APPLICATION NO:
F/2000/0577

LOCATION:
97 - 99 Pound Lane, Sonning Reading.

APPLICANT:
Bewley Homes Plc Philip Design Associates

PROPOSAL:
Proposed erection of 8 detached dwellings and garages plus demolition of existing 2 dwellings (Duplicate Application).

EARLIEST DATE FOR DECISION: **13/03/2000**

APPLICATION EXPIRY DATE: **10/04/2000**

CASE OFFICER: **Lynette Baker**

21 days 2nd 22/2

Application File

Appeal Decision

Hearing held on 23 August 2000

by Daphne Mair BA(Econ), MPhil, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions

The Planning Inspectorate
Room 1404
Tollgate House
Houlton Street
Bristol BS2 9DJ
☎ 0117 987 8927

Date
06 OCT 2000

Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/A/00/1043352
97-99 Pound Lane, Sonning, Reading

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town Country Planning Act 1990 against the failure of the local planning authority to give notice within the prescribed period of a decision on an application for planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Bewley Homes PLC against Wokingham District Council.
- The application (ref: F/2000/0577) is dated 11 February 2000.
- The development proposed is demolition of two houses and garages and erection of 8 detached houses with garages.

Summary of Decision: The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

1. It was agreed at the hearing that plan 2000.1114.01 B should be accepted as an amendment to that part of the site layout plan 99 72 01B which shows the visibility splay and the entrance section of the access road into the site. My considerations are therefore based on plans 99 72: 01B, 2A, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, a location plan and plan 2000.1114.01 B.

2. At the hearing the appellant offered a unilateral undertaking under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. I received this on 1 September. It would provide a sum of £60,000 to provide a pedestrian crossing on Pound Lane between West Drive and Duffield Road and appropriate measures to restrain vehicle speed in the vicinity of the site entrance.

Main Issues

3. I consider that the main issues in this case are whether the proposal would

   (a) Seriously endanger road safety or interrupt the free flow of traffic

   (b) Harm the character of this part of Sonning

   (c) Have an unsatisfactory relationship with adjacent dwellings, seriously detracting from their pleasantness as a place to live.

Planning Policy

4. The Berkshire Structure Plan, adopted in 1995 addresses the environment impact of development at policy LD3. Proposals will only be permitted where serious harm to the character or appearance of an area or the amenities of neighbouring land uses will not result. Policy EN1 aims to protect the character and quality of the environment in built up areas. Amongst other things its siting should be appropriate to its location, layout and landscaping should at least help maintain the character of the surroundings. Where appropriate the redevelopment of genuinely under-used urban land will be supported.

5. The Loddon Area Local Plan (LALP) was adopted in 1995. Following its expiry shortly

thereafter the Local Planning Authority resolved in 1996 that its policies should continue to carry weight except in relation to the supply of housing provision.

- Policy LTV6 states that open areas, including gardens, which significantly contribute to the character of settlements will be protected from development. Infill development will only be permitted if it is sympathetic in scale and character to its environs.
- Policy LH1 addresses housing on unidentified sites. Amongst criteria with which development should comply is the protection of garden areas important to the character of the settlement and that there should be no (other) adverse effect on character of the area.
- Policy LBE1 seeks in new development a high standard of design that is appropriate to its surroundings. Amongst other things, it should make a positive contribution to its setting and the character of the area.
- Policy LBE2 states that development that is inappropriate in its relationship with adjoining sites and buildings or which would adversely affect the character of an area by virtue of (amongst other things) siting, scale and massing will not normally be permitted. The supporting text sets out that new buildings should make an acceptable and positive contribution to the built environment and that "appropriate" in the policy refers to siting, form and the other factors set out in the policy itself in relation to character.

6. The inquiry into objections to the remaining and most relevant parts of the Wokingham District Local Plan (WDLP) is underway and housing policies were debated at a "round table" session in June this year. The plan was approved for development control purposes in 1997. It should be accorded considerable weight.

- Policy WOS3 sets out development control principles. Amongst these, proposals should be appropriate in character to their surroundings, not harm the amenities of adjoining occupiers, cause harm to road safety or related problems and be located to reduce the need to travel and to encourage use of other travel modes than the car.
- Policy WBE1 seeks respect for the local context including the local townscape, layout and massing, privacy and amenity of the existing environment.
- Policy WH1 seeks to make best use of unidentified sites in identified settlements subject to environmental and amenity considerations which include important garden areas, the character of the area, significant adverse effect on dwellings and traffic implications.

7. The most relevant national guidance is found in Planning Policy Guidance 1, 3 and 13.

- PPG1, amongst other things seeks to achieve good design and good *neighbourly development*.
- PPG3 seeks to achieve a more efficient use of urban land and more sustainable patterns of development in proximity to local services and public transport. Priority should be given to re-using previously developed sites in urban areas over green field sites and higher densities of 30 dwellings per hectare or more

should be sought. This should be combined with good design and is contingent on various factors including (paragraph 56) that new development should not be viewed in isolation. Design and layout should have regard to neighbouring buildings and the townscape of the wider locality. The local pattern of streets and spaces, amongst other things, should help determine the character and identity of a development. Previously developed land is defined in Annex C. It includes a building and the land attached to it, but this does not mean that the whole area should be redeveloped. A judgement should be made about factors such as how the site relates to the surrounding area and requirements for buffer strips and landscaped areas.

- PPG13 and the DETR's Places Streets and Movement address road safety and accessibility issues.

8. In June 2000 the Council's Environmental Services Committee considered PPG3 of March 2000, including, in particular, its implications for increased densities in urban areas. A new policy was approved for development control purposes on 12 June and submitted to the Local Plan Inquiry via a "round table" discussion on housing policies in the WDLP. The relevant part of that policy is that within established settlements on sites over 0.3ha, development at less than a minimum net density of 30 dwellings per hectare will not be permitted, subject to such a density not compromising the quality of the environment.

9. The appellant's planning witness sought clarification at the Local Plan Inquiry on the intended application of the latter clause. He recalls being told that lower densities may be required in Conservation Areas, Areas of Special Character, Wokingham Town Centre or in the vicinity of listed buildings, none of which apply in the appeal case.

10. The relevant section of the officer's proof of evidence to the "round table" session states that variation away from this density may be needed "to take account of factors specific to the site in question". This appears, rightly in my view, to allow of a wider scope for exceptions. In his post-hearing response to the witness's recollections, the Council's witness at the "round table" session does not recall excluding higher densities in the above locations. Neither would development at high density on small linear plots be ruled out, but it may be made more difficult because of possible adverse effects on "local context" factors. I have no doubt that the latter are an essential consideration in how proposals on any previously developed site should be assessed.

Reasons

Road safety

11. Pound Lane is a busy local distributor road linking Woodley to the south and Sonning to the north via a busy roundabout with the A4 Old Bath Road. That roundabout is about 103m to the north of the proposed access. The two existing houses have three access points to Pound Lane all of which fall short of modern standards. The proposed single access point would afford a visibility splay of 4.5m by 90m to the south and 4.5m by 77m or 3m by 90m to the north. The first 23m of the drive would be 5.5m wide reducing to 4.8m for the remainder. Kerb radii of 10m would be provided.

12. In the morning peak period northbound queues occur on Pound Lane towards the roundabout. These sometimes extend beyond the appeal site.

13. Using commonly accepted figured from the national TRICS database, it is estimated that each house would generate 8-10 two way trips per day of which about 1 per house would be in the morning peak hour. Of every 8 trips, 6 would be outbound and 2 inbound. Assuming the same split as traffic observed on Pound Lane, 60% of outbound trips would be northbound and 40% southbound. The appeal proposal would thus add about 3 extra cars exiting to join northbound traffic in the morning peak hour.

14. Taking forward visibility first, there is a 30mph speed limit past the site but prevailing (85 percentile) traffic speeds have been measured at 38mph past the site in a southerly direction as drivers accelerate away from the roundabout. A speed camera surveys traffic further along Pound Lane towards Woodley. According to the guidance in TD42/95 and at page 58 of People, Streets and Movement, a 4.5m by 90m splay should be provided in both directions at such speeds.

15. Forward visibility in the nearside direction would be below this, but 90m is available to the north at 3m back from the edge of the carriageway. The access would be more evident generally as vehicles approach because of its increased width and radii. Additional traffic generation would be quite low and the new drive would replace 3 drives with substandard visibility. Only one of the nine personal injury accidents in the locality over a 5-year period was close to the site, at the junction of West Drive and Pound Lane. Its circumstances have no relevance to the shortfall in forward visibility at the proposed junction. None of the four accidents at or near the roundabout involved the two domestic accesses on Pound Lane that are very close to the roundabout. I conclude that the forward visibility that could be provided would not endanger road safety.

16. Regarding other traffic implications, a queue of more than 90m would impede the ability of a driver leaving the site to turn right. Information from the three peak hour traffic counts indicates variation in queuing on different days and times of the year. The worst case (January) indicates such queuing for one 25-minute and one 10-minute period. The best case (April) has one 5-minute period only. These counts indicate to me that periods when queues extend for more than 90m are both infrequent and short lived.

17. I agree that occasionally, drivers would pull across the southbound carriageway to try to slot into a gap and thereby put themselves and oncoming drivers at risk. They would however be clearly seen by drivers coming off the roundabout. I saw on my visits that in the late afternoon it is necessary to wait some time for a gap in traffic to cross the road. The pelican crossing which the appellants have undertaken to provide would assist drivers wishing to turn right out of the site by creating occasional breaks in traffic but it would not affect queuing here as it would have to be sited to the south of the site entrance.

18. The appellant also proposed that the mouth of the roundabout could be widened to allow two streams of traffic even when a large vehicle is in one of the lanes. This would help reduce queuing. I saw that to do so would mean reducing an already fairly narrow footway. This would be unacceptable in terms of pedestrian safety.

19. The assumptions on which traffic generation per house is predicted are well accepted and no contrary evidence was offered to support opinions of local people that these are underestimates. In the absence of other evidence I also consider it reasonable to assume that the same north/south split would occur with traffic from the proposed houses as is the case with traffic passing along Pound Lane.

20. Regarding pedestrians, there is no injury accident recorded in this area and little to attract pedestrians in the vicinity. The undertaking to provide funds for a pelican crossing would doubtless be a safety benefit to pedestrians hereabouts.

21. Bearing all the above in mind I do not consider that the slight addition to vehicles wishing to exit the site and turn north would be unsafe or impede the flow of traffic unduly. I do not consider the pelican crossing necessary to render the proposal acceptable on traffic grounds.

The Character of the area

22. The site is on a short section of Pound Lane between the roundabout and railway bridge where there are several large houses with long rear gardens which front, but are set back from the road. West Drive, which joins Pound Lane a short distance to the south of the appeal site exhibits a similar character, as does the south eastern side of the Old Bath Road. Across Pound Lane two similar large plots on the corner with West Drive were redeveloped in the last 10 years or so with three blocks of flats. If not a "unique character" as a close neighbour puts it, the area is distinctive. Another resident's assessment seems fair to me: "the much vaunted character of this part of Sonning lies not only in the size of each plot but in the eclectic but complementary nature of the dwellings.... almost all built in this [last] century.... One thing not found is an enclave of virtually identical properties in a Close".

23. The general character of this part of Sonning as perceived from public viewpoints would be changed by the replacement of 2 very large and spaciously separated houses with 3 large houses and double garages on the same building line. The two storey elements of these would be separated by a minimum of 10m. The access road would open up a view deeper into the site than at present but the other 5 houses would not readily be evident. The set back from the road would be retained where planting could be reinforced. The access road would be wider than existing drives but there is room for some planting along it to soften the impact of the greater area of hard surfacing. Because the very large houses extend for a short length of Pound Lane only, these changes to the street scene would have a lesser impact than, say, in West Drive.

24. The general spacious and leafy ambience of this part of Sonning would be further affected by the removal of the hedges along the frontages to provide the much wider drive and the visibility splay. That the occupier of no.99 has obtained planning permission for a wall along the frontage indicates that such changes can occur in any case and I saw that several of the houses in the vicinity have close-boarded fences, some of them extending to about 1.8m. This prevents a view of the houses other than at their driveways. It reduces the sense of openness along Pound Lane in a way that contrasts with West Drive, where wide, tree lined grassed verges give a much more open appearance.

25. The rear gardens of nos. 97 and 99 are scarcely perceived from the road or other public viewpoint. In themselves, they are not important to the general character of the area. Five of the proposed houses here would scarcely be seen from the road or any public viewpoint.

26. Taking all the above into account and the relevant parts of Policies LTV6, LH1 and WOS3, I find no serious harm would arise to the physical character of the area.

The relationship with the surrounding houses

27. The house on Plot 3 is shown sited on the same building line as no.101 Pound Lane with about 6m between their flank walls. No.101 is a large house that has been extended on two

storeys out to the side boundary of no.99. There are trees along the shared boundary. The 13m deep garden of plot 3 adjoins the garden of no.101 close to the house. Plots 4 and 5 as proposed would have rear gardens of 13m and 12.5m respectively. These back on to the garden of 101 Pound Lane. Plot 5 also shares a boundary with Red Lodge. The house at plot 5 would be 11m from that boundary.

28. Plot 1 would have a similar building line to no.95 and is 4m from the common boundary. Its rear garden scales at 12.4m.

29. Red Lodge is one of two large houses with long gardens built on the rear gardens of houses fronting Old Bath Road. The corner of Red Lodge, which is at an angle to the boundary and contains its living room and main bedroom, is about 9m from that boundary and its terrace is a similar distance away. That corner would be about 20m from the side elevation of the house on plot 5. The distances between windows are such that, subject to the installation of obscured glass to the bathroom windows on the first floor of plot 5 and the removal of permitted development rights to install other windows on that elevation, the minimum distances often applied to ensure basic privacy would be secured. Similarly, fencing or the reinforcement with suitable planting along the existing rather sparse boundary would ensure visual privacy in the garden.

30. The boundary with no.101 is lined with trees and shrubs on the appeal site side and, apparently within the garden of no.101. Plot 1 has a similar relationship to no.95 as plot 3 to no.101. Any gaps in hedges and trees on the boundary could be filled by condition of any permission granted. Obscured glazing in the side elevation of plot 7 would avoid overlooking of the end of the garden of no.95.

31. With conditions as described above, I conclude that it would be possible to avoid direct overlooking or undue dominance by the buildings of occupiers of adjacent houses.

32. The issue here is more that in this part of Sonning, the layout of houses, combined with their plot size gives a very high standard of privacy and spaciousness to its residents in both house and garden. These qualities appear to me to be a distinctive characteristic of the area. Policies LBE2 and WBE1 address this relationship to other buildings and local context.

33. The occupier of Red Lodge tellingly said that part of the reason she had moved to Red Lodge was that there would not be the noise of small children in close proximity. This seems to me to crystallise and bring together the related issues of the wider character of the area and impact on adjacent occupiers upon which layout can have a major effect.

34. As a result of the side extension built to no.101 and, if built, that permitted at no.99, these two dwellings would be fairly close to each other. The main elevations are distant from other houses because of the long gardens. The latter allows the impact of activities in the gardens to be well dispersed.

35. At no.101 there would be a loss of the general sense of seclusion in its garden. This is because of the combination of comparatively modest depth and area of the three proposed gardens and the large size of the proposed houses. This would mean that the gardens would be much more intensively used than that of the existing house at no.99. All parts of the garden of no.101 would be so affected whereas at present the rear part is very secluded. The layout of the proposals and the resultant relationship with no.101 would thus mean that the high degree of privacy enjoyed by its occupiers would be unacceptably diminished.

36. Regarding no.95, there would be increased activity near no.95 because of the much smaller garden of Plot 1 compared to no.97. Plot 8 has a larger garden than plot 1 and plot 7 has only a narrow side garden and secondary elevation facing towards the rear of the garden of no.95. The impact would be less than at no.101 but still significant.

37. The sense of seclusion enjoyed by residents of Red Lodge would be very harmfully reduced because of activity in the garden of Plot 5 within 9m of the house and its terrace.

38. Reinforcement of tree planting along boundaries will have little effect on reducing the sense of intrusion arising from the relationships proposed on plots 3, 4, 5 and 6.

39. Whilst the building of Red Lodge a few years ago will have had some impact on the sense of privacy at 99 Pound Lane, the houses themselves are about 72m apart. Some loss of privacy in the rear part of the garden of no.99 has been lost but a high standard of seclusion otherwise remains.

40. Against the above impacts I must weigh the advice in PPG3 about the use of previously developed land in urban areas and the achievement of higher densities. Such development should not however be at the expense of the surroundings. Local character should be respected and all developments should be accessible by a range of non-car modes.

41. Pound Lane has a 2 hourly bus service in the middle of the day and there is only an hourly service along the nearby A4 Old Bath Road. Most of these nearby services depend, apparently, on Council subsidy, which is under review at present. There are no shops in easy walking distance and those to the south in Woodley appear to be mainly estate agents or newsagents. The nearest Local Education Authority primary school is about 500m away, across the A4 in Sonning and there are other state schools in Woodley, about 900m away. I was told that a significant proportion of local children is privately educated and that they are taken to school by car. From the above I conclude that the site is poorly served by public transport and inconvenient for local shops, schools and services so that there would be little option but to use the private car for many purposes. The existing two houses are inhabited and in good condition. The site has no overall "sustainability" advantages in my view.

42. However, if the aims of PPG3 in concentrating development in existing urban areas are to be met then, even allowing for the poor access to local facilities and infrequency of the nearby bus routes, there will be potential here to intensify use of this site. I consider however that the layout of any such redevelopment must allow for a more satisfactory relationship to adjacent houses so that more of the existing characteristic sense of seclusion can be retained than in the appeal scheme.

43. In coming to my overall conclusions, I have borne in mind that permissions were granted in 1988 and 1989 for the redevelopment of 2 houses on similar large plots a short distance across from this appeal site on the corner of West Drive and Pound Lane. Three blocks of 3 storey flats, known as West Court, now stand on that site.

44. That is a corner site where the contrast in type of development to adjacent buildings is less evident. Though different to the nearby large houses, the flats are in a spacious setting being set back from the two roads in fairly well treed grounds and behind retained verges in West Drive. Intensive use of amenity land adjacent to the gardens of existing houses is unlikely in an apartment development. I find no reference to local policies in the 1988 decision and in the 1989 letter there is a reference only to the fact that West Drive was identified within the

then emerging plan as "an important area for protection of amenity". I note that my colleague found the spaciousness and high standard of privacy to be a characteristic of that area, as I have of the land to the east in this appeal. Although it appears that the "important area" policy was not incorporated in the adopted plan, policies LBE2 of that plan and WBE1 and WH1 of the emerging plan protect the interests I have identified and to which I conclude that the proposal would cause serious harm.

Other matters

45. Some local residents report drainage problems in the area. Had I found the proposal otherwise acceptable, the requirement of other legislation would have sufficed to ensure that conditions were not worsened by this proposal. On the precedent point raised, each proposal must be judged on its own merits. The acceptability of a development in general principle, as I find here, must be balanced with its site specific impact in each case.

Conclusions

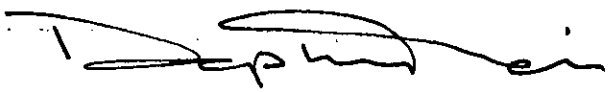
46. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Formal Decision

47. In exercise of the powers transferred to me, I dismiss the appeal and refuse planning permission for demolition of two houses and garages and erection of 8 detached houses with garages at 97-99 Pound Lane, Sonning, Reading.

Information

48. Particulars of the right of appeal against this decision to the High Court are enclosed for those concerned.



INSPECTOR

APPEARANCES

FOR THE APPELLANT:

Mr Huw Edwards, MSc MRTPI	Associate, Charles Planning Associates, Chartered Town Planners
Mr Robert Hewitt, BSc, CEng, MICE, MIHT	Partner, Stuart Michael Associates, Consulting Civil Engineers

FOR THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:

Mr Simon Lewis, BA(Hons), DipTP, MRTPI	Senior Planning Officer with the Council
Mr Tom Callaghan, HNC (Civil Engineering	Team Leader, Highways Development Control, with the Council

INTERESTED PERSONS:

Mr Nigel Rose, MA, CEng, MIMechE, MIMgt	Wokingham District Councillor for Sonning, Spinney Side, Holme Park Lane, Sonning, RG4 6SX
Mrs Valerie Moncur	Parish Councillor for Sonning, 1 Elm Cottage, Thames Street, Sonning, RG4 6UU
Mrs Janet Lawson	Red Lodge, Old Bath Road, Sonning, RG4 6TQ
Mr Michael Toh	99 Pound Lane, Sonning, RG4 6GG

DOCUMENTS

Document	1	List of persons present at the Hearing.
Document	2	Letter of notification and circulation list
Document	3	Appendices to Mr Edwards' statement
Document	4	Appendices to Mr Hewitt's statement
Document	5	Appendices to Mr Lewis' statement
Document	6	Appendices to Mr Callaghan's statement
Document	7	Proposed Highway conditions
Document	8	Minutes of meeting of Environmental Services Committee of 12 June 2000
Document	9	Extracts from WDLP Deposit Draft with Proposed Amendments

PLANS

Plan	A	Set of Application Plans: 99 72: 01B, 2A, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and Location Plan
Plan	B	Revised application plan (no.2000.1114.01 B) showing entrance section of access road and visibility splays

Town and Country Planning Acts

Demolition of Existing 2 No. Detached Dwellings
& Erection of 8 No. Detached Dwellings
at 97-99 Pound Lane, Sonning

Appeal on behalf of Bewley Homes Plc

Schedule of Appendices
APPEAL REF: APP/X0360/A/00/1043352

Appendices:

Appendix One	General Location Plans
Appendix Two	Photographs of Appeal Site and Surrounding Area
Appendix Three	West Court, West Drive Previous Appeal Decision – February 1988
Appendix Four	West Court, West Drive Previous Appeal Decision – August 1989
Appendix Five	Extracts from Berkshire Structure Plan
Appendix Six	Extracts from Loddon Area Local Plan
Appendix Seven	Extracts of Wokingham District Local Plan (Consolidated Document, November 1999)
Appendix Eight	Report to Environmental Services Committee 12 June 2000 Item No. 5 – PPG3: Housing
Appendix Nine	Extracts from LPA Housing Round Table Evidence WDLP Local Plan Inquiry 3 and 4 July 2000

APPENDIX ONE

General Location Plans



Plan 1

97 – 99 Pound Lane Sonning

General Surrounding Area

Not To Scale

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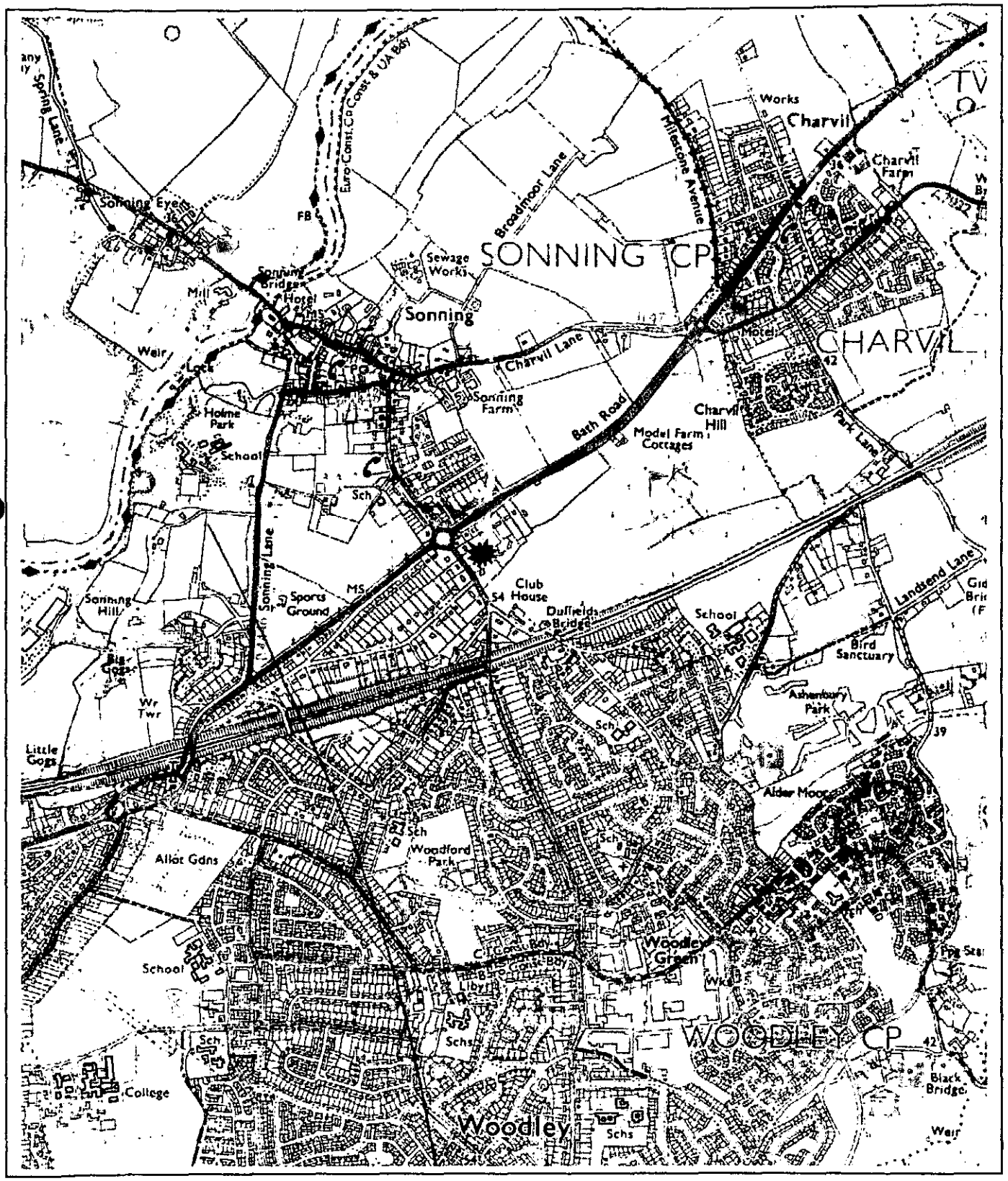
Chartered Town Planners



Plan 2

97 – 99 Pound Lane, Sonning

Site Location and Surrounding Area

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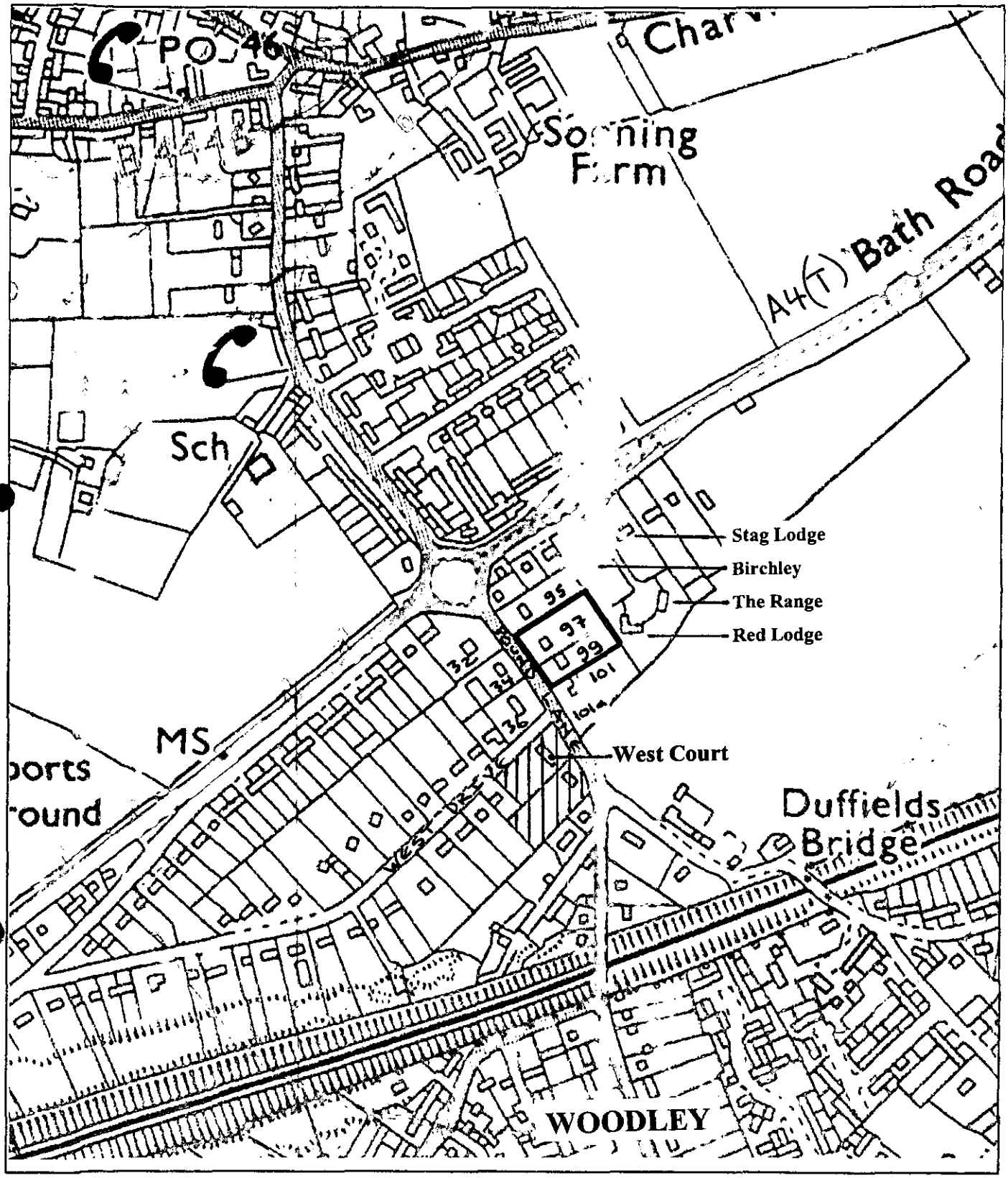

Plan 3

97 – 99 Pound Lane, Sonning

Appeal Site Location

Not To Scale

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APPENDIX TWO

Photographs of Appeal Site and Surrounding Area

1. No. 97 Pound Lane – Front Garden
2. No. 97 Pound Lane – Rear Aspect
3. No. 99 Pound Lane – Front Elevation
4. No. 99 Pound Lane – Rear Elevation
5. Appeal Site North East Boundary – Rear Garden of No. 97 Pound Lane
6. Appeal Site Northern Boundary – Between Nos. 95 & 97 Pound Lane
7. 'Red Lodge' – to the Rear of No. 99 Pound Lane
8. Appeal Site Southern Boundary – Between Nos. 99 & 101 Pound Lane
9. Frontage Development – Nos. 99 & 101 Pound Lane
10. Pound Lane – Looking South, Opposite Appeal Site
11. Frontage Development – Northern Aspect of West Drive
12. West Drive – Viewed Midway Looking West
13. West Court, West Drive – Viewed Looking South
14. West Court, West Drive – Viewed Looking South West
15. Junction of West Drive & Pound Lane – View Along West Drive
16. Junction of Pound Lane & West Drive – View North Along Pound Lane



1. No. 97 Pound Lane – Front Garden

2. No. 97 Pound Lane – Rear Aspect





3. **No. 99 Pound Lane – Front Elevation**

4. **No. 99 Pound Lane – Rear Elevation**





5. Appeal Site North East Boundary – Rear Garden of No. 97 Pound Lane

6. Appeal Site Northern Boundary – Between Nos. 95 and 97 Pound Lane





7. 'Red Lodge' – To the Rear of No. 99 Pound Lane

8. Appeal Site Southern Boundary – Between Nos. 99 and 101 Pound Lane





9. Frontage Development – Nos. 99 and 101 Pound lane

10. Pound Lane – Looking South Opposite Appeal Site





11. Frontage Development – Northern Aspect of West Drive

12. West Drive – Viewed Midway Looking West





13. **West Court, West Drive – Viewed Looking South**

14. **West Court, West Drive – Viewed Looking South West**





15. Junction of West Drive and Pound Lane – View Along West Drive

16. Junction of Pound Lane and West Drive – View North Along Pound Lane



APPENDIX THREE

West Court, West Drive

Previous Appeal Decision – February 1988

Ref: T/APP/H0330/A/86/058361 & 058362/P3

A/1222X/AJB/P

APP 5 J. Soones FIRST DECISION *

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43/88

2 MAR 88 DO DISTRICT SECRETARY

Middleton and Upsall
Solicitors
2 Fore Street
TROWBRIDGE
Wiltshire

Your reference

Our reference T/APP/H0330/A/86/058361 and 058362/P3

Date 29 FEB 88

Gentlemen

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1971, SECTION 36 AND SCHEDULE 9
APPEALS BY THAMES VALLEY HOMES LTD
APPLICATION NOS:- (O) 25952 AND (F) 25953

1. As you know I have been appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment to determine the above mentioned appeals. These appeals are against the decisions of the Wokingham District Council, (A) to refuse outline planning permission for the erection of 20 apartments with underground parking and (B) to refuse planning permission for the erection of 7 five-bedroom detached houses, both on land at Cheveley and Virginia Cottage, Pound Lane, Sonning. I held a local inquiry into the appeals on 1 December 1987 and visited the site and surrounding area on 3 December 1987.

2. Having considered the evidence presented at the inquiry, the written submissions made, including the letter from John Redwood MP, and from my inspection of the land to which the appeals relate and of the surrounding area I consider that the key issues which arise are the effects of the developments proposed on the character and appearance of the locality and on the general living conditions of adjacent residents.

3. Prior to the inquiry an amended layout plan relating to the dwellings proposed in Appeal B was submitted to the council. The council has no objection to this substitution and I shall therefore determine Appeal B on the basis of the amended plan submitted on 21 October 1987 (Plan C).

4. The sites extend to about 1.95 acres and 2.2 acres respectively. Apart from the rear portion of the garden of "Cheveley", which is omitted from Appeal A and where there is an extant permission for the erection of a detached house, the boundaries of the sites are common. The sites are currently occupied by 2 large detached houses, apparently of inter-war construction, each set in substantial grounds; both Virginia Cottage and Cheveley are proposed to be demolished to make way for the alternative developments proposed. There is a belt of mature and semi-mature trees, mainly oak and conifers, between the dwellings and Pound Lane, a well-used road crossing the River Thames east of Reading. Long, attractively landscaped gardens extend to the south-west to the rear of the dwellings up to the side boundaries of "Yarviden" and "The Braes", the rear garden of the latter dwelling being much deeper than the former. Access is proposed on the return frontage from West Drive, a wide private road with verges containing trees. The gardens of Cheveley and Virginia Cottage contain 66 individual trees and 4 groups of trees, together with other fruit trees.

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5. The immediate locality is characterised by large detached dwellings set in spacious attractive gardens. This is particularly so in Pound Lane, to the north of the railway line, where the natural environment is the unifying visual feature of the locality. Similarly low-density houses in West Drive are more open to view from the road, with generally fewer trees in front gardens.

6. With regard to the question of land supply I note that in terms of the approved Structure Plan there is agreement that there is not a 5-year supply of housing land to meet the requirements of Annex B of Circular 15/84. Although a different situation might emerge if the Structure Plan is approved as submitted, I am not able to assume that this will happen. My consideration is therefore made in the context of there being an added presumption in favour of the release of additional land for housing development.

7. It is the aim of the council and of residents to retain the character of the sites and of the surrounding area. The locality is one of very few areas in the District of high quality low-density housing which has retained, in the council's opinion a particular charm and character. Within the terms of approved Structure Plan policy the redevelopment of small sites, such as is proposed in these 2 appeals, is acceptable, provided the development proposed is appropriate to the physical, social and visual character and structure of the settlement. The council considers that the developments proposed would be harmful to the physical and visual character of the neighbourhood and thus be contrary to the requirements of the approved Structure Plan and of its submitted review. Contrary to the council's published "Development Control Policies and Guidelines", the proposals would not be compatible with the surrounding area. To be compatible new development should be sympathetic to the character, scale and massing of existing properties and should have plots of similar size and width; neither of the schemes proposed would achieve such compatability.

8. You claim that the proposals would not be harmful to the character of the neighbourhood and draw attention to the non-statutory status of the council's published document, which you suggest conflicts with Government advice. This seeks to encourage the full and effective use of land for housing in appropriate locations within urban areas and stresses that new development need not necessarily conform to the character of what exists unless the area has special architectural or other qualities that are worth preserving.

9. In considering the appeal proposals I attach considerable weight to the long-standing and fundamental principle that conformity with existing development does not have to be achieved for new development to be acceptable. It is in this context that I shall consider the various features of the development which are held by the council and residents to tell in favour of their views on the first issue.

10. Both proposals involve development at a density greater than that which generally prevails in the area. The development proposed under Appeal B, 7 dwellings on 2.2 acres, is however only marginally greater than the exceptionally low density which generally exists in West Drive and Pound Lane. The density and plot sizes of Scheme B would equate approximately to that found on plots in West Drive closest to the appeal site at "Yarviden" and "Acorns", the latter property lying opposite the sites' frontage to West Drive. Clearly the density envisaged under Appeal A (20 apartments on 1.95 acres) would be substantially higher. The illustrative plans accompanying the application for the apartments do however show to my satisfaction that a development containing 20 apartments can be achieved which by reason of the associated extensive grounds would not be markedly out of place in its surroundings. In terms of density I consider that both schemes use their respective sites to the best advantage and that the density objection is not in itself sufficiently compelling to cause me to regard the development as being unacceptable.

11. The second consideration on the first issue is the effect of the loss of trees. The council's objection, voiced at the inquiry in relation to both schemes, is that the developments would result in the loss of trees which should be retained because of their enhancement of the visual amenity. Although agreeing with your clients' assessment of the amenity value of the trees and recognising that none of the 32 individual trees or the 3 groups of trees, which merit retention at all costs or whose retention is very desirable, are to be felled, the council's main cause for concern is that if no redevelopment were to take place there would be no need for any trees to be felled.

12. As both schemes provide for the retention of all trees of amenity significance close to site boundaries, I consider that the loss of other trees would not cause harm to the attractively landscaped appearance of the appeal sites. It is in my view the boundary trees which contribute significantly to the character of the site and indeed the council concedes that the resultant loss of trees does not of itself amount to a reason sufficient to refuse permission. The remaining point of concern to the council, ie the perceived threat to the integrity of several trees by the siting of individual dwellings, could effectively be overcome in my opinion by the handing of the house types proposed on the plots immediately south-west of the proposed access to the site.

