

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	251856
Site Address:	Land at Rear of Johnson Drive, Finchampstead, Wokingham, RG40 3NW
Expiry Date:	26 September 2025
Site Visit Date:	19/11/25
Proposal: Application to vary condition 2 of planning consent 233086 for the Full application for the proposed erection of 8 no. dwellings and erection of car canopies, following removal/demolition of the existing outbuildings. Condition 2 refers to Approved Details and the variation is for the replacement of the approved drawings with revisions that incorporate alterations to the proposed dwellings.	

PLANNING POLICY	
National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
Core Strategy (CS)	CP1 – Sustainable Development CP3 – General Principles for Development CP4 – Infrastructure Requirements CP5 – Housing Mix, Density and Affordability CP6 – Managing Travel Demand CP7 – Biodiversity CP8 – Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area CP11 – Proposals Outside Development Limits (Inc Countryside) CP17 – Housing Delivery
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 – Development Limits CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction CC06 – Noise CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB05 – Housing Mix TB06 – Development of Private Residential Gardens TB07 – Internal Space Standards TB21 – Landscape Character TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU)	SS1 – Sustainable development principles SS2 – Spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy SS3 – Development within or adjacent to major and modest settlements SS5 – Development in the countryside SS10 – Meeting our housing needs CE1 – Design principles for efficient buildings

	CE3 – Environmental standards for residential development C1 – Active and sustainable transport and accessibility C2 – Mitigation of transport impacts and highway safety and design C3 – Active travel C4 – Green and blue infrastructure and public rights of way C5 – Parking and electric vehicle charging H1 – Housing mix, density and standards H3 – Affordable housing H12 – Residential development of existing private gardens FD1 – Development and flood risk (from all sources) FD2 – Sustainable drainage NE1 – Biodiversity and geodiversity NE2 – Biodiversity net gain NE3 – Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area NE4 – Trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows NE5 – Landscape and design DH1 – Place making and quality design DH2 – Safeguarding amenity DH6 – Archaeology HC4 – Open spaces, sports, recreation and play facilities HC5 – Environmental protection HC6 – Air pollution and air quality HC7 – Light pollution HC8 – Noise pollution HC9 – Contaminated land and water HC10 – Odor, fumes and dust
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document: • Section 4: Residential • Section 5: Streets and Spaces • Section 8: Identity and Rural Setting • Section 9: Getting Around CIL Guidance + 123 List Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan (Sept 2023)

PLANNING HISTORY

Certificates and changes of use

Reference	Description	Decision
T/1996/64687	Temporary change of use of land for storage of new vehicles	Refused 10 February 1997
CLU(E)105	Certificate for existing lawful use for the storage of unregistered motor vehicles	Refused 1 October 1998
T/APP/X/99/X0360/003156	Appeal against refusal of CLU(E)105	Part upheld 10 November 1999
APP/X0360/C/99/1028620/1	Linked appeal against enforcement notice associated with CLU(E)105	
TP/2001/3383	Temporary and retrospective change of use of land for storage of motor vehicles	Refused 5 April 2001
CLE/2001/3818	Certificate of lawful existing use of land for seven buildings and land for storage of plant and materials.	Approved 12 February 2002
TP/2002/5895	Temporary change of use of land to storage of cars	Refused 5 April 2002
F/2002/6913	Demolition of seven storage buildings and removal of open storage and replacement with two new storage buildings	Refused 28 October 2002
F/2003/9103		Approved 15 October 2003
F/2007/1070	Change of use for the siting of three storage containers	Refused 28 June 2007

183248	Certificate of lawful use for the storage of inert waste	Refused 4 March 2019
183255	Certificate of lawful use for the storage of builder's plant and materials	Refused 5 March 2019
APP/X0360/X/19/3224190	Appeal against the refusal of 183248	Public Inquiry appeal withdrawn 5 October 2020
APP/X0360/X/19/3224195	Linked appeal against the refusal of 183255	

Planning applications for residential development

Reference	Description	Decision
O/30127	52 dwellings	Refused 14 June 1988
T/APP/H0330/A/88/092313	Appeal against refusal of O/30127	Dismissed 18 September 1989
O/2001/4418	30 dwellings	Refused 1 May 2002
O/2001/5276	48 dwellings (outline)	Withdrawn 29 November 2001
O/2001/5362	50 dwellings (outline)	Refused 9 January 2002
APP/0360/A/01/1076708	Linked appeal against refusal of O/2001/4418	Dismissed 1 May 2002
APP/X0360/A/02/1081441	Linked appeal against the refusal of O/2001/5362	
160162	34 dwellings	Refused 3 May 2016
172230	25 dwellings (outline)	Refused 11 May 2018
APP/X0360/W/18/3205487	Appeal against refusal of 172230	Dismissed 19 November 2019

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
223592	Full application for the erection of 5no. dwellings with double garages following removal / demolition of the existing outbuildings.	Approved 09 June 2023

233086	Full application for the proposed erection of 8no. dwellings and erection of car canopies, following removal/demolition of the existing outbuildings.	Approved subject to s106 09 May 2025
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In addition, the following application at 6 Johnson Drive sits adjacent/south of the application site.

232595	Full application for the proposed erection of 1 no. detached five-bedroom dwelling with associated parking.	Approved 14/11/24
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CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Environmental Health – No objection
WBC Drainage – No objection subject to conditions
WBC Highways – No objection subject to conditions
WBC Green Infrastructure – No comment
WBC Landscape and Trees – No objection subject to conditions
WBC Ecology – No objection subject to conditions

External

Natural England - No comment

REPRESENTATIONS

Finchampstead Parish Council	No objection
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	7 objections have been received on the following grounds: <u>1. Planning Policy & Principle of Development</u> - The site is not identified for development in the Local Development Plan and is therefore an inappropriate location. - The increase from 5 to 8 dwellings is perceived as overdevelopment, inconsistent with the original scheme and out of character with the surrounding area. - The latest changes are significant and should be subject to a new full planning application rather than a variation. <u>2. Design, Scale & Character</u> - The revised layout reduces private garden space and increases hardstanding, contributing to a more congested and less sympathetic development.

