I accept that the proposal contributes to a diverse and sustainable rural enterprise, it would still conflict with Policy CP11 due to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings harming the character and appearance of the area.
16. The proposal has been described as a barn which makes it sound agricultural, but the uses are for domestic and commercial storage purposes. As for the application relating to certificate for an existing lawful use of mixed use of land for purposes

ancillary to the adjoining residential dwellings that was allowed on appeal in 2020 (Ref.182427), the Inspector notes that “the mixed use of the land for purposes ancillary to the adjoining residential dwellinghouses, the keeping of horses, the stationing of caravans for residential purposes and the parking of vehicles connected with the adjoining commercial units, commenced 17 years earlier in 2003 and subsisted uninterrupted and without intensification, despite the creation of three separate planning units on the land, until 2013.” The Inspector then concluded that the mixed use of the land, has remained as it existed in 2013. Several other historic applications quoted are not comparable to the appeal proposal.

17. The appellant also contends that when granting permission to application 230831, the proposed building was within existing commercial site limits and the position of the building did not represent encroachment into the countryside, again in accordance with CP11. Nonetheless, the application site already had a Certificate of Existing Development for use of land for car repair and sales (Sui Generis), which was granted on 30 June 2017 (ref: 171380).
18. The appellant also submits that, should the single-storey barn element of the scheme be considered unacceptable, the Inspector should, under the powers in s.79(1)(b) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, allow the part of the appeal relating to the relocation of the kennels and associated canine food storage into the countryside. However, as set out above, I have found that the two smaller buildings would add to the harm caused and cumulatively lead to excessive development and encroachment.
19. The appellant also contends that, for proposals to fully comply with Policy CP11, new development within the countryside would effectively cease, as criterion 3 restricts new-build additions and instead favours conversions and replacements. They argue that this would create a stagnant and static environment, ultimately undermining the quality of the countryside and the purpose of Policy CP11. I do not agree. Criterion 3 makes clear that development should be contained within suitably located buildings that are appropriate for conversion, or, in the case of replacement buildings, should deliver an environmental improvement. The policy therefore allows for change, but in a manner that safeguards the intrinsic character and quality of the countryside.
20. The appellant also refers to the proposed revisions to the settlement boundaries for Crowthorne, Finchampstead North and Wokingham, noting, among other criteria, that they should encompass permanent park home sites located adjacent to existing built-up areas. Given Pine Copse’s planning history and its proximity to the current settlement development limit (SDL), the appellant argues that it ought to be included in future SDL revisions. It is not the remit of this appeal to consider relocation of SDL, and I have determined this appeal with reference to the adopted local plan policies and the National Planning Policy Framework (“the Framework”).

Other matters and planning balance

21. The proposal would generate a modest level of employment, providing some social and economic benefits during construction and subsequent occupation. However, given its inefficient use of land in an open countryside location, where the spatial strategy seeks to secure sustainable patterns of development and make effective use of land, only limited weight can be attached to these benefits.

In this context, the scheme would not deliver benefits of sufficient magnitude to justify development in this sensitive rural setting.

Conclusion

22. Taking all other material considerations into account, I find that none carry sufficient weight to indicate a decision other than in accordance with the development plan. For the reasons set out above, and having had regard to the policies of the plan and the Framework as a whole, I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

A Oyebade

INSPECTOR