13. The other matter to be considered is the objection to the height of the apartments which are shown to be 3 storeys in height, above underground garaging. Although the application to which Appeal A relates is in outline form with all matters reserved for subsequent approval, the accompanying illustrative drawings indicate the form of massing envisaged. In the light of these intentions I believe that the drawings show that the proposed blocks would not be dominant in their surroundings. The roof heights envisaged would not be significantly higher than is the case with several dwellings in the locality, and whilst the massing and bulk of the blocks is likely to be greater, the opportunity exists for them to be well-separated from existing development, such that they would not look noticeably out of place.

14. I now consider the view of the council that building in depth - alternatively described by residents as backfilling - would be alien to the locality and create an unfortunate precedent for similar layouts by the redevelopment of other sites nearby. Reference is made to appeal decisions in connection with tandem development and the view is held locally that development in depth would be inappropriate on this site.

15. I recognise that no other sites in West Drive have been developed in depth, frontage development being universal in the area to the west of Pound Lane. The appeal sites do however occupy a corner position with a frontage to 2 roads, where in my view development in depth would not be inappropriate in principle. Whilst the view has been expressed that other residents in West Drive and Pound Lane might contemplate a similar form of redevelopment, there is thus a clear distinction between the appeal sites and all other potential sites, with the possible exception of land immediately north-west of the road junction; if redevelopment of that area were to be proposed it would be necessary to consider any proposal on its merits, although I note that the area of land potentially available is somewhat less than with the current proposals.

16. In the light of the above considerations I therefore conclude on the first issue that whilst the developments proposed do not conform to the existing character of the area, the objections raised on grounds of increased density, loss of trees and the form of layout proposed in both schemes and the height of the 2 blocks involved in the proposed apartments are not so convincing as to justify the dismissal of the appeals and I am satisfied that the proposals would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the area.

only category C and D trees in association with the development, I shall vary suggested condition 4 to reflect the wording used in Appendix 4 to Circular 36/78; (in this connection it is sufficient in my view to refer only to trees, rather than to "trees and shrubs" as favoured by the council or "planting" as preferred by your clients".)

23. For the above reasons, and in exercise of powers transferred to me, I hereby dismiss Appeal B and allow Appeal A and grant planning permission for the construction of 20 apartments with underground garaging on land at Virginia Cottage and Cheveley, West Drive, Pound Lane, Sonning in accordance with the terms of the application (No. (O) 25952) dated 28 May 1986 and the plans submitted therewith, subject to the following conditions:-

1. a. approval of the details of the siting, design and external appearance of the buildings, the means of access thereto and the landscaping of the site (hereinafter referred to as "the reserved matters") shall be obtained from the local planning authority;

   b. application for approval of the reserved matters shall be made to the local planning authority not later than 3 years from the date of this permission;

2. the development hereby permitted shall be begun on or before whichever is the later of the following dates:

   a. 5 years from the date of this letter; or

   b. the expiration of 2 years from the final approval of the reserved matters or, in the case of approval on different dates, the final approval of the last such matter approved;

3. the trees proposed for retention shall be protected to the satisfaction of the local planning authority for the duration of the development and shall not be willfully damaged or destroyed, uprooted, felled, lopped or topped during that period without the previous written consent of the local planning authority. Any trees removed without such consent or dying or being severely damaged or becoming seriously diseased during that period shall be replaced with trees of such size and species as may be agreed with the local planning authority;

4. buildings shall not be occupied until a means of vehicular access and vehicular parking areas have been constructed in accordance with the plans to be approved;

5. the existing vehicular accesses to Pound Lane shall be stopped up and their use discontinued before occupation of the apartments.

24. Attention is drawn to the fact that an applicant for any consent, agreement or approval required by a condition of this permission and for approval of the reserved matters referred to in this permission has a statutory right of appeal to the Secretary of State if approval is refused or granted conditionally or if the authority fail to give notice of their decision within the prescribed period.

25. This letter does not convey any approval or consent which may be required under any enactment, byelaw, order or regulation other than section 23 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971.

I am Gentlemen
Your obedient Servant

D DAVEY BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI
Inspector

APPENDIX FOUR

West Court, West Drive

Previous Appeal Decision – August 1989

Ref: T/APP/H0330/A/89/112986, 121200, 121201 & 121202/P3

App 4

Planning Inspectorate
Department of the Environment
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Our reference
T/APP/H0330/A/89/112886,
121200, 121201 & 121202/P3
Date 17 AUG 89

Gentlemen

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1971, SECTION 36 AND SCHEDULE 9
APPEALS BY THAMES VALLEY HOMES
APPLICATIONS NOS:- a.31833; b.32836; c.32838; d.32839.

1. As you know, I have been appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment to determine these 4 appeals, which are against the failure of Wokingham District Council (hereinafter called the LPA) to give notice of their decisions within the prescribed period on 4 applications relating to land forming the site of Chevely and Virginia Cottage, West Drive/Pound Lane, Sonning, Berkshire, as follows:

Dismissed a. full application for the erection of 24 flats and garages (application No 31833, appeal No 112886);

Allowed b. full application for redevelopment by the erection of 24 flats with underground garaging (application No 32836, appeal No 121202);

Allowed c. outline application for redevelopment by the erection of 2 blocks of flats with garages (application No 32838, appeal No 121201); and

Dismissed d. full application for formation of a new road and footpath (application No 32839, appeal No 121200).

I held in inquiry into the appeals in the Council Chamber at Wokingham on 18 and 19 July 1989, followed by an inspection of the site.

2. A few days after the first appeal had been received by the Department, the LPA issued a notice of refusal (Doc 5) giving 4 grounds of objection, summarised thus: 1. excessive in scale for the site, increased spread of building close to the western boundary, poor relationship with adjoining residential properties, detriment to established character of the locality; 2. balconies overlooking adjoining residential properties; 3. surface car parking at the western end of the site causing noise and disturbance to adjoining occupiers; and 4. loss of significant trees. No notices of refusal were ever issued for applications b, c or d, nor for duplicates of those applications. However the LPA is opposed to all of them on broadly the same grounds, so far as applicable. At the inquiry, objection was made by the LPA to the point of access for all 4 schemes; and certain detailed aspects of the designs were criticised.

3. Whilst the LPA and the County Highway Authority do not oppose the submitted access on grounds of traffic danger, a traffic argument is put forward forcefully by individual objectors. I therefore regard the first main issue to be whether the submitted access would (having regard to the likely traffic flow) cause danger to road users, or serious disturbance to the privacy, peace and quiet of occupants of the house opposite that point of access, known as Acorns. In considering this issue I have taken into account the feasibility of moving the point of access some 16 m to the east, as suggested in the LPA's overlay plan Z.1.

4. As to traffic flow, schemes a. and b. and c. each relate to a total of 24 dwellings to be served by the defined access. I am therefore able to form a view about the likely number and type of traffic movements. In the case of scheme d, on the other hand, the application form and submitted plan fail to indicate the type or size of development intended to be served. The plan simply shows a "new mews court" but otherwise a cleared site. During the inquiry I mentioned my misgivings about this degree of vagueness, and my preliminary view that application d. might, on its own, be premature in advance of any firm building scheme to go with it. I suggested that it might be treated as an application for approval of access details reserved by the previous Inspector when granting outline planning permission for 20 apartments, but, as your Counsel pointed out, the site boundaries do not exactly correspond. Another solution was discussed, which was to limit scheme d. by means of a planning condition that it should not be implemented otherwise than in connection with some approved development of about 20 apartments. On reflection I find this approach not to be acceptable either, having regard to the advice in Circular 1/85 about precision in planning conditions.

5. Scheme d. seems at first glance to be a simple application, and I hesitate to raise what may be regarded as merely a technical objection to it; but having considered all the points made by Counsel, I feel I am under a public duty to resist the making of this new road unless I can be satisfied that its use would in practice be limited to serving some acceptable and defined size and type of development. Although the expression "mews court" is used in Design Bulletin 32 etc, it is not a sufficiently precise expression in itself to satisfy me as to the size and type of development eventually proposed. Treating the road-building application d. as though it had been made to the Secretary of State in the first instance (under section 36(3) of the Act), I have reached the conclusion that it is premature because of the difficulty in judging the size and nature of any development likely to be served by the new road, and thus the impact of whatever traffic the new road would be likely to generate.

6. However, when I come to examine the new access as part of a comprehensive scheme for the site, I reach a different conclusion. I have considered with great care the arguments put forward (especially by Mr Pierce) about traffic danger; and I see that the new access would form a cross-roads with the access to Acorns, as opposed to a T-junction if it were moved 16 m to the east. However, provided the new road be limited in its use to serving only 24 dwellings, I do not find the "cross-road" objection to be very strong, because there would be little conflict of traffic. On balance I see no reason to disagree with the expert opinion of the County Highway Authority in recommend-

ing conditional approval of applications 32835-8, as stated in their letter of 25 May 1989 (Doc 14). In the interests of road safety, there would have to be special highway conditions, especially to close the existing vehicular accesses to Pound Lane once it has ceased to be used for builders' vehicles and plant.

7. The house opposite, called Acorns, is occupied by Mr John Redwood MP. His letters of objection were written on behalf of all the residents in West Drive, but he properly declared an interest as an immediately affected neighbour. In my opinion, Mr and Mrs Redwood are the only residents who would specifically be affected by disturbance from the new access, and therefore who would significantly benefit by having the access moved 16 m to the east as now suggested by the LPA and objectors. I can see that headlights of emerging cars would shine towards their house; they would, from the front of their house, see and hear traffic entering and leaving; and on occasions when they enter or leave their own garage they may have to wait for cars entering or leaving the new road. However I do not regard those points to be especially strong objections to a development if otherwise acceptable. The purpose of the planning system is mainly to regulate the use of land in the public interest.

8. As to the suggestion about moving the access point, I have considered the LPA's overlay, Plan Z.3, together with your clients' comments in the form of their feasibility study, Plan X. I am sure that some different but reasonably acceptable form of development could be achieved by making use of this altered access; but the issue before me is whether the scheme actually proposed would harm interests of acknowledged importance. The LPA's grounds of refusal do not criticise the point of access. The Officer's notes for verbal report to Committee (Doc 4) mention at paras .11 and .12 the un-neighbourly location of the access; but as to the suggestion at para .12 that this particular point of access was not envisaged when outline consent was given for 20 apartments, it clearly was. The LPA's plan Y shows that the previous inspector did have before him (as an illustration) exactly the same point of access. He did not object to it, in his decision letter (Doc 23) allowing outline planning permission.

9. My conclusion, having carefully considered all the evidence as to access, is that the points of criticism of the access, and the possibility of moving it to the east, do not amount to sufficiently strong reasons for rejecting applications a, b or c, either on traffic or amenity grounds.

10. The previous appeal decision had allowed, in outline, 20 apartments; and a single detached house had previously been approved in detail by the LPA (Doc 22 and Plan U), making a total of 21 dwellings on the present appeal site. As discussed during the inquiry, your clients would not build the single house if 24 flats are allowed, and would accept a planning condition aimed at ensuring this. Thus there would be 24 dwellings rather than the 21. As a result of the increased number, the larger size of flats, increased garaging and parking, and a different design, there would be substantial increases in height, "footprint", floor area, and bulk, compared with what my colleague had in mind when he allowed the previous appeal. I have

compared the various figures, and I rely especially on those given by the LPA witness at para 3.21 of her proof(Doc 20) but amended by her and as agreed with your clients' architect.

11. Whilst that comparison is useful, there is no need for me to judge the merits of the present proposals simply by reference to what was approved before. I now have fresh applications before me, which I must determine on their individual merits. I am of opinion that the main issue remaining for my determination is whether scheme a, b or c would be excessive in scale for the site, or would cause unacceptable loss of privacy, [illegible] and quiet to established neighbours in their enjoyment of private areas of garden. I must also consider whether the appearance of the area would be damaged by the bulk and siting of the flats, or by any loss of worthwhile trees. In all this, I have had special regard to the emerging Local Plan (Doc 19) in its identification of the area of 20th century houses in the vicinity of West Drive as one of the areas where Policy LH3 will be applied, aimed at protecting important areas.

12. Your clients have prepared 3 layouts for scheme a, of which the first 2 were admitted by you to be open to objection in terms of the effect on neighbours. A third layout, Plan J (drawing No 605/21), was substituted by consent of the LPA at the inquiry, which you said answered all of those objections. If this were a more ordinary housing estate, you might well be correct. However the vicinity of West Drive is not ordinary, being rightly identified in the emerging Local Plan as an important area for protection of amenity.

13. Having regard to the high standard of privacy and spaciousness which characterises this area, I find that Plan J would give rise to the following damaging effects. First, there would be serious overlooking of the rear of Windrush and Coppice Corner (also called Earsdon) from 1st floor windows of Block B. Screening sufficient to prevent that overlooking would be obtrusive to the occupants of those flats, especially if it took the form shown on Plan J, of vegetation only some 2 to 4 m outside windows of their habitable rooms. I note that your clients now own both those properties, and intend to redevelop Coppice Corner (Doc 24). The objection is, however, still valid. I am not so concerned about overlooking from balconies, because that problem could be controlled by a planning condition.

14. Secondly, Plan J proposes garaging and parking for some 26 cars on the backland part of the site, close to the private rear garden areas of Yarviden, The Braes, and Coppice Corner. I consider that residents there would lose the degree of peace and quiet that they may reasonably expect to enjoy, as a result of cars manoeuvring into those spaces, car doors slamming, the revving of engines, and general disturbance, so close to these quiet back gardens. No amount of screening would sufficiently reduce that nuisance, in this area characterised by a high degree of privacy and quiet in rear gardens.

15. Thirdly, Plan J proposes a block of 4 garages sited forward of the building line, which in my opinion would damage the pleasant street scene, at present characterised by an absence of buildings so close to the road. To allow those garages would make it hard for the

LPA to resist similar applications to build over forecourts and thus to preserve, so far as possible, the pleasant open and suburban appearance and character of West Drive. I note that all 3 of the layouts for scheme a. included some garaging forward of the building line. I cannot see how those garages could be re-sited in a more acceptable way without spoiling the landscaping (which is such an important feature of the project) or introducing even more disturbance to neighbours.

16. I note with approval that Plan J would avoid the felling of a horse chestnut tree which the earlier layouts would have endangered. I see no objection to the 2 blocks of flats in terms of scale or bulk. I have carefully considered all other factors favourable to scheme a, but on balance I find that they are outweighed by the serious objections already mentioned.

17. Scheme b. in my opinion avoids the objections which I have found in the case of scheme a, as follows. First, Block B would be sited further from the boundary, with no upper windows overlooking Windrush or Coppice Corner. Secondly, by the use of underground garaging for 24 cars, scheme b. avoids the need for above-ground garaging; the backland part of the site is shown as a landscaped garden, and not as an area for parking etc. Thirdly, the building line would not be breached by any garaging. In order to achieve these advantages, however, Block A has had to be enlarged, so that it would present a longer façade to West Drive, a feature which the residents' association and LPA find very objectionable. Whilst the horse chestnut would likewise be preserved, there would be the inevitable loss of a good cedar tree (tree No 31 in Doc 17), in order to obtain access to the site. On a point of detail, Thames Valley Police object to the means of internal access from the flats to the underground car park, for the reasons set out in Doc 12.

18. It is matter of subjective judgment, but in my opinion Block A would not be of excessive bulk or height if erected in accordance with scheme b, provided that the development be accompanied by really good landscaping. Block B would likewise be acceptable. The degree of overlooking would be no more than is to be expected in a residential area of this quality, being at an acceptable distance and mainly front-to-front. It is inevitable that blocks of flats on this site would contrast in scale and character with the single detached family houses at present fronting West Drive and Pound Lane. However Local Plan Policy LH3 does not say that all housing in this important area must be in the form of single houses. Policy LH3 should in this case be applied flexibly, because the principle of having 2 blocks of flats here has already been established by the previous appeal decision. I am not impressed by the argument that my colleague would have reached a different decision if the draft Local Plan had been before him, or if he had not been misinformed about the site area of Acorns for the purpose of density calculations.

19. Nor was his finding as to a shortage of housing land vital to his decision. I am satisfied that there is now an identified 5-year supply of house-building land, and I reject your criticism of the LPA's figures in Doc 21. This is not to say, however, that 24 flats would be an excessive number, being an increase of 22 dwellings over

the existing 2 large houses to be demolished, or an increase of only 3 over the numbers previously approved (ie the 20 flats allowed on appeal plus the one large detached house allowed by the LPA).

20. As to loss of trees, I note that a Tree Preservation Order previously made on your clients' land was not confirmed by the LPA, and has now lapsed. Loss of the cedar tree No 31 was in 1987 acceptable to the LPA, because it would inevitably have been felled if the house allowed in detail by them were built in accordance with Plan U and Doc 22. I find that its loss, and the loss of a limited number of less important trees on your client's land, would be compensated by the planting of replacements, and by other landscaping, for all of which a planning condition would be necessary. The confirmed TPO covering the verges of West Drive opinion sufficient to protect the roadside trees, and I see no need for a planning condition as well.

21. I accept the undertaking given by your clients' architect (in answer to my question) that the point made by the Police about the underground car park would be met when working drawings are prepared. Many of the points of detail mentioned by the LPA witness Mrs Wells in para 3.18 of her evidence (Doc 20) can likewise form part of landscaping details, still to be approved. The question of responsibility for maintenance of the surface of West Drive is one to be settled among the parties concerned. I note the terms of the High Court judgment, the so-called Tomlin Order, dated 23 February 1989, Doc 27. As agreed between the appellants and the LPA at the inquiry, a special condition would be necessary aimed at limiting the use of West Drive by heavy plant, especially because an underground car park would cause an unusual amount of excavation.

22. I sympathise with the wishes of residents to preserve the special character of West Drive. They almost unanimously oppose any scheme for 24 flats, and any scheme using this access. However on its own, local opposition to a proposal is not a sufficient ground for refusal, unless it be founded on valid planning reasons supported by substantial evidence. I have carefully considered all objections to scheme b, but they can either be met by my imposing special planning conditions, or are outweighed by the advantage of adding these well designed and landscaped flats to the housing stock of the locality without (as I find) invading open countryside. I have reached this conclusion on the merits of this particular application, without relying on the reasoning of my colleague in having allowed 20 flats in somewhat different planning circumstances. My decision will not be a compelling precedent in other appeals, where circumstances and surroundings are likely to differ.

23. As application c. is virtually the same as application b, except for being in outline, it follows that I reach the same conclusion, and shall allow it subject to conditions. The LPA witness was asked in cross-examination whether it was impossible to devise a scheme for 24 flats on this site of some 0.89 ha, and answered that it was not impossible. I agree. My approval of the outline application c. is on the understanding that any detailed plans would substantially follow the illustrative layout and perspective plans R and S (drawings Nos 605/17B and 605/20) and would not incorporate undesirable features of scheme a, already described. It would not, however, be reasonable

for me to fetter the discretion of the LPA by imposing a design and height condition such as the one suggested by them in Doc 6, No c6. Rather than their No c3, I consider that there should be a landscaping condition corresponding to Models 20 and 21 of Circular 1/85, as in the case of application b.

24. All of the conditions set out below are necessary in the interests of road safety, to preserve the appearance and character of the surroundings, and to prevent overdevelopment. I find no need for special conditions about drainage, a matter covered by public health legislation. Otherwise my conditions are based on those suggested at the inquiry, amended as necessary in the light of the evidence or as discussed above.

25. For the above reasons, and in exercise of the powers transferred to me, I hereby dismiss appeals a. and d. However I hereby allow appeals b. and c, and grant planning permission relating to land forming the site of Chevely and Virginia Cottage, West Drive/Pound Lane, Sonning, Berkshire, as follows:

Appeal b: I grant planning permission for redevelopment by the erection of 24 flats with underground garaging in accordance with the application No 32836 dated 2 February 1989 and the plans Nos 605/14A, 15A, 16A, 17B, 18 and 20 relating thereto, subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 5 years from the date of this letter.

2. Details of external materials to be used in the development shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority before any building is begun.

3. No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved by the the Local Planning Authority a scheme of landscaping (supplementary to details hereby approved) which shall include indications of all existing trees and hedgerows on the land and details of those to be retained, together with measures for their protection in the course of development; all planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting season following occupation of the buildings or completion of the development, whichever is the sooner; and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the development shall die, or be removed, or become seriously damaged or diseased, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species (unless the the Local Planning Authority give written consent to any variation).

4. means of vehicular access for the purpose of site works and construction works shall be from Pound Lane only; at the conclusion of those works all means of vehicular access from Pound Lane shall be stopped up and the boundaries reinstated; thereupon means of vehicular access to the permitted buildings shall be from West Drive only.

5. The buildings shall not be occupied until the following have been provided in accordance with the approved plans:

i. the new access from West Drive, with visibility splays of 2.5 m x 33 m clear of obstruction over a height of 0.6 m;

ii. space for underground garaging and above ground car parking; and those spaces shall be not thereafter be used for any purpose other than the parking of vehicles.

6. This permission shall not be implemented in addition to the planning permission previously granted to build a detached house on the western part of the site, either in accordance or details approved under reference No 28947, or otherwise.

Appeal c: I grant outline planning permission for redevelopment by the erection of 2 blocks of flats with garages in accordance with the application No 32838 dated 2 February 1989 and the location plan submitted therewith, subject to the following conditions:

1. Approval of the details of the siting, design and external materials of the buildings, and the landscaping of the site (hereinafter referred to as "the reserved matters") shall be obtained from the local planning authority.

2. Application for approval of the reserved matters shall be made to the local planning authority not later than the expiration of 3 years from the date of this letter.

3. The development hereby permitted shall be begun either before the expiration of 5 years from the date of this letter, or before the expiration of 2 years from the date of approval of the last of the reserved matters to be approved, whichever is the later.

4. No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved by the the Local Planning Authority a scheme of landscaping, which shall include indications of all existing trees and hedgerows on the land and details of those to be retained, together with measures for their protection in the course of development; all planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting season following occupation of the buildings or completion of the development, whichever is the sooner; and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the development shall die, or be removed, or become seriously damaged or diseased, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species (unless the the Local Planning Authority give written consent to any variation).

5. means of vehicular access for the purpose of site works and construction works shall be from Pound Lane only; at the conclusion of those works all means of vehicular access from Pound Lane shall be stopped up and the boundaries reinstated; thereupon means of vehicular access to the permitted buildings shall be from West Drive only.

6. The buildings shall not be occupied until the following have been provided in accordance with the plans hereby approved or further details submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority:

i. the new access from West Drive, with visibility splays of 2.5 m x 33 m clear of obstruction over a height of 0.6 m;

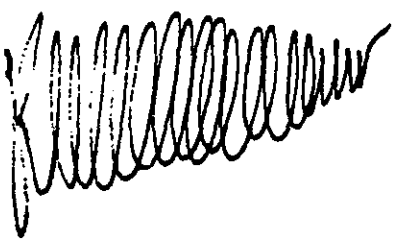
ii. space for underground garaging and above ground car parking; and those spaces shall be not thereafter be used for any purpose other than the parking of vehicles.

7. This permission shall not be implemented in addition to the planning permission previously granted to build a detached house on the western part of the site, either in accordance of details approved under reference No 28947, or otherwise.

26. Attention is drawn to the fact that an applicant for any approval required by a condition of this permission or for approval of the reserved matters referred to in this permission has a statutory right of appeal to the Secretary of State if approval is refused, or granted conditionally, or if the authority fail to give notice of their decision within the prescribed period.

27. This letter does not convey any approval or consent which may be required under any enactment, byelaw, order or regulation other than section 23 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971.

I am, Gentlemen
Your obedient Servant



R M MAXTONE GRAHAM MA(Cantab), Advocate
Legal Assoc: Royal Town Planning Inst
Inspector

APPEARANCES

FOR THE APPELLANTS

Mr R M K Gray QC	instructed by Middleton and Upsall, Solicitors, 2 Fore Street, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 8HX.
He called:	
Mr D A Tucker MSc CEng MICE MIHT	Partner in Tucker Parry Knowles Partnership, Highways Consultants, Newbury, Berkshire.
Mr A M Andrews RIBA FFB	Partner in Andrews Kalik Associates, Architects, Reading, Berkshire.
Mr I J Keen NDF MICFor FAborA	Managing Director of Beeching of Ash Ltd, Arboriculturalists, Aldershot.
Mr D J Pantling MA(Oxon) MRTPI ARICS DipTP	Principal of the David Pantling Consultancy, Romsey, Hampshire.

FOR THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY

Mr J L Davies, of Counsel	instructed by the Solicitor, Wokingham District Council.
He called:	
Mrs D M Wells DipTP MRTPI	a Principal Assistant Planning Officer.

FOR WEST DRIVE (SONNING) RESIDENTS LIMITED

Mr R P Huggins FCIArb Solicitor	the Company Secretary, of The Quarries, 10 West Drive, Sonning.
He called:	
Mr P Goodacre RD MSc FRICS	a Director of the Company, of Kingsmead, West Drive, Sonning.
Mr T Barber	the Chairman of the Company, of 6 West Drive, Sonning.

AN INTERESTED PERSON

District Councillor C Pierce	99 Western Avenue, Woodley, Berkshire (specially appointed to represent Sonning Parish Council in the absence of its Chairman).

DOCUMENTS

1. List of persons present at the inquiry.

2. Letter of notification of inquiry, and circulation list.

3. Planning history.

4. Officers' reports to Committee; and notes for verbal report.

5. Grounds of refusal of application a, 9 January 1989.

6. LPA's lists of suggested conditions if any appeals allowed.

7. Letters from West Drive (Sonning) Residents Ltd, February-April 1989; and statements by Mr Goodacre and Mr Barber.

8. Letters from Mr John Redwood MP, of Acorns, West Drive.

9. Petition of objection from local residents.

10. Letters of objection from local residents.

11. Consultation reply from Architects' Panel.

12. Consultation reply from Thames Valley Police.

13. Consultation replies from County Highways Department.

14. Correspondence with County Highways Department, 1980-1989.

15. County Highways Committee minutes, October 1951.

16. Correspondence between LPA and Andrews Kalik Associates.

17. Tree Surveys etc:

    a. by Beeching of Ash Ltd, 1986.

    b. by Mr Keen, Beeching of Ash Ltd, June 1989.

    c. memorandum from LPA's Recreation and Amenities Officer to District Secretary, 1989.

18. Replacement Structure Plan for Berkshire, November 1988:

    a. Secretary of State's letter of approval.

    b. Extracts from Structure Plan as approved.

19. Extracts from Loddon Area Local Plan Consultation Draft, 1989.

20. Policies and tables included in Mrs Wells' proof of evidence.

21. Housing Land Supply: LPA's provisional figures, April 1989.

22. LPA's approval of reserved matters, application No 28947, one detached house on the western part of the site, 1987.

Documents (continued)

23. Appeal decision letter relating to the majority of the present site, dismissing outline appeal for 7 five-bedroomed detached houses but allowing outline appeal for 20 apartments, 29 February 1988, ref T/APP/H0330/A/86/058361-2/P3.

24. Appeal decision letter concerning Coppice Corner, to southeast of the site, 11 July 1989, ref T/APP/H0330/A/89/114834/P4.

25. Calculations of areas, volumes and site coverage:

    a. by Mr Andrews (as corrected by him in evidence);

    b. by Mr Goodacre;

    c. by Mrs Wells (as amended by her in evidence and as agreed with Mr Andrews: found at Doc 20, para 3.21).

26. Land Certificate entries and plan, West Drive (Sonning) Residents Ltd, Title No BK778.

27. High Court orders in litigation between Thames Valley Homes Limited and West Drive (Sonning) Residents Limited, dated 22 December 1988 (interim injuction) and 23 February 1989 ("Tomlin Order", with Schedule and plan).

PLANS PRODUCED BY THE APPELLANTS

Submitted plans for full application a:

A. Location plan.

B. Layout, No 605/1A (superseded).

C. Layout, No 605/1B (superseded).

D. Ground and 1st floor plans, No 605/2.

E. Second floor plan, No 605/3.

F,G,H. Elevations, Nos 605/4, 5 and 6.

I. Garages, No 605/7.

J. Layout substituted at inquiry (by consent of LPA), No 605/21.

Submitted plans for full application b:

K, L. Floor plans, Nos 605/14A and 15A.

M. Elevations, No 605/16A.

N. Layout, No 605/17B.

O. Basement car park, No 605/18.

P. Perspective, No 605/20.

Plans (continued)

Submitted plans for outline application c:

Q. Location plan, No 605/10C.

R. Illustrative layout, No 605/17B.

S. Illustrative perspective, No 605/20.

Submitted plan for full application d:

T. Site plan, No 605/19A.

Not part of any application before this inquiry:

U. Bundle of detailed plans for single detached house approved in 1987.

V. Bundle of illustrative plans for 20 apartments, allowed in outline on appeal in 1988.

W. Bundle of illustrative plans for 7 houses, dismissed on appeal in 1988.

X. Feasibility study of LPA's overlay DW1, Plan Z.3.

PLANS PRODUCED BY WOKINGHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL

Y. Illustrative layout for 20 apartments, allowed in outline on appeal in 1988, to be read with LPA's overlays, Z.1-3.

Z.1. Overlay for Plan Y showing layout of application a. (No 605/1).

Z.2. Overlay showing layout of application b. (No 605/17A).

Z.3. Overlay showing feasibility of access moved about 16 m to east of submitted access point, Mrs Wells' appendix DW1.

PHOTOGRAPHS OF SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

1-9. Produced by LPA, with plan of viewpoints.

10-19. Produced by Mr Goodacre, including 3-storey flats elsewhere.

20-24. Produced by Mr Huggins, West Drive boundary etc before 1989.

25-30. Sent by objector Mrs Redwood, present state of boundaries.

ARCHITECTURAL MODELS PRODUCED BY MR GOODACRE

1. Scale of 1/1250 (displayed; now retained by Mr Goodacre).

2. Scale of 1/500 (displayed; now retained by Inspector):
   A. 20 apartments with underground garaging;
   B. 24 apartments with above ground garaging (applc'n a);
   C. 24 apartments with underground garaging (applc'n b).

APPENDIX FIVE

Extracts from Berkshire Structure Plan

Ref: 3.1.11

Charles Planning Associates
39 Locks Heath District Centre
Southampton, SO31 6DX

Tel: 01489-577946

Royal County of BERKSHIRE



BERKSHIRE STRUCTURE PLAN 1991-2006

Incorporating Alterations adopted in August 1997





CPA

CHARLES PLANNING ASSOCIATES

Chartered Town Planners

Babtie

Public Services Division

3.7 Sustainable levels, forms and locations for development are therefore sought which contribute towards meeting the needs and aspirations of today's society for homes, jobs and services, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This implies a greater reliance on the use of renewable resources at an acceptable level, coupled with the conservation of non-renewable resources and the reduction of land, water and air pollution. In addition, growth during the Plan period needs to be kept down to levels which can be accommodated within the environmental and other limits described in Chapter 2.

3.8 This approach is considered appropriate in view of :

- the limited capacity of the County to absorb further development;
- the need to husband land so that there is scope for development beyond 2006;
- the cumulative impact of development on existing communities, on the transport network and on pollution;
- the extent of existing commitments;
- uncertainties as to the timing and extent of recovery from the recent recession;
- changing economic factors which may affect people's aspirations and ability to form new households in separate accommodation;
- emphasis in the Regional Guidance on sustainable development, respecting environmental constraints and reducing rates of development in the west of the region.

3.9 Wthin this framework it is intended that scope and flexibility should be provided for helping to meet local housing needs, to secure and maintain a balanced local economy and to allow the provision of a wide range of job opportunities.

The Overall Strategy

Policy OS1 **The overall strategy of the Plan is to seek sustainable development and improvement to the quality of life in Berkshire by pursuing the following objectives :**

(i) to restrain development to levels that respect the limits set by environmental, infrastructure and other constraints upon the development of land;

(ii) to give priority within (i) to meeting Berkshire's economic and social needs, including the provision of low-cost housing and wider employment opportunities;

(iii) to protect and enhance the character and quality of Berkshire's landscape, environment and heritage;

(iv) to steer development to locations which minimise the need for travel and can be well served by public transport;

(v) **to conserve natural resources;**

(vi) **to minimise pollution;**

(vii) **to seek improvements to infrastructure, services and amenities;**

(viii) **to promote an appropriate balance between all forms of transport by continuing to develop an integrated transport strategy.**

MAIN THEMES OF THE STRATEGY

3.10 The main themes of the Structure Plan strategy are outlined below and developed in more detail in subsequent chapters. Environmental concerns are reflected in policies in all sections of the Plan. References to policies in the Plan of particular relevance are listed under each sub-heading.

Restraining Levels of Growth

3.11 The Plan seeks to keep growth down to levels which can be accommodated within the limits set by environmental, infrastructure and other considerations (Policies OS1; LD1, LD3, LD6, LD7; H1, H2; BU1; TC1; R1; M1, M3).

3.12 A restrained level of growth will generally take less open land for development, generate less traffic and waste and help towards reducing pollution, energy consumption, the depletion of water resources and the demand for minerals and aggregates. It will also allow more scope for catching up in the provision of social and physical infrastructure (subject to the environmental acceptability of proposals and availability of the necessary resources).

3.13 This approach is in line with key objectives in the regional planning guidance for the South East, in which it is suggested that levels of development should respect the region's valuable environmental features and avoid the wasteful use of land and other natural resources. The regional guidance also states that a reducing rate of growth is appropriate in the west of the region to enable infrastructure and services to catch up with rapid rates of development in the recent past.

3.14 The overall housing provision for the period 1991-2006 was increased by the County Council from 37,000 to 40,000 dwellings in response to a direction issued by the Secretary of State for the Environment on 29 June 1995. While the Council has welcomed the fact that the Secretary of State has not pressed it to accept the total of 48,000 dwellings recommended by the Panel which conducted the Examination in Public in 1993, it remains concerned that increasing the provision above 37,000 dwellings could have serious environmental consequences contrary to the overall objectives of the Structure Plan.

LIMITING THE IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT

4.1 The previous chapter emphasised the overriding importance of securing sustainable development, improving the quality of life in all parts of Berkshire and protecting (and where possible, enhancing) the environment in its widest sense.

4.2 To reinforce the overall strategy, policies set out in this chapter provide the starting point for considering all development proposals.

SUSTAINING BERKSHIRE'S ENVIRONMENT

4.3 Planning policies in Berkshire have a contribution to make to the conservation of natural resources and this theme underlies a number of policies in the Plan. While it is appreciated that many issues can only be partly addressed through the planning system, there are a number of measures that may be taken by which the impact of development on both the local and global environments can be reduced.

4.4 New development offers an important opportunity to secure the conservation of energy and natural resources, by means ranging from broad-scale decisions about location; through more specific decisions about the orientation of buildings and siting of shelter belts; to consideration of design, materials and the recycling of waste.

Sustainable Development

Policy LD1 **In formulating policies in local plans and in considering development proposals, account will be taken of the extent to which development is sustainable in its location and form; helps to conserve natural resources, including land, water and fossil fuels; and minimises the risk of pollution.**

4.5 The principles of sustainable development are explicitly recognised in recent Planning Policy Guidance Notes, in particular, PPG's 1, 12 and 13 and MPG6 on Provision of Aggregates. Policy LD1 is aimed at sustaining Berkshire's environment and helping to address wider environmental concerns through the formulation of policies in local plans and the consideration of development proposals. In seeking to achieve the aims expressed in Policy LD1, development will be sought which accords with the following principles. (Cross references to other policies in the Plan of particular relevance are listed after each sub-section).

(i) making the best use of land resources, for example, by protecting the open countryside and by maximising the use for development of urban land especially where vacant or derelict (where this is compatible with conserving and enhancing the quality of the urban environment) (OS1, C2, C4, C6, C10, EN1, H5, BU1, S4, R7, M2, W3) ;

Limiting the Impact of Development

4.8 The provision of suitable small recycling facilities, such as bottle and can banks, in association with development acceptable under other policies in this Plan, will contribute towards meeting a target of recycling at least 25% of the County's household waste by the year 2000 as proposed in Policy W2 (35% by 2007). The nature and type of facilities will depend on the type of development and the waste management systems being used. However, the facilities may include two separate elements :

- local recycling facilities for the public to deposit different types of recyclable material; and
- facilities for source separation and storage of different types of waste.

4.9 Policy LD2 will normally apply to the following categories of development:

(i) housing proposals for 100 or more dwellings;

(ii) new development, redevelopment or refurbishment of shopping centres or facilities where the floorspace of existing and new development amounts to 500 sq.metres or more;

(iii) business, industrial, distribution or storage development involving a net increase in floorspace of 500 sq.metres or more;

(iv) major transport, leisure, recreation, tourist or community facilities;

(v) car parks for the public including 'park and ride' schemes with over 200 spaces; and

(vi) appropriate smaller developments which frequently attract a significant number of people (e.g. community or shopping schemes).

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

4.10 The County Council considers that even where proposals for development may be acceptable in principle within the provisions of other policies in the Structure Plan and in local plans, local planning authorities need to be satisfied that proposals will not have any significant adverse environmental impact.

Environmental Impact of Development

Policy LD3 **Development proposals will only be permitted where they do not give rise to an unacceptable impact on the environment, including serious harm to the character or appearance of an area, or the amenities of neighbouring land uses.**

4.11 In a highly constrained County such as Berkshire, most major development is likely to have a significant impact, either by itself or cumulatively, and environmental assessments may be required for a wider range of development than that specifically referred to in Circular 15/88 in order to determine the acceptability of proposals.

ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION

MAINTAINING ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

6.1 The quality of the County's environment relates to its character, identifiable 'sense of place', and people's living conditions. These depend partly on care for its environment as a whole, including the countryside (dealt with in Chapter 5) and towns, villages and built-up areas which are considered in this chapter. It also concerns : safeguarding and enhancing a number of specific environmental interests, which together contribute to the character of the County; curbing and controlling a number of specific threats to pleasant living conditions; and the conservation of natural resources.

The Environment of the Built-up Areas

6.2 The density, form and quality of buildings, landscape and other elements of the environment in towns, villages and built-up areas have an important bearing on the overall quality of life in the County, especially as the majority of the population live and work in such areas.