	• The inclusion of car barns and three-storey dwellings is out of keeping with the established character of the area. • The development is viewed as having shifted from a low-density, high-quality scheme to a more intensive and visually intrusive form. <u>3. Residential Amenity</u> • Concerns include increased overlooking, loss of privacy, and potential overshadowing of neighbouring properties. • Prolonged construction activity and repeated amendments are causing ongoing noise and disruption. • The proposed gated access, not part of the original approval, may result in additional noise and air pollution from idling vehicles, impacting neighbouring amenity. <u>4. Parking & Highways</u> • Insufficient on-site parking provision may lead to further informal hardstanding. • Potential for car barns to be converted into garages, increasing built form and reducing open space. • Increased vehicle storage could exacerbate local traffic congestion and raise highway safety concerns. <u>5. Trees, Biodiversity & Environmental Impact</u> • Reintroduction of a car barn on Plot 6 raises concerns over potential damage to the roots of a mature, protected tree within a designated wildlife corridor. • The revised scheme is seen as having a greater adverse impact on local green infrastructure and biodiversity. <u>6. Flooding & Drainage</u> • Increased hardstanding and reduced permeable surfaces will worsen surface water drainage impacting on neighbours. <u>7. Infrastructure Capacity</u> • Local infrastructure, including roads, healthcare services, and water treatment facilities, is inadequate to accommodate additional residential development.
APPRAISAL	
Site Description: This 1.3-hectare site lies in a ‘backland’ location north of Nine Mile Ride in Finchampstead, accessed via Johnson Drive, which also serves several other residential properties. The southern portion includes part of the rear garden of 6 Johnson Drive, while the remainder was previously used for indoor/outdoor builders’ storage, including outbuildings, vehicles, and construction materials. The site is within the countryside but adjoins the settlement boundary of Finchampstead North to the west and south. Planning permission (ref. 233086) was granted in May 2025 and has been implemented, and works have now commenced on site.	

PP 233086 is subject to a s106 legal agreement which secured the following:

1. Affordable Housing financial contribution in lieu of 3.2 affordable units (40%)
2. Thames Basin Heath SPA SANG financial contribution
3. Thames Basin Heath SPA SAMM financial contribution
4. Management company (Man. Co.) details to maintain private roads
5. Details of Private Access Road and Landscaped Wildlife Area Management Plan
6. Transfer of Private Access Road and Landscape Wildlife Area to the Man. Co.
7. Biodiversity Net Gain measures
8. Biodiversity Net Gain monitoring contribution
9. s106 monitoring contribution

For clarity, the s106 for 233086 defines the “Planning Application” as including “*any subsequent permissions under Section 73 of the Act permitting the carrying out of the Development*”. Hence, the above obligations would be ‘carried through’ to the new permission should this application be granted.

Proposal:

The proposal seeks to vary Condition 2 of the extant permission for the replacement of the approved drawings with revisions that incorporate several alterations to the proposed dwelling, including:

- An addition of 3 car barns for units 1, 4 and 5
- First floor gable addition to units 4,
- Smaller ground floor rear extensions to units 4, 5 and 7 with larger main GF and FF elements
- GF side extension to Unit 6
- Widening of proposed driveways of Plots 4, 5, and 6
- Other minor reconfigurations

The proposal intends no additional units. As such, the overall housing density is maintained the same as that in the extant planning permission (233086). Extracts of submitted block plans for the extant permission and current s73 application are provided at Figs. 1 and 2 below for clarity:



Figs. 1 and 2: Extracts of Site Plans for the extant permission (left) and the proposed s73 layout (right).

Section 73(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) (as amended) (the Act) requires that the local planning authority (LPA) 'shall consider only the question of the conditions subject to which planning permission should be granted.' The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) further states that in deciding an application under s73, the LPA must only consider the disputed conditions that are the subject of the application – it is not a complete re-consideration of the application. Notwithstanding, assessment of the principle of this development (as agreed under PP 233086) is provided below for clarity:

Principle of Development:

Core Strategy and MMD Local Plan

The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the local Development Plan. The Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy CC01 states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for Wokingham Borough will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The site lies within designated countryside, adjacent to but outside the defined development limits of Finchampstead North, a Modest Development Location under Core Strategy Policy CP9 (refer to Fig 3 below). While the site is partly previously developed and benefits from proximity to local services and public transport, it falls outside the settlement boundary. As such, Policy CP11 applies, which restricts development in the countryside unless specific exceptions are met.

The proposal does not meet any of the exceptions listed under CP11, such as supporting rural enterprises, reusing suitable buildings, or delivering essential community or affordable housing. However, the development as previously approved under 233086 would not result in settlement coalescence or harm the quality of the environment, aligning with the broader aims of CP11 to protect settlement identity and

environmental quality. Hence, the extant planning permission 233086 represents a robust 'fallback position' for the applicant. This is a very relevant material consideration and shall be given significant weight.

