

OUTLINE PLANNING APPROVAL

DRAFT DECISION NOTICE



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Expiry Date: 24 December 2024

Application Number: 242421

Location: Land to the North of School Road, Arborfield Cross

Proposal: Outline application for the proposed redevelopment of the site and erection of up to 95 no. dwellings with associated access, infrastructure, open space, landscaping and associated works. (All matters reserved except for means of access).

Recommendation: Refused

Reasons

1. The proposal represents inappropriate unplanned development outside of development limits within the countryside that is contrary to the spatial objectives of the development plan and to Policies CP1, CP3, CP6, CP9, CP11 and CP17 of the Core Strategy, Policies CC01, CC02, CC03 and TB21 of the MDD Local Plan, the Borough Design Guide SPD and sections 2, 4, 12 and 15 of the NPPF.
2. The proposed quantum of development within the parameters submitted for approval would result in a cramped and a poorly laid out scheme which has not been demonstrated to achieve minimum separation distances or adequate private amenity space. The road layout and parameters for development would result in development with streets that have poor passive surveillance and an access road that does not create a legible or integrated street network with the existing settlement pattern. The development is contrary to policies CP1, CP3 and CP11 of the Core Strategy, Policies CC01, CC02, CC03 and TB21 of the MDD Local Plan, the Borough Design Guide SPD, The National Design Guide and sections 8, 12 and 15 of the NPPF.
3. The proposed development will have a prominent negative and detrimental impact on the Bearwood and Barkham Valued Landscape, character of School Road (designated as a Green Route) and character & appearance of the area by reason of the loss of a sizeable section of open and attractive undulating landscape in the countryside with an urbanising large-scale development. Due to the location of the proposed access road, land form and quantum of development, the proposal would appear as detached from the village's main built-up core and fail to read as an organic extension to the settlement, thereby eroding its character, resulting in poor place-making. Therefore, the proposal would be contrary to policies CP1, CP3 and CP11 of the Core Strategy, Policies CC01, CC02, CC03 and TB21 of the MDD Local Plan, the Borough Design Guide SPD, National Design Guide, the Wokingham District Landscape Character Assessment, the Wokingham Borough Council Valued Landscape Assessment (2024) and sections 8, 9, 11, 12 and 15 of the NPPF.

4. The proposed development would significantly and prominently erode the open space that separates Arborfield Cross and Barkham Hill and Arborfield Cross and Arborfield, resulting in a detrimental degree of visual and perceived coalescence between these independent settlements, contrary to policies CP1, CP3 and CP11 of the Core Strategy, Policies CC01, CC02, CC03 and TB21 of the MDD Local Plan, the Borough Design Guide SPD, the Wokingham District Landscape Character Assessment, the Wokingham Borough Council Valued Landscape Assessment (2024) and sections 12 and 15 of the NPPF.

5. The proposal would have a harmful impact on the setting of the Grade II listed building through the erosion of open fields which contribute to its rural setting. The proposed parameter plans would result in development which would not be reflective of both the historic roadside settlement and the existing pattern of development, thereby failing to preserve or enhance the character of the Arborfield Cross Conservation Area. The proposal would be contrary to Core Strategy policy CP3, MDD LP policy TB24 and sections 12 and 16 of the NPPF.

6. The agricultural land is classed as Grade 3 and the application fails to demonstrate there would be no loss of Grade 3a Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land, or that such a loss would be outweighed by other material considerations, contrary to Core Strategy policy CP1 and section 15 of the NPPF.

7. By virtue of a lack of accurate and updated information a baseline survey date cannot be agreed and an assessment of how 10% biodiversity net gain will be achieved is not possible. As such, if granted planning permission, there is no guarantee that 10% biodiversity net gain would be achieved, hence would be contrary to Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021).

8. It has not been demonstrated that the proposal would not lead to harm to bat and reptile protected species and species of principal importance. The proposal is therefore contrary to policy CP7 of the Core Strategy, policy and TB23 of the MDD LP, Policy IRS3 of the Arborfield & Barkham Neighbourhood Plan and section 15 of the NPPF.