Protection and Enhancement of the Environment of Built-Up Areas

Policy EN1 **The character and quality of the environment in the towns, villages and other built-up areas will be protected and enhanced. Within these areas development must be appropriate in scale, form, impact, character and siting to its location. In particular :**

(i) **development should embody a high standard of design, layout and landscaping, and help maintain and, where possible, enhance the character of its surroundings;**

(ii) **town and village greens and all open land important to the character of settlements will be protected from development and where necessary enhanced;**

(iii) **the existing tree cover, important areas of vegetation and wildlife habitats will be conserved, and additions to them encouraged;**

(iv) **special attention will be paid to the maintenance and improvement of the character of town and village centres.**

Where appropriate, to achieve optimum use of land and buildings in built-up areas, the re-use of vacant buildings and redevelopment of derelict or genuinely under-used urban land will be supported.

6.11 The use which best retains the character of an historic building will normally be that for which it was built. However, where this cannot reasonably be achieved, any new use should:

- be wholly compatible with maintenance of the special character of the building; and
- involve minimum alteration to that character, internally or externally; and
- not materially damage the setting of the building.

6.12 Should, in exceptional circumstances, the complete or partial demolition or the large scale alteration of an historic building be permitted, detailed prior recording of the building will be required.

6.13 The County Council maintains a record of buildings and other structures of special architectural and historic interest to ensure consistency of records throughout Berkshire.

Areas of Special Character

6.14 The designation of Conservation Areas allows areas to be selected for their special character and for the application of extra resources, publicity, attention and controls. There are other areas or attractive groups of buildings - for example nineteenth and early twentieth century areas with a recognisable and consistent period character - where Conservation Area designation may not be justified, but where measures are desirable to ensure that change does not harm the existing character.

Areas of Special Character Including Conservation Areas

Policy EN5 **Areas of special character, particularly designated Conservation Areas, common land and town and village greens, will be protected from change damaging to their character and appearance. Encouragement will be given to proposals which make a positive contribution to the enhancement of the character and appearance of such areas.**

6.15 In both designated Conservation Areas and other areas of special character, particular attention will be paid to ensuring that the form, materials, density and siting of new buildings reflect and enhance the character of the area.

Archaeological Remains and Evidence

6.16 Archaeological remains are irreplaceable. They are the evidence, in some instances the only evidence, of the past development of our civilisation. They comprise a varied resource, including buried objects and standing structures ranging in date from prehistory to the industrial era. Particular care must be taken to ensure that archaeological remains and evidence are not needlessly or thoughtlessly destroyed.

6.17 The positive management, enhancement and understanding of archaeological sites will be promoted. Where appropriate, sites will be made accessible to the public.

Assessment of Development Proposals

Policy H4 **Within the provision specified in Policy H2, local planning authorities should ensure that proposals for new residential development are in locations which are close and have good access, particularly by public transport, to existing and proposed employment sites/areas and shopping and service facilities. In addition, they should ensure that such proposals take account of the distribution of local needs and demands.**

7.38 In order to comply with Policy OS1, which seeks to minimise the consumption of land, full use should be made of available land within existing urban areas. However, it is recognised that in certain areas there may be concern about over-development. Loss of open space and intensification of development can affect the quality of the urban environment, where most residents of the County live. In this respect, careful consideration should be given to the provisions of Policy EN1. Therefore such development must not harm the physical or visual character of the settlement, neighbourhood or surrounding area. In some cases it may be appropriate for local plans to set out general policies which limit the scale and form of development.

7.39 In some cases, it may not be possible to accommodate all of the provisions shown in Policies H1 and H2 within the existing urban areas. In these circumstances, further land should be released through the local plan process. In order to comply with Policy C1, this would require the delineation of new settlement boundaries which define the land to be released. In addition, much of the development within existing built-up areas will be identified through local plans.

Development Within Settlements and Redevelopment/Change of Use

Policy H5 **Part of the provision for housing development specified in Policy H1 will be achieved by :**

(i) **building on suitable undeveloped land within built-up areas and settlement boundaries;**

(ii) **redevelopment or adaptation of an existing building or set of buildings;**

(iii) **changes of use of suitable permanent non-residential buildings and by the sub-division of existing dwellings.**

In addition, if further land releases are required to meet the provisions of Policies H1 and H2, these should normally be made through the definition of settlement boundaries as part of the local plan process.

7.40 Undeveloped land within built-up areas and settlement boundaries may be suitable for housing development if it conforms with other structure and local plan policies. In drawing up settlement boundaries in local plans, district and borough councils will need to consider whether additional land releases are required to meet the provisions of Policies H1 and H2, having had regard to the likely contribution of the sites described in Policy H5 (i)-(iii) above. Additional provision should be made through the designation of new settlement boundaries in local plans. This may be at the edge of settlements, or through the identification of completely new settlements. "Rounding-off" may continue to be appropriate, but only through such boundary changes, designated in the local plan process.

7.41 The policy has considerably less detail than Policy H3 in the Replacement Structure Plan for Berkshire. This reflects current Government guidance (para. 5.56 of PPG12 - Development Plans and Regional Planning Guidance) that detailed development control policies are more appropriate in local plans. However, until such time as local plan policies are in place, the original Structure Plan policy remains as supplementary planning guidance. In particular, "building on suitable undeveloped land within the existing built-up area of a settlement" may involve more than one individual site and the construction of a new means of access. However, the Green Belt Local Plan limits the scale of development which is appropriate within "Recognised Settlements" in the Green Belt to the definition of infilling set out in previous Structure Plans (i.e. single plots on existing road frontages). This definition should continue to apply until such time as district-wide local plans are prepared for the appropriate areas. At that time, new criteria may be prepared.

7.42 Any proposals for freestanding new settlements would require careful consideration of the efficient means of providing infrastructure and services and should be of a size adequate to support appropriate facilities. For example, in order to foster the growth of a community, ready access to a primary school would be important. Furthermore, in conformity with the objectives of this Plan relating to sustainable development, the provision of good public transport links would be important.

Other Housing Development Outside Settlements

7.43 In accordance with Policy C2, housing development will not normally be permitted in the countryside, as defined by settlement boundaries in local plans. Furthermore, there is a general presumption against development in the Metropolitan Green Belt, as set out in Policy C4. In addition, in accordance with Policy C6, development will not be permitted where it would threaten important open areas which are of special significance as 'green wedges' or 'gaps' separating settlements or communities.

Slough

7.44 In the case of Slough, its location, entirely surrounded by Green Belt, means that it will become increasingly difficult to identify sufficient land to meet local housing needs without the release of land from the Green Belt. The possible release of Green Belt land in Slough to meet the housing provision is considered in paragraphs 5.15 and 5.16 of the Countryside and Rural Development Chapter.

LOSS OF HOUSING

7.45 Development proposals which would result in the loss of housing may require local planning authorities to countenance the release of further housing land, possibly on "greenfield" sites. Therefore, the County Council is concerned that there should be no avoidable loss of housing.

Development Proposals Involving the Loss of Housing

Policy H6 **Proposals for redevelopment or change of use resulting in the loss of residential accommodation will normally receive favourable consideration only if they replace at least the number of dwelling units lost.**

7.46 There may be limits on the increase of residential units in the Green Belt. This is set out in Policy C4. In implementing Policy H6, local planning authorities will have regard to local housing needs.

WIDENING THE CHOICE OF HOUSING

Low-Cost Housing

7.47 The County Council is concerned about the increasing difficulties of securing access to low-cost housing throughout Berkshire.

7.48 The main indicators of the scale of the problem are district council housing waiting lists and the numbers of households accepted as homeless in the County. Relatively low levels of public sector housebuilding and the sale of council houses has meant that the needs of only some of the households on these lists can be met. The County Council also recognises that there is a problem of access to housing for groups such as single-worker households, young people, and many essential workers in service and other industries on below-average incomes who do not appear on, or qualify for, the above lists.

7.49 Although a full response to this problem will require appropriate initiatives in national fiscal and housing policies, the County Council considers that planning policies (at the strategic and local level) can also make a valuable contribution. This is supported by the DoE's Planning Policy Guidance Note 3, "Housing" which recognises that a community's need for affordable housing is a material planning consideration.

7.50 The following policies provide a strategic framework within which the district councils can allow genuine low-cost housing schemes for sale or rent to provide homes for those whose incomes are insufficient to enable them to acquire accommodation on the open market.

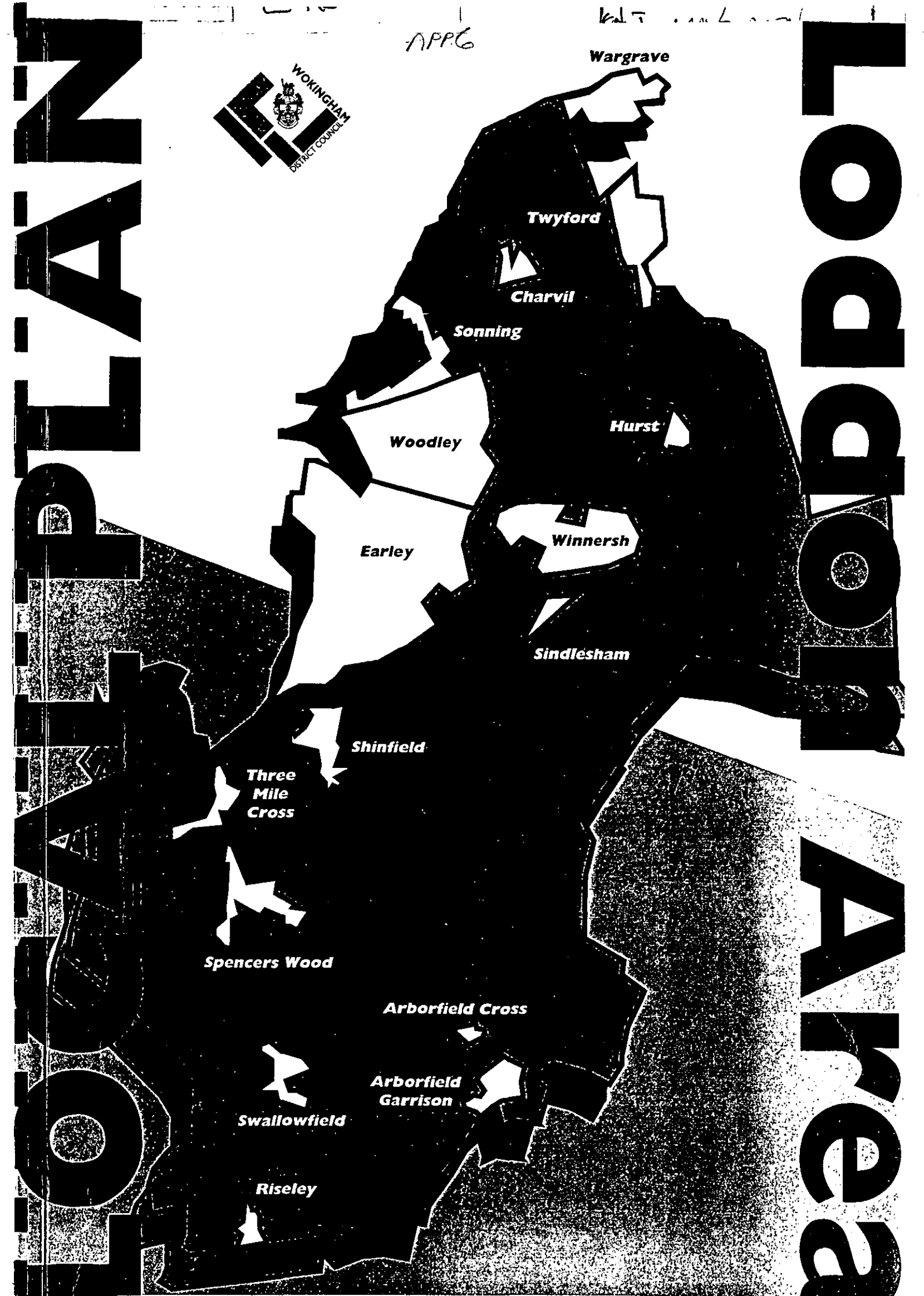
APPENDIX SIX

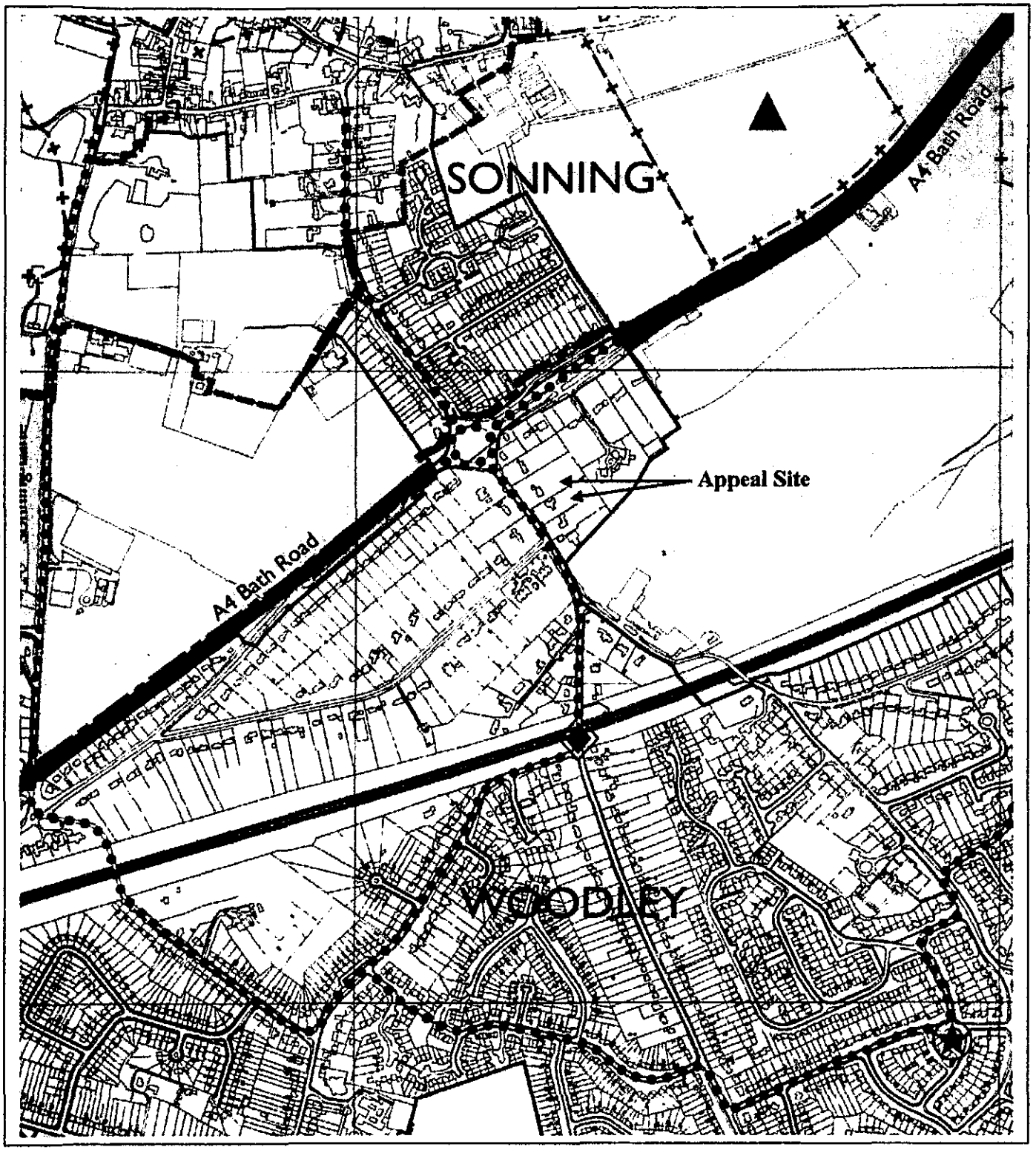
Extracts from Loddon Area Local Plan

APP6

LOCAL PLAN

Lodden Area





Appendix Seven

97 – 99 Pound Lane, Sonning

Deposit Draft Wokingham District Local Plan
Extract From Proposals Map (North)

Not to scale

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CPA
CHARLES PLANNING ASSOCIATES
Chartered Town Planners

which the land is demarcated by rural as opposed to urban characteristics.

1.1.10 Settlement edges are extremely sensitive areas of the landscape. Development occurring on or near the settlement edge can impinge unsatisfactorily on the countryside and prejudice the maintenance of a clear physical and visual separation between settlements. The need to consider the effect of proposals for limited housing and employment development on the rural areas is dealt with in policies LC1, LC2 and LC16.

1.1.11 As a complement to the latter, and in line with the spirit of policies EN4 and EN5 of the Replacement Structure Plan, there is a need to ensure that natural features such as trees and hedgerows which soften or screen the edge of the built up area, and, in many cases delineate the boundary, are retained. Where a lack of natural features exist the boundaries of the identified settlements have been delineated by fencelines or other means. Where development intrudes on the countryside, the provision of landscaping will be encouraged. The background work for this policy has involved carrying out a plan wide landscape survey which has included an assessment of the quality of boundaries to 'identified' settlements.

❖ LTV4 ENHANCING SETTLEMENT BOUNDARIES

THE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL SEEK TO RETAIN NATURAL BOUNDARY FEATURES WHICH EXIST AROUND 'IDENTIFIED' SETTLEMENTS AND ENCOURAGE THE STRENGTHENING OF BOUNDARIES BY NEW TREES AND HEDGEROW PLANTING WHERE NATURAL FEATURES ARE WEAK OR ABSENT AND DEVELOPMENT IMPINGES ON THE COUNTRYSIDE. WHERE SUCH BOUNDARIES ARE FORMED BY WOODLAND OR TREES THE PROTECTION MAY TAKE THE FORM OF TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS.

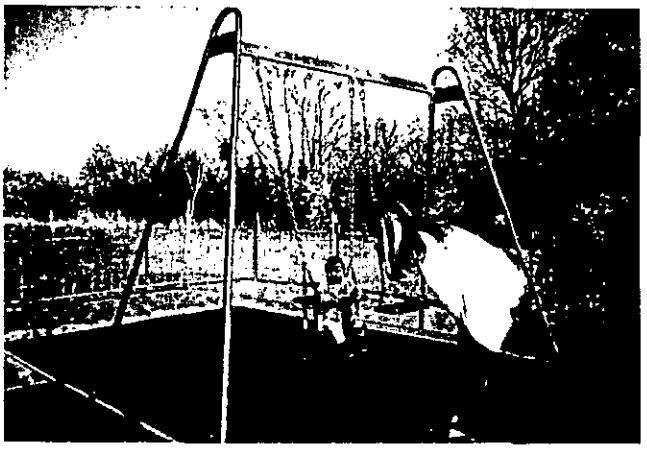
1.1.12 Although there is a general presumption in favour of development within identified settlements, it is felt that there is a need to consider particularly carefully proposals for development within, but adjacent to the boundary of, the identified settlement where the settlement edge is fairly exposed due to land levels or limited natural screening and existing development is of a fairly low density. An intensification of the level of development through infilling, redevelopment or the additions of substantial extensions could result in the introduction of a hard urban edge close to the rural area.

❖ LTV5 TRANSITIONAL AREAS

IN VISUALLY SENSITIVE TRANSITIONAL AREAS, AS DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, THE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL RESTRICT ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT, IN THE FORM OF INFILLING, REDEVELOPMENT AND EXTENSIONS TO A LEVEL APPROPRIATE TO PREVENT THE FORMATION OF A HARD URBAN EDGE TO SETTLEMENTS.

IMPORTANT OPEN AREAS WITHIN SETTLEMENTS

1.1.13 In addition to the visually sensitive transitional areas and the more extensive open areas defined in Part 2 of the Local Plan, certain parts of some settlements have a distinctive character derived from the amount of open space and space about buildings. Often these spaces have a profuse amount of vegetation within them which is important in softening the urban environment. Whilst some settlements have isolated areas of this form of development the degree of concentration of development in older settlements tends to decrease with distance from the centre and there are open areas close to the boundaries which it is important to retain. Many of the important open areas within settlements are by their nature small and the local plan does not, therefore, define the areas to which the following policy relates. The application of the policy will be through the consideration of individual areas in the light of specific proposals.



❖ ***LTV6 PROTECTION OF IMPORTANT OPEN AREAS WITHIN SETTLEMENTS***

WITHIN THE IDENTIFIED SETTLEMENTS, DEVELOPMENT OF AREAS OF OPEN LAND INCLUDING GAPS IN ROAD FRONTAGES AND GARDEN AREAS WHICH SIGNIFICANTLY CONTRIBUTE TO THE CHARACTER OF SETTLEMENTS WILL NOT NORMALLY BE PERMITTED. ANY NEW DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING INFILL DEVELOPMENT WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED IF IT IS SYMPATHETIC IN SCALE AND CHARACTER TO THE ENVIRONS OF THE SITE.

ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENT

1.1.14 The District Council is keen to see enhancement of the environment throughout the plan area. Priorities for action are established in the following chapters but other opportunities will also be taken as they arise subject to the availability of funding and other resources where appropriate.

allow some development to occur in the identified settlements on unidentified sites in response to needs and opportunities identified by landowners and developers. It is estimated that a further 781 dwellings will be provided in the District on such sites between 1992 and 1998. Details of the basis for this estimation are given in Local Plan Working Paper Four which is available separately from this plan.

❖ LH1 HOUSING DEVELOPMENT ON UNIDENTIFIED SITES

WITHIN THE IDENTIFIED SETTLEMENTS RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE FORM OF INFILLING, ROUNDING OFF AND REDEVELOPMENT GENERALLY WILL BE CONSIDERED FAVOURABLY SUBJECT TO LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS AND OTHER PROVISIONS OF THIS PLAN. IN VIEW OF THE SENSITIVITY OF SUCH PROPOSALS AND THEIR POTENTIAL IMPACT THE PREPARATION OF A DEVELOPMENT BRIEF WILL NORMALLY BE NECESSARY IN BRINGING FORWARD SCHEMES ON SITES OVER 0.4 HECTARE. ON SITES OVER 0.4 HECTARE, AN ELEMENT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING WILL BE SOUGHT IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY LH8.

IN INTERPRETING THIS POLICY, THE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL PARTICULARLY WISH TO ENSURE THAT THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA (WHICH ARE AMPLIFIED IN OTHER POLICIES WHERE INDICATED) ARE COMPLIED WITH:

(A) THE PROTECTION OF OPEN AND WOODED AREAS, GAPS AND GARDEN AREAS WHICH ARE IMPORTANT TO THE CHARACTER OF THE SETTLEMENT CONCERNED (POLICY LTV6 AND VARIOUS SPECIFIC POLICIES);

(B) NO SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE EFFECT ON THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA (POLICIES LTV6, LBE1 & LBE2);

(C) NO SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE EFFECT ON SETTLEMENT BOUNDARIES AND THE SURROUNDING COUNTRYSIDE (POLICY LTV5);

(D) NO LOSS OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACE OR RECREATIONAL FACILITIES (POLICY LR4);

(E) THE PROVISION OF ADEQUATE GARDEN AREAS, SPACE ABOUT BUILDINGS AND OFF-STREET PARKING FOR ALL NEW DWELLINGS;

(F) THE PRESENCE OF ADEQUATE LOCAL HIGHWAY CAPACITY TO CATER FOR TRAFFIC GENERATED BY THE DEVELOPMENT.



1.2.08 The housing requirement for the five year period to 1998 is based on the provision required by the Approved Structure Plan until 1996, and thereafter on that required by the provision to be made in the Draft Deposit Structure Plan. This gives a total requirement 1992-98 of 3590 units for Wokingham District. Of the total provision (1984-98) some 9630 had been built by March 1992. Permission had also been granted for a further 1785 dwellings on that date and commitments had been entered into subject to legal agreements, for a further 257 dwellings. Together with the 781 houses to be provided on unidentified sites a total of 12229 dwellings have been provided for (taking into account non-implementation of unidentified sites and Lower Earley). Therefore, in the entire District, sites remain to be identified for 991 dwellings.

1.2.09 Sites for 336 dwellings are to be included in the South East Area Local Plan, and 726 additional dwellings have been identified in this Local Plan. This totals 1062 dwellings - more than the requirement to allow for non-implementation of any sites. The total for this Plan area is made up of 470 dwellings to be developed as the main area

1.4 QUALITY AND CONSERVATION OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT



NEW DEVELOPMENT, REDEVELOPMENT AND REFURBISHMENT

1.4.01 The most attractive and successful urban environments are those where all the component parts (e.g. buildings, trees, roads, spaces, people, traffic) have been satisfactorily accommodated to create interesting, lively and pleasant places. In order to maintain and enhance the character of the built environment, the design of new buildings or extensions to existing buildings and the creation of new spaces within that environment, are very important.

1.4.02 The District Council is particularly concerned to promote a high standard of design in new development, and to ensure that new buildings are responsive to their location. This means that new buildings need to be appropriate in terms of their function, siting, scale, form, massing, materials, colour and texture in their relationship with adjoining buildings and sites. Accordingly, new buildings will be expected to make an acceptable and positive contribution to the built environment. For particularly sensitive areas, design briefs will be prepared to provide a framework for design to guide prospective developers. In addition, developments that incorporate public access should accommodate sculptures or other works of art to provide visual interest, where this is considered appropriate by the local planning authority. For the particularly sensitive areas, design briefs will be prepared to provide a framework for design to guide prospective developers.

1.4.03 In the case of schemes proposing more than one building, regard will be paid to the impact of the development over a wider area, involving an assessment of criteria additional to those referred to in paragraph 1.4.02 above. Accordingly, schemes should relate to the 'grain' of the area, and take account of their effect on the skyline, pedestrian and vehicular movements in the area, vistas, safety and environmental constraints. Where large sites exist which would significantly affect the urban fabric urban design briefs/appraisals will be prepared or required to establish the wider context within which applications will be considered.

❖ *LBE1 DESIGN OF NEW DEVELOPMENT*

NEW DEVELOPMENT SHALL BE OF A HIGH STANDARD OF DESIGN APPROPRIATE TO THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA IN WHICH IT IS TO BE SITUATED. IT SHOULD:

(A) MAKE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO ITS SETTING AND THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA;

B) CONTRIBUTE TO THE CREATION OF A SAFE AND ATTRACTIVE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH TO LIVE AND WORK;

(C) RETAIN IMPORTANT NATURAL, MAN-MADE OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES OF THE SITE COMPATIBLE WITH GOOD DESIGN.

❖ LBE2 INAPPROPRIATE DESIGN

PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT THAT IS INAPPROPRIATE IN TERMS OF ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH ADJOINING SITES AND BUILDINGS, OR WHICH WOULD ADVERSELY AFFECT THE CHARACTER OF AN AREA, BY VIRTUE OF ITS SITING, SCALE, FORM, MASSING, MATERIALS, COLOUR OR TEXTURE, WILL NOT NORMALLY BE PERMITTED.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT

1.4.04 Within the built environment it is important not only to safeguard those buildings, undeveloped areas and special features which contribute to the character and attractive qualities of the area but also to seek opportunities to enhance the quality of the built environment.

1.4.05 Often the more attractive and successful urban environments have evolved organically over a period of many years and incorporate a variety of architectural styles. In more recent years development in some parts of the District has taken place more comprehensively with little variety in design. In other areas particularly since the war and up to the early 1970's some development has been inserted into an existing area to the detriment of the older urban fabric.

1.4.06 In some areas, district and local shopping centres in particular, where large scale redevelopment has taken place, the opportunity may arise for comprehensive refurbishment since a large part of the urban fabric will tend to age and decay simultaneously. In other areas environmental enhancement of the urban fabric surrounding the buildings may be sufficient to rejuvenate the area as a whole.

❖ LBE3 REFURBISHMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT

ENCOURAGEMENT WILL BE GIVEN TO THE REFURBISHMENT OR PARTIAL REDEVELOPMENT OF AREAS OR INDIVIDUAL SCHEMES WHERE A SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENT WILL RESULT TO THE BENEFIT OF THE COMMUNITY.

❖ LBE4 ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENT SCHEMES

ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENT SCHEMES WILL BE ENCOURAGED WITHIN THE PLAN AREA AS OPPORTUNITIES ARISE AND WILL INCLUDE THE AREAS AS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP AND AS SET OUT IN PART TWO OF THE PLAN.

SUNLIGHT, DAYLIGHT AND NOISE

1.4.07 Daylight penetration into new buildings, and existing buildings affected by new development, is an important amenity consideration as is sunlight penetration of spaces outside windows. In this respect it should always be the intention to maximise penetration of new development and minimise the impact of new development on old as far as is possible. The orientation of rooms, gardens and both public and private spaces is therefore critical since together the two aspects can provide warmth, comfort and pleasant living and working conditions. They can also have some impact on energy consumption by reducing the dependence on artificial lighting and heating. Further guidance on this matter can be found in the District Council's Development Control Guidelines.

❖ LBE5 SUNLIGHT AND DAYLIGHT

IN CONSIDERING PROPOSALS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT, REDEVELOPMENT AND REFURBISHMENT THE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL

must be of a form, scale and height compatible with the character of the area and be constructed in materials sympathetic to the existing urban fabric. Proposals for new development that would be to the detriment of the local scene and character of these areas, by virtue of being badly designed in themselves, or when the use of poor and inappropriate materials is proposed, will not be acceptable. Proposals for development adjoining designated conservation areas will be expected to recognise the character of the area, and be supported by full details, to ensure that inappropriate forms of development do not take place in sensitive locations. In addition to policies earlier in this chapter, the following policies will apply in the control of development in conservation areas.

❖ LBE14 INAPPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT IN CONSERVATION AREAS

PROPOSALS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT WHICH WOULD BE DETRIMENTAL TO THE CHARACTER OF A CONSERVATION AREA WILL NORMALLY BE REFUSED.

❖ LBE15 NEW DEVELOPMENT IN CONSERVATION AREAS

IN CONSIDERING PROPOSALS FOR OTHERWISE ACCEPTABLE NEW DEVELOPMENT IN CONSERVATION AREAS THE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL HAVE REGARD TO THE FOLLOWING:

(A) THE MASSING, SCALE, SITING AND DESIGN OF PROPOSED BUILDING(S);

(B) THE MATERIALS TO BE USED IN NEW BUILDING(S) (AND ANCILLARY FLOORSPACE TREATMENTS). THESE SHOULD BE APPROPRIATE TO THE AREA AND SYMPATHETIC TO ADJOINING BUILDINGS;

(C) THE CONTRIBUTION THE NEW BUILDING(S) WOULD MAKE TO THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA.

OTHER AREAS OF TRADITIONAL LOCAL CHARACTER

1.4.25 Links with the past are particularly important in an area which has experienced great change and high levels of growth. Equally important is the need to maintain the sense of place given by the use of traditional building materials and methods which is so often lost in modern development, leading to a sense of sameness.

1.4.26 Conservation areas will conserve the traditional local character of a few select areas. However, other areas and groups of buildings exist which, although not worthy of classification as Areas of Architectural, Historic or Townscape Character, nevertheless provide important links with the past and a sense of place. The Replacement Structure Plan, in Policy EN22, seeks to perpetuate areas of traditional local character by seeking, in any new development, designs and use of materials which take account of that character.

❖ LBE16 NEW DEVELOPMENT IN AREAS OF TRADITIONAL LOCAL CHARACTER

WITHIN AREAS OF TRADITIONAL LOCAL CHARACTER, AS IDENTIFIED IN PART TWO AND ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, OTHERWISE ACCEPTABLE NEW DEVELOPMENT SHOULD RESPECT THE EXISTING CHARACTER OF THE AREA. IN CONSIDERING PROPOSALS WITHIN SUCH AREAS THE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL HAVE REGARD TO THE SCALE OF THE DEVELOPMENT, ITS RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING BUILDING FORMS AND THE USE OF TRADITIONAL MATERIALS.

LISTED BUILDINGS

1.4.27 The plan area contains over 400 buildings which are included in the statutory list of buildings of architectural or historic interest and which are afforded special protection.

❖ PN1 ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENT - WARGRAVE VILLAGE CENTRE

THE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL PROMOTE THE ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENT OF WARGRAVE VILLAGE CENTRE.

PARISH OF SONNING

2.2.12 The Parish of Sonning is on the north-western edge of the District, bordered on the northwest by about 3 miles of the River Thames and on the south by the Paddington to Reading main railway line. There is open countryside to the north (in Oxfordshire) and east (towards Charvil and Wargrave) which provides proper gaps between settlements. The south west corner of the parish is closest to the major urban area of Reading and contains part of the area being developed as the Thames Valley Park.

2.2.13 The first known settlement at Sonning was in the seventh century, under the Saxon chieftain Sunna. By the tenth century the Bishop of Ramsbury and Sonning had an official residence. In the fourteenth century it became part of the see of Salisbury and a palace overlooking the river, of which only traces remain, was used by visiting Bishops of Salisbury until the late sixteenth century. Sonning was always an important river crossing and for centuries one of the largest parishes in the region. Sonning Bridge is one of the oldest on the river.

2.2.14 Sonning remains one of the most picturesque and historic villages on the Thames. It attracts many visitors from neighbouring areas and much farther afield, as do the Mill Theatre and other facilities across the river in Sonning Eye. The centre of the village is a conservation area. This contains numerous buildings, including the large parish church, listed as a special architectural or historical interest. The Deanery, built by Lutyens with a garden laid out by Gertrude Jekyll, is listed Grade I. Many other houses and the Bull Hotel date from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

2.2.15 To the south of the conservation area there is some open land including Reading University Farm and several sports grounds. Beyond, between the A4 and the railway, are Sonning Golf Course and an area of twentieth century houses in the vicinity of West Drive. This area has retained a distinctive character of its own, comprising substantial detached properties within large pleasant grounds.

2.2.16 In order to help retain a variety of residential areas within the District, it is desirable to protect the character of this area by resisting any proposals for development that might prejudice its quality. It is clear that the subdivision of certain curtilages would destroy the particular amenity afforded by the generous layout.

2.2.17 In order to prevent an inappropriate building-up of frontages and loss of spaciousness it is also considered that particular care should be taken over the design of any extensions, especially any proposals involving boundary to boundary development. It is one of the areas which would be encompassed within the protection of Important Areas established in Policy LTV6.

PARISH OF CHARVIL

2.2.18 The Parish of Charvil is the smallest of the parishes in the District extending from the River Thames in the north to Lands End and Waingels Copse in the south. In 1986 the Parish had a population of 1868.



APPENDIX SEVEN

Extracts from Wokingham District Local Plan
Deposit Draft

(Consolidated Document, November 1999)

Ref: 3.7.08

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Chartered Town Planners

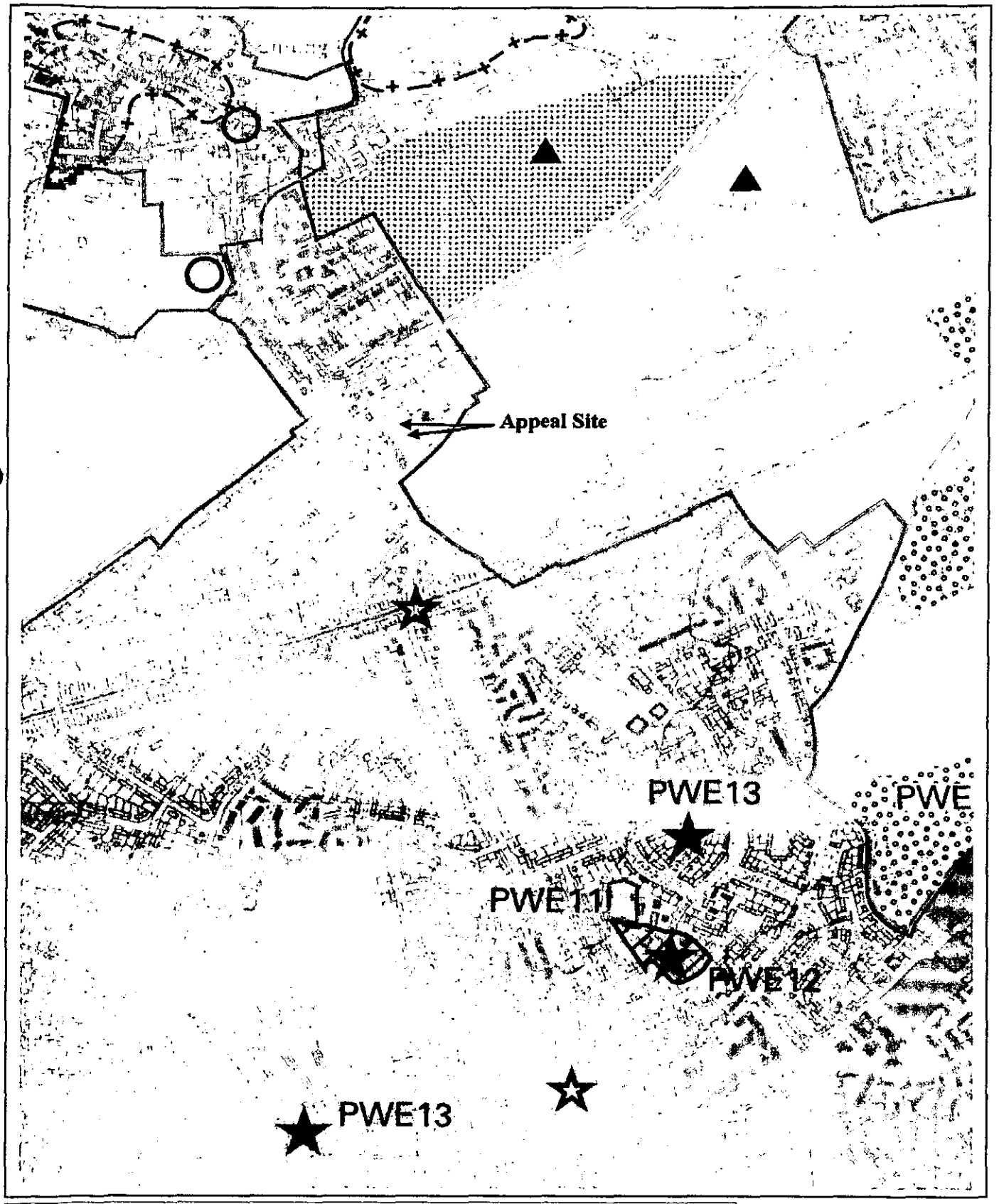
WOKINGHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL

Wokingham District Local Plan

Deposit Draft 1997

Consolidated Document November 1999

November 1999



Appendix Six

97 – 99 Pound Lane, Sonning

Loddon Area Local Plan
Extract From Proposals Map (North)

Not to scale

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CHARLES PLANNING ASSOCIATES

Chartered Town Planners

Wokingham District Plan Deposit Draft (as amended) November 1999

The Wokingham District Local Plan Deposit Draft was placed on deposit from 21st October 1997 until 2nd December 1997.