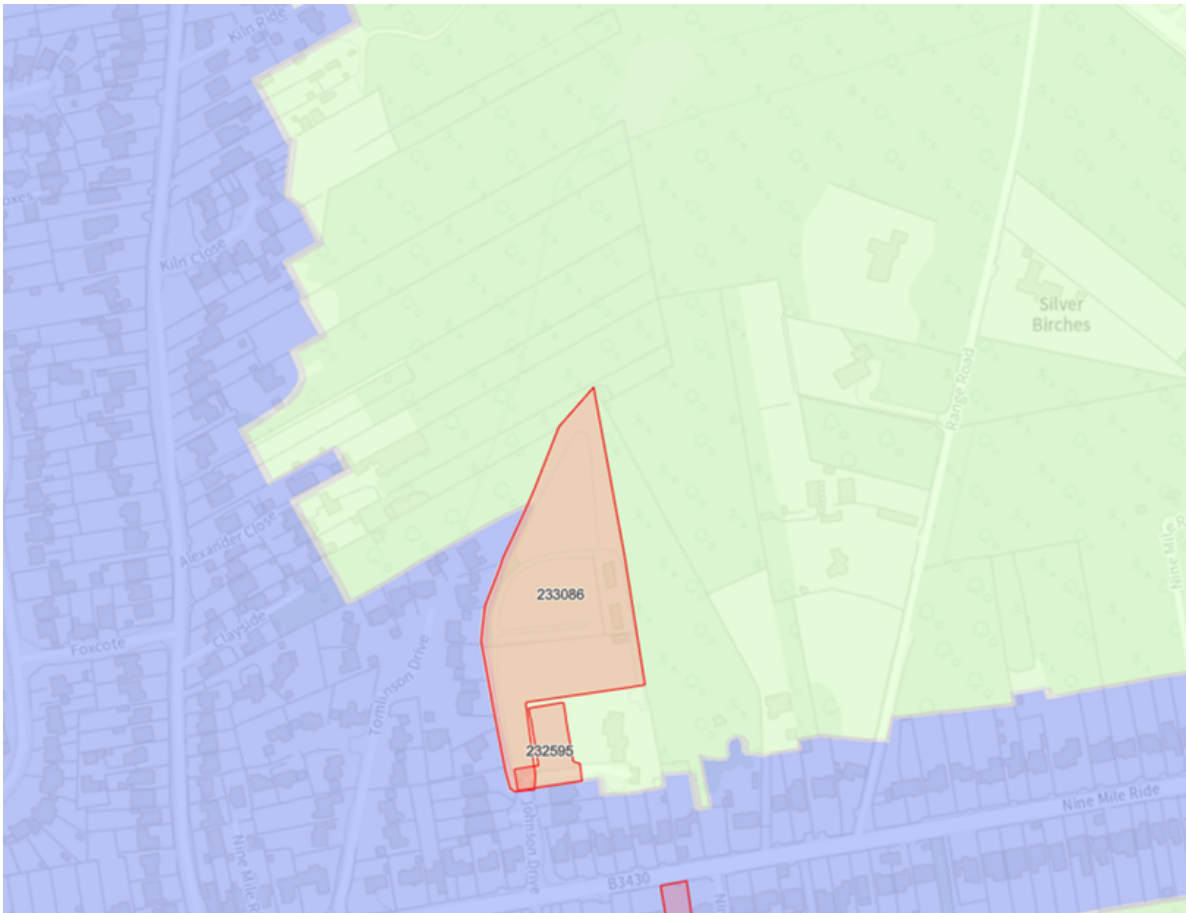


Fig. 3: The application site shown in context with designated countryside (green) and Modest Development Location (Mauve)

Local Plan Update

The Local Plan Update (LPU), the plan which will supersede the adopted Core Strategy and MDD local plans, it is at Regulation 22 stage as it has been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination. As per paragraph 49 of the NPPF:

“Local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:

- a) the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);*
- b) the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and*
- c) the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to this Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given)”*

As a whole, the LPU is still given limited weight, despite its advance stage of preparation. This is owing to unresolved objections to a great number of the policies contained within it. However, those policies highlighted in yellow in the policy table earlier in this report are those that have received less objection and therefore individually hold are considered by officers to hold moderate weight in the

determination of this particular application. All the others hold limited weight. The policies that hold moderate weight will feed into/be considered in their relevant sections in this report.

Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan (FNDP)

The application site is located within the parish of Finchampstead and therefore the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan (formally adopted at Council on 21 September 2023) forms part of the development plan for the area.

Policy AHD1 of the FNDP only allows development outside of development locations where will only be supported where they are in accordance with national and Borough planning policies. Supporting text at paragraph 5.5 states that other forms of development outside development limits will be supported when considered against the criteria set by Core Strategy Policy CP11, or successor. As such, given the Council's view remains unchanged in respect of the proposal's noncompliance with CP11, the proposal is also contrary to policy AHD1 of the FNDP given the alignment between the two policies.

The conflict with the adopted FNDP significantly weighs against the proposal and it is clear that the government attaches great importance to neighbourhood planning. Paragraph 12 of the NPPF states, 'where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not usually be granted.'

The FNDP also contains a number of policies on issues including housing; settlement separation; the natural environment; transport and design. These inter-relate with other material considerations which are discussed below.

Character of the Area:

The proposal is assessed against several relevant planning policies. Policy TB21 of the MDD requires developments to consider the Council's Landscape Character Assessment, ensuring that proposals respond appropriately to the area's landscape quality, strategy, sensitivity, and key characteristics, while also preserving or enhancing its distinct features.

Policy TB06 of the MDD expects development within residential gardens to positively reflect the local character, particularly in terms of layout, landscaping, building height, and materials. This aligns with Core Strategy Policy CP3, which sets out general development principles. Additionally, Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan Policy D1 emphasises that building heights should be in keeping with the local character, with three-storey housing only supported within the Strategic Development Location.

The site falls within the 'Finchampstead Forested and Settled Sands' Landscape Character Area, identified as a high-quality and distinctive landscape with moderate sensitivity. The strategy for this area is to conserve and enhance its existing character, including its woodland and open landscape features.

The officer report, that was considered by the Council's Planning Committee on 11 December 2024, for the previous planning application 233086 stated that: *"The development would have limited views from wide ranging street scenes owing to its tandem arrangement, with its most visibility from the rear of properties on Tomlinson Drive. Properties in the vicinity are of good size and detailing are detached and generally well-spaced. The proposal would see a similar composition with dwellings comfortably positioned within the plots so as to not disharmonise the existing rhythm and pattern of development within Tomlinson Drive and Johnson Drive".*

The proposed changes would not alter the overall character of this 8-unit scheme of two storey dwellings as can be seen in Figs. 1 and 2 above. The general footprint, heights and massing and external appearance (refer to Fig. 3 below) of the development would remain largely unchanged in character terms.



Fig. 4: Extract of proposed street-scene (Plots 01-03)

The most significant change is the proposed addition of three car barns (approx. dimensions: H 5.0m x W 9.6m x D 6.1m) for units 1, 4 and 5. Although the Council's Borough Design Guide discourages garages in front gardens, this self-contained 8-unit scheme would not affect existing street scenes and hence is acceptable in this respect.

Overall, the proportions of the proposed car barns would be subservient to the dwellings they serve and while they would project forward of front elevations (in a similar manner to that already approved on Plot 03), they would have retain suitable separation distances from the main properties thereby avoiding a cramped development or any conflict with the animation of the principle elevations and retaining suitable public surveillance as exemplified on Plot 01 (refer Fig. 04 above).

The other alterations proposed (as outlined in the Proposal section of this report above) are deemed relatively insignificant changes in design terms, which would result in no substantive change to the overall quality and character and appearance of this development. In respect of objections raised regarding the resultant reduction in private garden space and increases hardstanding, these changes are also not considered so significant to have any material impact on the character of the scheme.

Objections raised regarding 'three-storey dwellings' being out of keeping with the established character of the area are insubstantially founded. The proposed development would include 8 no. 2-storey dwellings, albeit with floorspace provided within the rooflines. The brickwork elevations of these buildings are wholly 2-storey, except where gable features protrude slightly upwards, and broadly reflect the character of other two-storey properties in the wider area. The overall scale and size of the dwellings proposed are undoubtedly on the large side but, as already mentioned, sit within their largely self-contained enclave and create a high-quality development that has an attractive sense of place at the same density to that approved under the extant permission. External materials would be the same as those previously agreed through the condition discharge process.

