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To: Brigitte Crafer
Landscape Architect
Wokingham Borough Council

Re: Application 250835 – Land Adjacent to Hutts Farm Cottage, Blagrove Lane,
Wokingham
Subject: Response to Tree Comments

Dear Ms. Crafer,

We would like to thank you for your detailed review and constructive comments on the revised layout for the above site. We have carefully reviewed each of the points raised and can confirm that all matters have been addressed within the updated arboricultural report and plans, with the exception of the recommendation to reposition the proposed access further north.

Following further technical assessment, it is not feasible to relocate the access point as suggested. The current alignment represents the only practicable solution that satisfies both highway visibility splay requirements and safe vehicle movements. Shifting the access northward would necessitate the removal of four existing trees, albeit lower-quality “C” category specimens, that presently contribute positively to the street scene and provide valuable screening and local amenity. Their loss would have a greater visual and environmental impact than the modest encroachment currently proposed.

The existing design results in an 8.1% incursion into the Root Protection Area of off-site Tree T21 (A category Oak). This limited encroachment occurs on the western side of the tree’s rooting area, where the proposed access is located. Importantly, the eastern side of the tree extends into a large open field that provides a substantial area of unrestricted rooting potential, ensuring continued access to moisture, nutrients, and oxygen. The proposed works within the RPA will be undertaken strictly in accordance with BS5837:2012 and the arboricultural method statement, incorporating sensitive construction techniques such as the use of cellular confinement systems, and continuous on-site arboricultural supervision to safeguard the tree’s health throughout the works.

In reference to your comment regarding the lack of overriding justification for development within the RPA, BS5837:2012 (Section 5.3.1) states that *“the default position should be that structures are located outside the RPAs of trees to be retained. However, where there is an overriding justification for construction within the RPA, technical solutions might be available that prevent damage to the trees.”* The standard does not preclude encroachment but rather requires that any incursion is supported by sound arboricultural reasoning and mitigation.

In this instance, the encroachment equates to only 8.1% of the RPA of Tree T21, which is considered tolerable where compensatory rooting area exists and where specialist construction techniques are proposed. The design has been developed with full regard to this guidance, ensuring that the tree’s physiological and structural integrity will be preserved. The combination of the minor scale of incursion, high-quality rooting area to the east, and strict adherence to BS5837 construction methodologies provides a clear and proportionate justification for the proposed layout.

We consider that this approach provides a robust and sustainable balance between the requirements of safe access and the retention of important trees on and adjacent to the site. It ensures that the integrity and long-term health of T21 will not be compromised while maintaining the overall treelined character of Blagrove Lane. We trust the additional justification and mitigation measures set out within the submitted arboricultural report address your concerns and demonstrate the care taken to preserve the site’s arboricultural and landscape character.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. Alexander Barnes, BSc Arb, MArborA
Consultant Arborist