A large number of objections were received.

As a result the council agreed to a number of pre-inquiry amendments. The purpose of making amendments is to update the plan to take account of changed circumstances and to change the plan where alterations suggested by objectors are considered appropriate by the council.

The changes in respect of Chapter 6 (major development south of the M4 motorway) were agreed for the purpose of advertisement at the Environmental Services Committee on 22nd June 1998 and were confirmed at the meeting of 21st September 1998.

Changes in respect of the rest of the plan were agreed by the committee at meetings on 9th November 1998, 15th February 1999 and 22nd March 1999. They were published in 'Wokingham District Local Plan, Proposed Amendments to Deposit Draft 1999'. The amendments were formally advertised from 23rd April 1999 to 11th June 1999.

A number of objections to the proposed amendments were received. These were reported to the Environmental Services Committee on 13th September 1999 who considered how to respond to them. The committee decided not to proceed with 10 amendments and to recommend to the inquiry 19 additional amendments.

This document is a consolidated document which contains the text of the deposit draft as changed by the amendments which are being recommended to this inquiry and by the proposed additional amendments. It also includes maps which show the proposed changes and additional proposed changes to the proposals maps. This document, however, does not include the appendices to the District Plan.

This document has been prepared for the benefit of users so that it is readily apparent what the council's current position at the commencement of the second part of the local plan inquiry is. It is not intended to supersede either the Deposit Draft or the Amendments documents.

In case of any queries, please contact:

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Telephone 0118 974 6478

1.0 OVERALL STRATEGY

INTRODUCTION

1.1 In developing the District Local Plan the Council agreed an Overall Strategy (set out in para. 0.7) for the plan. The Overall Strategy seeks to slow down the rate of development within the District and to promote sustainable development in order to protect and enhance the quality of the environment within the plan area and also to meet the social and economic aspirations of the District.

1.2 In considering development proposals the achievement of sustainable development is a fundamental principle. However there are other issues that form part of the overall sustainable development approach which also need to be considered when dealing with development proposals. It is the aim of this chapter to set out the fundamental policies from which the remaining policies of the plan take their lead.

1.3 The plan area is under pressure to accommodate new homes, jobs, services and improved transport facilities and in doing so maintain a prosperous economy. It is important that local commerce and industry produces a dynamic local economy that makes a positive contribution to the character, environment and quality of life of those who live and work in the District.

POLICY FRAMEWORK

Strategic Policy

1.4 This approach accords with the overall approach to development adopted by Berkshire County Council in the *Berkshire Structure Plan 1991 - 2006* which states that:

> 'Sustainable levels, forms and locations of development are ... sought which contribute towards meeting the needs and aspirations of today's society for homes, jobs and services, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This implies a greater reliance on the use of renewable resources at an acceptable level, coupled with the conservation of non-renewable resources and the reduction of land, water and air pollution. In addition, growth during the Plan period needs to be kept down to levels which can be accommodated within ... environmental and other limits.' (Para. 3.7 of Berkshire Structure Plan 1991 - 2006).

POLICIES

1.5 The policies set out below aim to ensure that such an approach is achieved.

POLICY WOS1: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

THE COUNCIL WILL ENSURE, WHERE POSSIBLE, THAT DEVELOPMENT IS SUSTAINABLE AND IMPROVES THE QUALITY OF LIFE WITHIN THE PLAN AREA BY PURSUING THE FOLLOWING OBJECTIVES:

A) TO CONTINUE TO SLOW DOWN THE RATE OF DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE PLAN AREA TO ENSURE THAT THE BEST OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

Cont.

IS CONSERVED WHILST PROVIDING APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENTS WHICH MEET LOCAL NEEDS

B) GIVE PRIORITY WITHIN a) TO MEETING THE DISTRICT'S ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL NEEDS, INCLUDING THE PROVISION OF LOW-COST HOUSING AND A WIDER RANGE OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

C) CONSERVING AND ENHANCING THE PATTERN OF TOWN AND PARISH COMMUNITIES BY RETAINING AND EMPHASISING THE BALANCE BETWEEN TOWNS AND VILLAGES, COUNTRYSIDE AND SETTLEMENTS, OPEN RIVER VALLEYS AND ENCLOSED WOODLANDS

D) TO PROVIDE FOR EMPLOYMENT, HOUSING, SHOPPING AND SERVICES IN PLACES THAT MINIMISE THE NEED FOR TRAVEL BY PRIVATE CAR

E) THAT NEW DEVELOPMENT MAKES A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE CHARACTER, ENVIRONMENT, LANDSCAPE, HERITAGE WITHIN THE PLAN AREA

F1)TO CONSERVE NATURAL RESOURCES

F2)TO MINIMISE POLLUTION

G) TO SEEK IMPROVEMENTS TO INFRASTRUCTURE, SERVICES AND AMENITIES.

H) TO ENCOURAGE AND SUSTAIN BALANCED RURAL COMMUNITIES

I) TO DEVELOP BROWNFIELD SITES IN PREFERENCE TO GREENFIELD SITES

Implementation: Through the development control process.

Monitoring: Planning applications determined.

Limiting the Spread of Development

1.6 The Council recognises the need to maintain an acceptable level of environmental quality and considers that the maintenance of a clear distinction between built-up areas and the countryside is fundamental to achieving this aim. Such an approach helps to ensure that individual settlements retain their identity and that the open and rural character of land outside the boundaries of identified settlements is retained. Accordingly it is intended to limit development outside identified settlements to that which is appropriate to the countryside or for which a rural location is essential. Although these uses are acceptable in principle, they must also be acceptable in practice.

1.7 In order to be consistent in the treatment of settlements having common characteristics, it has been necessary to draw up a definition of the classification of settlements as used in the policies and proposals contained in this plan and as shown on the proposals map.

1.8 An 'identified' settlement or built-up area must possess all the following characteristics:

(i) a sizeable amount of development in a compact form (if development is dominated by, or interspersed with, areas of land that are characteristically rural or open, it will not come within this criterion)

(ii) possess a range of basic services, such as a primary school, shop and community facilities, providing a forum for social contact

(iii) be physically and socially cohesive.

1.9 For the purposes of this plan the identified settlements are:

ARBORFIELD CROSS
BARKHAM HILL
CHARVIL
EARLEY/SONNING/WOODLEY
FINCHAMPSTEAD
FINCHAMPSTEAD NORTH
HURST
PINEWOOD
RISELEY
SHINFIELD
SINDLESHAM
SPENCERS WOOD
SWALLOWFIELD
THREE MILE CROSS
TWYFORD
WARGRAVE
WINNERSH
WOKINGHAM.

1.10 Areas of sporadic development exist within the plan area which involve very few properties and/or are dominated by areas of undeveloped rural land either between, or to the rear and in front of properties causing them to be characterised by a loose settlement pattern, or to form a narrow strip of development in what is a distinctly rural area. These areas of development have not been included within the identified settlements.

POLICY WOS2: GENERAL DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

SUBJECT TO THE DETAILED PROVISIONS OF OTHER POLICIES CONTAINED IN THIS PLAN, DEVELOPMENT WILL BE ALLOWED WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF THE IDENTIFIED SETTLEMENTS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP AND LISTED IN THE TEXT.

OUTSIDE THESE SETTLEMENTS DEVELOPMENT WILL ONLY BE ALLOWED IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND WILL BE STRICTLY CONTROLLED THROUGH THE APPLICATION OF THE DETAILED POLICIES AND PROVISIONS OF THIS PLAN AND STRUCTURE PLAN POLICIES C2 (DEVELOPMENT OUTSIDE BUILT UP AREAS AND SETTLEMENTS) AND C4 (CONTROL OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE GREEN BELT).

Implementation: Through the development control process.

Monitoring: Planning applications determined.

1.11 The most attractive and successful urban environments are those where all the component parts (e.g. buildings, trees, roads, spaces, people, traffic) have been satisfactorily accommodated to create interesting, lively and pleasant places. In order to maintain and enhance the character of the built environment, the appropriateness of the use of existing buildings and the design of new buildings or extensions to existing buildings, are very important.

1.12 The Council is particularly concerned to promote a high standard of design in new buildings, to ensure that new buildings are responsive to their location and to their potential occupants' and/or users' needs. New development needs to be appropriate in terms of function, siting, scale, form, massing, materials, colour and texture in its relationship with adjoining buildings and sites. Accordingly, new development will be expected to make an acceptable and positive contribution to the built environment. In addition new development should be appropriately located so as to reduce the need to travel and to encourage alternative modes of transport to the car.

1.12a Landscaping schemes should be comprised predominantly, if not wholly, of locally native species.

POLICY WOS3: DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PRINCIPLES

THE COUNCIL WILL REQUIRE ALL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS THAT ARE ACCEPTABLE IN PRINCIPLE WHEN ASSESSED AGAINST OTHER POLICIES OF THIS PLAN TO:

A) BE APPROPRIATE IN SCALE OF ACTIVITY AND CHARACTER TO THE AREA IN WHICH THEY ARE LOCATED AND BE INTEGRATED INTO THEIR LOCAL CONTEXT WITHOUT DETRIMENT TO THE AMENITIES OF ADJOINING LAND USES AND OCCUPIERS

B) HAVE NO SIGNIFICANT DETRIMENTAL IMPACT UPON IMPORTANT MAN-MADE, LANDSCAPE AND NATURE CONSERVATION FEATURES AND PROVIDE FOR FURTHER LANDSCAPE TREATMENT WHERE RELEVANT TO THE TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT AND/OR THE PROTECTION OF LOCAL VISUAL AMENITY

C) BE BOTH LOCATED AND DESIGNED SO AS TO REDUCE THE NEED TO TRAVEL AND ENCOURAGE THE USE OF WALKING, CYCLING AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT AS ALTERNATIVES TO THE CAR

D) HAVE NO SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON ROAD SAFETY OR CAUSE HIGHWAY, TRAFFIC GENERATION OR TRAFFIC RELATED ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

E) PROVIDE BUILDINGS, FACILITIES AND SPACES THAT ARE CAPABLE OF USE BY PEOPLE WHO HAVE MOBILITY OR SENSORY IMPAIRMENT

F) BE OF HIGH QUALITY OF DESIGN THAT RESPECTS THE LOCAL CONTEXT BY VIRTUE OF SITING, LAYOUT, MASSING, MATERIALS, COLOUR AND TEXTURE.

Implementation: Through the development control process.

Monitoring: Planning applications determined.

Services, Amenities and Infrastructure

1.13 It is a principle of good planning that new development should provide the necessary infrastructure, including services and amenities, needed to support the development. This is a material consideration in considering planning applications (as set out in Circular 1/97, *Planning Obligations*). An explicit assessment must be made of infrastructure requirements arising from the development and how these should be met. Such provision is a key element in the quality of life or new and existing residents. Supplementary planning guidance has been produced setting out the implementation of Policy WOS4 below.

POLICY WOS4: SERVICE, AMENITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT

WHERE DEVELOPMENT IS ACCEPTABLE IN PRINCIPLE, UNDER THE POLICIES OF THIS PLAN, DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WILL BE EXPECTED TO HAVE

Cont.

POLICY FRAMEWORK

National Policy

4.5 Advice on design at the national level is limited. There is no Planning Policy Guidance Note purely on design considerations. Paras 13 - 20 and Annex A (paras A1 - A7) of PPG1 refer specifically to the issue of design. Paras 4 - 7 of Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 (PPG 3) *Housing* look at good design in the context of housing development.

4.6 Comprehensive guidance on heritage issues is given in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG 15) *Planning and the Historic Environment.* Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG 16) *Archaeology and Planning* gives advice on archaeology and planning.

Strategic Policy

4.7 The *Berkshire Structure Plan 1991 - 2006* acknowledges that the quality of the County's environment relates to its character, identifiable 'sense of place', and people's living conditions. The plan recognises that these depend partly on care for the built environment, but that also of importance are the maintenance and improvement of interests that have a bearing on the County's character, the limitation and control of specific threats to pleasant living conditions, and the conservation of natural resources.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

4.8 The environmental policies in this plan are augmented by additional guidance in the form of Planning Guidelines, Development Briefs, Design Guides, and Conservation Area Studies. This additional guidance includes detailed advice that is not appropriate for inclusion in the plan. The policies of the plan take precedence over the supplementary planning guidance, and provide the main thrust for environmental policy in the plan area.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

4.9 Proposed development should be considered in the context of the surrounding area. This will allow vernacular style and any good features to be interpreted in the new development, helping to contribute to its sense of place.

POLICY WBE1: DEVELOPMENT IN ITS LOCAL CONTEXT

THE COUNCIL WILL REQUIRE GOOD CONTEMPORARY DESIGN THROUGHOUT THE PLAN AREA, WHICH RESPECTS ITS LOCAL CONTEXT. WHEN CONSIDERING ANY APPLICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT THE COUNCIL WILL HAVE REGARD TO THE FOLLOWING CONSIDERATIONS:

a) ITS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

b) ITS VISUAL IMPACT

c) ACCESSIBILITY

Cont.

d) LANDFORM AND ANY NATURAL FEATURES, INCLUDING LANDSCAPE TREATMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS

e) THE LOCAL TOWNSCAPE

f) THE LAYOUT, FORM, SCALE, MASSING, AND MATERIALS OF DEVELOPMENT

g) SAFETY AND SECURITY

h) THE PRIVACY AND AMENITY OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

i) SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DESIGN GUIDANCE ADOPTED BY THE COUNCIL.

Implementation: Use of design guidance in the development control process.

Monitoring: Consider quality of development on the ground, including through design awards.

4.10 Not all of the plan area is of the same visual quality. Some parts of it could benefit from environmental improvement, and in some circumstances, this may be achievable through redevelopment opportunities.

POLICY WBE2: IMPROVING ON THE LOCAL CONTEXT

IN AREAS WHERE THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT DOES NOT EXHIBIT ESPECIALLY PRONOUNCED OR HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL STYLES, ANY PROPOSALS FOR INFILL DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE USED AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO CREATE ADDED VISUAL INTEREST AND RAISE THE AREA'S ARCHITECTURAL QUALITY.

Implementation: Through the development control process.

Monitoring: Check quality of development on the ground.

4.11 Because of their extent, large developments are likely to have a greater impact on the environment than smaller scale ones. It is therefore particularly important to ensure a high quality of development within such proposals. Large development areas are probably best considered in terms of a series or pattern of smaller areas, each with its own layout and form of development, and hence its own distinctive character. This should lead to the avoidance of extensive areas of characterless development that bear no relationship to features on the ground.

POLICY WBE3: CHARACTER OF LARGE SCALE DEVELOPMENT

ANY PROPOSALS FOR LARGE SCALE DEVELOPMENT SHOULD PROVIDE A CLEAR AND COHERENT LAYOUT THAT CREATES AREAS OF IDENTIFIABLE CHARACTER WITHIN THE DEVELOPMENT. WHERE DEVELOPMENT IS TO BE CARRIED OUT IN PHASES, THE COUNCIL WILL REQUIRE THE SUBMISSION OF A INDICATIVE LAYOUT FOR THE ENTIRE SITE PRIOR TO THE APPROVAL OF ANY

Cont.

POLICY WBE19: DEVELOPMENT BRIEFS

DEVELOPMENT BRIEFS WILL BE PREPARED IN THE FOLLOWING CASES:

a) FOR SITES WHERE THIS PLAN IDENTIFIES THAT A DEVELOPMENT BRIEF SHOULD BE PREPARED

b) FOR SITES LARGER THAN 1.0 HA WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN IDENTIFIED IN THIS PLAN

c) SITES WHERE THERE ARE CONFLICTING POLICY OBJECTIVES, OR WHERE THE SCHEME DEPARTS FROM ADOPTED STANDARDS.

ALL DEVELOPMENT BRIEFS SHOULD BE PREPARED USING THE PROCEDURE SET OUT IN THE DEVELOPMENT BRIEFING MANUAL. THE BRIEF SHOULD INDICATE ALSO HOW THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE POSITIVELY INTERPRETS THE POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN.

Implementation: Through the development briefing process, including use of the Development Briefing Manual, Section A1 of the Planning Guidelines.

Monitoring: Quality assessments of development briefs.

AREA-BASED POLICIES

(Paragraph 4.31 deleted)

(Paragraph 4.32 deleted)

(Policy WBE20 deleted)

I) CONSIDERATION WILL BE GIVEN TO APPROPRIATE CONTEMPORARY DESIGN THAT PAYS REGARD TO THE ABOVE POINTS.

Implementation: Through the development control process.

Monitoring: Through detailed studies of conservation areas.

4.42 Listed buildings often have the most to contribute in a conservation area, but other traditional buildings play an important role as a backcloth. Careful control over traditional buildings is therefore important for the overall appearance of the conservation area.

POLICY WHE5: ALTERATIONS AND EXTENSIONS TO TRADITIONAL BUILDINGS IN CONSERVATION AREAS

ALTERATIONS OR EXTENSIONS TO TRADITIONAL BUILDINGS WITHIN CONSERVATION AREAS MUST HAVE REGARD TO THE FOLLOWING:

A) THE RE-USE OF MATERIALS

B) THE USE OF TRADITIONAL MATERIALS APPROPRIATE TO THE LOCALITY

C) THE FORM, PITCH, CLADDING AND ORNAMENT OF THE ROOF SHOULD BE RETAINED

D) NEW WINDOWS SHOULD BE CONSTRUCTED TO MATCH THE ORIGINAL USING THE SAME PATTERN, GLAZING DIVISIONS, FRAME, MOULDING AND MATERIALS

E) NEW WINDOW OPENINGS OR DORMERS SHOULD NOT DISTURB THE PROPORTIONS OF THE ORIGINAL BUILDING, AND SHOULD RESPECT THE SIZE AND STYLE OF EXISTING WINDOWS

F) EXTENSIONS TO BUILDINGS SHOULD BE SUBSERVIENT TO THE EXISTING BUILDING

G) THE SITING OF EXTENSIONS SHOULD NOT DETRACT FROM THE TRADITIONAL INTEGRITY OF THE BUILDING OR ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER BUILDINGS OR OPEN SPACES WITHIN CONSERVATION AREAS.

Implementation: Through the development control process.

Monitoring: Studies of conservation areas.

AREAS OF SPECIAL CHARACTER

4.43 There are some areas or attractive groups of buildings where there is a consistent period or character reflecting the area's past, but where a conservation area designation is not justified. It is desirable to protect these areas from development or change that may harm the particular character of that area. These areas are known as 'Areas of Special Character'.

POLICY WHE6: DESIGNATION OF AREAS OF SPECIAL CHARACTER

IN ADDITION TO THE DESIGNATION OF CONSERVATION AREAS THE COUNCIL HAS DESIGNATED AREAS OF SPECIAL CHARACTER, AS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP. ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENT SCHEMES MAY BE PURSUED IN THESE AREAS DEPENDING UPON THE NEED FOR SUCH SCHEMES.

Implementation: Through the designation and review of Areas of Special Character.

Monitoring: Studies of Areas of Special Character.

4.44 Although there is no statutory protection afforded to these areas of special character, their importance is recognised, and the features of these areas should therefore be retained and enhanced.

POLICY WHE7: RETENTION OF IMPORTANT FEATURES IN AREAS OF SPECIAL CHARACTER

THE COUNCIL WILL SEEK TO RETAIN AND ENHANCE THOSE FEATURES THAT MAKE UP THE DISTINCT CHARACTER OF THE AREAS OF SPECIAL CHARACTER. THESE INCLUDE: BUILDINGS, RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN BUILDINGS, VIEWS, VISTAS, OPEN SPACES, TREES, TRADITIONAL STREETSCAPE, STREET FURNITURE, WALLS, RAILINGS, AND TRADITIONAL MATERIALS.

Implementation: Through the development control process.

Monitoring: Studies of Areas of Special Character.

POLICY WHE8: DEVELOPMENT IN AREAS OF SPECIAL CHARACTER

IN ADDITION TO THE CRITERIA SET OUT IN POLICY WBE1 NEW DEVELOPMENT IN AREAS OF SPECIAL CHARACTER WILL BE EXPECTED TO RESPECT THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE AREA, AS SHOULD PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT ADJACENT TO, OR AFFECTING THE SETTING OF, AN AREA OF SPECIAL CHARACTER. IN PARTICULAR ATTENTION SHOULD BE PAID TO VOLUME, SCALE, FORM, MATERIALS AND QUALITY OF THE NEW DEVELOPMENT.

PROPOSALS FOR THE ALTERATION OR EXTENSION OF ANY BUILDING IN, AND WHERE APPROPRIATE, ADJACENT TO, AN AREA OF SPECIAL CHARACTER, WILL BE EXPECTED TO HAVE REGARD TO THE HISTORIC AND ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES OF THAT BUILDING. IN PARTICULAR ATTENTION SHOULD BE PAID TO:

A) THE SCALE AND PROPORTION OF THE ORIGINAL BUILDING

B) THE SHAPE AND VOLUME OF ITS ROOF

Cont.

POLICIES

5.12 Only part of the District's housing requirement is met through the allocation of specific areas of land for development. Housing will continue to be built on unidentified sites. In accordance with Berkshire Structure Plan Policies (C1 and H5), these sites will be within the boundaries of identified settlements.

POLICY WH1: HOUSING DEVELOPMENT - UNIDENTIFIED SITES

WITHIN THE IDENTIFIED SETTLEMENTS, ON SITES THAT ARE NOT IDENTIFIED IN THE PLAN FOR RESIDENTIAL USE, DEVELOPMENT IN THE FORM OF INFILLING, REDEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE OF USE TO RESIDENTIAL USE WILL BE CONSIDERED FAVOURABLY, SUBJECT TO LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL AND AMENITY CONSIDERATIONS AND ALL OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES AND PROVISIONS OF THIS PLAN, IN ORDER TO MAKE THE BEST USE OF LAND IN BUILT-UP AREAS.

IN PARTICULAR, THE COUNCIL WILL SEEK TO ENSURE THAT THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE COMPLIED WITH:

a) OPEN AND WOODED AREAS, AND GAPS AND GARDEN AREAS, THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO THE CHARACTER OF THE SETTLEMENT, ARE PROTECTED FROM INAPPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT

b) THERE IS NO SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE EFFECT ON THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA, INCLUDING ON ANY CONSERVATION AREA

c) THERE IS NO SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE EFFECT ON ANY RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY OR LISTED BUILDING

d) THERE IS NO SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE EFFECT ON THE SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY OR ON THE ADJOINING COUNTRYSIDE

e) THERE IS NO SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE EFFECT ON ANY INTEREST OF NATURE CONSERVATION IMPORTANCE

f) THERE IS NO LOSS OF RECREATIONAL FACILITIES OR PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

g) THERE IS ADEQUATE LOCAL HIGHWAY AND INFRASTRUCTURE CAPACITY TO CATER FOR TRAFFIC AND OTHER DEMANDS GENERATED BY THE DEVELOPMENT, WITH, WHERE SEEN AS NECESSARY, THE PROVISION OF ROAD SAFETY MEASURES. IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO CONSIDER THE CUMULATIVE EFFECT ON ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SAME AREA, TO DETERMINE THEIR ACCEPTABILITY UNDER THIS CRITERION

Cont.

h) AN ELEMENT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING IS PROVIDED IN RESIDENTIAL SCHEMES OF 15 OR MORE DWELLINGS OR OF 0.5 HECTARE OR MORE IN SETTLEMENTS OF 3,000 OR FEWER, AND OF 25 OR MORE DWELLINGS OR OF 1 HECTARE OR MORE ELSEWHERE. THE SETTLEMENTS WHERE THE 25 DWELLINGS REQUIREMENT APPLIES COMPRISE CROWTHORNE (PINEWOOD), EARLEY, NORTH FINCHAMPSTEAD, TWYFORD, WARGRAVE, WINNERSH, WOKINGHAM AND WOODLEY. NEW DEVELOPMENT WILL BE EXPECTED TO COMPLY WITH THE COUNCIL'S SERVICE, AMENITY, AND INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENT (S.A.I.R.).

PROPOSALS FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT WILL BE JUDGED AGAINST THE COUNCIL'S PLANNING GUIDELINES FOR THEIR ACCEPTABILITY UNDER DESIGN AND PARKING CRITERIA.

Implementation: Planning permissions to private and public sector housebuilders, having regard to Planning Guidelines.

Monitoring: Planning applications.

5.13 Assuming that 1,850 dwellings are provided on the major site south of the M4 at Grazeley by 2006, it is necessary to ensure that sufficient land is identified for the development of small sites. The sites that have been identified in Policy WH2 have been selected on the basis of their performance against a number of environmental criteria.

POLICY WH2: HOUSING DEVELOPMENT - IDENTIFIED SITES

IN ADDITION TO THE 1,850 DWELLINGS TO BE BUILT AT GRAZELEY (SEE PROPOSAL WSM1), THE COUNCIL WILL MAKE PROVISION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF APPROXIMATELY 867 DWELLINGS IN THE PERIOD 1 APRIL 1996 TO 31 MARCH 2006 ON THE FOLLOWING SITES, SUBJECT TO THE PROVISION OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY SERVICES NECESSARY TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT. THESE SITES WILL BE SAFEGUARDED FROM OTHER TYPES OF DEVELOPMENT. IN BRINGING FORWARD THE SITES FOR DEVELOPMENT, A DEVELOPMENT BRIEF WILL BE REQUIRED. DEVELOPMENTS AT OR NEAR WINNERSH WILL BE REQUIRED TO CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS SCHEMES PUT FORWARD IN THE WINNERSH TRANSPORT STUDY.

a) WI12 LAND WEST OF MOLE ROAD, SINDLESHAM
b) WI17 FORMER GMU DEPOT, WATMORE LANE, WINNERSH
c) AB05 ARBORFIELD GARRISON, ARBORFIELD
d) SH03 LAND AT GRAZELEY ROAD, THREE MILE CROSS 60
e) SH13 CHURCH FARM AND CATTLE BREEDING CENTRE, CHURCH LANE
f) SH15 LAND AT HOLLOW LANE, SHINFIELD
g) SH27 LAND AT WILSFORD CLOSE, SHINFIELD
h) SH37 LAND AT LANE END FARM, CUTBUSH LANE, SHINFIELD
i) WI13 LAND AT CHATSWORTH AVENUE, WINNERSH

Implementation: Planning permissions to private and public sector housebuilders.

Monitoring: Monitor release of sites for development, including planning permissions.

APPENDIX EIGHT

Report to Environmental Services Committee

12 June 2000, Item No. 5 – PPG3: Housing

WARDS: ALL

5.00 PPG3 HOUSING

Purpose of Report

5.01 To advise members of the publication of Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 'Housing' (PPG3) and its implications for Wokingham District.

Suggested Action

5.02 Members are asked to NOTE the content of the report, and to RESOLVE to include the draft policy on residential densities in the District Local Plan as soon as the local plan process permits, and to adopt that policy for the purposes of development control as soon as possible.

Background Information

5.03 PPG3 is the Government's statement on planning policy with regard to housing. The most recent version, issued in March 2000, updates the policy in the last PPG, which was issued in 1992. It contains the Government's new approach to planning for housing. The Government's main objectives, to be implemented by the local authorities, are:

1. To recognise the housing needs of all in the community and provide a greater choice of housing through a better mix of housing sizes, types and locations.
2. To promote more sustainable patterns of development and make better use of previously-developed land, through focusing additional housing in existing towns and cities on sites with good access to facilities and public transport. Good design should be promoted in order to create high quality environments and encourage an urban renaissance.

Efficient Use of Land

5.04 A key focus of the new PPG is the need to make more efficient use of previously-developed land, empty properties and conversions, in order to minimise the amount of greenfield land required for development. The national target is for 60% of additional housing to be provided on previously-developed land or through conversions, by 2008. Each region will have its own percentage target.

Urban Potential Studies

5.05 PPG3 states that in order to establish how much additional housing can be accommodated within existing urban areas, all local planning authorities should carry out an urban housing capacity study. The six Unitary Authorities in Berkshire are currently working together on a Berkshire-wide Urban Potential Study as part of work in preparation for the new Structure Plan covering the period after 2006. In line with government guidance this study is exploring the implications of a number of different scenarios which reflect changes in density and parking provision, which in turn would affect the layout and mix of the housing development. The aim of the study is to calculate the number of additional dwellings that could be built in existing urban areas in accordance with

current plan policies and standards, and the number that could be accommodated with a change in standards. The results of the study will be used in making housing allocations in the Structure Plan to reduce the amount of housing total on greenfield sites.

Increasing Residential Densities

5.06 The Berkshire-wide Urban Potential Study looks at increasing the potential for development within existing urban areas, by increasing densities. In paragraph 57 PPG3 states that new housing development in England is currently built at an average of 25 dwellings per hectare (dph), but more than half of all new housing is built at less than 20 (dph). This, it states, is a level of land take that can no longer be sustained. Local authorities are required to critically examine the standards applied to new development. In particular paragraph 58 states that local planning authorities should avoid developments that make inefficient use of land, i.e. those with a density of less than 30 dph. Developments that achieve a net density of 30dph make more efficient use of land and should be encouraged. In areas with good public transport accessibility, such as towns and local centres, or areas around major nodes along good quality public transport corridors; a greater intensity of development should be sought.

5.07 Table One below illustrates the densities which have achieved on the sites allocated for housing in the Wokingham District Deposit Draft Local Plan, as proposed to be amended.

Site:	Number of Dwellings:	Density Achieved:
WSM1 - Grazeley	2,500	**25.07dph**
SH27 - The Homestead, Shinfield Road	7	**10 dph**
SH14 - Land at Church Lane	25	**11.52 dph**
CH03 - Charvil Farm, Bath Road	21	**16.54 dph**
SH09 – Diana Close, off Beech Hill Lane	8	**17.78 dph**
WK06 - Keephatch Farm	39	**17.89 dph**
SH15 – Land at Hollow Lane	77 to 105	**19.44 dph to 26.52 dph**
WI12 – Land west of Mole Road	30	**20 dph**
SH37 – Land at Lane End Farm	118	**20.45 dph**
AB05 – Arborfield Garrison	277	**20.67 dph**
SH03 – Land rear of Grazeley Road, Three Mile Cross	91	**23.3 dph**
WK35 - Wokingham Town Football Club	74	**39.15 dph**
WK21 - Land at Norton Road	23	**46 dph**
WK20 - Rear of Victoria House, Easthampstead Car Park	14	**50 dph**

Table One: Densities achieved on Local Plan Housing Sites

5.08 As Table One shows, only three of the local plan sites have achieved densities that are in conformity with the requirements of PPG3. The conclusion is that the Council will have to adapt its approach to densities if it is to fully comply with the guidance.

5.09 Paragraph 57 of PPG3 highlights the densities that currently prevail on new sites, and recognises that these are often too low, because of the implications for:

1) Land take
2) Sustainability of services and transport, leading to
3) Social exclusion.

Local authorities are asked to examine their development standards to avoid further wasteful use of land.

5.10 Paragraph 2 of PPG3 states that local planning authorities should: *'make more efficient use of land by reviewing planning policies and standards'.*

Housing Mix

5.11 The PPG states Local Authorities should encourage the development of mixed and inclusive communities through providing a range of housing types and tenures, avoiding the creation of large areas of housing of similar characteristics. LPA's should take into account assessments of local housing need in determining the size and type of additional housing for which they should plan.

The Local Plan does include a policy supporting the provision of a variety of housing. Indication is given in the text of the proportions of different dwelling sizes (as measured by numbers of bedrooms), that should be provided, on the basis of evidence given in the Housing Needs Survey. The Development Control service applies these percentages to sites of ten or more dwellings. This threshold is not formalised in the Local Plan, however.

5.12 One of the easiest ways for the Council to increase density will be to increase the proportion of smaller dwellings built.

The importance of design when increasing residential densities

5.13 In addition to stressing the importance of making efficient use of land, PPG3 also stresses the importance of promoting good design in new housing developments in order to create attractive, high quality environments (paragraphs 2, 11, 45, 46, 54). Similarly, PPG3 stresses that high density development should not be at the expense of the green and open spaces within the urban area, which are important for creating an attractive living environment (paragraphs 52 & 53). Policy WH1 of the District Local Plan includes criteria against which housing development within settlements will be considered including the protection of open spaces.

5.14 As a result of different views in the past the common perception of high density is of high-rise developments in a harsh urban environment surrounded by low quality amenity space. However, high density can be achieved by low or medium rise developments, with an enhanced use of design.

5.15 The use of a design-based approach has been examined in detail in two studies carried out by the planning consultant Llewelyn Davies. These are 'Sustainable Residential Quality: new approach to urban living' which looked at development in London, and 'Sustainable Residential Quality in the South East'. The studies undertook detailed analysis of a number of case studies and by combining a reduction in policy standards with an enhanced use of design produced alternative development proposals for a number of different sites.

5.16 These studies show how an increase in density can be achieved by relaxing some of the standards currently contained in local plans. If this is coupled with a design-led approach, which takes into account the characteristics of each site, rather than applying standard countrywide, the results can create a better residential environment than is possible under current plan policies and standards.

Location of development

5.17 In addition to the strong presumption in favour of previously developed land there is also locational guidance for new development.

5.18 The new guidance advises in paragraph 30 that in identifying sites to be allocated for housing in local plans, local planning authorities should follow a search sequence, starting with the re-use of previously developed land and buildings within urban areas identified by the urban housing capacity study, then urban extensions and finally new development around nodes in good public transport corridors. It also identifies in paragraph 31 criteria against which local

planning authorities should assess the potential and suitability of sites for allocation for housing in Local Plans. These are: availability of previously developed sites; location and accessibility; capacity of existing and potential infrastructure; ability to build communities; and the physical and environmental constraints on development of land.

5.19 Broadly this guidance is compatible with the methodology which has been used to select sites for inclusion in the District-wide plan. The majority of the housing sites allocated in the District –wide local plan are either within settlements or are urban extensions. A priority has been given to previously developed land. However, a major area of conflict in the current local plan inquiry is between the guidance for urban extensions and the council's policies to protect gaps between settlements.

5.20 Further guidance on development includes:

- linking development with Public Transport;
- promoting mixed-use development;
- greening the residential environment; and
- securing high quality design.

5.21 It is noted in the PPG that development will still be required outside of existing urban areas. Any substantial new development should not consist exclusively of housing, but must be planned as a community with a mix of land uses, including adequate shops, employment and services.

5.22 Only a limited amount of housing can be expected to be accommodated in expanded villages. Additional development in rural areas will only be appropriate where it will support local services, help to meet local housing needs and is in keeping with the character of the village.

5.23 New settlements it is stated in the guidance are a possible, but infrequently viable option due to scale, cost and time required for development. Any new settlement must be free-standing, not a dormitory of an existing larger settlement, and should maximise opportunities for sustainable modes of transport and quality design. Any proposal should be brought forward through the planning system, either at a regional, structure plan, or local plan level depending on scale.

5.24 Some local planning authorities may have either land allocations for employment which will not be implemented within the plan period, or land that was designated for a particular use in a policy context not consistent with revised PPG3. Local planning authorities are advised they should therefore review all non-housing allocations when reviewing development plans and consider if any of this land may be more appropriately allocated as housing or mixed use development. In preparing the District-wide plan the Council has met the requirement to consider whether land allocated for employment development might be better used for housing or mixed use development.

Land Supply

5.25 Although the requirement for a five year housing land supply is not included in this new version of PPG3 there is a requirement to show on the plan's proposals map sufficient sites to accommodate at least the first five years of housing

development proposed in the plan. This will take account of the likely supply of windfall sites.

5.26 In a recent appeal decision the Secretary of State refused a major housing development notwithstanding evidence that a five year land supply was unavailable. He wrote '*The revision of PPG3 does not require local authorities to ensure the availability of five years supply of housing land free from constraints, in the terms of the former version*'.

Changes Required to Bring the Council's District Local Plan into *Conformity with PPG3*

5.27 The Wokingham District Deposit Draft, as proposed to be amended, does not include a specific policy on residential density. The table above clearly shows that the current policies and standards are not sufficient on their own, to achieve the densities now required by government guidance. The Local Plan Inquiry Inspector has suggested that consideration be given to the question of introducing a density policy when the inquiry session dealing with housing matters is held on 3rd and 4th July. The Council's views on this matter need to be supported by a resolution of this Committee. To that end, a policy has been drafted, which is in conformity with the provisions of the PPG. This is set out below.

PROPOSED POLICY ON RESIDENTIAL DENSITIES

In order to ensure an effective and efficient use of land, no residential development shall be permitted at a net density of less than 30 dwellings per hectare, on sites within or adjoining identified settlements.

A net density of between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare on new residential development will generally be acceptable. Higher densities in this range will be acceptable in locations with good public transport connections and good access to local retail, community and service facilities.

In areas with particularly good accessibility to public transport and facilities, densities should be in excess of 50 per hectare.

All developments, whatever their net density, will be expected to incorporate a high quality of design throughout.

The Wording of the Policy

5.28 Results of internal consultations on the wording of the policy have pointed out that it could be helpful to seek to quantify what is meant by the terms 'good' and 'particularly good' in the context of public transport connections and access to facilities. One way of doing this would be to relate the density policy to an accessibility matrix of some kind. In preparing the Berkshire –wide Urban Potential Study the six unitary authorities have agreed a definition for a public transport corridor. This is a level of public transport provision that is considered frequent enough to encourage people to travel by public transport. It is considered appropriate to encourage development at higher densities within 400m of such a route. A public transport corridor has been defined, and agreed between the six unitaries, as a route which has the following bus or train frequency:

- Every 20 minutes between 7-9am and 4-7pm (every 30 minutes in rural areas)
- An evening and Monday - Saturday service allowing two return journeys to be made

5.29 It has also been agreed as part of the Urban Potential Study, that locations within 800m of a town or district centre (as identified in the local plan) or 400m of a local centre (again as identified in the local plan) are suitable locations in which to locate new development and higher densities. These distances are considered appropriate walking distances to the facilities available. Sites within 400m of the town centre were considered to be particularly sustainable.

5.30 In combining these approaches to sustainable locations, appropriate thresholds for locations with good and particularly good accessibility, in terms of the proposed policy, would be:

- Good: sites within 800m of a town or district centre, or 400m of a local centre and with the level of public transport provision as outlined above

- Particularly good: sites within 400m of a town or district centre and with the level of public transport provision as outlined above

If more detailed accessibility matrices are produced in the future these could replace the thresholds outlined in this report.