Hence, the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of its impact on the character and appearance and therefore accords with the relevant planning policies and guidance.

Amenities of future occupants: Internal amenity standards

Policy TB07 states that “Proposals for new residential units... should ensure that the internal layout and size are suitable to serve the amenity requirements of future occupiers.”

The proposed internal layouts to these units are very generous and do not compromise the previously approved internal layouts.

External garden space

R16 of the Borough Design Guide SPD stipulates that each dwelling should have access to some form of amenity space and it should retain and protect privacy, benefit from sunlight where possible and be able to accommodate 2–4 chairs and a small table. R16 of the Borough Design Guide states that new housing should have amenity space that has a depth of at least 11m.

All proposed dwellings would still have a garden depths in excess of 11m which would be sufficient room for practical and recreational activities. Hence, the proposal is acceptable in this respect.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development should not be of detriment to adjoining land users. Policies within the Borough Design Guide (BDG) concentrate on standards of accommodation for future occupiers of residential development. R16 stipulates required separation distances between built form. R18 aims to protect sunlight and daylight to existing properties, with no material impact on levels of daylight in the habitable rooms of adjoining properties.

Overlooking, overbearing and loss of light:

No substantive changes are proposed to the extant permission that would significantly reduce separation distances between existing neighbouring properties such that any significant harm in term of overlooking, loss of privacy or overbearing presence would occur.

The closest relationship would be that between No. 22 Tomlinson Close and proposed Plot 6 (refer to Fig. 5 below). This would still retain a separation distance in excess of 30m at first floor level and 26m in respect of the proposed new single car port to Plot 6. These separation distances are wholly adequate to avoid any overbearing presence, loss of daylight or excessive overlooking impacting on the amenities of this, and other, existing neighbouring dwellings.



Fig. 7: Proposed side-to-rear relationship between Plot 6 and 22 Tomlinson Drive

In terms of the objection raised to the gated access not being part of the original approval, this is incorrect. Details of satisfactory 'post and rail' gates were detailed on the original Hard Landscaping Plan. These were deemed acceptable by Planning Committee when they considered the original application (233086) on 11th December 2024 (the Council's Supplemental Agenda for this meeting refers).

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

The Council's Highways Officer has noted that the proposal incorporates a widening of the driveways for Plots 4, 5, and 6 and introduction of double carports and a single car port for Plot 6. These are considered minor improvements in terms of car parking and manageability around the site.

Flooding and Drainage:

The NPPF and its supporting Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) on 'Flood Risk and Coastal Change' provide guidance on how flood risk should be considered within the planning application process and encourages the implementation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). The NPPF also requires applications to be subject to a Sequential Test, to guide development to areas at the lowest risk of flooding.

Core Strategy Policy CP1 and MDD Local Plan Policies CC09 and CC10 are relevant and establish that new development should avoid increasing and where possible reduce flood risk (from all sources) by first developing in areas with lowest flood risk, carrying out a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) where required, and managing surface water in a sustainable manner. Applications are also required to demonstrate how they have used the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) to determine the suitability of the proposal.

The Council's Drainage Officer initially raised concerns to this proposal in the absence of revised Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS) details. Hence, given the proposed increase in impermeable area (car barns, widening of driveways, ground floor extensions etc.), albeit relatively small, officers have requested new drainage calculations, demonstrating that the proposals would not cause additional surface water flooding over and above green field run-off rates. The applicant duly submitted the following additional information in this respect:

- Revised road contour layout
- Revised external works layout (showing land topography)
- Revised drainage layout
- Surface water outfall drawings
- Revised micro-drainage calculations

Following assessment of this additional information, the Council's Drainage Officer has confirmed that the revised micro-drainage calculations shows that there is no flooding for events up to and including the 1 in 100-yr flood event with a 40% allowance for climate change. The pdf files for this result have been audited by the Council's Drainage Officer who confirms the drainage results.

Therefore, subject to adherence to the revised approved SuDS details, the proposal complies with the above flooding and drainage related policies.

Landscape and Trees:

Policy CC03 of the MDD seeks to protect existing trees and promote opportunities for new soft landscaping.

Policy IRS6 of the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan states that development proposals should seek to retain mature or important trees, groups of trees or woodland on site. If trees are to be removed, a similar replacement should be provided in terms of local species and keeping with the character of the area.

The Council's Landscape Architect initially objected to this proposal due to the increases building footprints and additions of car barns, that they felt would create a more urban form that blocks woodland views and erodes the rural character. Of most concern was the proposed car port at Plot 6 which appeared to conflict with mature Oak tree T25 (as evidenced in Fig. 7 above), removing the previously agreed buffer and risking canopy and root damage.

However, following discussions with the applicant, it was suggested that T25 had been incorrectly plotted on the original application (233086). To evidence this, a revised Tree Constraints Plan, Tree Protection Plan (refer to Fig. 8 below) and Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) carried out by a qualified arboriculturalist have been submitted to support this current proposal.