9. Insufficient information has been submitted with the planning application to enable the highways, parking and transportation implications of the proposed development to be fully assessed. This is due to the absence of an acceptable Transport Assessment. The applicant has failed to demonstrate that this major development would not have a significant adverse impact upon highway safety. This is contrary to Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 and CP6, and sections 8 and 9 of the NPPF.

10. Insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate that the proposal would encourage a modal shift towards sustainable modes of transport, by reason of the countryside location outside and unconnected to settlement limits, distances to facilities and services and poor quality of the walking/cycling environment, contrary to policies CP1, CP2, CP3, CP6 and CP11 of the Core Strategy, CC01 and CC02 of the MDD Local Plan, the Borough Design Guide SPD, National Design Guide and sections 8 and 9 of the NPPF.

11. Insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate that the proposed foul water drainage strategy would be viable, contrary to Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 and policy CC10 of the MDD Local Plan.

12. Insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate how planning policies relating to sustainable construction and reductions in carbon dioxide emissions would be complied with, contrary to Core Strategy policy CP1, MDD LP Policies CC04 and CC05 and WBC Sustainable Design and Construction SPD.

13. In the absence of a planning obligation to secure suitable avoidance and mitigation measures and access management monitoring arrangements, in terms that are satisfactory to the Local Planning Authority (LPA), the LPA is unable to satisfy itself that the proposals include adequate mitigation measures to prevent the proposed development from having an adverse effect on the integrity of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA, in line with the requirements of Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 as amended and Article 6(3) of Directive 92/43/EEC. The proposal would be contrary to Policy NRM6 of the South East Plan, Policies CP8 and CP4 of the Core Strategy and section 15 of the NPPF

14. In the absence of a planning obligation, the proposal fails to secure opportunities for training, apprenticeships and other vocational initiatives to develop local employability skills contrary to MDD LP Policy TB12.

15. In the absence of a planning obligation, the scheme fails to make adequate provision for affordable housing, contrary to Policy CP5 of the Core Strategy and section 5 of the NPPF.

16. In the absence of a planning obligation the development fails to secure the management/adoption of internal estate roads or the installation of a pavement on the southern side of Barkham Ride, contrary to Core Strategy policy CP1, CP3, CP4 and CP6 and section 9 of the NPPF.

17. In the absence of a planning obligation to secure a travel plan or a contribution towards My Journey, a contribution towards the Arborfield Bus Strategy and a contribution towards improvements of public transport infrastructure, the development fails to comply with policies CP1, CP3, CP4 and CP6 and sections 8 and 9 of the NPPF.

18. In the absence of a planning obligation to secure contribution towards healthcare, the development fails to comply with policy CP2 of the Core Strategy and section 8 of the NPPF.

19. In the absence of a planning obligation to secure delivery, ongoing maintenance, and monitoring of significant habitat creation and enhancement measures on-site, the proposal fails to comply with the biodiversity net gain mitigation hierarchy and is contrary to Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021), Core Strategy policy CP7, MDD LP policy TB23 and section 15 of the NPPF.

20. In the absence of a planning obligation to secure delivery and ongoing maintenance of Public Open Space, the proposal fails to comply with policy CP3 of the Core Strategy, policy TB08 of the MDD LP, National Design Guide and sections 8 and 12 of the NPPF. **Informatives**

1. This decision is in respect of the drawings and plans numbered

Parameters Plan 2522477.4 Rev B

Site Boundary Plan 2522477.4 Rev A

Transport Assessment 2305-083-TA-01 Rev A

received by the Local Planning Authority on 23 September 2024.

2. The Council engages with all applicants in a positive and proactive way through specific pre-application enquiries and the detailed advice available on the Council's website. On this particular application, no pre-application advice was sought before the application was submitted. As the proposal was clearly contrary to the provisions of the Development Plan, it was considered that further discussions would be unnecessary and costly for all parties.

BJC

Recommendation and conditions/reasons agreed:

Date: 20.12.24

REMEMBER - The earliest date for a decision on this application is: **11 December 2024**