Approach to be taken prior to adoption of the Local Plan

5.31 If members resolve to agree to the new policy wording then it could be incorporated as an amendment to the Local Plan, for Development Control purposes. This policy will not have been subject of public consultation, but will have the same status as the Proposed Further Amendments of September 1999 and the Proposed Amendments to the Transport chapter. Public consultation on all these amendments will take place when the Proposed Modifications are put out for consultation, after receipt of the Inspectors' Report.

5.32 In the meantime paragraph 38 of PPG3 should provide the necessary support for refusing applications at unacceptably low densities, in relation to the requirements of PPG3 paragraphs 57 and 58. The policy could be formally introduced into the Local Plan at the Proposed Modifications stage of the plan, which will not be before mid-2001.

5.33 The introduction of a policy will not be sufficient on its own to address the issue. A review of the additional standards that are applied to new development will be required. The main ones are:

1) Parking standards,
2) Housing sizes and types.

5.34 The **parking standards** contained within the local plan do not meet the new requirements of PPG3. Paragraph 61 states that local authorities should revise their parking standards to allow for significantly lower levels of off-street parking. Paragraph 62 states that developments which provide '*more than 1.5 off-street car parking spaces per dwelling are unlikely to reflect the Government's emphasis on securing sustainable residential environments*'. It goes on to say that '*policies which would result in higher levels of off-street parking, especially in urban areas, should not be adopted*'. While the Local Plan accords with the guidance in that it sets maximum rather than minimum standards, the maximum standard should be reduced to 1.5. While it is recognised that the District has a high level of car ownership, changes in the design of layouts and provision of parking spaces could allow for a sufficient level of parking provision, and enable densities to be increased. For example, the use of twin length garages instead of the standard double garages while reducing the amount of drive space, would provide the same amount of garaged space but with a reduced plot width. Use of car ports would ensure that the space allocated for parking is used for such purposes, rather than storage, as often happens when garages are provided. Use of communal parking would also reduce the amount of space allocated to parking and thus allow for an increase the number of dwellings on site. Residential car parking standards, however, should ***not*** be reviewed independently but looked at as part of the forthcoming comprehensive review of parking standards in the District.

5.35 With regard to **housing sizes and types**, it is suggested that the Council could formalise the approach taken to housing mix within developments, in connection

with Local Plan policy WH6. The Housing Needs Survey 1997 showed that there is an imbalance in housing mix across the District and therefore provides the justification for asking for the mix of dwelling types to reflect and address this. PPG3 does stress the need to ensure there is a choice of housing available, and this is currently not being achieved in Wokingham District. Although proportionate demand by dwelling size is currently included in the Local Plan, this is only in the supporting text; its inclusion in the policy would strengthen the position of the Council in negotiations. Further strength would be gained from being able to use a more up-to-date Housing Needs Survey as the basis for negotiation.

5.36 In order to show developers how changes in design can enable good quality, higher density schemes to be achieved, it would be helpful to produce some **Supplementary Design Guidance** with illustrations of good practice. If this is to include examples from other areas it would be necessary to choose areas that had similar built characteristics and socio-economic characteristics (i.e. level of car ownership) to Wokingham.

Financial Implications

5.37 None specific to this report.

Environmental Implications

5.38 The PPG's emphasis on the re-use of land for development, increased densities and high standards of design, should assist in securing developments that reduce land take, are in sustainable locations, and improve the environment.

Equal Opportunities Implications

5.39 None specific to this report.

Community Safety Implications

5.40 None specific to this report.

Time Constraints

5.41 PPG3 was issued in March 2000. The Housing Round Table at the Local Plan Inquiry is due to take place on 3rd and 4th July.

Background Papers	Dept. Where held
Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 Housing	Environmental Services
Wokingham District Local Plan	Environmental Services
'Sustainable Residential Quality: new approach to urban living' and 'Sustainable Residential Quality in the South East', both by Llewelyn Davies, planning consultants.	Environmental Services

Author: Richard Ford, Jim Dunning and Liz Walker
Date: 31 May 2000
h/text/richard/PPG3resdensl.doc

APPENDIX NINE

Extracts from LPA Housing Round Table Evidence

WDLP Local Plan Inquiry – 3 & 4 July 2000

WDC/HRT/5/Doc1

WOKINGHAM DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN

PUBLIC LOCAL INQUIRY
FEBRUARY 2000

PROOF OF EVIDENCE

HOUSING ROUND TABLE SESSION
3 AND 4 JULY 2000

HOUSING ROUND TABLE SESSION

INTRODUCTION

01 This paper sets out the Council's position on the points raised in the Inspectors' agenda for the District Local Plan Housing Round Table session, issued in a letter from the Programme Officer on 12 May.

02 The items suggested for the agenda by the Inspectors were as follows:

1) Housing Numbers
a) Completion figures
b) Outstanding commitments (1+ hectare)
c) Local Plan sites
d) Other soft commitments
e) Windfall allowance (less than 1 hectare)
f) Flexibility allowances
g) Implementation rates - major development south of the M4.

2) Methodology for the selection of Sites.

3) Need for Reserve Sites.

4) Brownfield Development and the Sequential Approach.

5) Density guidelines and whether a specific policy is required.

6) Design guidance and whether a specific policy is needed.

7) Affordable Housing and whether policy WH7 meets national guidance.

8) Local Needs Housing and whether policy WH9 is necessary or adequately expressed.

9) Use of a table in the Plan - to show details of sites/figures/methodology.

03 This proof addresses issues 1 to 6 inclusive and 9, in turn. Issues 7 and 8 are dealt with in a separate proof. Most issues in this proof are considered in the following way. First, the issues identified by the Inspectors are set out. Then the views of the objectors are summarised. Finally, the Council's response is given. The Council has in general used the information derived from its 1 April 1999 base survey. Where subsequent information has been used, this is specified.

51 Policy WEM17 Mixed Use Premises, in the Economic Development and Employment chapter of the Plan, encourages mixed use developments in specified locations. The Council acknowledges it may be helpful to refer in the Housing chapter to this policy.

52 Under these circumstances, the Council considers that there is no need for a specific policy in brownfield development in the District Local Plan.

5) DENSITY - THE NEED FOR A SPECIFIC POLICY

THE ISSUES RAISED BY THE INSPECTORS

53 The Inspectors question whether a policy specifically relating to the issue of density should be included in the Plan.

SUMMARY OF OBJECTORS' REPRESENTATIONS

54 Those objectors who have addressed the issue of density are of the opinion that, bearing in mind the clear 'higher level' guidance applying, there is no need for a specific policy. Density is a matter that can only be addressed on a site specific basis; a policy incorporating figures would be arbitrary and inappropriate.

THE CASE FOR THE DISTRICT COUNCIL

55 The Berkshire-wide Urban Potential Study is looking at increasing the potential for development within existing urban areas, by increasing densities (the rate of progress on this project is unlikely to be such that any results will be available for use in the current District Local Plan). Paragraph 57 of PPG3 2000 states that new housing development in England is currently built at an average of 25 dwellings per hectare (dph), but more than half of all new housing is built at less than 20 (dph). This, it states, is a level of land take that can no longer be sustained. Local authorities are required to critically examine the standards applied to new development. In particular paragraph 58 states that local planning authorities should avoid developments that make inefficient use of land, i.e. those with a density of less than 30 dph. Developments that achieve a net density of 30dph make more efficient use of land and should be encouraged. In areas with good public transport accessibility, such as towns and local centres, or areas around major nodes along good quality public transport corridors; a greater intensity of development should be sought.

56 Table One below illustrates the densities that have been achieved on the sites allocated for housing in the Wokingham District Deposit Draft Local Plan, as proposed to be amended.

Site	Number of Dwellings	Gross Density Achieved
WSM1 - Grazeley	2,500	**25.07dph**
SH27 - The Homestead, Shinfield Road	13	**20.97 dph**
SH14 - Land at Church Lane	25	**11.52 dph**
CH03 - Charvil Farm, Bath Road	21	**16.54 dph**
SH09 – Diana Close, off Beech Hill Lane	8	**17.78 dph**
WK06 - Keephatch Farm	39	**17.89 dph**
SH15 – Land at Hollow Lane	105	**26.52 dph**
WI12 – Land west of Mole Road	30	**20 dph**
SH37 – Land at Lane End Farm	118	**20.45 dph**
AB05 – Arborfield Garrison	277	**20.67 dph**
SH03 – Land rear of Grazeley Road, Three Mile Cross	91	**23.3 dph**
WK35 - Wokingham Town Football Club	77	**40.74 dph**
WK21 - Land at Norton Road	23	**46 dph**
WK20 - Rear of Victoria House, Easthampstead Car Park	14	**50 dph**

Table One: Gross Densities achieved on Local Plan Housing Sites

57 As Table One shows, only three of the local plan sites have achieved densities that are in conformity with the requirements of PPG3. The conclusion is that the Council will have to adapt its approach to densities if it is to fully comply with the guidance.

58 The District Local Plan Deposit Draft, as proposed to be amended, does not include a specific policy on residential density. The table above clearly shows that the current policies and standards are not sufficient on their own, to achieve the densities now required by government guidance.

59 To this end, a policy has been drafted, which has been approved by a recent resolution of the Environmental Services Committee for consideration at the public local inquiry. This is set out overleaf.

PROPOSED POLICY ON RESIDENTIAL DENSITIES

IN ORDER TO ENSURE AN EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT USE OF LAND, NO RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ON SITES OVER 0.3HA WITHIN IDENTIFIED SETTLEMENTS SHALL BE PERMITTED AT A NET DENSITY OF LESS THAN 30 DWELLINGS PER HECTARE, SUBJECT TO DEVELOPMENT AT SUCH A DENSITY NOT COMPROMISING THE QUALITY OF THE ENVIRONMENT.

A NET DENSITY OF BETWEEN 30 AND 50 DWELLINGS PER HECTARE ON NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT WILL GENERALLY BE ACCEPTABLE. HIGHER DENSITIES IN THIS RANGE WILL BE ACCEPTABLE IN LOCATIONS WITH GOOD PUBLIC TRANSPORT CONNECTIONS AND GOOD ACCESS TO LOCAL RETAIL, COMMUNITY AND SERVICE FACILITIES.

IN AREAS WITH PARTICULARLY GOOD ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND FACILITIES, DENSITIES SHOULD BE IN EXCESS OF 50 PER HECTARE.

ALL DEVELOPMENTS, WHATEVER THEIR NET DENSITY, WILL BE EXPECTED TO INCORPORATE A HIGH QUALITY OF DESIGN THROUGHOUT.

60 The Council does not accept the objectors view that such a policy is inappropriate. There is currently no policy in the plan that suggests to its users what levels of density would be acceptable to the Council in new developments. The Council considers that such a policy, setting out these levels according to circumstances, would help to make developers aware of the Council's requirements. The levels in the policy are based on the content of PPG3, and are likely to be reasonable in most circumstances. Of course, there may be occasions where the levels set out are not appropriate, for whatever reason. Nevertheless, the Council considers it prudent to adopt the principle that it is reasonable to secure the levels of density in the policy, but in the circumstances where it is not, exception to the policy can be made. Particularly relevant is this part of the policy:

"...SUBJECT TO DEVELOPMENT AT SUCH A DENSITY NOT COMPROMISING THE QUALITY OF THE ENVIRONMENT".

This term is an acknowledgement that, on some sites, there may be a need to vary the density away from the policy suggestion, to take account of factors specific to the site in question. If it were concluded that it was unreasonable to require development to the standard set out in the policy, then there would be scope for seeking a lower density.

61 However, it is considered that it would not be appropriate to include any greater detail in the policy than that already suggested. Any additional requirements should be set out in Supplementary Planning Guidance, outside the local plan.

6) DESIGN GUIDANCE AND THE NEED FOR A SPECIFIC POLICY

THE ISSUES RAISED BY THE INSPECTORS

62 The Inspectors question whether a policy specifically relating to the issue of density should be included in the Plan.

SUMMARY OF OBJECTORS' REPRESENTATIONS

63 Generally, objectors have not addressed themselves to this issue.

THE CASE FOR THE DISTRICT COUNCIL

64 The importance of design is accepted by the Council; PPG1 paragraphs 13 to 20 and PPG3 paragraphs 54 to 56 stress the significance of the issue with regard to new development. The principle of design is addressed in the District Local Plan overall policy WOS3 Development Control Principles, which applies to residential, as well as other forms of, development. Additionally, policy WBE19 Development Briefs sets out the circumstances under which a development brief is required by the Council to be prepared. Under these circumstances, the Council considers that there is no need for any further policy on design in the District Local Plan.

7) AFFORDABLE HOUSING

65 This issue is considered in a separate proof.

8) LOCAL NEEDS HOUSING (POLICY WH9) AND THE NEED FOR THE POLICY

66 This issue is considered in a separate proof.

CHARLES PLANNING
ASSOCIATES

Chartered Town Planners

7 July 2000

Your Ref: F/2000/0578
Our Ref: HE/AJH/B/035/1/05

Wokingham District Council
Environmental Services Department
Planning Services
Civic Offices
Shute End
Wokingham
Berkshire
RG40 1BN

PLANNING SERVICES	NPT 3158
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DC	
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10 JUL 2000	
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For the attention of Mrs Lynette Baker

Dear Mrs Baker

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACTS
97-99 POUND LANE, SONNING
DEMOLITION OF EXISTING 2 DWELLINGS & ERECTION OF 8 DWELLINGS
APPLICATION NO: F/2000/0578

I refer to our recent telephone conversation regarding the above application. As you are aware, I have recently been Instructed to act on behalf of Bewley Homes Plc in respect of the current application and the forthcoming Informal Hearing Appeal.

Present Application:

You have advised me that you are still awaiting comments from the Council's Highway Engineer (Tom Callaghan), following his recent meeting with my Client's Highway consultant on 26 June 2000. If Mr Callaghan's previous concerns relating to highway matters have been adequately addressed, you indicated that you were still presently minded to refuse the application due to reasons concerning the resultant detrimental impact of the development upon the existing character of the area and the amenity of local residents.

I understand that you have the authority to deal with the planning application under delegated powers, and that you envisage utilising these powers, thus avoiding the need to report the application to the Planning Committee on either 19 July 2000 or 9 August 2000.

During our recent telephone conversation, I advised you that my Client was keen to avoid the need for the forthcoming Hearing. In this respect, I requested that you delayed the determination of this application, in order to provide me with the opportunity of discussing the proposed development with you further. I would therefore like to request a meeting with you in the next 7 days, in order to appraise whether it is possible to address your present concerns.

Forthcoming Appeal:

The date for the Informal Hearing has now been confirmed for Wednesday 23 August 2000. The submission date for any Evidence will therefore by 2 August 2000. I recognise that the new procedures related to planning appeals are not yet in force (DETR Circular 05/2000), but I think there will be clear advantages in preparing a Statement of Common Ground in relation to this appeal.

Principal: W.A.Charles DipTP MRTPI MIMgt *Associates:* Huw Edwards MSc MRTPI, Daphney Haywood BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

39 Locks Heath District Centre • Locks Heath • Southampton • Hampshire • SO31 6DX
Tel: 01489 577946 • Fax: 01489 577947 • E.Mail: cpacda@aol.com • VAT Reg. No: 568 7410 10

Whilst my Client still wishes to avoid the need to proceed with the appeal, and perhaps this can be achieved following our meeting (requested above), we could discuss the extent of any Common Ground at that meeting, if it becomes evident that the appeal is likely to proceed.

I would hope it is possible to resolve these outstanding issues, and I will contact you shortly next week in order to arrange a mutually convenient date for our meeting. In view of the approaching deadline regarding the appeal date for submissions, I will telephone you with any suggested dates.

Yours sincerely

HUW EDWARDS

ASSOCIATE
CHARLES PLANNING ASSOCIATES

Copy to - A Brooks Esq, Bewley Homes Plc
B Hewitt Esq, Stuart Michael Associates

THAMES VALLEY
POLICE

P.C. Dave STUBBS
Crime Prevention Design Adviser
(Berks)

Thatcham Police Station
20, Chapel Street
Thatcham, BERKS.
RG18 4QL
Tel. 01635 295156
Fax. 01635 295126

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Date 16th June 2000

Mrs. A. Odell
Planning Department
Wokingham District Council
PO Box 157
Shute End
Wokingham
BERKS.
RG40 1WR

For 'Secured by Design' standards and application forms
Visit the 'SBD' website at :-
www.securedbydesign.com

Your Ref. 0577 / 0578

Dear Mrs. Odell.

97-99, Pound Lane, Sonning.

Thank you for the details of the applications in respect of the above site.

There is nothing in security or community safety terms that causes any concern. There is good surveillance over the access and rear gardens interlock securely. It will obviously be incumbent on the developer to specify physical security to a good standard - a 'Secured by Design' award would b quite feasible on this layout, and I would be pleased to advise on this, without which I would have to say, the developer is not doing all that reasonably can be done to reduce crime.

In the light of the duty on local authorities to do all that they reasonably can to prevent crime & disorder under Section 17 of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998, the potential crime risks facing this proposal include burglary and car crime. This risk is increased if the development does not take account of the principles of 'Secured by Design'.

The council can help to discharge its duty in respect of its planning function under Sec. 17 by taking the above comments into account when arriving at its decision.

I trust this will be of assistance and thank you for your consultation.

Yours sincerely.

P.C. Dave STUBBS
Thames Valley Police
CPDA. (Berks.)

Stuart Michael Associates
CONSULTING CIVIL ENGINEERS
PLANNING • DESIGN • PROJECT CO-ORDINATION

29 Kingfisher Court, Hambridge Road
Newbury, Berkshire RG14 5SJ
Newbury Tel: 01635 551511
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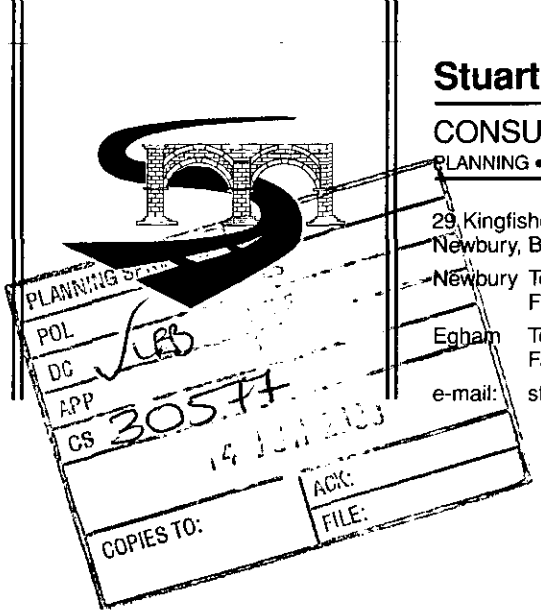
Egham Tel: 01784 471923
Fax: 01784 432319
e-mail: stuartmichael@btinternet.com



Our Ref: 1114/RMEH/sb

13 June 2000

Mrs L Baker
Wokingham District Council
Planning Department
P O Box 153
Shute End
WOKINGHAM
Berkshire RG40 1WL

Dear Mrs Baker

Re: Proposed Development 97 – 99 Pound Lane, Sonning
Planning Application F/2000/0577

We refer to our telephone conversation with Tom Callaghan earlier today.

You will be aware that in response to the Council's earlier comments on this Application, we commissioned a traffic survey. We subsequently submitted a report and computations to Mr Callaghan with recommendations on measures which could be implemented at the Applicant's expense to address the Council's particular concerns.

We have arranged to meet Mr Callaghan at 0900 am on Monday 26 June to discuss the Council's concerns, our report and measures which could be implemented under a Section 106 Agreement or a condition of planning permission.

We seek your confirmation that the Application will not be considered by Committee until after this meeting has taken place, as our discussions may affect officers' recommendations.

Yours sincerely

R M E Hewitt
STUART MICHAEL ASSOCIATES

c.c. T Callaghan – WDC
A Brooks – Berkeley Homes

Partners: S. M. Atkinson B.Sc (Hons), C. Eng., M.I.C.E., M.I.H.T., M.A.P.M.
R. M. E. Hewitt B.Sc (Hons), C. Eng., M.I.C.E., M.I.H.T.
Associates: S. W. Andrews M.I.H.T.
J. S. Muscroft B. Eng. (Hons), C. Eng., M.I.C.E., M.C.I.W.E.M., M.I.H.T.

Tel. No. 0118 974 6323 (Direct Line) Fax. 0118 974 6313

Date: 12th June 2000.

Your ref. 1114/TW/sb

My ref. TC/P9/[19716]

Mr T Wood
Stuart Michael Associates
29 Kingfisher Court
Hambridge Road
Newbury
Berkshire
RG14 5SJ

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Environmental Services Department
Engineering Services
P.O. Box 153
Shute End, Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WL
Main Switchboard (0118) 974 6000
Minicom No: (0118) 974 6991
DX: 33506 – Wokingham

Dear Mr Wood,

PLANNING APPLICATION F/2000/0577
PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT 97-99 POUND LANE, SONNING

I refer to your letter dated 25th April 2000 addressed to Mr Auton, and my recent telephone conversation with your colleague Mr Hewitt.

I have checked the additional information you have submitted and I have some concerns as it conflicts with other recent survey data carried out in support of similar proposals for residential development along Pound Lane in close proximity to your site. A survey carried out on the 18th January 2000, identified a morning peak hour queue length of upto 36 vehicles (216 metres assuming 6.0 m/vehicle), which is significant greater than the maximum queue length of 85 metres measured in April. Therefore, even with the proposed minor improvements to the Pound Lane/A4 roundabout, there will be little or no effect on the queuing traffic back past your site entrance.

As recommended in your letter, in view of the differences in the survey data it may be beneficial for us to meet and discuss in greater detail the problems associated with the residential development of this site.

If you require any further assistance please contact me on the above telephone number.

Yours sincerely,

T. Callaghan
Team Leader Highways Development Control.

cc : Heather Morgan - Planning

TO: **DEVELOPMENT CONTROL**
Lynette Baker

FROM: Environmental Design

DATE: 4 June 2000

Location: 97-99 Pound lane, Sonning.

Proposal: Erection of 8 detached dwellings and garages plus demolition of existing 2 dwellings.

Application Number: F/2000/0577 and F/2000/0578

In response to your consultation dated 18th February 2000 for the above application, the arboricultural comments are as follows:

The proposals are acceptable in relation to the good quality trees and I have no objection to planning permission being granted.

Conditions should be attached requiring the following details to be submitted:

- Tree protection measures and details of any proposed tree work.
- Landscape scheme.
- Proposed routes of underground services.
- Levels and final finished levels.
- Where site huts will be positioned and where materials and equipment will be stored.

Neil Etherington
Senior Arboriculturist



Site Plan, Scale: 1 to 1250

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Date: 15 February 2000

N
W E
S

Received by Wokingham District Council

Application No: F/2000/0577

Proposal:
Proposed erection of 8 detached dwellings and garages plus demolition of existing 2 dwellings (Duplicate Application).

Location:
97 - 99 , Pound Lane, Sonning, Reading.

The application is available for inspection at Wokingham District Council's offices during the following times:

PLANNING DEPARTMENT, SHUTE END, WOKINGHAM TEL (0118) 974 6428
8.30 - 5.00 Monday - Thursday & 8.30 - 4.00 Friday

WOODLEY LIBRARY HEADLEY ROAD WOODLEY (9.30am - 7.00pm Mon, Thurs & Fri. 9.30am - 5.00pm Tues, 9.30am - 1.00pm Saturday. closed all day Wednesday)

Comments should be sent in writing QUOTING THE APPLICATION NUMBER to the Case Officer Lynette Baker P.O. Box 157 Council Offices, Shute End, Wokingham Berkshire, RG40 1WR to arrive on or before 13/03/2000. Written comments submitted will become available for public inspection.

In view of the very large number of planning applications and letters of comment received, it will not normally be possible for an individual reply to observations made. However any comments will be taken into account when the application is determined and you will be notified of the decision.

Head Planning and Transportation

Date: 12 May 2000

To: Case Officer

We have received Additional Plans for the following planning application:

Application Number: F/2000/0578

Location: 97 - 99, Pound Lane, Sonning, Reading.

Proposal: Proposed erection of 8 detached dwellings and garages plus demolition of existing 2 dwellings (Duplicate Application).

Applicant: Bewley Homes Plc C/O Philip Design Associates.

Case Officer: Lynette Baker

The new plans show the following: Highway/junction layout. Drawing no 99.72.01B.

Comments are required by 26/05/2000.

Should you have any queries regarding this application please contact the case officer Lynette Baker on (0118) 974 6447.

WORK SHEET FOR : Lynette Baker

Application Number : F/2000/0577

Applicant : Bewley Homes Plc Philip Design Associates.

Location : 97 - 99, Pound Lane, Sonning, Reading.
Proposal : Proposed erection of 8 detached dwellings and garages plus demolition of existing 2 dwellings (Duplicate Application).

Site Notice Displayed ? :	YES	NO	DATE
		✓	8/3.

Date of Neighbour Notifications : All neighs notified : 4 red

Date of Site Visit : Site notices (2 erected by LEB) taken

Date Registered : 14/02/2000 21 day dump period of pub. cons

Earliest Date for Decision : 13/03/2000

Latest Consultation Date/Site Notice Expiry Date : 13/03/2000

Application Expiry Date: 10/04/2000

Consultation Responses : Sonning PC: Obj – Δ nature of area, set precedent, Δ in pattern without acc'g infrastructure, unneighbourly, overlkg, traffic + highway safety.
HA: REF – too nr ⊘ with A4, vis splays, extra traffic → highway safety.
Letters: 17 objecting on grds of:
Δ to char of area, overdevt pollution, volume of traffic, loss of light + privacy, safety of school route drainage,
TVRO: no objection
Landscape: conditions

Planning Issues :

1. Impact on char of area. LBE1, LBE2, LIV6 LH1
2. " " neigh props:
3. Design & layout
4. HA

PPG3
piecemeal

Application Number: F/2000/0577

Appraisal :

1 Impact on character of area.

Existing character comprises large properties of varied but distinctive styles set in large plots, well back from the road. The area is well treed and has a green & spacious feel. There is no other backland development in this part of Pond Lane, apart from West Court flats (West Drive) which cannot be classed as backland. (and were allowed on appeal).

The proposal would involve breaking through the existing frontage pattern with an access road & 3 dwellings in the front, with the loss of some trees at access point. The proposed 5 houses in the existing rear gardens would again necessitate removal of trees, some of which can be seen from the road (* and close up some of the gaps which currently contribute to the street scene) & would create an enclave of development alien to the existing pattern. This properties in a very similar is considered that this, together with the detrimental changes to the frontage of the site, constitutes an inappropriate form of development which would detract from the existing well treed & spacious character of the area. It would also constitute piecemeal development, which, if it became a precedent, would result in a multiplicity of accesses along Pond Lane, contrary to the existing character.

While the advice in PPG3 is noted, the need for housing land within settlements should not outweigh the need to preserve what is good in existing development. It is considered that the need to preserve the existing distinctive character of

Recomendation : Approval: ☐ **Refusal:** ☑
(tick appropriate box)

this part of Sonning outweighs the need for 5 new houses.

2. Impact on neighbouring props.

The boundary with Redlodge to the rear is currently completely open. Plot 1 will be intrusive (22m) + currently even from ground floor breakfast room will overlook RL + detract from

its privacy. Other overlooking relationships are:

Plot 3 to rear of Plot 4 (22m)
Plot 4 to rear of 101 (25m)
Plot 1 to rear of Plot 8 (16m)
Plot 7 to rear of Plot 8 (21m)
Plot 5 to rear of Plot 6 (21m)

Though these distances may in some contexts be marginal, in terms of this location, sighting a cramped development out of character with its surroundings, which would detract from the amenity of existing property.

3. Design & Layout

See comments under 2 above re layout resulting in unsatisfactory relationships with the dwellings. Design — all new units look broadly similar — this lack of variety is out of character with the surrounding existing properties. Lack of space around units compared with existing → cramped form of development.

4 Highway issues
Traffic survey completed — HA still not satisfied, reasons for refusal on SA's consultation response dated 2/3/00 still stand.

OS = Refs, TVPLO

Application Number F/2000/0577
Conditions/Reasons for Refusal

No	Std Con	Std Reas	Non Std Conditions / Reasons for Refusal
1.			The proposal by virtue of its siting, scale + form represents piecemeal development out of character with the surrounding area, and detracting from it. The proposal is therefore contrary to BSP policy LD3, EN1, LALP policies LBE1, LBE2, LTV6, LHI + WDLP policies WOS3 WBE1, WHI
2			The proposal by virtue of its siting, + scale, constitutes unneighbourly development which would detract from the amenity of existing properties, and demonstrates unsatisfactory relationships with the proposed development. The proposal is therefore contrary to LALP policy LBE2 + WDLP policies WOS3 + WBE1.
3			The formation of a new access in close proximity to the junction of the A4 with Ford Lane would result in conflicting traffic movements which would adversely affect road safety & the free flow of traffic
4			The proposed development would generate additional traffic movements into & out of a distributor road on a section where vehicle speeds are above the speed limit & where appropriate visibility cannot be gained.

RECORD OF SITE VISIT

SITE ADDRESS: 97 - 99 Pound Lane
Sonning Reading.

APPLICATION NUMBER: F/2000/0577

OFFICER: Lynette Baker

DATE OF SITE VISIT: 8/3

1 SITE/STATUTORY NOTICE DISPLAYED ? No - neighs notified

2. DESCRIPTION OF SURROUNDINGS

See 00578 for smo

3. DESCRIPTION OF SITE/BUILDING

4. RELATIONSHIP TO ADJOINING PROPERTIES

5. SITE CONSTRAINTS

TREES

ACCESS/PARKING

LEVELS

BOUNDARY TREATMENT

OTHERS

TDH 97-99 Pond Lane — could you check reasons 3+4 please

Application Number F/2000/0577
Conditions/Reasons for Refusal

No	Std Con	Std Reas	Non Std Conditions / Reasons for Refusal
1.			The proposal by virtue of its siting, scale + form represents piecemeal development out of character with the surrounding area, and detracting from it. The proposal is therefore contrary to BSP policy LD3, EN1, LALP policies LBE1, LBE2, LTV6, LH1 + WDLP policies WOS3 WBE1, WH1.
2			The proposal by virtue of its siting + scale constitutes unneighbourly development which would detract from the amenity of existing properties and demonstrates unsatisfactory relationships with the proposed development. The proposal is therefore contrary to LALP policy LBE2 + WDLP policies WOS3 + WBE1.
3			The formation of a new access in close proximity to the junction of the A4 with Pond Lane would result in conflicting traffic movements which would adversely affect road safety & the free flow of traffic
4			The proposed development would generate additional traffic movements into & out of a distributor road on a section where vehicle speeds are above the speed limit & where appropriate visibility cannot be provided.

NA

NA

WORK SHEET FOR : Lynette Baker

Application Number : F/2000/0578

Applicant : Bewley Homes Plc C/O Philip Design Associates.

Location : 97 - 99, Pound Lane, Sonning, Reading.
Proposal : Proposed erection of 8 detached dwellings and garages plus demolition of existing 2 dwellings (Duplicate Application).

Site Notice Displayed ? :	YES	NO	DATE

Date of Neighbour Notifications : .....

Date of Site Visit : .....

Date Registered : 14/02/2000

Earliest Date for Decision : 13/03/2000

Latest Consultation Date/Site Notice Expiry Date : 13/03/2000

Application Expiry Date: 10/04/2000

Consultation Responses :

see 0577

Planning Issues :

Application Number: F/2000/0578

Appraisal :

Recomendation : Approval: ☐ **Refusal:** ☐
(tick appropriate box)

Had the Council been in a position to determine the application it would have been refused for the following reasons:

Application Number F/2000/0578
Conditions/Reasons for Refusal

No	Std Con	Std Reas	Non Std Conditions / Reasons for Refusal
			As for 0577
			↳ see attached.
			Duplicate applic'n at appeal (pending)

WRITE TO APPLICANT + SoS.

John Mercer
2/8/02.

RECORD OF SITE VISIT

SITE ADDRESS: 97 - 99 Pound Lane Sonning Reading. APPLICATION NUMBER: F/2000/0578	OFFICER: Lynette Baker DATE OF SITE VISIT: 8/3

1 SITE/STATUTORY NOTICE DISPLAYED ? no - neighbs notified

2. DESCRIPTION OF SURROUNDINGS Res area - mixed styles & ages but all lge in large plots - spacious & well treed.

3. DESCRIPTION OF SITE/BUILDING 2 lge [illegible] own lg gdns

4. RELATIONSHIP TO ADJOINING PROPERTIES [illegible]

5. SITE CONSTRAINTS

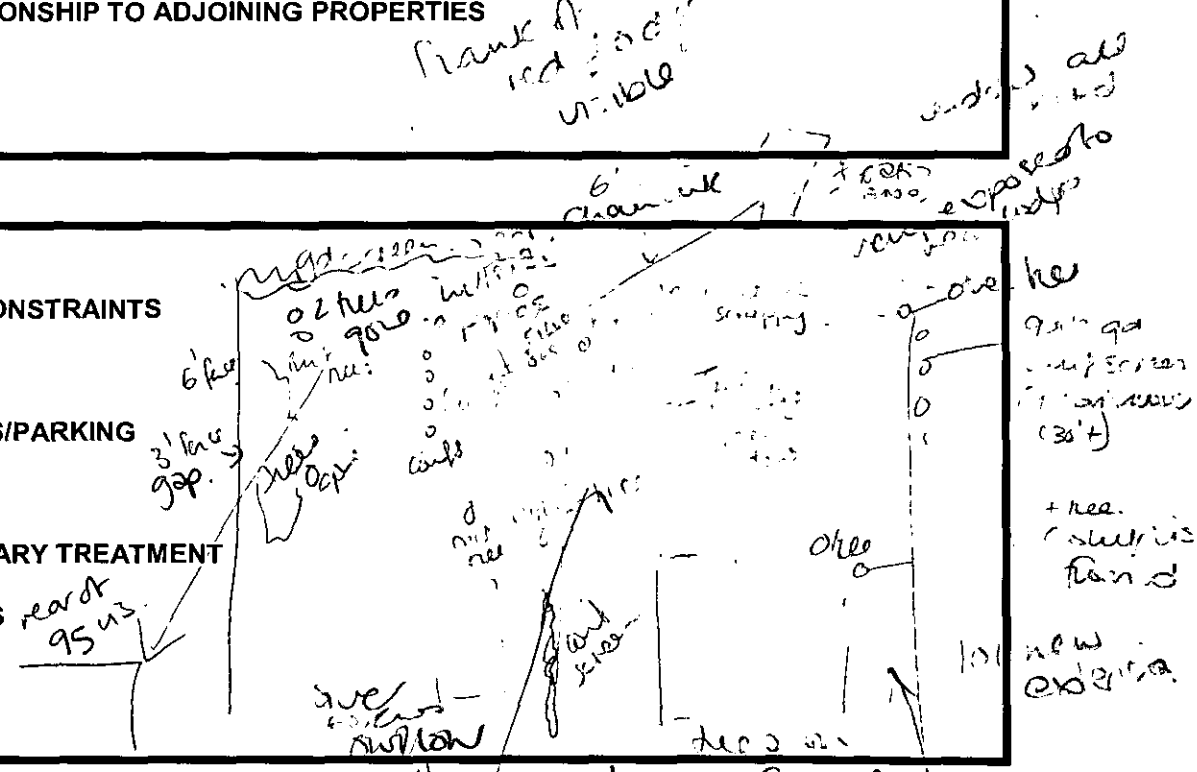
TREES

ACCESS/PARKING

LEVELS

BOUNDARY TREATMENT

OTHERS



WORK SHEET FOR : Lynette Baker

Application Number : F/2000/0577~~8~~

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Site Notice Displayed ? :	YES	NO	DATE
		✓	8/3

Date of Neighbour Notifications : All neighs notified : 4 red

Date of Site Visit : site notices (2 erected by LPA) taken down after period of pub. cons

Date Registered : 14/02/2000

Earliest Date for Decision : 13/03/2000

Latest Consultation Date/Site Notice Expiry Date : 13/03/2000

Application Expiry Date: 10/04/2000

Consultation Responses : Sonning PC : obj – Δ nature of area, set precedent, Δ in pattern without acc'g infrastructure, unneighbourly, overlkg, traffic + highway safety.
HA : REF – too nr Ø with ACL, vis splays, extra traffic → highway safety.
Letters : 17 objecting on grds of: Δ to char of area, overdevt pollution, volume of traffic, loss of light + privacy, safety of school route drainage,
TVRO : no objection
Landscape : conditions

Planning Issues :

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2. " " neigh props.
3. Design & layout
4. HA

PPG3
Piecemeal

Application Number: F/2000/0578

Appraisal :

1 Impact on character of area.

Existing character comprises large properties of varied but distinctive styles set in large plots, well back from the road. The area is well treed and has a green & spacious feel. There is no other backland development in this part of Pond Lane, apart from West Court flats (West Drive) which cannot be classed as backland. (and was allowed on appeal).

The proposal would involve breaking through the existing frontage pattern with an access road & 3 dwellings in the front, with the loss of some trees at access point. The proposed houses in the existing rear gardens would again necessitate removal of trees, some of which can be seen from the road. (* and close up some of the gaps which currently contribute to the street scene) & would create an enclave of very similar properties in a development alien to the existing pattern. This considered that this, together with the detrimental changes to the frontage of the site, constitutes an inappropriate form of development which would detract from the existing well treed & spacious character of the area. It would also constitute piecemeal development, which, if it became a precedent, would result in a multiplicity of accesses along Pond Lane, contrary to the existing character.

While the advice in PPG3 is noted, the need for housing land within settlements should not outweigh the need to preserve what is good in existing development. It is considered that the need to preserve the existing distinctive character of

Recomendation : Approval: ☐ **Refusal:** ☑
(tick appropriate box)

this part of Sonning outweighs the need for 3 new houses.

2. Impact on neighbouring props.

The boundary with Redlodge to the rear is currently completely open. Plot 1 will be intrusive (22m) + currently even 1st floor breakfast room will overlook RL + detract from

its privacy. Other overlooking relationships are:

Plot 3 at rear of Plot 4 (22m)
Plot 4 at rear of 101 (25m)
Plot 1 at rear of Plot 8 (16m)
Plot 7 at rear of Plot 8 (21m)
Plot 5 at rear of Plot 6 (21m)

Though these distances may in some contexts be marginal, in terms of this location, signify a cramped development out of character with its surroundings, which would detract from the amenity of existing property.