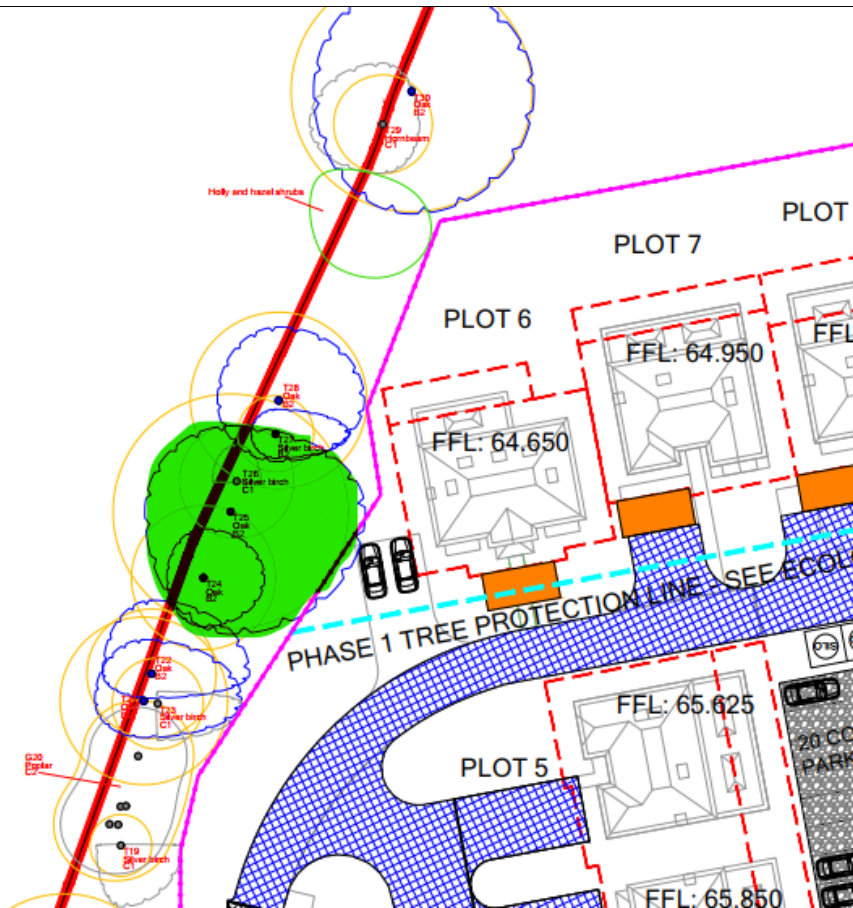


Fig. 8: Extract of revised Tree Protection Plan (n.b. plan excludes single car barn proposed for Plot 6)

The Council's Landscape Architect has assessed the above additional information which indicates that the 2m gap between the end wall of the extended Plot 6 would be retained between T25 as surveyed above. This is significantly less than the 5.1m agreed under the extant permission (233086). The Council's Landscape Architect has advised this is a 'less than ideal' scenario but would not warrant refusal of the application. This relationship was verified on site during the officer site visit, it being noted that T25 had not been 'cut back' adjacent to Plot 6.

In addition, it should be noted that the internal arrangement of Plot 6 does not include any habitable room windows that would face westwards towards T25. Hence, it is unlikely that future occupants of this unit would seek further tree works to this specimen to reduce its crown.

In respect of the Council's Landscape Architect's original concerns regarding the potential erosion of the rural character and woodland views that were suggested to result from this latest proposal, the limited extent of additional hardstanding and built form (noting that the car barns would open sided) would not be so significant as to warrant refusal of this application. Overall, the general plot coverage remains largely unchanged as does the density for this scheme, and the proposals would not be viewed as a significant alteration to the extant permission in the view of officers.

Hence, the proposal would continue to deliver a high-quality development for this site with adequate soft landscaping and separation distance between buildings in compliance with the relevant landscape and trees planning policies and guidance.

Ecology:

Policy TB23 of the MDD Local Plan requires the incorporation of new biodiversity features, buffers between habitats and species of importance and integration with the wider green infrastructure network. Policy CP7 states that sites designated as of importance for nature conservation at an international or national level will be conserved and enhanced and inappropriate development will be resisted.

Policy IRS5 of the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan (FNDP) states that “all development which would result in a net gain in dwellings or other recognised pathway to likely significant effects, alone or in-combination, on the Thames Basin Heaths SPA must provide sufficient information to allow assessment of the effect and demonstrate that no adverse effect will occur through secured avoidance and/or mitigation measures if required”.

The Council's Ecologist noted that acceptable information has already been submitted and approved to discharge the ecology-related conditions under the extant permission, namely:

- Construction Environmental Management Plans (CEMP) Job no: 233292, May 2025.
- Biodiversity Enhancement Plan, Revision A, AA Environmental, June 2025.
- Technical Note: Biodiversity Net Gain, Revision C, October 2024 by AA Environmental.
- Biodiversity Net Gain Metric, 4th October 2024 prepared by AA Environmental.
- Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan, Revision B, AA Environmental Limited (AAe) – 09/07/2025.
- Landscape Ecological Management Plan, Report reference: 233292, May 2025, produced by AA Environmental Limited.
- Tree Protection Plan, Rev C, February 2025 produced by GHA Trees Arboricultural consultancy.

The above having been approved under condition discharge application no. 251160. Hence, subject to suitable revised wording of the ecology-related conditions to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the above approved details, no objection was raised to this proposal as it complies with the relevant planning policies and guidance on ecology and wildlife habitat matters.

Biodiversity Net Gain:

The original application (233086) was determined after the commencement of mandatory biodiversity net gain, as set out by the Environment Act 2021 and associated regulations. However, as the application was made prior to 12 February 2024, it is exempt from the requirement to deliver a 10% mandatory net gain, as measured using the Statutory metric.

Notwithstanding the above, Condition 13 of planning permission 233086 was discharged under application 251160, based on the Biodiversity Metric (dated 4 October 2024) prepared by AA Environmental, and the accompanying Technical Note: Biodiversity Net Gain Rev C (October 2024). These documents reported a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) of 28.30%.

The Council's Ecologist has advised that the proposed variation for the additional garage canopies does not result in a failure to meet the national target of 10%. On the basis that these plans do not vary the produced information provided in the Biodiversity Metric and Technical Note: Biodiversity Net Gain, further submission of new documents

showing the amendments are not required. As such, compliance with a revised worded condition would ensure suitable BNG is still achievable and secured.

Environmental Health Issues:

Relevant planning policies require that development avoids exposing future occupiers to pollution, including noise, air, and ground contamination. Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 emphasise the need for high-quality design that safeguards the amenity of both future residents and neighbouring uses. Policy CC06 of the MDD specifically addresses the need to assess and mitigate noise impacts.

National planning guidance also highlights the importance of preventing developments from causing or being affected by unacceptable levels of pollution or land instability, and encourages improvements to local environmental conditions where possible.

At the local level, the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan (Policy GA1) requires proposals to demonstrate how they will mitigate traffic-related noise and air pollution through effective planning.

The application proposes relatively minor changes to the approved housing scheme, with the overall layout remaining largely unchanged. Environmental health matters, including land contamination, noise, and dust, were comprehensively addressed under the original permission, and all related conditions have been discharged, other than a final verification report which is required prior to first occupation.

The site investigation and proposed remediation measures submitted under the previous application (233292) confirmed that the site is suitable for residential use. No further assessment is therefore required, and any unexpected contamination will be managed under existing conditions.

Construction impacts will continue to be controlled through the approved Construction Management Plan, which remains applicable through the revised condition recommended. Standard working hours and dust suppression measures will apply if this application is approved.

In summary, the proposal raises no new environmental health concerns and remains compliant with relevant local and national policies.

Archaeology:

Policy TB25 of the MDD Local Plan requires that in areas with high archaeological potential, applicants must assess the potential impact of development on any archaeological remains. Where such remains are likely to be affected, the preferred approach is to preserve them in place. If preservation is not feasible, appropriate measures such as excavation, recording, and archiving must be undertaken.