3. Design & Layout

See comments under 2 above. Layout results in unsatisfactory relationships with the dwellings. Design — all new units look broadly similar — the lack of variety is out of character with surrounding existing properties. Lack of space around units compared with existing → cramped form of development.

4. Highways issues
Traffic survey completed — HA still not satisfied, reasons for refusal on EA's consultation response dated 2/3/00 still stand.

OS = trees, TVRLO

Letter to applic & copy to
Insp. — wd have
ref. for - - -

Application Number F/2000/0578
Conditions/Reasons for Refusal

No	Std Con	Std Reas	Non Std Conditions / Reasons for Refusal
1.			The proposal by virtue of its siting, scale + form represents piecemeal development out of character with the surrounding area, and detracting from it. The proposal is therefore contrary to BSP policy LD3, EN1, LALP policies LBE1, LBE2, LTV6, LH1 + WDLP policies WOS3 WBE1, WH1.
2.			The proposal by virtue of its siting + scale constitutes unneighbourly development which would detract from the amenity of existing properties, and demonstrates unsatisfactory relationships within the proposed development. The proposal is therefore contrary to LALP policy LBE2 + WDLP policies WOS3 + WBE1.
3			The formation of a new access in close proximity to the junction of the A4 with Pound Lane would result in conflicting traffic movements which would adversely affect road safety & the free flow of traffic
4			The proposed development would generate additional traffic movements into & out of a distributor road on a section where vehicle speeds are above the speed limit & where appropriate visibility cannot be provided.

[signature]

2 2/8/02

Received by Wokingham District Council

Application No: F/2000/0577

Proposal:
Proposed erection of 8 detached dwellings and garages plus demolition of existing 2 dwellings (Duplicate Application).

Location:
97 - 99, Pound Lane, Sonning, Reading.

The application is available for inspection at Wokingham District Council's offices during the following times:

PLANNING DEPARTMENT, SHUTE END, WOKINGHAM TEL (0118) 974 6428
8.30 - 5.00 Monday - Thursday & 8.30 - 4.00 Friday

WOODLEY LIBRARY HEADLEY ROAD WOODLEY (9.30am - 7.00pm Mon, Thurs & Fri. 9.30am - 5.00pm Tues, 9.30am - 1.00pm Saturday. closed all day Wednesday). If you intend to view this application at Woodley Library (see details above) please allow 4 days from the date of this letter for delivery of plans.

Comments should be sent in writing QUOTING THE APPLICATION NUMBER to the Case Officer Lynette Baker P.O. Box 157 Council Offices, Shute End, Wokingham Berkshire, RG40 1WR to arrive on or before 04/04/2000. Written comments submitted will become available for public inspection.

In view of the very large number of planning applications and letters of comment received, it will not normally be possible for an individual reply to observations made. However any comments will be taken into account when the application is determined and you will be notified of the decision.

Head Planning and Transportation

Erected
17/3

Received by Wokingham District Council

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97 - 99, Pound Lane, Sonning, Reading.

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Head Planning and Transportation

Tel: (0118) 974 6447

Date:

My ref: F/2000/0577

CONFIDENTIAL

Councillor N Rose
Spinney Side
Holme Park Farm Lane
Sonning
Berks
RG4 6SX

Environmental Services Department
Planning Services
P.O. Box 157
Shute End, Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WR
Tel: (0118) 974 6000
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Minicom No: (0118) 974 6991
DX: 33506 – Wokingham

Dear Councillor

Application Number: F/2000/0577
97 - 99 , Pound Lane, Sonning, Reading.
Proposed erection of 8 detached dwellings and garages plus demolition of existing 2 dwellings (Duplicate Application).

I write to let you know that the above mentioned application has been recommended for APPROVAL: ☐ REFUSAL: ☐ under delegated powers.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact **Lynette Baker** on **(0118) 974 6447.** If you then feel the application needs to be transferred to the next available Development Control Sub-Committee for decision please fill in the form below.
This form must be received no later than _____

Yours faithfully

Head of Planning and Transportation

LISTING FORM
Case officer: **Lynette Baker** Application Number: **F/2000/0577**
97 - 99 , Pound Lane, Sonning, Reading.
Proposed erection of 8 detached dwellings and garages plus demolition of existing 2 dwellings (Duplicate Application).

Transfer: Yes ☐ No ☐
Reason for Transfer:
_____
_____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Councillor N Rose

NB. It would be helpful for speedy decision making if you could respond, even if you do not wish this application to be transferred.

Planning Inspectorate
Department of the Environment
Room 1404 Tollgate House Houlton Street Bristol BS2 9D
Telex 449321
Direct Line 0272-218927
Switchboard 0272-218811
GTN 1374

WOKINGHAM DISTRICT SEC... RE... 21... A9L.

David Pantling Consultancy
St Barbe Chambers
The Hundred
ROMSEY
Hampshire SO51 8BW

Your reference
224/2/3
Our reference
T/APP/H0330/A/89/112886,
121200, 121201 & 121202/P3
Date 17 AUG 89

Gentlemen

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1971, SECTION 36 AND SCHEDULE 9
APPEALS BY THAMES VALLEY HOMES
APPLICATIONS NOS:- a.31833; b.32836; c.32838; d.32839.

1. As you know, I have been appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment to determine these 4 appeals, which are against the failure of Wokingham District Council (hereinafter called the LPA) to give notice of their decisions within the prescribed period on 4 applications relating to land forming the site of Chevely and Virginia Cottage, West Drive/Pound Lane, Sonning, Berkshire, as follows:

a. full application for the erection of 24 flats and garages (application No 31833, appeal No 112886);

b. full application for redevelopment by the erection of 24 flats with underground garaging (application No 32836, appeal No 121202);

c. outline application for redevelopment by the erection of 2 blocks of flats with garages (application No 32838, appeal No 121201); and

d. full application for formation of a new road and footpath (application No 32839, appeal No 121200).

I held in inquiry into the appeals in the Council Chamber at Wokingham on 18 and 19 July 1989, followed by an inspection of the site.

2. A few days after the first appeal had been received by the Department, the LPA issued a notice of refusal (Doc 5) giving 4 grounds of objection, summarised thus: 1. excessive in scale for the site, increased spread of building close to the western boundary, poor relationship with adjoining residential properties, detriment to established character of the locality; 2. balconies overlooking adjoining residential properties; 3. surface car parking at the western end of the site causing noise and disturbance to adjoining occupiers; and 4. loss of significant trees. No notices of refusal were ever issued for applications b, c or d, nor for duplicates of those applications. However the LPA is opposed to all of them on broadly the same grounds, so far as applicable. At the inquiry, objection was made by the LPA to the point of access for all 4 schemes; and certain detailed aspects of the designs were criticised.

3. Whilst the LPA and the County Highway Authority do not oppose the submitted access on grounds of traffic danger, a traffic argument is put forward forcefully by individual objectors. I therefore regard the first main issue to be whether the submitted access would (having regard to the likely traffic flow) cause danger to road users, or serious disturbance to the privacy, peace and quiet of occupants of the house opposite that point of access, known as Acorns. In considering this issue I have taken into account the feasibility of moving the point of access some 16 m to the east, as suggested in the LPA's overlay plan Z.1.

4. As to traffic flow, schemes a. and b. and c. each relate to a total of 24 dwellings to be served by the defined access. I am therefore able to form a view about the likely number and type of traffic movements. In the case of scheme d, on the other hand, the application form and submitted plan fail to indicate the type or size of development intended to be served. The plan simply shows a "new mews court" but otherwise a cleared site. During the inquiry I mentioned my misgivings about this degree of vagueness, and my preliminary view that application d. might, on its own, be premature in advance of any firm building scheme to go with it. I suggested that it might be treated as an application for approval of access details reserved by the previous Inspector when granting outline planning permission for 20 apartments, but, as your Counsel pointed out, the site boundaries do not exactly correspond. Another solution was discussed, which was to limit scheme d. by means of a planning condition that it should not be implemented otherwise than in connection with some approved development of about 20 apartments. On reflection I find this approach not to be acceptable either, having regard to the advice in Circular 1/85 about precision in planning conditions.

5. Scheme d. seems at first glance to be a simple application, and I hesitate to raise what may be regarded as merely a technical objection to it; but having considered all the points made by Counsel, I feel I am under a public duty to resist the making of this new road unless I can be satisfied that its use would in practice be limited to serving some acceptable and defined size and type of development. Although the expression "mews court" is used in Design Bulletin 32 etc, it is not a sufficiently precise expression in itself to satisfy me as to the size and type of development eventually proposed. Treating the road-building application d. as though it had been made to the Secretary of State in the first instance (under section 36(3) of the Act), I have reached the conclusion that it is premature because of the difficulty in judging the size and nature of any development likely to be served by the new road, and thus the impact of whatever traffic the new road would be likely to generate.

6. However, when I come to examine the new access as part of a comprehensive scheme for the site, I reach a different conclusion. I have considered with great care the arguments put forward (especially by Mr Pierce) about traffic danger; and I see that the new access would form a cross-roads with the access to Acorns, as opposed to a T-junction if it were moved 16 m to the east. However, provided the new road be limited in its use to serving only 24 dwellings, I do not find the "cross-road" objection to be very strong, because there would be little conflict of traffic. On balance I see no reason to disagree with the expert opinion of the County Highway Authority in recommend-

ing conditional approval of applications 32835-8, as stated in their letter of 25 May 1989 (Doc 14). In the interests of road safety, there would have to be special highway conditions, especially to close the existing vehicular accesses to Pound Lane once it has ceased to be used for builders' vehicles and plant.

7. The house opposite, called Acorns, is occupied by Mr John Redwood MP. His letters of objection were written on behalf of all the residents in West Drive, but he properly declared an interest as an immediately affected neighbour. In my opinion, Mr and Mrs Redwood are the only residents who would specifically be affected by disturbance from the new access, and therefore who would significantly benefit by having the access moved 16 m to the east as now suggested by the LPA and objectors. I can see that headlights of emerging cars would shine towards their house; they would, from the front of their house, see and hear traffic entering and leaving; and on occasions when they enter or leave their own garage they may have to wait for cars entering or leaving the new road. However I do not regard those points to be especially strong objections to a development if otherwise acceptable. The purpose of the planning system is mainly to regulate the use of land in the public interest.

8. As to the suggestion about moving the access point, I have considered the LPA's overlay, Plan Z.3, together with your clients' comments in the form of their feasibility study, Plan X. I am sure that some different but reasonably acceptable form of development could be achieved by making use of this altered access; but the issue before me is whether the scheme actually proposed would harm interests of acknowledged importance. The LPA's grounds of refusal do not criticise the point of access. The Officer's notes for verbal report to Committee (Doc 4) mention at paras .11 and .12 the un-neighbourly location of the access; but as to the suggestion at para .12 that this particular point of access was not envisaged when outline consent was given for 20 apartments, it clearly was. The LPA's plan Y shows that the previous inspector did have before him (as an illustration) exactly the same point of access. He did not object to it, in his decision letter (Doc 23) allowing outline planning permission.

9. My conclusion, having carefully considered all the evidence as to access, is that the points of criticism of the access, and the possibility of moving it to the east, do not amount to sufficiently strong reasons for rejecting applications a, b or c, either on traffic or amenity grounds.

10. The previous appeal decision had allowed, in outline, 20 apartments; and a single detached house had previously been approved in detail by the LPA (Doc 22 and Plan U), making a total of 21 dwellings on the present appeal site. As discussed during the inquiry, your clients would not build the single house if 24 flats are allowed, and would accept a planning condition aimed at ensuring this. Thus there would be 24 dwellings rather than the 21. As a result of the increased number, the larger size of flats, increased garaging and parking, and a different design, there would be substantial increases in height, "footprint", floor area, and bulk, compared with what my colleague had in mind when he allowed the previous appeal. I have

compared the various figures, and I rely especially on those given by the LPA witness at para 3.21 of her proof(Doc 20) but amended by her and as agreed with your clients' architect.

11. Whilst that comparison is useful, there is no need for me to judge the merits of the present proposals simply by reference to what was approved before. I now have fresh applications before me, which I must determine on their individual merits. I am of opinion that the main issue remaining for my determination is whether scheme a, b or c would be excessive in scale for the site, or would cause unacceptable loss of privacy, peace and quiet to established neighbours in their enjoyment of private areas of garden. I must also consider whether the appearance of the area would be damaged by the bulk and siting of the flats, or by any loss of worthwhile trees. In all this, I have had special regard to the emerging Local Plan (Doc 19) in its identification of the area of 20th century houses in the vicinity of West Drive as one of the areas where Policy LH3 will be applied, aimed at protecting important areas.

12. Your clients have prepared 3 layouts for scheme a, of which the first 2 were admitted by you to be open to objection in terms of the effect on neighbours. A third layout, Plan J (drawing No 605/21), was substituted by consent of the LPA at the inquiry, which you said answered all of those objections. If this were a more ordinary housing estate, you might well be correct. However the vicinity of West Drive is not ordinary, being rightly identified in the emerging Local Plan as an important area for protection of amenity.

13. Having regard to the high standard of privacy and spaciousness which characterises this area, I find that Plan J would give rise to the following damaging effects. First, there would be serious overlooking of the rear of Windrush and Coppice Corner (also called Earsdon) from 1st floor windows of Block B. Screening sufficient to prevent that overlooking would be obtrusive to the occupants of those flats, especially if it took the form shown on Plan J, of vegetation only some 2 to 4 m outside windows of their habitable rooms. I note that your clients now own both those properties, and intend to redevelop Coppice Corner (Doc 24). The objection is, however, still valid. I am not so concerned about overlooking from balconies, because that problem could be controlled by a planning condition.

14. Secondly, Plan J proposes garaging and parking for some 26 cars on the backland part of the site, close to the private rear garden areas of Yarviden, The Braes, and Coppice Corner. I consider that residents there would lose the degree of peace and quiet that they may reasonably expect to enjoy, as a result of cars manoeuvring into those spaces, car doors slamming, the revving of engines, and general disturbance, so close to these quiet back gardens. No amount of screening would sufficiently reduce that nuisance, in this area characterised by a high degree of privacy and quiet in rear gardens.

15. Thirdly, Plan J proposes a block of 4 garages sited forward of the building line, which in my opinion would damage the pleasant street scene, at present characterised by an absence of buildings so close to the road. To allow those garages would make it hard for the

LPA to resist similar applications to build over forecourts and thus to preserve, so far as possible, the pleasant open and suburban appearance and character of West Drive. I note that all 3 of the layouts for scheme a. included some garaging forward of the building line. I cannot see how those garages could be re-sited in a more acceptable way without spoiling the landscaping (which is such an important feature of the project) or introducing even more disturbance to neighbours.

16. I note with approval that Plan J would avoid the felling of a horse chestnut tree which the earlier layouts would have endangered. I see no objection to the 2 blocks of flats in terms of scale or bulk. I have carefully considered all other factors favourable to scheme a, but on balance I find that they are outweighed by the serious objections already mentioned.

17. Scheme b. in my opinion avoids the objections which I have found in the case of scheme a, as follows. First, Block B would be sited further from the boundary, with no upper windows overlooking Windrush or Coppice Corner. Secondly, by the use of underground garaging for 24 cars, scheme b. avoids the need for above-ground garaging; the backland part of the site is shown as a landscaped garden, and not as an area for parking etc. Thirdly, the building line would not be breached by any garaging. In order to achieve these advantages, however, Block A has had to be enlarged, so that it would present a longer façade to West Drive, a feature which the residents' association and LPA find very objectionable. Whilst the horse chestnut would likewise be preserved, there would be the inevitable loss of a good cedar tree (tree No 31 in Doc 17), in order to obtain access to the site. On a point of detail, Thames Valley Police object to the means of internal access from the flats to the underground car park, for the reasons set out in Doc 12.

18. It is matter of subjective judgment, but in my opinion Block A would not be of excessive bulk or height if erected in accordance with scheme b, provided that the development be accompanied by really good landscaping. Block B would likewise be acceptable. The degree of overlooking would be no more than is to be expected in a residential area of this quality, being at an acceptable distance and mainly front-to-front. It is inevitable that blocks of flats on this site would contrast in scale and character with the single detached family houses at present fronting West Drive and Pound Lane. However Local Plan Policy LH3 does not say that all housing in this important area must be in the form of single houses. Policy LH3 should in this case be applied flexibly, because the principle of having 2 blocks of flats here has already been established by the previous appeal decision. I am not impressed by the argument that my colleague would have reached a different decision if the draft Local Plan had been before him, or if he had not been misinformed about the site area of Acorns for the purpose of density calculations.

19. Nor was his finding as to a shortage of housing land vital to his decision. I am satisfied that there is now an identified 5-year supply of house-building land, and I reject your criticism of the LPA's figures in Doc 21. This is not to say, however, that 24 flats would be an excessive number, being an increase of 22 dwellings over

the existing 2 large houses to be demolished, or an increase of only 3 over the numbers previously approved (ie the 20 flats allowed on appeal plus the one large detached house allowed by the LPA).

20. As to loss of trees, I note that a Tree Preservation Order previously made on your clients' land was not confirmed by the LPA, and has now lapsed. Loss of the cedar tree No 31 was in 1987 acceptable to the LPA, because it would inevitably have been felled if the house allowed in detail by them were built in accordance with Plan U and Doc 22. I find that its loss, and the loss of a limited number of less important trees on your client's land, would be compensated by the planting of replacements, and by other landscaping, for all of which a planning condition would be necessary. The confirmed TPO covering the verges of West Drive opinion sufficient to protect the roadside trees, and I see no need for a planning condition as well.

21. I accept the undertaking given by your clients' architect (in answer to my question) that the point made by the Police about the underground car park would be met when working drawings are prepared. Many of the points of detail mentioned by the LPA witness Mrs Wells in para 3.18 of her evidence (Doc 20) can likewise form part of landscaping details, still to be approved. The question of responsibility for maintenance of the surface of West Drive is one to be settled among the parties concerned. I note the terms of the High Court judgment, the so-called Tomlin Order, dated 23 February 1989, Doc 27. As agreed between the appellants and the LPA at the inquiry, a special condition would be necessary aimed at limiting the use of West Drive by heavy plant, especially because an underground car park would cause an unusual amount of excavation.

22. I sympathise with the wishes of residents to preserve the special character of West Drive. They almost unanimously oppose any scheme for 24 flats, and any scheme using this access. However on its own, local opposition to a proposal is not a sufficient ground for refusal, unless it be founded on valid planning reasons supported by substantial evidence. I have carefully considered all objections to scheme b, but they can either be met by my imposing special planning conditions, or are outweighed by the advantage of adding these well designed and landscaped flats to the housing stock of the locality without (as I find) invading open countryside. I have reached this conclusion on the merits of this particular application, without relying on the reasoning of my colleague in having allowed 20 flats in somewhat different planning circumstances. My decision will not be a compelling precedent in other appeals, where circumstances and surroundings are likely to differ.

23. As application c. is virtually the same as application b, except for being in outline, it follows that I reach the same conclusion, and shall allow it subject to conditions. The LPA witness was asked in cross-examination whether it was impossible to devise a scheme for 24 flats on this site of some 0.89 ha, and answered that it was not impossible. I agree. My approval of the outline application c. is on the understanding that any detailed plans would substantially follow the illustrative layout and perspective plans R and S (drawings Nos 605/17B and 605/20) and would not incorporate undesirable features of scheme a, already described. It would not, however, be reasonable

for me to fetter the discretion of the LPA by imposing a design and height condition such as the one suggested by them in Doc 6, No c6. Rather than their No c3, I consider that there should be a landscaping condition corresponding to Models 20 and 21 of Circular 1/85, as in the case of application b.

24. All of the conditions set out below are necessary in the interests of road safety, to preserve the appearance and character of the surroundings, and to prevent overdevelopment. I find no need for special conditions about drainage, a matter covered by public health legislation. Otherwise my conditions are based on those suggested at the inquiry, amended as necessary in the light of the evidence or as discussed above.

25. For the above reasons, and in exercise of the powers transferred to me, I hereby dismiss appeals a. and d. However I hereby allow appeals b. and c, and grant planning permission relating to land forming the site of Chevely and Virginia Cottage, West Drive/Pound Lane, Sonning, Berkshire, as follows:

Appeal b: I grant planning permission for redevelopment by the erection of 24 flats with underground garaging in accordance with the application No 32836 dated 2 February 1989 and the plans Nos 605/14A, 15A, 16A, 17B, 18 and 20 relating thereto, subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 5 years from the date of this letter.

2. Details of external materials to be used in the development shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority before any building is begun.

3. No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved by the the Local Planning Authority a scheme of landscaping (supplementary to details hereby approved) which shall include indications of all existing trees and hedgerows on the land and details of those to be retained, together with measures for their protection in the course of development; all planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting season following occupation of the buildings or completion of the development, whichever is the sooner; and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the development shall die, or be removed, or become seriously damaged or diseased, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species (unless the the Local Planning Authority give written consent to any variation).

4. means of vehicular access for the purpose of site works and construction works shall be from Pound Lane only; at the conclusion of those works all means of vehicular access from Pound Lane shall be stopped up and the boundaries reinstated; thereupon means of vehicular access to the permitted buildings shall be from West Drive only.

5. The buildings shall not be occupied until the following have been provided in accordance with the approved plans:

i. the new access from West Drive, with visibility splays of 2.5 m x 33 m clear of obstruction over a height of 0.6 m;

ii. space for underground garaging and above ground car parking; and those spaces shall be not thereafter be used for any purpose other than the parking of vehicles.

6. This permission shall not be implemented in addition to the planning permission previously granted to build a detached house on the western part of the site, either in accordance of details approved under reference No 28947, or otherwise.

Appeal c: I grant outline planning permission for redevelopment by the erection of 2 blocks of flats with garages in accordance with the application No 32838 dated 2 February 1989 and the location plan submitted therewith, subject to the following conditions:

1. Approval of the details of the siting, design and external materials of the buildings, and the landscaping of the site (hereinafter referred to as "the reserved matters") shall be obtained from the local planning authority.

2. Application for approval of the reserved matters shall be made to the local planning authority not later than the expiration of 3 years from the date of this letter.

3. The development hereby permitted shall be begun either before the expiration of 5 years from the date of this letter, or before the expiration of 2 years from the date of approval of the last of the reserved matters to be approved, whichever is the later.

4. No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved by the the Local Planning Authority a scheme of landscaping, which shall include indications of all existing trees and hedgerows on the land and details of those to be retained, together with measures for their protection in the course of development; all planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting season following occupation of the buildings or completion of the development, whichever is the sooner; and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the development shall die, or be removed, or become seriously damaged or diseased, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species (unless the the Local Planning Authority give written consent to any variation).

5. means of vehicular access for the purpose of site works and construction works shall be from Pound Lane only; at the conclusion of those works all means of vehicular access from Pound Lane shall be stopped up and the boundaries reinstated; thereupon means of vehicular access to the permitted buildings shall be from West Drive only.

6. The buildings shall not be occupied until the following have been provided in accordance with the plans hereby approved or further details submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority:

i. the new access from West Drive, with visibility splays of 2.5 m x 33 m clear of obstruction over a height of 0.6 m;

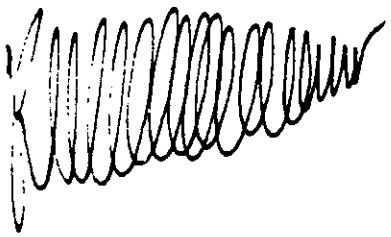
ii. space for underground garaging and above ground car parking; and those spaces shall be not thereafter be used for any purpose other than the parking of vehicles.

7. This permission shall not be implemented in addition to the planning permission previously granted to build a detached house on the western part of the site, either in accordance of details approved under reference No 28947, or otherwise.

26. Attention is drawn to the fact that an applicant for any approval required by a condition of this permission or for approval of the reserved matters referred to in this permission has a statutory right of appeal to the Secretary of State if approval is refused, or granted conditionally, or if the authority fail to give notice of their decision within the prescribed period.

27. This letter does not convey any approval or consent which may be required under any enactment, byelaw, order or regulation other than section 23 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971.

I am, Gentlemen
Your obedient Servant



R M MAXTONE GRAHAM MA(Cantab), Advocate
Legal Assoc: Royal Town Planning Inst
Inspector

Tel. 0118 974 6447 (Direct Line)
E-mail: Lynette.Baker@wokingham.gov.uk
Date. 2 August, 2000
My ref. Leb/F/2000/0577
Your ref.

Environmental Services Department
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Richard Gandy
Philip Design Associates
Braboeuf House,
64 Portsmouth Road,
Guildford,
Surrey,
GU2 5DU

Dear Mr. Gandy,

97-99 POUND LANE SONNING: F/2000/0577

As you are aware, the above application is the subject of an Informal Hearing on August 23rd 2000 (appeal ref. APP/X0360/A/00/1043352). I am writing to inform you that had this Council been in a position to determine the application it would have been refused for the following reasons:

1. The proposal by virtue of its siting, scale and form, represents piecemeal development out of character with the surrounding area, and detracting from it. The proposal is therefore contrary to Berkshire Structure Plan policies LD3 and EN1, Loddon Area Local Plan policies LBE1, LBE2, LTV6 and LH1, and Wokingham District Local Plan policies WOS3, WBE1 and WH1.

2. The proposal by virtue of its siting and scale constitutes unneighbourly development which would detract from the amenity of existing properties, and demonstrates unsatisfactory relationships within the proposed development. The proposal is therefore contrary to Loddon Area Local Plan policy LBE2 and Wokingham District Local Plan policies WBE1 and WOS3.

3. The formation of a new access in close proximity to the junction of the A4 with Pound Lane would result in conflicting traffic movements which would adversely affect road safety and the free flow of traffic.

4. The proposed development would generate additional traffic movements into and out of a distributor road on a section where vehicle speeds are above the speed limit and where appropriate visibility cannot be provided.

I am sending a copy of this letter to The Planning Inspectorate for their information. If you need any further assistance, please contact my colleague Simon Lewis on 0118 9746454.

Yours sincerely,

LYNETTE BAKER
Senior Planning Officer

c.c. Miss A. Bibi, The Planning Inspectorate.

Tel: (0118) 974 6447

Date: 02 · 08 · 00

My ref: F/2000/0578

CONFIDENTIAL

Councillor N Rose
Spinney Side
Holme Park Farm Lane
Sonning
Berks
RG4 6SX

Environmental Services Department
Planning Services
P.O. Box 157
Shute End, Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WR
Tel: (0118) 974 6000
Fax: (0118) 974 6484
Minicom No: (0118) 974 6991
DX: 33506 – Wokingham

Dear Councillor

Application Number: F/2000/0578
97 - 99 , Pound Lane, Sonning, Reading.
Proposed erection of 8 detached dwellings and garages plus demolition of existing 2 dwellings (Duplicate Application).

I write to let you know that the above mentioned application has been recommended for APPROVAL: ☐ REFUSAL: ☑ under delegated powers.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact **Lynette Baker** on **(0118) 974 6447.** If you then feel the application needs to be transferred to the next available Development Control Sub-Committee for decision please fill in the form below.
This form must be received no later than 14 · 08 · 00

Yours faithfully

Head of Planning and Transportation

LISTING FORM
Case officer: **Lynette Baker** Application Number: **F/2000/0578**
97 - 99 , Pound Lane, Sonning, Reading.
Proposed erection of 8 detached dwellings and garages plus demolition of existing 2 dwellings (Duplicate Application).

Transfer: Yes ☐ No ☐
Reason for Transfer:

_____

_____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Councillor N Rose

NB. It would be helpful for speedy decision making if you could respond, even if you do not wish this application to be transferred.

Stuart Michael Associates

CONSULTING CIVIL ENGINEERS
PLANNING • DESIGN • PROJECT CO-ORDINATION

29 Kingfisher Court, Hambridge Road
Newbury, Berkshire RG14 5SJ

Newbury Tel: 01635 551511
Fax: 01635 550405

Egham Tel: 01784 471923
Fax: 01784 432319

e-mail: stuartmichael@btinternet.com

Our Ref: 1114/TW/sb

25 April 2000

Wokingham District Council
P O Box 157
Shute End
WOKINGHAM
Berkshire RG40 1WL

For the attention of Steve Auton

Dear Mr Auton

Re: Proposed Development 97 – 99 Pound Lane, Sonning
F/2000/0577

We refer to your letter dated 7 April 2000 including your comments to the Planning Officer.

As agreed we commissioned a traffic survey to be carried out at the roundabout between the A4 and Pound Lane. From the results of this survey we have carried out ARCADY 3 computations to examine queuing characteristics on the Pound Lane approach to the roundabout.

With regard to issues raised we comment as follows:

1. The roundabout appears to perform within its theoretical operational capacity.

2. We computed maximum queue lengths in the AM Peak = 7.3 (veh) 43.8 (m) (assuming 6.0 m/vehicle). Our computations are supported by observations measured during the survey carried out on a normal weekday (11 April 2000).

3. The 'end queue length' is approximately 50 m from the proposed point of access to the development.

4. The maximum queue length measured on the 11 April 2000 was 85 m. Again this does not affect the proposed point of access to the development, however, we accept on occasions particular traffic conditions could cause traffic to back-up past the development access. We consider this to be the exception not the rule.

Cont.,

Partners: S. M. Atkinson B.Sc (Hons), C. Eng., M.I.C.E., M.I.H.T., M.A.P.M.
R. M. E. Hewitt B.Sc (Hons), C. Eng., M.I.C.E., M.I.H.T.

Associates: S. W. Andrews M.I.H.T.
J. S. Muscroft B. Eng. (Hons), C. Eng., M.I.C.E., M.C.I.W.E.M., M.I.H.T.

However, if overcoming your concerns regarding queue lengths is the key to securing planning permission for our clients proposals, there are two measures which could be implemented with the council's approval. Firstly, the geometry of the Pound Lane entry to the roundabout can be amended, as per attached sketch (Drawing No. 2000.1114.02) to improve the flow of traffic thereby reducing queues. Our computations indicate that this could reduce queues by approximately 18.0 m. Secondly, at the point of access, (Drawing No.2000.1114.01 Rev A), "KEEP CLEAR" road markings may be employed to permit vehicles to enter and leave the development.

With regard to vehicle speeds along Pound Lane we note that the road is subject to 30 mph enforcement by speed cameras. We also bring to your attention a new signal controlled crossing that has been installed on the A4 west of the roundabout which will interrupt flows and restrain vehicle speeds.

Regarding visibility at the proposed point of access to the development. With the removal of vegetation and some minor earthworks our clients can achieve 3.0 x 90 m (or 4.5 x 77 m) to the north and 4.5 x 90 m to the south of the site access. This is illustrated by Drawing No. 2000.1114.01 Rev A.

In summary we have examined the concerns you have raised, and consider there are measures which can be implemented to address and overcome the potential problems if necessary by minor amendments to the proposed development layout submitted by our client's architects.

Therefore we would respectfully ask that you reconsider your recommendations to refuse planning permission, and advise the Planning Officer accordingly.

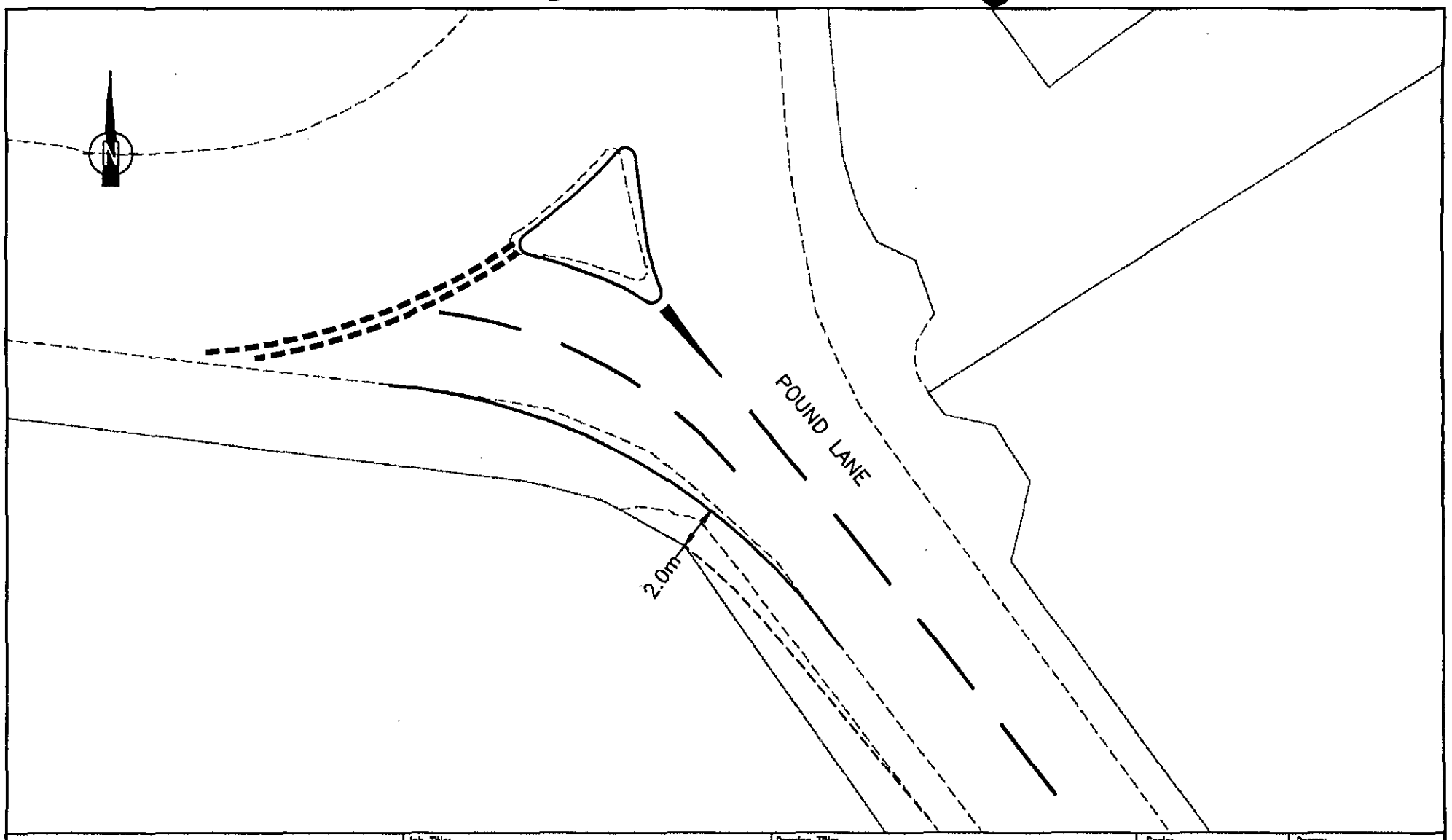
We would welcome a meeting with you, at your offices or on site, to discuss the above before the Application is considered by Committee.

Yours sincerely

Tim Wood
STUART MICHAEL ASSOCIATES

Enc.

c.c. Mrs L Baker – WDC
A Brooks – Bewley Homes
R Gandy - PDA



Stuart Michael Associates
CONSULTING CIVIL ENGINEERS
PLANNING · DESIGN · PROJECT CO-ORDINATION
28 Kingfisher Court, Hambridge Road
Newbury, Berkshire RG14 5SJ
Tel: (01635) 551011, Fax: (01635) 552403

Job Title:
POUND LANE, SONNING

Client:
BEWLEY HOMES

Drawing Title:
POUND LANE/A4 RBT
PROPOSED MINOR IMPROVEMENTS

Scale:	Drawn:
1:250	TSW
Date: 04/00	Checked: RMEH
Drawing No: 2000.1114.02	Rev:

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

PROOF OF EVIDENCE

BY

Tom Callaghan

In respect of an appeal by

BEWLEY HOMES PLC

against the failure of the Local Planning Authority to determine the planning application within the statutory period for the erection of 8 detached dwellings and garages plus demolition of existing 2 dwellings.

AT 97-99 POUND LANE, SONNING, READING

LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY REFERENCE F/2000/0577

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT TRANSPORT & THE REGIONS REFERENCE : APP/X0360/A/00/1043352

---

1. SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

1.1 The evidence provided within this statement addresses the Council's deemed reasons for refusal No's 3 & 4 of Planning Applications F/2000/0577 as set out in the LPA's letter dated 2nd August 2000 (see appendix 1). The reasons for refusal cover the Highway Authority's concerns that the formation of a vehicular access in close proximity to the roundabout junction of Pound Lane and the A4, with sub standard visibility would be detrimental to highway safety and free flow of traffic.

1.2 The application as submitted is for the demolition of 2 existing dwellings (No's 97 and 99 Pound Lane) and the erection of 8 detached dwellings and associated access road. The site is located to the east side of Pound Lane, approximately 100 metres south of its junction with the A4.

2. EXISTING SITUATION

2.1 Pound Lane is a classified single carriageway road which forms part of the Distributor Road network within Berkshire as defined within the Berkshire Design Guide. There are currently 3 vehicular accesses serving the two appeal properties, of which two will be closed and one upgraded to serve as access to the 8 new detached dwellings.

2.2 Immediately fronting the appeal site, Pound Lane has an overall width of 12.7 metres, comprising a 6.2 metre carriageway, with a 2.3 metre verge and 1.5 metre footway to the east side and a 1.5 metre footway and 1.2 metre verge to the west side. The section of Pound Lane fronting the appeal site is subject to a 30 mph speed limit and benefits from street lighting. However, a recent traffic and speed survey carried out on the 18th January 2000 (see appendix 2), associated with a proposed development of 5 dwellings immediately opposite the appeal site, identified that the 85th percentile speed of traffic travelling along Pound Lane was 38 mph (dry weather conditions).

2.3 There have been 6 recorded personal injury accidents in the vicinity of the appeal site during the period January 1997 to August 1998, although none have been associated with the appeal site (see appendix 3). Five of the accidents resulted in slight injuries, although one involving a pedestrian resulted in serious injury.

3.0 PROPOSAL

3.1 Department of Environment Transport and Regions' publication Places Streets and Movement (Companion Guide to Design Bulletin 32) (CGDB32) sets out criteria with respect to visibility splays and supersedes the advice previously contained within PPG 13 and DB32 (see appendix 4). In determining the required visibility splay, it is important to have regard to the speed of the major road traffic (Pound Lane) and the likely level of use of the proposed access. Therefore, in view of the speed of traffic passing the site (35.5 m.p.h. wet weather speed) in both directions, CGDB32 requires minimum visibility splays of 90 metres at an appropriate 'minor road distance' of 4.5 metres.

3.2 Although there is provision within the guidance to reduce the minor road set back distance from 4.5 to 2.4 metres, it clearly states that ***this is the minimum necessary for junctions <u>within development</u> to enable a driver who has stopped at a junction to see down the major road without encroaching onto it.*** (underlining my emphasis). The access to the proposed development is clearly not within a development and therefore, a 4.5 metre set back is appropriate.

3.3 The application drawings indicate visibility splays of 4.5 x 90 metres to the south (looking left) and 3.0 x 90 metres to the north (looking right). Whilst visibility to the south is adequate, the visibility available to the north is substandard as it does not achieve the required 4.5 metre set back distance. In any event, in order to achieve the visibility splays proposed by the appellant, it will require the removal/cutting back of a substantial amount of existing mature vegetation.

3.4 The importance of providing adequate minor road set back distances is reinforced in Chapter 7 of Department of Transport Technical Directive 42/95 'Geometric Design of Major/Minor Priority Junctions' which acknowledges that the provision of adequate visibility splays for minor roads is necessary to allow drivers on the major road to be aware of traffic entering from the minor road in time for them to be able to slow down and stop safely if necessary.

3.5 Furthermore, the Berkshire Design Guide attaches great importance to ensuring that the safety and efficiency of the Distributor Road network is maintained or enhanced by insisting on good junction design for access to new development and that the maintenance of free flowing traffic conditions takes precedence over the need for access.

3.6 Although the sub standard visibility is, in itself a reason for refusal, the primary concern of the Highway Authority relates to the effect of queuing traffic from the Pound Lane/A4 roundabout back beyond the appeal site access which occurs extensively during the morning peak period. It is the Highway Authority's concern that drivers emerging from the appeal site wishing to turn right onto Pound lane towards the A4 could wait within the free flowing southbound lane, or alternatively be forced to take risks due to the extensive delay drivers may experience while waiting for a gap in traffic. This point was acknowledged by SMA in a letter dated 27th March 2000 who requested that the determination of the application be held in abeyance for a period of 4 weeks to enable surveys to be carried out (see appendix 5).

3.7 Three separate traffic surveys have been undertaken recently along the section of Pound Lane fronting the appeal site. On all three occasions, the surveys have identified traffic queuing back well beyond the appeal site access for period upto 30 minutes during the morning peak period. A further site visit carried out on Wednesday 12th July at 8.30 am identified traffic queues extending back from the A4 beyond the railway bridge (see appendix 6). Clearly, the increased conflict between vehicles emerging from the access onto Pound Lane, causing an obstruction as a result of queuing traffic where vehicle speeds are well above the speed limit (38 mph) would be detrimental to highway safety.

3.8 It is generally agreed with the appellant's Highway Consultant Stuart Michael Associates (SMA) that the likely level of traffic generated by a development of 8 dwellings will vary between 64-80 trips per day of which 8 will occur during the morning peak period. It is also agreed that the likely distribution of the traffic will be 60% north bound and 40% southbound. Therefore, the likely proportion of vehicles wishing to turn right from the proposed access during the morning peak will be approximately 4. Although this may seem low, it is a four fold increase on the number of right turning movements that are currently associated with the two existing dwellings.

3.9 Although it is acknowledged that the current accident record along Pound Lane in the vicinity of the appeal site has not involved vehicle movements associated with existing private drives, this should not necessarily support proposals to increase the use of a substandard vehicular access. This is a view supported by previous Planning Inspectors dealing with similar highway issues within Wokingham District.

3.10 There have been extensive discussions between the Highway Authority and SMA since the planning application was submitted, and a number of options proposed by SMA to reduce the extent of queuing traffic from the A4 beyond the appeal site entrance. These have varied from carrying out minor alterations to the Pound Lane entry to the roundabout, through to offering financial contributions towards suggested major junction improvements at approximate costs of £500,000. None of the proposed improvements are considered to be either feasible or likely to offer any noticeable improvement to the extensive northbound queuing that occurs.

3.11 It has also been suggested by SMA that the use of Keep Clear markings at the proposed access and at other junctions along Pound Lane could be used to reduce the conflict of turning traffic. However, the use of Keep Clear markings are only considered appropriate as a remedial measure where existing major road junctions do not operate satisfactorily. They are also unenforceable and often ignored or go unnoticed by drivers. Furthermore, if as suggested by SMA the Keep Clear markings were used consistently along Pound Lane in the vicinity of the appeal site, this would only increase the length of queuing traffic that currently occurs and move the problem elsewhere along Pound lane.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

4.1 There have been no changes in circumstances since the recommendation for refusal was issued and for the above reasons I consider that the increased use of a sub standard access in close proximity to the A4 Roundabout where vehicle speeds are high would be detrimental to highway safety and therefore request that the appeal be dismissed.

Tom Callaghan
15th Aug 2000

APPENDIX 1
Deemed Reasons For Refusal

Tel. 0118 974 6447 (Direct Line)
E-mail: Lynette.Baker@wokingham.gov.uk
Date. 2 August, 2000
My ref. Leb/F/2000/0577
Your ref.

Environmental Services Department
Planning Services
P.O. Box 157
Shute End, Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WR
Tel: (0118) 974 6000
Fax (0118) 974 6484
Minicom No: (0118) 977 8909
DX: 33506 – Wokingham

Richard Gandy
Philip Design Associates
Braboeuf House,
64 Portsmouth Road,
Guildford,
Surrey,
GU2 5DU

Dear Mr. Gandy,

97-99 POUND LANE SONNING: F/2000/0577

As you are aware, the above application is the subject of an Informal Hearing on August 23rd 2000 (appeal ref. APP/X0360/A/00/1043352). I am writing to inform you that had this Council been in a position to determine the application it would have been refused for the following reasons:

1. The proposal by virtue of its siting, scale and form, represents piecemeal development out of character with the surrounding area, and detracting from it. The proposal is therefore contrary to Berkshire Structure Plan policies LD3 and EN1, Loddon Area Local Plan policies LBE1, LBE2, LTV6 and LH1, and Wokingham District Local Plan policies WOS3, WBE1 and WH1.

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I am sending a copy of this letter to The Planning Inspectorate for their information. If you need any further assistance, please contact my colleague Simon Lewis on 0118 9746454.

Yours sincerely,

LYNETTE BAKER
Senior Planning Officer

c.c. Miss A. Bibi, The Planning Inspectorate.

APPENDIX 2
Traffic and Speed Survey

D. Woodie

THE PAUL CASTLE CONSULTANCY

TRAFFIC DATA COLLECTION & PRESENTATION SPECIALISTS

TRAFFIC DATA COLLECTION

& PRESENTATION SYSTEMS

Pound Lane - Sonning

Traffic Study

Tuesday 18th January 2000

FOR

Peter Brett Associates - Reading

The Paul Castle Consultancy
Castle Farm
Deddington
Oxfordshire
OX15 0TP
Telephone 01869 338778
Fax 01869 338779
E-Mail Paul.Castle@Btinternet.Com



PCC 2800

The Paul Castle Consultancy has prepared this report in accordance with the instructions of PETER BRETT ASSOCIATES for its sole and specific use. The Paul Castle Consultancy shall not be liable for any such use of any information contained herein for any purpose other than that for which the same was prepared and provided, pursuant to their appointment as Traffic Data Collection Specialists in this matter.

Authorisation For Issue:

Fieldwork Supervisor: *Darren Yardy*

Report Compiler: *Paul Castle*

Checked By: *Carol Lilley-Hopkins*

Project Manager: *Paul Castle*



Report Date: *21st January 1999*

In the event of any queries regarding the content of this report, please contact the Report Compiler (by fax or telephone) who shall deal with your questions.

Location Map & Photographs

PAUL CASTLE CONSULTANCY
Location Plan

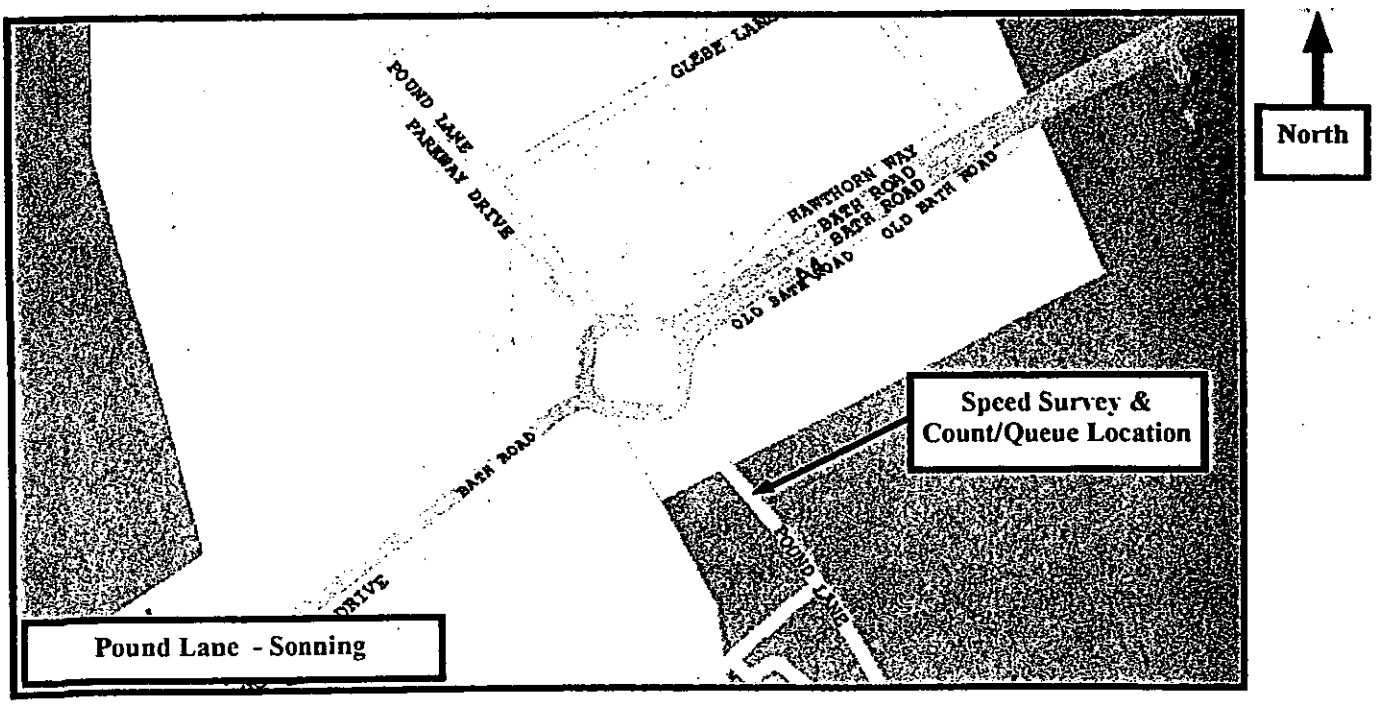
Project:	Sonning	**Originator:**	Paul Castle
PCC Number:	2855	**Date:**	January 2000



Pound Lane - Sonning



Northbound View To Roundabout



MCC, Queue Length & Speed Survey Results

Pound Lane - Sonning - Manual Traffic Survey, Tuesday 18th January 2000

Produced by The Paul Castle Consultancy

Pound Lane - Traffic Flows

	NORTHBOUND				SOUTHBOUND			
TIME	Cars/LGV	OGV I	OGV 2	TOTAL	Cars/LGV	OGV I	OGV 2	TOTAL
0730 - 0745	134	7	1	142	71	7	0	78
0745 - 0800	154	5	2	161	86	6	0	92
Hourly Total	288	12	3	303	157	13	0	170
0800 - 0815	177	8	1	186	101	5	0	106
0815 - 0830	188	11	0	199	117	8	0	125
0830 - 0845	189	8	1	198	128	6	0	134
0845 - 0900	175	10	0	185	114	8	0	122
Hourly Total	729	37	2	768	460	27	0	487
0900 - 0915	147	11	1	159	97	6	0	103
0915 - 0930	134	10	0	144	91	8	0	99
Hourly Total	281	21	1	303	188	14	0	202
Session Tota	1298	70	6	1374	805	54	0	859
1630 - 1645	111	6	0	117	265	13	0	278
1645 - 1700	105	6	0	111	292	17	0	309
Hourly Total	216	12	0	228	557	30	0	587
1700 - 1715	114	5	0	119	267	15	0	282
1715 - 1730	105	6	0	111	221	10	0	231
1730 - 1745	113	4	0	117	213	9	0	222
1745 - 1800	109	7	0	116	208	8	0	216
Hourly Total	441	22	0	463	909	42	0	951
1800 - 1815	103	4	1	108	214	5	0	219
1815 - 1830	77	4	0	81	197	3	1	201
Hourly Total	180	8	1	189	411	8	1	420
Session Tota	837	42	1	880	1877	80	1	1958

Pound Lane - Queue Lengths

TIME	NORTHBOUND	SOUTHBOUND	TIME	NORTHBOUND	SOUTHBOUND
730	5	0	1630	2	0
735	10	0	1635	0	0
740	12	0	1640	0	0
745	24	0	1645	0	0
750	28	0	1650	2	0
755	30	0	1655	3	0
800	36	0	1700	2	0
805	26	0	1705	3	0
810	22	0	1710	4	0
815	10	0	1715	5	0
820	6	0	1720	6	0
825	10	0	1725	2	0
830	7	0	1730	2	0
835	28	0	1735	0	0
840	27	0	1740	0	0
845	17	0	1745	2	0
850	6	0	1750	0	0
855	4	0	1755	3	0
900	3	0	1800	2	0
905	7	0	1805	0	0
910	2	0	1810	0	0
915	3	0	1815	5	0
920	2	0	1820	1	0
925	1	0	1825	0	0
930	1	0	1830	0	0

Pound Lane, Sonning - Speed Survey

Produced By Paul Castle Consultancy

All Speeds recordings are from Free Flowing vehicles.

Weather Tues 18 January 2000

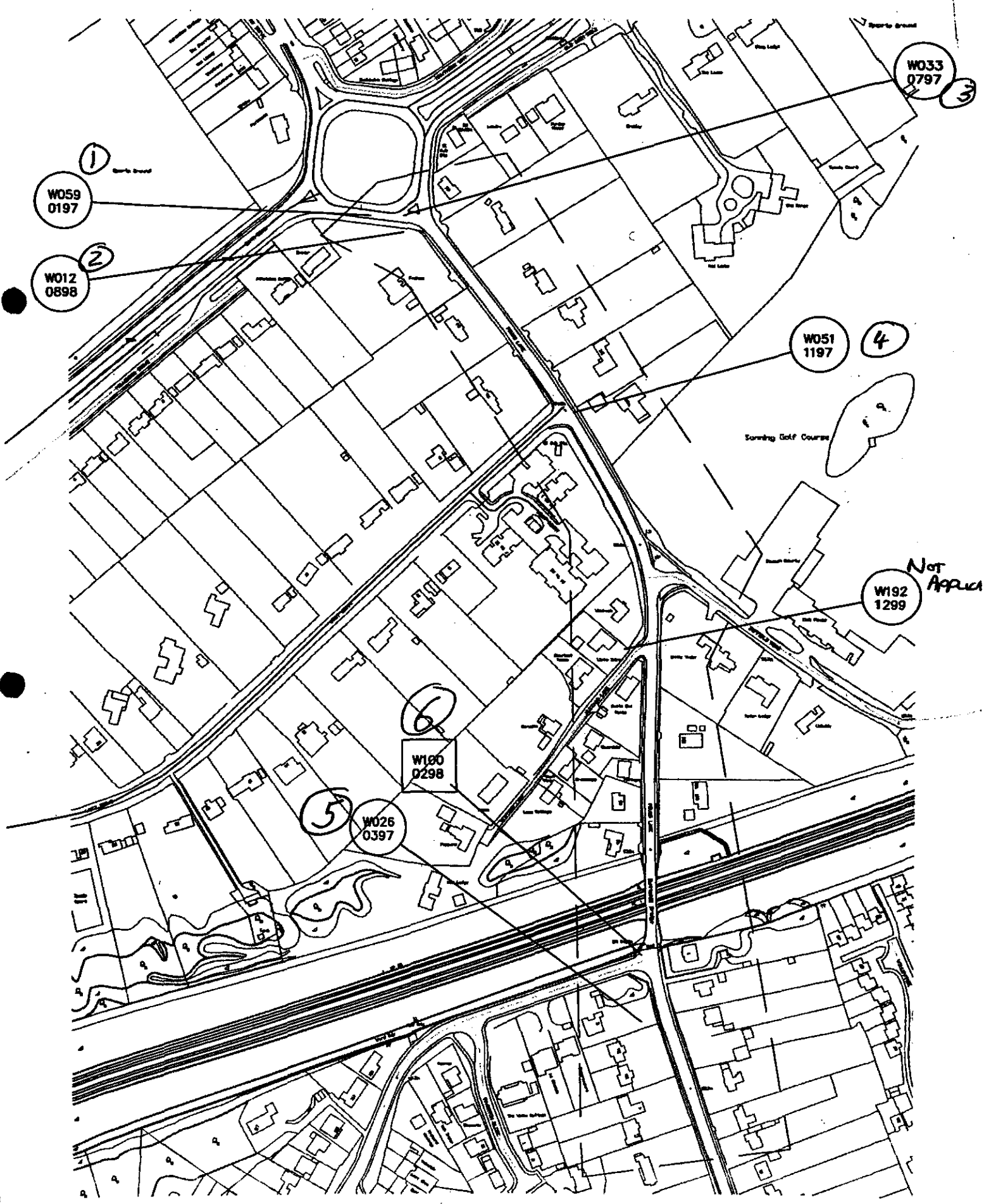
Dry/Cold 1000 - 1200

Northbound				Southbound			
	Speeds (mph)		Speeds (mph)		Speeds (mph)		Speeds (mph)
1	12	51	32	1	17	51	33
2	15	52	32	2	20	52	33
3	16	53	32	3	21	53	33
4	20	54	32	4	21	54	33
5	20	55	32	5	21	55	33
6	20	56	33	6	22	56	33
7	21	57	33	7	22	57	34
8	21	58	33	8	22	58	34
9	21	59	33	9	23	59	34
10	22	60	33	10	23	60	34
11	22	61	33	11	23	61	34
12	22	62	33	12	23	62	34
13	23	63	33	13	24	63	34
14	23	64	33	14	24	64	34
15	23	65	33	15	24	65	34
16	24	66	33	16	24	66	35
17	24	67	34	17	25	67	35
18	25	68	34	18	25	68	35
19	25	69	34	19	25	69	35
20	25	70	34	20	26	70	35
21	26	71	34	21	27	71	35
22	26	72	34	22	27	72	35
23	27	73	34	23	28	73	35
24	27	74	35	24	28	74	35
25	27	75	35	25	28	75	35
26	28	76	35	26	28	76	35
27	28	77	35	27	29	77	35
28	29	78	35	28	29	78	35
29	29	79	36	29	30	79	36
30	29	80	36	30	30	80	36
31	30	81	37	31	30	81	36
32	30	82	37	32	30	82	37
33	30	83	37	33	30	83	37
34	30	84	37	34	30	84	38
35	30	85	38	35	30	85	38
36	30	86	38	36	30	86	38
37	31	87	38	37	31	87	38
38	31	88	38	38	31	88	38
39	31	89	39	39	31	89	39
40	31	90	39	40	31	90	40
41	31	91	40	41	31	91	40
42	31	92	40	42	31	92	40
43	31	93	41	43	31	93	40
44	31	94	41	44	31	94	41
45	31	95	42	45	32	95	41
46	32	96	42	46	32	96	41
47	32	97	43	47	32	97	43
48	32	98	44	48	32	98	44
49	32	99	45	49	33	99	45
50	32	100	47	50	33	100	49

ROAD SURFACE - DRY

Average Northbound	31.3	Average Southbound	32.0
85th%ile Northbound	38.0	85th%ile Southbound	38.0

APPENDIX 3
Accident Record


W033
0797
3
1
W059
0197
2
W012
0898
W051
1197
4
Sonning Golf Course
Not Applica
W192
1299
6
W100
0298
5
W026
0397

Data-file: tom2

Area L/A Number Severity Day Date Time Link/Node Grid Ref. Street

(1)

-- 475 W0590197 Slight TUE 28/01/1997 1810 0 476180/174850 064/

BATH RD RBT JNC POUND LN WOKINGHAM 1st Rd: A4 2nd Rd: N14

Speed C'way Jct Det'l/Ctrl Light Weather Rdsurf PedXHuman PedXPhy Spec'l Hazard

60mph Roundabt R'dabt Give Dark+L . Dry . .

Cas/ Class/Sex/Age Ped'n Sch

Veh+Art Man'vre VehLocRD+RS Jctn Skd Hit LeftRd Dvr Veh Sev/Pass Loc Dir Mov P School

1V 2 Dr F27. ?

C1 TRNG RT FROM NW TO SW ON RBT HIT PC2 TRAV SW

User Information: CO C/Factors:

(2)

-- 475 W0120898 Slight SUN 02/08/1998 2100 0 476200/174840 064/

A4 BATH RD RBT JNC POUND LN WOKINGHAM 1st Rd: A4 2nd Rd: N14

Speed C'way Jct Det'l/Ctrl Light Weather Rdsurf PedXHuman PedXPhy Spec'l Hazard

40mph Roundabt R'dabt Give Dark+L . Dry . .

Cas/ Class/Sex/Age Ped'n Sch

Veh+Art Man'vre VehLocRD+RS Jctn Skd Hit LeftRd Dvr Veh Sev/Pass Loc Dir Mov P School

1V 2 Dr M99. No ?

C2 WAITING AT RBT TO TRAV N HIT IN REAR BY C1

User Information: CMNB C/Factors:

(3)

-- 475 W0330797 Slight WED 09/07/1997 1820 0 476200/174850 064/

POUND LN RBT JNC BATH RD WOKINGHAM 1st Rd: A4 2nd Rd: N14

Speed C'way Jct Det'l/Ctrl Light Weather Rdsurf PedXHuman PedXPhy Spec'l Hazard

40mph Roundabt R'dabt Give . . Dry Refug . .

Cas/ Class/Sex/Age Ped'n Sch

Veh+Art Man'vre VehLocRD+RS Jctn Skd Hit LeftRd Dvr Veh Sev/Pass Loc Dir Mov P School

1V 2 Dr M17. ?

C1 TRNG RT FROM SE TO NE HIT PC2 TRAV SW

User Information: CM C/Factors:

(4)

-- 475 W0511197 Slight WED 12/11/1997 0810 0 476300/174730 001/

POUND LN JNC WEST ST WOKINGHAM 1st Rd: N14 2nd Rd: D7509

Speed C'way Jct Det'l/Ctrl Light Weather Rdsurf PedXHuman PedXPhy Spec'l Hazard

30mph Single2L T/Stag Unct . . Wet . .

Cas/ Class/Sex/Age Ped'n Sch

Veh+Art Man'vre VehLocRD+RS Jctn Skd Hit LeftRd Dvr Veh Sev/Pass Loc Dir Mov P School

1V 1 Dr F11. ? Y 7508

C2 TRAV S HIT BY PC1 CYCLING FRM FWAY W TO E THROUGH TRAFF

User Information: VB C/Factors:

-- W1921299 Unknown *BA / / 0/ 0/

Speed C'way Jct Det'l/Ctrl Light Weather Rdsurf PedXHuman PedXPhy Spec'l Hazard N.A.

0mph Unknown NotJCT NotJ ? ? ? . .

Cas/ Class/Sex/Age Ped'n Sch

Veh+Art Man'vre VehLocRD+RS Jctn Skd Hit LeftRd Dvr Veh Sev/Pass Loc Dir Mov P School

User Information: C/Factors:

Area L/A Number Severity Day Date Time Link/Node Grid Ref. Street

-- 475 W0260397 Slight THU 13/03/1997 1515 0 476340/174360/

(dot) - slight/non-adverse, X - serious, F - fatal

WESTERN AVE JNC TIVERTON AVE WOKINGHAM 1st Rd: D7517 2nd Rd: D7517

Speed	C'way	Jct	Det'l/Ctrl	Light	Weather	Rdsurf	PedXHuman	PedXPhy	Spec'l Hazard
30mph	Single2L	T/Stag	Give	.	.	Dry			

Veh+Art	Man'vre	VehLocRD+RS	Jctn	Skd	Hit	LeftRd	Dvr	Cas/ Veh	Class/Sex/Age Sev/Pass	Loc	Ped'n Dir	Mov	Sch P	School
								1V 1	Dr M17.	No	?			

MC1 TRAV NE AT SPEED LST CONT ON RHBEND HIT NSIDE KRB RIDER FELL OFF

User Information: SZ C/Factors: 21

---

(6)

-- 475 W1000298 Serious FRI 27/02/1998 1350 0 476340/174400 002/

BUTTS HILL RD JNC WESTERN AVE ON RLWY BDGE WOKINGHAM 1st Rd: N14 2nd Rd: D7509

Speed	C'way	Jct	Det'l/Ctrl	Light	Weather	Rdsurf	PedXHuman	PedXPhy	Spec'l Hazard
30mph	Single2L	T/Stag	Give	.	.	Dry			

Veh+Art	Man'vre	VehLocRD+RS	Jctn	Skd	Hit	LeftRd	Dvr	Cas/ Veh	Class/Sex/Age Sev/Pass	Loc	Ped'n Dir	Mov	Sch P	School
								1V 1	Pe M16X	NoNOTC	?	Bck	Y	7508

C1 TRAV N HIT PED WLKNG N WHO STEPPED INTO CWAY ON RLWY BDGE (NO FWAY)

User Information: PW C/Factors:

APPENDIX 4

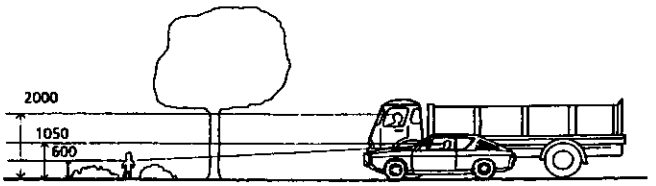
DETR Places streets and Movement

Sightlines at Road Junctions

The design of sightlines at junctions is discussed in detail in both DB32 and PPG13, annex D. This section draws together the advice in those two documents. The guidance given here needs to be assessed in the circumstances of each case. Sightlines should never be reduced to a level where danger is likely to be caused.

The diagrams and commentary given here describe the most salient points involved.

To enable drivers emerging from a minor road or access to see and be seen by drivers proceeding along the major road, unobstructed visibility is needed within the shaded area (x/y) in plan. Vertical visibility is also required as shown in the section.



Clear horizontal sightlines should take account of both what the driver can see and what pedestrians (especially children) can see. Sightlines need to be determined from an eye height of 1.05m – 2m, to an object height of 0.6m – 2m.

Requirements for X and Y dimensions are summarised as:

X dimension (minor road distance)

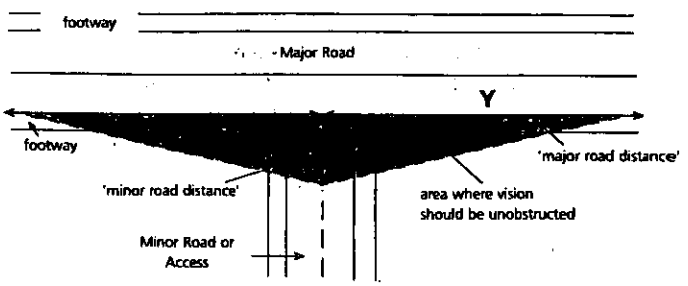
9m: The normal requirement for major new junctions and for the improvement of existing junctions between access roads and district or local distributor roads - for instances where the minor road is busy (ref. PPG13 annex D para. 2).

4.5m: For less busy minor roads and busy private access points.

2.4m: The minimum necessary for junctions within development to enable a driver who has stopped at a junction to see down the major road without encroaching onto it.

2.0m: For single dwellings or small groups of up to half a dozen dwellings or thereabouts.

Only in exceptional circumstances should a distance of less than 2.0m be considered.



The advice in this section supersedes that contained in both PPG13 and DB32.

Y dimension (major road distance)

Table A

Major road speed (kph)	120	100	85	70	60	**50**	**40**	**30**
Major road distance (m)	295	215	160	120	90	**70**	**45**	**33**

Table B

Speed Limit (mph)	70	60	50	40	**30**	**20**
Major road distance (m)	295	215	160	120	**90***	**45***

** includes an allowance for motorists travelling at 10kph above the speed limit.*

Tables A and B are drawn from Annex D of PPG13 with the speeds for residential areas shown in bold. In addition to the dimension quoted, where it can be shown that vehicle speeds will be contained to either 30mph or 20mph the respective Y distances in table B can be amended to 60m and 33m respectively.

Reference: DB32 pp.50–53 and PPG13 Annex D

APPENDIX 5

SMA Correspondence dated 27th March 2000

Stuart Michael Associates
CONSULTING CIVIL ENGINEERS
PLANNING • DESIGN • PROJECT CO-ORDINATION

29 Kingfisher Court, Hambridge Road
Newbury, Berkshire RG14 5SJ
Newbury Tel: 01635 551511
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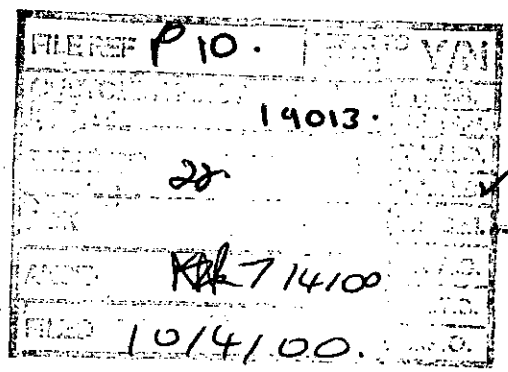
Our Ref: 1114/RMEH/fhr

27 March 2000

Wokingham District Council
Environmental Services Department
P O Box 153
Shute End
WOKINGHAM
Berkshire RG40 1WL

FAO: Mr S N Auton



Dear Sir

Re: PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT POUND LANE, SONNING
VEHICULAR ACCESS

We refer to your letter dated 22 March 2000 and your telephone conversations with Dave Barker and the undersigned.

We note your concerns regarding traffic queues on Pound Lane and vehicle speeds. We have been asked by our client to address these concerns with a view to overcoming potential highway objections.

We should be grateful if you would ask the Planning Officer to hold the Application in abeyance for a period of 4 weeks to permit us to undertake traffic surveys and prepare supplementary technical submissions for your consideration.

Meanwhile, we should be pleased if you would forward us a copy of your comments on the Application.

Yours sincerely

R M E Hewitt
STUART MICHAEL ASSOCIATES

cc: A Brooks – Bewley Homes Plc
R Gandy – PDA

Partners: S. M. Atkinson B.Sc (Hons), C. Eng., M.I.C.E., M.I.H.T., M.A.P.M.
R. M. E. Hewitt B.Sc (Hons), C. Eng., M.I.C.E., M.I.H.T.
Associates: S. W. Andrews M.I.H.T.
J. S. Muscroft B. Eng. (Hons), C. Eng., M.I.C.E., M.C.I.W.E.M., M.I.H.T.

APPENDIX 6

Highway Authority Letter Dated 17th July 2000

Tel. No. 0118 974 6323 (Direct Line) Fax. 0118 974 6313

Date: 17th July 2000.

Your ref. 1114/RMEH/sw

My ref. TC/P9/21057

Mr R Hewitt
Stuart Michael Associates
29 Kingfisher Court
Hambridge Road
Newbury
Berkshire
RG14 5SJ

Environmental Service Department
Engineering Services
P.O. Box 153
Shute End, Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WL
Main Switchboard (0118) 974 6000
Minicom No: (0118) 974 6991
DX: 33506 – Wokingham

Dear Mr Hewitt,

PLANNING APPLICATION F/2000/0577
PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT 97-99 POUND LANE, SONNING

I refer to our meeting on 26th June, and your subsequent letter dated 30th June 2000.

As explained during our meeting, I consider that the minor improvements suggested at the roundabout with the A4 would offer very little improvement to the northbound queue lengths that currently occur along Pound Lane. Furthermore, I carried out a further site visit on Wednesday 12th July, during the morning peak period (8.30 am) and observed queuing traffic from the A4 back to and beyond the railway bridge. Therefore, I can confirm that the original concerns of the Highway Authority remain and that the recommendation for refusal stands.

If you require any further assistance please contact me on the above telephone number.

Yours sincerely,

T. Callaghan
Team Leader Highways Development Control.

cc : Heather Morgan - Planning

Town and Country Planning Acts

Demolition of Existing 2 No. Detached Dwellings
& Erection of 8 No. Detached Dwellings
at 97-99 Pound Lane, Sonning

Appeal on behalf of Bewley Homes Plc

Written Statement (Planning Matters)

APPEAL REF: APP/X0360/A/00/1043352

prepared by:

H Edwards MSc MRTPI

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Ref: HE/B/035/1/10
August 2000

Town and Country Planning Acts

Demolition of Existing 2 No. Detached Dwellings
& Erection of 8 No. Detached Dwellings
at 97-99 Pound Lane, Sonning

Appeal on behalf of Bewley Homes Plc

APPEAL REF: APP/X0360/A/00/1043352

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Town and Country Planning Acts

Demolition of Existing 2 No. Detached Dwellings
& Erection of 8 No. Detached Dwellings
at 97-99 Pound Lane, Sonning

Appeal on behalf of Bewley Homes Plc

Schedule of Appendices
APPEAL REF: APP/X0360/A/00/1043352

Appendices:

Appendix One	General Location Plans
Appendix Two	Photographs of Appeal Site and Surrounding Area
Appendix Three	West Court, West Drive Previous Appeal Decision – February 1988
Appendix Four	West Court, West Drive Previous Appeal Decision – August 1989
Appendix Five	Extracts from Berkshire Structure Plan
Appendix Six	Extracts from Loddon Area Local Plan
Appendix Seven	Extracts of Wokingham District Local Plan (Consolidated Document, November 1999)
Appendix Eight	Report to Environmental Services Committee 12 June 2000 Item No. 5 – PPG3: Housing
Appendix Nine	Extracts from LPA Housing Round Table Evidence WDLP Local Plan Inquiry 3 and 4 July 2000

1.0
Instructions & Introduction

Instructions:

1.1 Charles Planning Associates (Chartered Town Planners) are Instructed by Bewley Homes Plc to prepare a Planning Appeal in respect of Wokingham District Council's failure to determine a planning application for the demolition of 2 No. detached dwellings and erection of 8 No. detached dwellings at 97-99 Pound Lane, Sonning, Reading, Berkshire.

1.2 This Written Statement is submitted in support of the appeal, pursuant to Section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (As Amended), and should be read in conjunction with the previously submitted application forms and revised plans that were forwarded to the Planning Inspectorate on 17 May 2000.

1.3 Evidence within this Statement has been prepared by Huw Edwards, an Associate of Charles Planning Associates. I hold an MSc in Town and Country Planning (Reading) and am a Corporate Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute. I have 10 years experience in town planning and development, including 7 years in the Forward Planning Division of a local planning authority. During my employment, I have appeared as Expert Witness at several EiPs, Local Plan Inquiries and S.78 Inquiries.

1.4 In addition to evidence submitted by Charles Planning Associates, Bewley Homes Plc has also Instructed a civil engineering consultancy to submit specialist evidence in relation to highway matters. This information is detailed in a separate Written Statement prepared by:

R M E Hewitt BSc (Hons), CEng, MICE, MIHT
Partner, Stuart Michael Associates – Consulting Civil Engineers

1.5 Charles Planning Associates were not involved in the preparation, submission or intervening discussions related to the appealed planning application, and were only recently Instructed regarding the preparation of evidence concerning this Informal Hearing. I understand that Stuart Michael Associates have been involved in intervening discussions with Wokingham District Council regarding highway matters, the extent of which is documented in Mr Hewitt's accompanying Written Statement.

Introduction:

1.6 Section 2 of this Statement sets out the background to the planning application and the grounds of the appeal upon which the Informal Hearing is based. In the light that the appeal is against the non-determination of the submitted planning application, this Section seeks to identify the main issues between both parties.

1.7 Section 3 provides a brief description of the site and its surrounding environs, and Appendix 1 contains general location plans of the appeal site and surrounding area. Section 4 identifies any previous planning history of the site itself and examines the history of other residential developments in the locality.

1.8 The appeal site is situated within an identified settlement policy boundary, which is not the subject of a designated Conservation Area or an Area of Special Character. Section 5 of this Statement examines the relevant planning policy framework at a National, strategic and local level, including an analysis of the implications of the Revised PPG3: Housing (March 2000).

1.9 Section 6 explores the planning considerations, which stem from the examination of the preceding planning policy framework.

1.10 Brief observations on the Third Party Representations are set out in Section 7, and a short summary and conclusion is contained within Section 8.

2.0
Background and Grounds for Appeal

2.1 A planning application was submitted on 12 February 2000, which was registered on 18 February 2000. A Revised Highway Drawing (99.72.01B) was submitted on 8 May 2000. The application was submitted in duplicate.

2.2 An appeal was lodged on 17 May 2000 against the failure of Wokingham District Council to determine (one of) the planning application(s) within the statutory time period. It was hoped that a locally based planning approval could be achieved through the negotiations of the remaining duplicate application. However, despite persistent attempts by my Client in seeking to pursue this matter, Bewley Homes Plc were unable to gain a meeting with the local planning authority. It is understood that a 'Highway Meeting' took place on 26 June 2000.

2.3 Charles Planning Associates were Instructed on 21 June 2000 in respect of this appeal and the remaining duplicate application. Following several attempts, a meeting was arranged with the Case Officer on 26 July 2000, which represented the first and last meeting between my Client and the local planning authority regarding all matters associated with both planning applications.

2.4 During the course of the above meeting, we were advised that the Case Officer had (that morning) received the final consultation response from the Council's Highway Department and was now in a position to determine the remaining application under delegated powers. We understand that the application is to be refused for the following reasons:

i) resultant impact upon the character of the area;
ii) resultant impact upon the amenity of the occupants of the adjoining and proposed properties;
iii) proximity to Pound Lane/Bath Road roundabout; and
iv) generation of additional vehicular movements.

2.5 The evidence contained within this Statement examines points (i) and (ii) above, whilst the Statement prepared by Stuart Michael Associates (Mr Hewitt) addresses points (iii) and (iv).