The proposal intends relatively minor amendments to the approved scheme, with the overall layout generally unchanged. Archaeological matters were fully addressed under the original permission, and the required Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) condition has been discharged following completion of the necessary work.

As the current proposal does not involve significant additional ground disturbance beyond that previously assessed, no further archaeological investigation is required. Subject to adherence to the revised WSI condition, the development remains therefore compliant with MDD Local Plan Policy TB25 and Paragraph 211 of the NPPF.

Other:

Procedural

The proposed changes are suitable for consideration under the s73 process as the site boundary and description remain unchanged.

Infrastructure

In respect of objections received regarding lack of infrastructure, the extant permission provides the fallback for the principle of this development in this location. Moreover, as indicated in the start of the 'Appraisal' section of this report, the planning obligations secured under the original permission (233086) would be 'carried through' to the new permission should this application be granted.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):

When planning permission is granted for a development that is CIL liable, the Council will issue a liability notice as soon as practicable after the day on which the planning permission first permits development. Completing the assumption of liability notice is a statutory requirement to be completed for all CIL liable applications.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010):

In determining this application, the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that persons with protected characteristics as identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

RECOMMENDATION

Conditions agreed:	Yes
Recommendation:	Approve subject to revised conditions
Date:	20 August 2025
Earliest date for decision:	27 August 2025

Recommendation agreed by:
(Authorised Officer)

BJC

Date: 26.11.25

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 Screening Assessment and Appropriate Assessment

In the light of the "Sweetman Judgement" (People Over Wind and Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta, April 2018), the comments below comprise an Appropriate Assessment which includes advice on necessary avoidance and mitigation measures which is consistent with the advice provided to the Planning Inspectorate on such matters.

Summary of Response

WBC, in consultation with Natural England, has formed the view that any net increase in residential development between 400m and 5km straight-line distance from the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area (SPA) is likely to have a significant effect on the integrity of the SPA, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects. An Appropriate Assessment has been carried out which includes regard to mitigation requirements.

This site is located approximately **4 km** (measured from the access road to the application site) from the boundary of the SPA and therefore is likely to result in an adverse effect on the SPA, unless it is carried out together with appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures.

On commencement of the proposed development, a contribution (calculated on a per-bedroom basis) is to be paid to Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) towards the cost of measures to avoid and mitigate against the effect upon the Thames Basin Heaths SPA, as set out in WBC's Infrastructure Delivery Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

The strategy is for relevant developments to make financial contributions towards the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs) in perpetuity as an alternative recreational location to the SPA and financial contributions towards Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) measures.

In this instance, the proposed development would result in a net increase of **eight no 4-bedroom dwellings** within 5km of the SPA which results in a total SANG contribution of **£28,374.88**

The proposed development is required to make a contribution towards Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) which is also calculated on a per bedroom basis. Taking account of the per bedroom contributions this results in a total SAMM contribution of **£9,800.00**

The total SPA related financial contribution for this proposal is **£38,174.88**. The applicant **must agree** to enter into a S106/s111 agreement to secure this contribution prior to occupation of each dwelling. Subject to the completion of the S106 agreement, the proposal would not lead to an adverse effect on the integrity of the SPA and would comply with SEP Saved Policy NRM6, policy CP8 of the Core Strategy, and the NPPF.

1. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) as amended

In accordance with The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) as amended, Regulation 63, a competent authority (in this case Wokingham Borough Council (WBC)), before deciding to undertake, or give any consent, permission or other authorisation for, a plan or project which—

- a. is likely to have a significant effect on a European site...(either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and
- b. is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of that site.

must make an appropriate assessment of the implications of the plan or project for that site in view of that site's conservation objectives.

A person applying for any such consent, permission or other authorisation must provide such information as WBC may reasonably require for the purposes of the assessment or to enable it to determine whether an appropriate assessment is required.

WBC must for the purposes of the assessment consult Natural England (NE) and have regard to any representations made by that body. It must also, if it considers it appropriate, take the opinion of the general public, and if it does so, it must take such steps for that purpose as it considers appropriate. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment, and subject to Regulation 64 (Considerations of overriding public interest), WBC may agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the European site.

In considering whether a plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of the site, WBC must have regard to the manner in which it is proposed to be carried out or to any conditions or restrictions subject to which it proposes that the consent, permission or other authorisation should be given.

2. Stage 1 Screening for Likely Significant Effects

WBC accepts that this proposal is a 'plan or project' which is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European Site. The Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) is a European designated site which affects the borough, and WBC must ensure that development does not result in an adverse impact on the SPA. The potential adverse effects on the integrity of the SPA include recreational activities from inside the SPA and air pollution from inside and outside the SPA.

At this stage WBC cannot rule out 'likely significance effects' on the SPA (alone or in combination with other plans or projects) because the proposal could undermine the Conservation Objectives of these sites. This is because the proposal lies within 5 km of the SPA and:

- represents a net increase in dwellings within 400m - 5km of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) which will lead to an increase in local population and a potential increase in recreational activity on the SPA

As the 'likely significance effects' cannot be ruled out at this stage an Appropriate Assessment must be undertaken.

3. Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment

Based on the information proposed by the applicant, WBC must decide whether or not an adverse effect on site integrity (alone or in combination with other plans or projects) can be ruled out. Mitigation may be able to be provided so that the proposal is altered to avoid or reduce impacts.

The following policies and guidance set out WBC's approach to relevant avoidance and mitigation measures which have been agreed with Natural England. For the majority of housing developments this will comprise the provision of (or contribution towards) Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and a contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) Project. The financial contributions towards SANG would be either through an obligation in a s106 agreement that requires WBC to allocate an appropriate amount of the development CIL receipt towards the provision of SANG, or through an obligation in an agreement under s111 of the Local Government Act, that requires the developer to make an appropriate financial contribution towards the provision of SANG (to be used in the event that the developer successfully seeks CIL relief). Developers will be required to secure an appropriate financial contribution to the SAMM project through an obligation in a s106 agreement.

For SDL development (and occasionally some other larger non SDL developments) within 5km of the SPA, SANG is required at a minimum of 8 ha per 1,000 new residents, constructed and delivered to Natural England's quality and quantity standards and a contribution towards pan SPA access management and monitoring (as advised by the Thames Basin Heaths Joint Strategic

Partnership Board). For SDL development (and occasionally some other larger non SDL developments) between 5 and 7km, the proposals will need to be individually assessed but it is likely that SANG will be required on site in line with Natural England's quality and quantity standards, although the exact requirement will be agreed having regard to evidence supplied.

a. Policies and Guidance

For this proposal the following guidance and policies apply:

- South East Plan (May 2009) Policy NRM6 (Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area) <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100528160926/http://www.gos.gov.uk/gose/planning/regionalPlanning/815640/>
- Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010) Policy CP8 (Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area) sets out the approach WBC will take in order to protect the TBH SPA <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx?allId=268860>
- Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010) Policy CP7 (Biodiversity) sets out the approach WBC will take in order to protect national and international nature conservation sites <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx?allId=268860>
- Wokingham Borough Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014) Policy TB23 (Biodiversity and Development) <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx?allId=269993>
- Infrastructure Delivery and Contributions SPD (2011) <http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx?allId=193415>

The project as proposed would not adversely impact on the integrity of the SPA if avoidance and mitigation measures are provided as stipulated by these policies and guidance.

b. SPA Avoidance and Mitigation Measures

i) The provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and its ongoing maintenance in perpetuity.

In accordance with the development plan, the proposed development will be required to provide alternative land to attract new residents away from the SPA. The term given to this alternative land is Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG).

As this development is not part of an SDL, the developer may make a payment contribution towards strategic SANGs in line with schedule below (most likely this will be at Rooks Nest Wood SANG although it is subject to SANGs capacity in the right location within Wokingham borough). An occupation restriction will be included in the Section 106 Agreement in order to ensure that the contribution has been made prior to occupation of the dwellings. This gives the certainty required to satisfy the Habitats Regulations in accordance with South East Plan Policy NRM6 (iii) and Core Strategy Policy CP8

The development will result in a net increase of **8 no dwellings**, broken down as follows: **8 no. 4 bedroom dwellings**. Depending on the dwelling mix, the level of SANG payments are set out as follows:

No. of bedrooms	SANG Contribution 5km	Aggregate SANG Contribution
1 bedroom	£1,567.98	£0

2 bedrooms	£2,049.59	£0
3 bedrooms	£2,690.93	£0
4 bedrooms	£3,546.86	x 8 = £28,374.88
5 bedrooms	£4,240.62	£0
Total SANG Contribution		£28,374.88

ii. Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) Contribution

The proposed development will also be required to make a contribution towards Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM). This project funds strategic visitor access management measures on the SPA to mitigate the effects of new development on it.

From 1st April 2022 SAMM contributions have been updated across the 11 Local Authorities affected by the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. Following engagement with Natural England, the Joint Strategic Partnership Board agreed this change is necessary to ensure sufficient income is raised to cover the costs of the SAMM project in perpetuity. Without this change the SAMM project would be at risk of being unable to deliver the objectives of the SAMM project, and therefore secure positive outcomes for the SPA

The level of contributions are calculated on a per bedroom basis. The application for this development is for 8 **no. 4 bedroom dwellings**. Depending on the dwelling mix, the level of SAMM payments are calculated as follows:

No. of bedrooms	SAMM Contribution 5km	Aggregate SAMM Contribution
1 bedroom	£563.00	£0
2 bedrooms	£784.00	£0
3 bedrooms	£1,042.00	£0
4 bedrooms	£1,225.00	x8 = £9,800
5+ bedrooms	£1,400.00	£0
Total SAMM Contribution		£9,800

Prior to the permission being granted the applicant must enter into a Section 106 Agreement based upon the above measures.

4. Conclusion

An Appropriate Assessment has been carried out for this development in accordance with the Habitats Regulations 2017. Without any appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures the Appropriate Assessment concludes that the development is likely to have a significant effect upon the integrity of the SPA with the result that WBC would be required to refuse a planning application.

Provided that the applicant is prepared to make a financial contribution (see above) towards the costs of SPA avoidance and mitigation measures, the application will be in accordance with the SPA mitigation requirements as set out in the relevant policies above.

WBC is convinced, following consultation with Natural England, that the above measures will prevent an adverse effect on the integrity of the SPA. Pursuant to Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) and Regulation 63(5) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) as amended, and permission may be granted.

If the applicant does not agree with the above mitigation and does not enter into a Section 106 Agreement to secure the measures, then the application must be refused using the following reason for refusal.

5. Example Reason for Refusal

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.

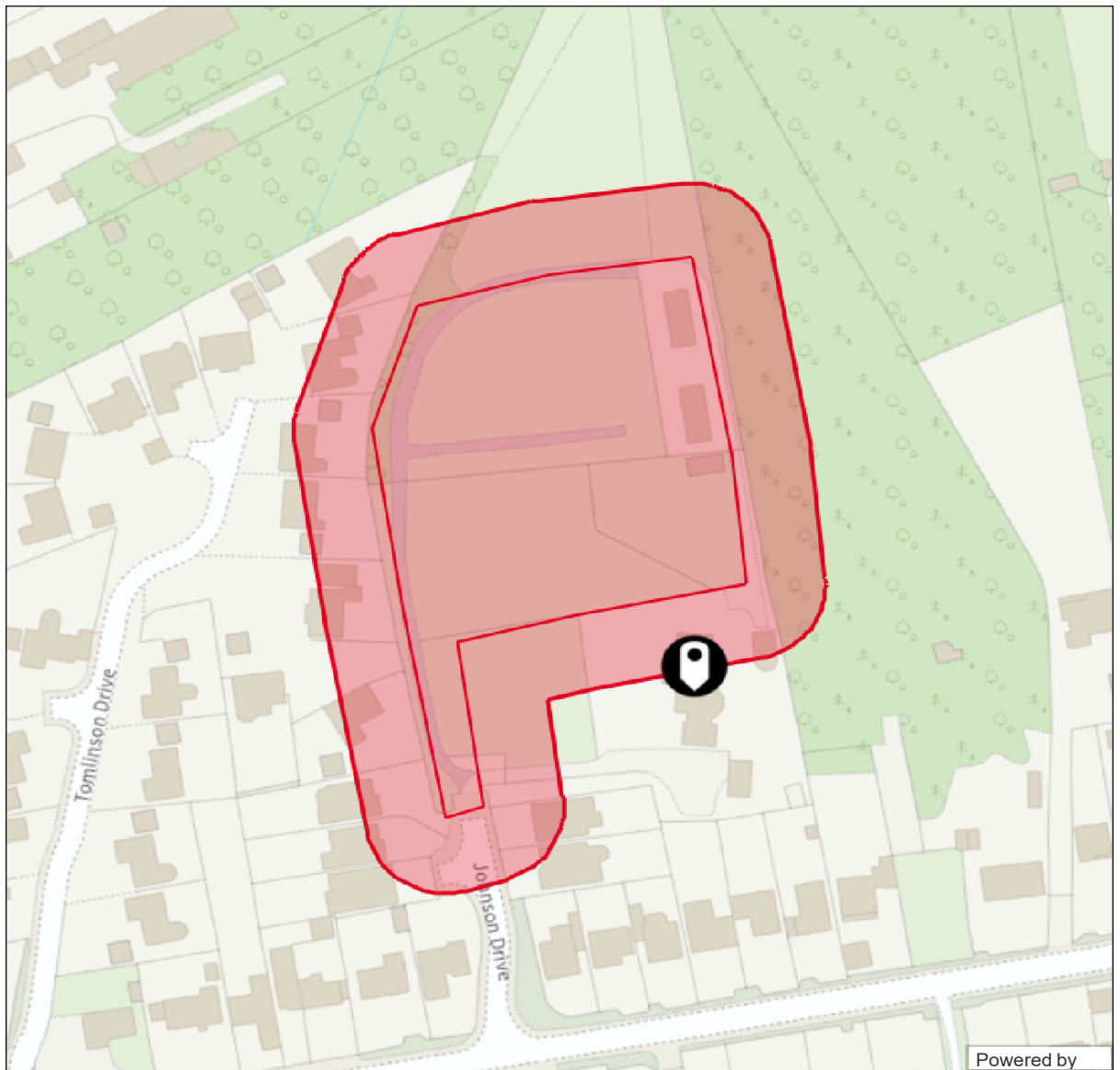
Date:

26.11.25

Signed:

BJC

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS:



Area of Interest (AOI) Information

Area: 17,952.22 m²

Date: Mon Aug 04 2025 19:11:53 GMT+0100 (British Summer Time)

Heritage & Conservation

Archaeological Sites
Consultation Zone



Conservation Areas



Listed Buildings

Affordable Housing Thresholds | Total count: 4

#	NAME
1	Outside Development Locations
2	Within Modest or Limited Development Locations
3	Within Modest or Limited Development Locations
4	Within All Development Locations

Scale and Location of Development Proposals | Total count: 2

#	FEATURE_TYPE	NAME
1	Countryside	Countryside
2	Modest Development Locations	Finchampstead North

Thames Basin Heath SPA Mitigation Zones | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME
1	Special Protection Area Linear Mitigation Zone	5km Linear Mitigation Zone

Major Nuclear Sites Consultation Zone | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME	PLANNING_NOTE
1	Consultation Zone - Major Nuclear Site	AWE: Special Case Zone	ONR also requests to be consulted on planning applications, irrespective of distance from nuclear sites, for special cases. Developments that either introduce a new hazard or change the existing external hazards posed to nuclear sites.

Aerodrome Safeguarding: Farnborough Consultation Zone | Total count: 2

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME	CONSULT_WHEN
1	Aerodrome Safeguarding: Farnborough Consultation Zone	Consultation zone 3	All buildings, structures, etc. Exceeding 90m
2	Aerodrome Safeguarding: Farnborough Consultation Zone	Consultation zone 1	Tree Planting, Mineral extract/Quarrying, Refuse tips, Reservoir, Sewage Disposal, Nature reserve, Bird Sanctuary, any aviation use

Aerodrome Safeguarding: Gatwick Consultation Zone | Total count: 1

#	Description
1	Please consult London Gatwick on the following: All buildings, structures & works exceeding 150 m AGL.

Aerodrome Safeguarding: Heathrow Consultation Zone | Total count: 1

#	Height Band	Wind Turbine	Aviation
1	All works exceeding 150 metres (492.1 feet)	YES	YES

Submitted Sites Live | Total count: 1

#	SITE_REF	LUPP	ADDRESS
1	5FI018	Housing (C3 Planning Use Class).	Land to the rear of 6 Johnson Drive

Risk of Flooding from Surface Water | Total count: 10

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME
1	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 30 year risk extent
2	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 100 year risk extent
3	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 100 year risk extent
4	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 100 year risk extent
5	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 1000 year risk extent
6	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 1000 year risk extent
7	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 1000 year risk extent
8	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 1000 year risk extent
9	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 1000 year risk extent
10	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 1000 year risk extent

Bat Roost Habitat Suitability | Total count: 10

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME	CONSULT
1	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	XD1041	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team
2	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	XD1046	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team
3	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	XD1047	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team
4	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	XG1041	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team
5	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	XG1045	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team
6	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	XH1040	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team
7	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	XH1041	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team
8	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	XH1042	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team
9	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	XH1043	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team
10	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	XH1045	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team

Badger Consultation Zones | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME	CONSULT
1	Badger Sett Consultation Zone	100 Metre Consultation Zone	Ecology Officer - Green Infrastructure Team

Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zones | Total count: 2

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME	CONSULT
1	Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zone	Green	Consult NatureSpace for Major developments only
2	Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zone	Amber	For Householder applications check HH Layer. Consult NatureSpace for all other types of development

SSSI Impact Risk Zones | Total count: 3

#	IRZURL
1	https://irz.geodata.org.uk/IRZ/step2.html?irzcode=0101000322302&es=11401&location=481766,166418%20(IRZ%20polygon%20centre)
2	https://irz.geodata.org.uk/IRZ/step2.html?irzcode=0301000432000&es=11401&location=480059,163550%20(IRZ%20polygon%20centre)
3	https://irz.geodata.org.uk/IRZ/step2.html?irzcode=0301000430000&es=11401&location=481146,167261%20(IRZ%20polygon%20centre)

Water Utility Consultation Zones | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME	CONSULT_WHEN
1	Water Utility Consultation Zone	South East Water Supply Area	New dwellings

Landscape Character Assessment 2019 | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	Name
1	Landscape Character Assessment 2019	Finchampstead Forested and Settled Sands

Tree Preservation Orders Served or Confirmed | Total count: 5

#	TPO_REFERENCE	TPO_TYPE	RECORD_STATUS
1	TPO-0361-1988	Group	Confirmed
2	TPO-0361-1988	Group	Confirmed
3	TPO-0361-1988	Single	Confirmed
4	TPO-1642-2018	Group	Confirmed
5	TPO-1642-2018	Group	Confirmed

Wards | Total count: 1

#	NAME	Closest Approximate Distance
1	Finchampstead Ward	0 m

Parishes | Total count: 1

#	NAME	Closest Approximate Distance
1	Finchampstead CP	0 m