3.0
Site Location and Surrounding Area

3.1 The appeal site is located within the urban area of Woodley, which although situated within Wokingham District, has a greater relationship with the wider conurbation of Reading (4 km west), as opposed to the town of Wokingham itself (8 km south east). The small village of Sonning is immediately to the north of the busy A4(T) Bath Road. Appendix 1 identifies the appeal site in the context of the surrounding area.

i) The Appeal Site

3.2 The appeal site comprises the existing two dwellings and curtilages of Nos. 97 and 99 Pound Lane, which extend to an area of 0.788 ha (1.95 acres). Both properties represent large detached dwellings of mid-war construction, which are set in extensive linear plots. The existing land-use therefore comprises the substantial domestic gardens of each property, both of which are mostly level lawn areas. The landscape features of both properties comprise the mature trees and hedging that delineate the site boundaries, together with the well maintained lawns and flowerbeds.

3.3 The appeal site's northern and southern boundaries represent the common boundary between the adjoining properties (Nos. 95 and 101 Pound Lane respectively). These are defined by a mixture of very mature coniferous and deciduous planting, some 12 m in height, which provide considerable visual containment. The proposed development indicates the retention of these dominant tree boundaries.

3.4 The eastern boundary at the rear of No. 97 Pound Lane comprises an extensive mature tree belt between the appeal site and the domestic curtilage of 'Birchley' (a detached property fronting Bath Road). The rear of No. 99 Pound Lane comprises a post and wire fence and sporadic planting between the appeal site and the domestic curtilage of 'Red Lodge' (one of two detached properties constructed to the rear of 'Birchley' and 'Stag Lodge'). My Client proposes the retention of the existing tree belts, which will be supplemented by 1.8 m close-boarded fencing and semi-mature tree planting along the boundary with Red Lodge.

3.5 Pound Lane delineates the western boundary, which is characterised by mature trees and hedging, with a single point of vehicular access serving No. 97 Pound Lane and two points serving No. 99 Pound Lane. Each dwelling is set back approximately 20 m from the road, with the intervening area comprising landscaped front lawn areas.

3.6 The proposed development seeks to retain the majority of the mature trees both within the appeal site and at its boundaries. There are no Tree Preservation Orders in force on this site.

ii) The Surrounding Area

3.7 The appeal site and its surrounding environs comprise large detached dwellings set in substantial mature landscaped plots. Its character is defined by private front gardens of large detached dwellings set back from Pound Lane with a mixture of mature trees and hedging, punctured by a series of serving vehicular accesses. Pound Lane is a busy minor road, with footways on each side and accompanying street lighting.

3.8 To the west of Pound Lane is a similar pattern of development along West Drive (a private road). This also comprises large detached dwellings in linear plots, but has a distinctly different character due to the nature of the serving road, namely an unadopted, unlit avenue of trees. At its junction with Pound Lane is a recently constructed three-storey development of 24 apartments (West Court). (This is examined further in the following section of this Statement.)

3.9 A denser pattern of development comprising the settlement of Woodley exists to the south of the main-line railway, which is in a cutting at this point.

3.10 The historic village of Sonning is situated to the north of Bath Road, preceded by an intervening area of more recent residential development.

3.11 Appendix 2 contains photographic examples of the appeal site and surrounding area.

4.0
Relevant Planning History

i) The Appeal Site

4.1 Other than the present planning application/appeal, there is no specific planning history that is relevant to this case.

ii) Surrounding Development

4.2 In chronological order, there are three other developments that are pertinent to this Informal Hearing:

a)	Land to the rear of Birchley and Stag Lodge (Construction of Red Lodge and The Range)	Mid 1980s
b)	Redevelopment of Nos. 38 & 40 Pound Lane (Construction of West Court)	August 1989
c)	Redevelopment of Nos. 32 & 34 Pound Lane (Proposed construction of 6 detached dwellings)	June 2000

a) Red Lodge and The Range

4.3 These two dwellings are located to the east of the appeal site and represent a form of backland development, situated in the former rear gardens of large detached dwellings of mid-war construction, which were previously set in extensive linear plots. It is anticipated that Red Lodge and The Range were constructed in the mid-1980s.

4.4 The District Council has therefore previously accepted the principle of the redevelopment of existing linear plots, on land immediately adjoining the present appeal site.

b) Construction of West Court, West Drive

4.5 West Court comprises a three-storey modern development of 24 private apartments, which occupies the previous site of two large detached dwellings set in extensive linear plots. This development stems from a complex planning history, essentially involving two planning appeal decisions (February 1988 and August 1989) and a subsequently revised planning approval (February 1994).

4.6 The District Council had originally opposed the redevelopment of the existing large detached dwellings (Nos. 38 and 40 Pound Lane – 'Chieveley' and 'Virginia Cottage' respectively) because of the resultant impact upon the character and appearance of the locality, and on the general amenity of adjacent residents. An Inquiry was held in December 1987 and the Inspector's recommended approval for the erection of 20 apartments was received in February 1988 (ref: T/APP/H0330/A/86/058361 & 058362/P3).

4.7 A series of alternative planning applications for 24 apartments were then submitted to Wokingham District Council during 1998 and duly appealed against non-determination, although the LPA subsequently indicated that they would have refused each planning application. A further Inquiry was held in July 1989 and the Inspector's favourable decision notice for 24 apartments was issued in August 1989 (ref: T/APP/H0330/A/89/112986, 121200, 121201 & 121202/P3).

4.8 Two further planning applications were submitted in September 1993 and November 1993, the latter being approved in February 1994 for 24 apartments and surface level car parking. I would anticipate that the resultant development (West Court) was constructed during the mid-1990s.

4.9 For convenience, I have appended a copy of both of the previous appeal decisions in Appendix 3 and Appendix 4 of this Statement. In the consideration of both appeals, each Inspector clearly had regard to the prevailing character of the surrounding area in reaching their decisions. I refer to specific observations from both of these appeal decisions in detail in my examination of the present planning policy framework in the following section of this Statement (Section 5).

c) Proposed Redevelopment of Nos. 32 & 34 Pound Lane

4.10 The LPA has recently received (June 2000) a planning application from Bryant Homes to redevelop Nos. 32 & 34 Pound Lane and Isomer (an adjoining detached dwelling) for the erection of 6 No. detached dwellings. At the time of preparing this Statement, the planning application remains undetermined, although it is understood that the LPA intends to refuse the proposed development on similar grounds to this appeal.

iii) Observations/Comment

4.11 Upon having read both of the above appeal decisions and examined the accompanying two-dimensional appeal plans, there is common recognition that West Drive and Pound Lane comprise high quality, low-density residential development. However, upon visiting the appeal site and the surrounding area, it is readily apparent that West Drive and Pound Lane have a distinctly different character. This is despite both areas each having had new development of higher density introduced to the existing pattern of development: ie West Court in West Drive; and 'Red Lodge' and 'The Range' to the rear of Pound Lane.

4.12 In his consideration of the first appeal proposal, the Inspector concluded that:

> **'.... I attach considerable weight to the long-standing and fundamental principle that conformity with existing development does not have to be achieved for new development to be acceptable.'**
> *(Paragraph 9, T/APP/H0330/A/86/058361 – my Appendix 3)*

4.13 Clearly, the LPA and the Planning Inspectorate have acknowledged that redevelopment in this locality can be undertaken, providing that any such new development does not detrimentally compromise the existing character of the area. It is in this context and the present day planning policy framework, especially the implications of Revised PPG3: Housing (March 2000), that the proposed development which is the subject of this appeal should be examined.

5.0
Planning Policy Framework

5.1 The planning policy framework relevant to this appeal comprises Planning Policy Guidance Notes, DETR Circulars, the adopted Berkshire Structure Plan, the adopted Loddon Area Local Plan and the emerging Wokingham District Local Plan. The following components of which are considered to be of particular relevance:

i) <u>National</u>

- **Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 (PPG1): General Policy and Principles (February 1997)**

5.2 PPG1 sets out the Government's commitment to achieving a more sustainable form of development, whilst at the same time seeking to protect the built environment. It recognises that new development can have an effect upon the character and quality of an area, and therefore the appearance of a proposed development and its relationship to its surrounding area are material considerations in the determination of planning applications.

5.3 Paragraphs 4 and 5 identify the requirement to create a 'sustainable planning framework' by using previously developed areas in the most efficient way and shaping new development patterns in a way which minimises the need to travel. In devising an appropriate scheme for the appeal site, my Client was mindful of the advice in paragraphs 13-20 of PPG1 and the need to respect the existing character of the area. In its consideration of 'planning for housing', paragraph 24 states that a key objective for the location of new development is to make effective use of land within urban areas. It is considered that the proposed development which is the subject of this appeal meets with these objectives.

- **PPG3: Housing (March 2000)**

5.4 This recently revised Government Guidance sets out the basic principles relating to the provision of land for housing and Paragraph 1 identifies a number of objectives, including:

> **'To promote more sustainable patterns of development and make better use of previously developed land ....'**
> and
> **'new housing and residential environments should be well designed ....'**

5.5 In order to achieve the Government's objectives, LPAs should, *inter alia*:

> '• **provide sufficient housing land but give priority to re-using previously developed land within urban areas .... in preference to the development of greenfield sites;**
> • **create more sustainable patterns of development by building in ways which exploit and deliver accessibility by transport to jobs, education and health facilities, shopping, leisure and local services;**
> • **make more efficient use of land by reviewing planning policies and standards;**
> • **promote good design in new housing developments in order to create attractive high quality living environments in which people will choose to live.'**
> *(PPG3, paragraph 2)*

5.6 Revised PPG3: Housing, places increased focus on the re-use of previously developed land, which reflects the Government's commitment of a National target of 60% of additional housing to be provided on such sites – thereby minimising the amount of greenfield land being taken for development (paragraphs 21, 22 and 23).

5.7 The Government recognises that land is a finite resource, and that urban land and buildings can often be significantly underused (paragraph 24). In order to assess the level of additional housing that could be accommodated within existing urban areas, LPAs are now required to undertake urban housing capacity studies. It is understood that the six Unitary Authorities in Berkshire are currently working in partnership towards a County-wide study as part of a Review of the Structure Plan (ie post 2006).

5.8 In order to assist LPAs in promoting more sustainable housing patterns of development, Revised PPG3 contains the section entitled *'Creating Sustainable Residential Environments'* (paragraphs 46-75), which is relevant to this appeal in general terms. However, particular regard should be had to paragraphs 57 and 58 that are concerned with *'Making the best use of land'*, which indicates that:

- LPAs should avoid the inefficient use of land;
- more than half of all new housing is built at less than 20 dwellings per hectare, which is historically very high and can no longer be sustained;
- LPAs should therefore encourage housing development which makes more efficient use of land (to result in developments of between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare).

5.9 The above Government advice is preceded with the recognition that good design and layout of new development can help to achieve the Government's objectives of making the best use of land (paragraphs 54-56). LPAs and developers are encouraged to think imaginatively about designs and layouts which achieve a more efficient use of land without the quality of the environment being comprised.

5.10 It is felt that the proposed development seeks to achieve the Government's objectives of making more efficient use of land, whilst respecting the quality of the environment within which it is located and without compromising its character. The appeal scheme for 8 No. dwellings on the 0.788 hectare site represents a net density of 10.15 dpha. Whilst it is noted that the proposed development falls short of the Government's aspirational target of between 30-50 dpha, the number of dwellings and resultant density have been derived in order to have regard to the physical characteristics of the site and prevailing character of the area. This issue is examined more fully in the following section of this Statement.

- **The Effect of Section 54A and Revised PPG3**

5.11 Section 54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (As Amended) states that when making any determination under the Planning Acts, regard is to be had to the Development Plan, and that the determination shall be in accordance with the Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. It is intended that S54A should apply to the 'adopted or approved' Development Plan, which in the case of Wokingham District Council there is not.

5.12 The Loddon Area Local Plan (LALP) was prepared during 1990 and was adopted in May 1995. The LALP had an end date of 1996, and is therefore out of date.

5.13 The LPA published the Deposit Draft version of the Wokingham District Local Plan (WDLP) in October 1997 and a two part Local Plan Inquiry (LPI) commenced in October 1998. Part Two of the LPI is still in process and is presently scheduled to conclude in October 2000. The relevance of S.54A and the degree of weight that should be attached to both the LALP and WDLP policies should therefore be considered in the context of the advice of PPG1, in particular, paragraphs 40, 48 and 54.

5.14 In addition to the above, paragraph 37 of Revised PPG3: Housing recognises that Development Plans form the framework upon which decisions on development proposals are taken, and it is necessary that they reflect National policy guidance. LPAs are therefore required to take account of the guidance contained in PPG3, and should seek to revise their housing policies at the earliest opportunity.

5.15 Paragraph 38 of PPG3 indicates that in the interim, LPAs should have regard to the Government policy within the Revised PPG3 as material considerations which may supersede the policies in their Plan. This is significant, in so far as the previous LALP is now out of date and the emerging WDLP is still at its LPI stage, and the Part Two Inspector's Report is not anticipated until 12 months time.

5.16 Whilst the remainder of this section examines the strategic and local plan policies relevant to this appeal, the Inspector is invited to conclude that the advice in PPG3: Housing (March 2000) is clearly a material consideration that weighs in favour of allowing this appeal. It is also relevant to note at this stage that the LPA has recently approved the wording of a 'new policy' in the light of the Revised PPG3, which seeks to address the issue of increased density and this is discussed later in this section of the Statement.

ii) Strategic

- **Berkshire Structure Plan: 1996-2006**

5.17 The BSP was Adopted in November 1995, Altered further in August 1997 and it provides the strategic framework for development until 2006. The Structure Plan is presently under review, being prepared jointly by the six Unitary Authorities of the former County co-ordinated by a Joint Strategic Planning Unit. The BSP Review is at an early stage, with an Information Sheet and Questionnaire having been published in November 1999 and a Deposit Draft Plan expected following the publication of Revised Regional Guidance (RPG9).

5.18 The extant plan, for our purposes, is therefore the Berkshire Structure Plan: 1991-2006. However, whilst the LPA has not indicated any strategic policy objections in its reasoning for opposing the proposed development, I have identified below the relevant BSP policies for the purposes of this appeal:

Policy OS1 - Overall Strategy
Policy LD1 - Sustainable Development
Policy LD3 - Environmental Impact of Development
Policy EN1 - Protection and Enhancement of the Environment of Built-Up Areas
Policy EN5 - Areas of Special Character Including Conservation Areas
Policy H4 - Assessment of Development Proposals
Policy H5 - Development within Settlements and Redevelopment/Change of Use
Policy H6 - Development Proposals Involving the Loss of Housing

5.19 I have included copies of the above policies within Appendix 5 of this Statement, although I do not propose to examine any of these policies in detail. However, it is important to note that the Adopted BSP policies were formulated during the early 1990s in advance of the Revised PPG3. Notwithstanding the above, the main thrust of its policies relevant to this appeal seek to:

- achieve sustainable forms of development and improve the quality of life for Berkshire residents;
- prevent unacceptable impact on the environment, including avoiding serious harm to the character or appearance of an area;
- designate areas of special character, and Conservation Areas, which will provide protection from change damaging to their character and appearance;
- locate development in close proximity to services and facilities;
- direct new development to existing built-up areas; and
- avoid the need for greenfield sites, through favourable consideration of the redevelopment of existing dwellings within the urban area.

5.20 The above policies therefore demonstrate the strategic objectives of directing new development to within the defined boundaries of existing urban areas, whilst at the same time ensuring adequate protection is given to those areas worthy of special protection. It is relevant to note that the appeal site is situated within the defined settlement policy boundary for Woodley/Sonning, it lies almost 1 km to the south of Sonning Conservation Area, it does not affect the setting or character of any listed buildings, nor is it the subject of additional protection in the form of an Area of Special Character.

iii) **Local**

- **Loddon Area Local Plan (LALP)**

5.21 As previously indicated, the LALP was formulated in 1990 and a LPI was held between November 1990-May 1991. The Plan was Adopted in May 1995 and had an end date of 1996. However, I understand the LPA will seek to rely upon some of its policies, and I have enclosed an extract from the LALP Proposals Map and the relevant policies in my Appendix 6. These policies include:

LTV1	-	Identified Settlements
LTV6	-	Important Open Areas Within Settlements
LH1	-	Housing Development on Unidentified Sites
LBE1	-	Design of New Development
LBE16	-	New Development in Areas of Traditional Local Character
Chapter 2.2	-	Parish of Sonning

5.22 The LALP was prepared in accordance with the earlier Replacement Structure Plan for Berkshire (RSPB), which was Adopted in November 1988. Clearly, both of these documents were prepared over a decade ago, and have subsequently either been superseded or are now out of date. I would therefore contend that their policies should be afforded only limited weight in the consideration of this appeal.

5.23 In an examination of the above policies, it is apparent within the area-based text for the Parish of Sonning (paragraphs 2.2.12-2.2.17, LALP), that the LPA sought to protect the character of the area in the vicinity of the appeal site, through its use of Policy LTV6. However, the extent of such an area is not defined upon the LALP Proposals Map. Moreover, it is important to note at this stage that the emerging Wokingham District Local Plan (WDLP) does not contain any such similar observations in the Deposit Draft Plan.

5.24 It may be helpful to the Inspector to be advised that Policy LH3 of the Draft LALP, which was referred to in the previous Inspector's decision in August 1989 (my Appendix 4, paragraph 11), was not carried forward into the Adopted LALP.

- **Wokingham District Local Plan (WDLP)**

5.25 As previously indicated, the WDLP was placed on Deposit in October 1997 and Part I of the LPI commenced in October 1998. Proposed Amendments to the Deposit Draft WDLP were published in April 1999 and Part II of the LPI is presently scheduled to conclude in October 2000.

5.26 Part I of the LPI closed in October 1999 and the LPI Inspector's Report was published on 21 July 2000, which recommends the deletion of the LPA's preferred major development site south of Junction 11 of the M4 motorway (at Grazeley), and the rejection of both of the alternative schemes (at Spencer's Wood/Three Mile Cross and Shinfield) in the light of, *inter alia*, the Government guidance contained within the Revised PPG3: Housing. Whilst the matter of major development is not directly relevant to this appeal, it is important to note the considerable level of weight attached to the recently published National guidance by the Government Inspector.

5.27 In the consideration of this appeal, I have enclosed an extract from the Deposit Draft WDLP Proposals Map and the relevant policies in my Appendix 7. The WDLP indicates that in seeking to achieve its strategic housing requirement, the LPA will maximise the contribution to the total housing requirement from redevelopment sites and other sites within settlements and locate housing according to the principles of sustainability. These policies include:

Policy WOS1	-	Sustainable Development
Policy WOS2	-	General Development Principles
Policy WOS3	-	Development Control Principles
Policy WBE1	-	Development in its Local Context
Policy WBE20	-	Low Density Developments*
Policy WHE6	-	Areas of Special Character
Policy WH1	-	Housing Development – Unidentified Sites

** Policy WBE20 was an area-based policy which sought to ensure the protection of the particular character of a low density development area in Shinfield. This policy was deleted by the LPA in the Proposed Amendments to the WDLP (April 1999), in order to take account of the need to make the best use of previously developed land.*

5.28 It is significant to note that Policy WHE6 provides the LPA with the opportunity to designate Areas of Special Character in accordance with Policy EN5 of the Berkshire Structure Plan. The Deposit Draft WDLP identified many such areas across the District, although it does not identify or refer to the area in the vicinity of the appeal site. Moreover, in its consideration of the need for additional such designated areas following the publication of the Deposit Draft WDLP, the LPA did identify two additional Areas of Special Character in the Proposed Amendments (April 1999). However, neither of these were in the vicinity of the appeal site.

5.29 Therefore, in its preparation of the emerging WDLP, the LPA has twice appraised the many different areas of varying housing development throughout the District, and has not considered the area in the vicinity of the appeal site worthy of additional policy protection in the form of Policy WHE6.

- **The Effect of PPG3 and the WDLP**

5.30 I have previously indicated that the LPA has recently approved the wording of 'new policy' in the light of Revised PPG3, although the Inspector will be aware of the varying response from different LPAs across England in response to their obligations under the new Government guidance.

5.31 At its meeting on 12 June 2000, the Environmental Services Committee (ESC) considered a report regarding the implications of Revised PPG3, in particular the need to avoid the inefficient use of land in the provision of additional residential development. A copy of the ESC Report is attached at Appendix 8, and a copy of the LPA Officer's proposed policy on residential densities is set out below:

> **'In order to ensure an effective and efficient use of land, no residential development shall be permitted at a net density of less than 30 dwellings per hectare, on sites within or adjoining identified settlements.**
>
> **A net density of between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare on new residential development will generally be acceptable. Higher densities in this range will be acceptable in locations with good public transport connections and good access to local retail, community and service facilities.**
>
> **In areas with particularly good accessibility to public transport and facilities, densities should be in excess of 50 per hectare.**
>
> **All developments, whatever their net density, will be expected to incorporate a high quality of design throughout.'**

5.32 In its consideration of the implications of PPG3 and the wording of the above policy, the Committee Members were concerned that the proposed policy wording was too rigid. To this end, Members sought to retain a degree of flexibility in relation to the operation of this new policy, and resolved to include the following policy in the Local Plan as soon as the local plan process permits and that it be adopted for the purposes of development control as soon as possible:

> **'In order to ensure an effective and efficient use of land, no residential development on sites over 0.3 hectares within identified settlements shall be permitted at a net density of less than 30 dwellings per hectare, subject to development at such a density not compromising the quality of the environment.**
>
> **A net density of between 30-50 dwellings per hectare ....'**
>
> *(The remainder of the policy is identical to that set out in paragraph 5.31 above.)*

5.33 The revised policy was introduced to the local plan process at the LPI Housing Round Table on 3 and 4 July 2000, and I understand that the LPA is presently using the new policy for the purposes of development control. I have attached the relevant extracts from the LPA's Housing Round Table Proof of Evidence in my Appendix 9.

5.34 I would contend that the proposed policy on residential densities is in accordance with the spirit of the objectives of Revised PPG3 and I have previously suggested that the content of the Revised PPG3 should be a material consideration in the determination of this appeal. I would therefore propose that the implications of the above policy should also have bearing in the consideration of this appeal, although less weight could be attached to its wording than that of National guidance at this stage.

5.35 In an assessment of the presently proposed residential development on the appeal site against the above policy, the main issue to be resolved is its resultant impact upon the quality of the local environment – namely, the additional wording introduced by ESC Council Members. This issue is explored in the following section of this Statement.

6.0
Planning Considerations

6.1 At the time of preparing this Statement, the duplicate application remains to be determined and as such, no formal Decision Notice has been issued. However, following the recent meeting with the LPA Case Officer and the preceding analysis of the relevant planning policy framework, it is possible to identify the two planning matters which need to be addressed in this Statement:

i) Impact upon the character of the area; and
ii) Impact upon the amenity of residents (existing and resultant).

6.2 In the consideration of each of these issues against the aforementioned planning policy framework, it is important to have regard to the significant shift in the formulation of policy within which these appeal proposals should be determined – namely, the increased emphasis on avoiding the inefficient use of land through higher density development.

i) Impact Upon Character

6.3 The prevailing pattern of development in the vicinity of the appeal site comprises low density residential development. Pound Lane is characterised by large detached dwellings of mid-war construction set back approximately 20 m from the public highway. Upon visiting the appeal site and surrounding locality, there is a readily apparent distinct difference in character between the dwellings fronting Pound Lane and those in West Drive. This difference is predominantly derived through the adopted nature of Pound Lane itself and the level of traffic that uses this highway.

6.4 The previously adopted LALP identified West Drive and its surrounding environs as an area worthy of added policy protection from redevelopment, although it did not delineate the specific area to which it was referring on the Proposals Map. However, in the consideration of two earlier appeal proposals and in having regard to this matter, both Inspectors considered that redevelopment could be undertaken without detrimentally affecting the prevailing character of the area (my Appendices 3 and 4).

6.5 The emerging WDLP does not refer to specific areas of low density development that it considers worthy of retention, and instead prefers to designate Areas of Special Character, which it seeks to protect from development that may harm the particular character of that area. As previously indicated, the WDLP does not identify the appeal site or its surrounding environs as one of these such areas.

6.6 However, in devising the proposed development for the appeal site and in preparing the submission of this Statement, it is recognised that development needs to be accommodated without detrimentally affecting the prevailing character of the area. I have previously described this as being one of the large, high quality detached dwellings set back approximately 20 m from Pound Lane. The proposed scheme seeks to respect the existing 'building line' of the adjoining dwellings, and proposes the closure of 3 existing points of vehicular access and the creation of an enlarged single point of access.

6.7 It is felt that the proposed development to the rear of the Nos. 1-3 of the appeal scheme, could be accommodated without materially affecting the 'character' of existing development when appraised from Pound Lane. Furthermore, the proposed house types have been devised specifically for this site in order to reflect to the style and character of surrounding development.

6.8 I consider it appropriate at this stage to note that Bewley Homes Plc has a recognised track record within the Development Industry of constructing high quality distinctive dwellings of considerable quality. Indeed, this has been recognised in one of the Third Party representations (see Section 7 of this Statement).

6.9 Whilst the proposed layout introduces residential development to the rear of the former frontage development, this has been achieved without causing any undue disturbance to the original building line. This was a guiding principle in the design of the proposed scheme.

6.10 In the consideration of this appeal against the present policy framework, including that of Revised PPG3 and the LPA's new policy on the density of residential development, it is felt that the proposed scheme represents an appropriate form of development which has due regard to the character of the area, when weighed against the need to make more efficient use of land. Indeed, if the capacity of the appeal site was to be considered in the context of the LPA Officer's original wording of the 'new policy', this would result in the following:

0.788 ha @ 30 dpha = 23.64 dwellings

as opposed to that presently proposed

8 dwellings at a density of 10.15 dpha

6.11 It is our contention that it is appropriate to seek to provide this lower level density of development in order not to compromise the quality of the local environment, whilst similarly seeking to ensure an effective and efficient use of land.

ii) Impact Upon the Amenity of Residents

6.12 I understand the main areas of concern relate to the resultant impact upon the amenity of existing residents, in particular those immediately adjoining the appeal site, namely Nos. 95 and 101 Pound Lane, and 'Red Lodge' to the east.

6.13 Clearly, the redevelopment of the appeal site will result in the introduction of built development in the former rear gardens of Nos. 97 and 99 Pound Lane. Whilst this will have an impact upon the existing amenity presently enjoyed by adjoining residents, it is the extent of any impact that needs to be assessed and whether it is likely to be adversely detrimental so as to substantiate a reason for dismissing this appeal. It is our contention that it does not.

6.14 I have previously drawn the Inspector's attention to the appeal site's northern and southern boundaries, which are concurrent with Nos. 95 and 101 Pound Lane respectively. These boundaries are defined by existing mature planting which predominantly visually enclose the site, thereby minimising the impact upon the amenity of adjoining residents.

6.15 An important element of the proposed scheme would be to supplement the existing boundary trees through additional landscaping of semi-mature native planting, which would complement the provision of additional 1.8 m close boarded fencing where deemed necessary. The appeal site's boundary with 'Red Lodge' to the east has been recognised as the one in need of most sensitive attention, and any resultant impact could be appropriately mitigated through the provision of appropriate boundary treatment. This is a matter which can be properly secured by way of planning conditions, if the Inspector was minded to allow this appeal.

6.16 In the consideration of any impact upon the amenity of the residents of 'Red Lodge', it is important to have regard to the impact that resulted in a consequence of 'Red Lodge' being constructed as backland development to the rear of 'Birchley', and its approved juxtaposition with the existing rear garden of No. 99 Pound Lane. Upon visiting the appeal site, it is apparent that it is only as a result of the present occupier's under utilisation of their extensive rear garden, that the impact from 'Red Lodge' has been limited.

6.17 The proposed layout within the appeal site boundaries was devised in order to provide an adequate level of amenity space for each resultant dwelling. Clearly, this represents a lesser degree of provision than presently exists, but one which respects the needs of privacy and prevents any problems of overlooking. It is considered that the proposed scheme provides an appropriate balance between the requirement to achieve the greater efficiency of land, without compromising the immediate living environment of the resultant occupants.

6.18 In recognition of the requirements of Policy WBE1 of the Deposit Draft WDLP, particular regard has been given to the vernacular style of the proposed dwellings. This is intended to contribute to the high quality character of the existing dwellings in the vicinity of the appeal site, and represents the reasoning behind the appellant's original submission of the final choice of materials to be used which should be agreed in advance with the LPA.

6.19 It is therefore considered that the appeal scheme seeks to minimise its impact upon the amenity of adjoining existing residents, whilst providing an appropriate level of private amenity space through the form and layout of the proposed development.

7.0
Third Party Representations

7.1 A total of 17 third party representations were submitted to the LPA in respect of the planning applications, and I understand copies have previously been forwarded to the Planning Inspectorate.

7.2 The main issues emanating from the letters of local residents similarly reflect the concerns identified by the LPA, namely:

(a) adverse impact upon character
(b) adverse impact upon amenity
(c) exacerbate existing traffic problems in Pound Lane

7.3 The above issues have already been addressed either in this Statement of Mr Hewitt's accompanying Highway Statement. Additional areas of concern relate to:

(d) inadequate drainage system (flooding is said to be a problem)
(e) the safety of schoolchildren crossing the highway
(f) setting a precedent for further redevelopment.

7.4 **Issue (d)** – In previous discussions with the LPA, my Client was not advised of any difficulties in relation to the capacity of the sewage or drainage system in this locality. The scale of development is such that the proposed development would not materially affect the capacity of the foul or storm water drainage systems.

7.5 **Issue (e)** – Clearly, the safety of schoolchildren crossing the public highway is of paramount importance, but it is understood that the concerns of residents relate more to the A4 (Bath Road), than to Pound Lane itself. Moreover, the LPA has previously acknowledged that the resultant traffic impact from the proposed development is only minimal and will not significantly increase vehicular movements or endanger highway safety.

7.6 **Issue (f)** – It is commonly recognised that each application should be determined upon its individual merits, and that ultimately the decision will rest with each relevant landowner as to whether future redevelopment opportunities exist in the area. Notwithstanding of course the need to also accord with the relevant Development plan policies.

8.0
Summary & Conclusions

SUMMARY:

8.1 The appeal site is situated within the existing built-up area of Woodley/Sonning and lies within an identified settlement boundary as defined in the Deposit Draft Wokingham District Local Plan. There is common agreement that the site's general location and its proximity to local facilities, to Reading and to public transport opportunities, meets with the objectives of sustainability. Therefore, the principle of redevelopment for residential development is generally acceptable, and thus the sustainability principles of the emerging Local Plan are also accorded with.

8.2 The appeal site comprises two existing detached dwellings (Nos. 97 and 99 Pound Lane) and their respective curtilages, both of which are substantial linear landscaped lawns. Neither of the two dwellings are statutory listed, and no other listed buildings are in close proximity to the appeal site.

8.3 Existing surrounding built development comprises large detached dwellings set in extensive mature landscaped plots. The character of the area is defined by significant sized houses set back from a busy minor road (Pound Lane) with a mixture of mature trees, fencing and hedging, each property being served by either one or two points of vehicular access.

8.4 The immediate area of the appeal site has been the subject of past and present redevelopment proposals. This has resulted in the erection of two additional 'backland' dwellings to the east of the appeal site, and the construction of a three-storey block of 24 exclusive apartments to the south west. Both of these previous developments were as a result of the redevelopment of the plots of two detached dwellings. The fundamental principle of redevelopment in this locality has therefore been previously acknowledged as being generally acceptable.

See appeal decision App 3.

8.5 An important material factor in the consideration of this appeal is the significant shift in policy formulation as a consequence of the publication of Revised Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 (PPG3): Housing (March 2000). The revised National guidance continues the general thrust of the Government's aims and objectives in seeking to create a more sustainable planning framework through a greater efficiency use of land within urban areas, whilst not comprising the quality of the local environment. In order to achieve the Government's objectives, PPG3 advocates the provision of higher density residential developments of between 30-50 dwellings per hectare. This appeal scheme aims to assist in achieving a greater efficiency of an area of under utilised land within an urban area, whilst seeking to respect the quality of the environment within which it is located.

8.6 National, strategic and local planning policies support the redevelopment/reuse of appropriate site within existing built-up areas, providing the proposals do not detrimentally affect the character of the surrounding area and amenity of local residents. The emerging Wokingham District Local Plan does not identify the appeal site and surrounding environs as falling within a designated Conservation Area or an Area Special Character. It is therefore on this basis and in the light of Revised PPG3 that the appellant's proposals have been considered.

8.7 I have indicated that Wokingham District Council does not have an up to date Adopted Development Plan, although the Wokingham District Local Plan is at an advanced stage of preparation. Furthermore, the Local Plan Authority has recently approved a 'new policy' regarding the density of new development, which reflects the requirements of Revised PPG3. I have demonstrated that the proposed development does not conflict with the objectives of this new policy, and accords with the other policies of the Deposit Draft Wokingham District Local Plan.

8.8 In the assessment of this appeal scheme, I have indicated that a balance needs to be struck between the requirement to ensure the effective and efficient use of land, with the requirement to avoid serious harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. I have sought to demonstrate that the proposed scheme achieves these objectives without detrimentally affecting matters of acknowledged importance.

8.9 The proposed residential scheme represents an acceptable form of development, which can be accommodated without a deleterious affect upon the character of the area or materially impacting upon the amenity of adjoining residential properties.

CONCLUSION:

8.10 In conclusion, I consider the redevelopment of the appeal site provides the opportunity of securing a greater efficiency of underused land with a suitably designed residential scheme, without detrimental harm to the character and amenity of the surrounding area. The proposed scheme will undoubtedly change the existing character of the site and have an impact upon the amenity presently enjoyed by adjoining residents. However, the resultant impact upon the wider character of the surrounding area would be limited and the impact upon existing amenity would be minimal through mitigation measures.

8.11 The publication of Revised PPG3 places increased emphasis upon the objectives of sustainability and the need to achieve a more effective use of presently under utilised land in sustainable locations. It is argued that this National guidance is a significant material consideration in the determination of this appeal, against the local Development Plan policy framework which indicates that the appeal site is not situated within a designated Conservation Area or an identified Area of Special Character.

8.12 The Inspector is therefore respectfully requested to allow this appeal, subject to an appropriate list of relevant planning conditions.

PDL	FLG
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CS 0735	LET
28 FEB 2000	
COPIES TO:	ACK: ✓
	FILE:

THE GABLES,
36 Pound Lane
SONNING
READING
RG4 6GG

Dear Sir/Madam.

I write with reference to your letter of 18/02/00. Your reference: Lynette Baker/F/2000/0578.

Application Number:
F/2000/0578

We purchased our property (opposite the proposed area) 6 years ago, deliberately choosing a mature residential area.

Although we had not realised at the time that plots were to be

built at the side of our property - we had to accept it as planning had been granted, but the difference once they were built was marked - there is definite light deprivation & loss of privacy & increase in traffic. Anyway - this is in the past. We felt secure in the knowledge that we are surrounded by mature properties etc.

However, - this application horrifies us.

The flats have already to some degree altered the nature of the area & I feel are inappropriate

to the character of Pound Lane - & the nature of this character will be further eroded by the proposal of modern properties - even if the proposal is for 'character' properties, they will still be 'modern'.

The air is already very polluted because of proximity to the A4 & volume of traffic on Pound Lane - this will increase with the possibility of 16 ? more vehicles.

We do not know how far back the proposed properties will be, but privacy was a

vital factor when purchasing an property.

Cramming properties into an already heavily populated area seems to be a real rape of the countryside & the beauty of Sonning - ruining its character.

Getting in & out of our driveway is difficult & particularly 7.30-9.30 am. & 4.0-6.0 pm. is a nightmare. Traffic comes off the roundabout on the A4 & into Pound Lane very fast & frequent. It also comes round

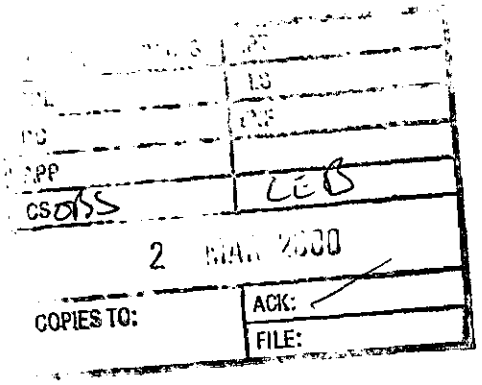
the bend near Driffield Rd. very fast - + the traffic is heavy - making exit very hard. I cannot conceive of a road entering/accessing Pound Lane which will not considerably compound what is already a nightmare - particularly as Pound Lane is also quite narrow due to volume of traffic it carries. Approx. 10 years ago the developers of Westcrest Flats were refused access on to Pound Lane - Wokingham District Council

stating that no further access roads would be allowed. They had to access on to West Drive. I believe this was contested to the Lands & to appeal but Wokingham would not relent & allow access to Pondhouse. This road / pressure would be very close to our driveway & would exacerbate the problem that already exists.

Yours faithfully,

S.P. & R. Courtney

(MR & MRS. S. P. COURTNEY)



48 Pound Lane
Sonning
Reading
RG4 6GG

17.03.00

Wokingham District Council
Shute End
WOKINGHAM RG40 1WR

Ref : F/2000/0577/0578

Dear Sir,

I am writing to object most strongly to the application to build 8 dwellings plus garages on the site of existing houses in Pound Lane, Sonning.

The southern half of Pound Lane contains a wide range of individual dwellings of widely different ages and styles and this defines the character of the neighbourhood. One delightful house is completely thatched and another cottage dates back to before 1840. Already two beautiful houses have been destroyed to make way for three very high apartment blocks. The proposed development would seriously harm the character of the area.

There is, furthermore, the problem of traffic. Butts Hill Road/ Pound Lane is already an extremely busy road with virtually all motorists greatly exceeding the 30 mph limit. I have considerable difficulty driving out from my property. The proposed development will add further to the traffic level and danger. I would like to remind you that there is still no footway over Butts Bridge. It is extremely hazardous walking across the bridge, especially for mothers with young children and or a pram. Two years ago a motorist collided here with a cyclist and almost killed him. The last thing we need in Pound Lane is development creating even more traffic and even more cars trying to enter the traffic stream.

Yours faithfully,

D C Evans

D C Evans

Segrave Lodge, Pound Lane, Sonning, Berkshire, RG4 6GG
Tel: 0118 9442200 Fax: 0118 944 2255

PLANNING SERVICES	HPT
POL	TLS
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APP	
CS 615	LOB
03 APR 2000	
COPIES TO:	ACK
	FILE:

29th March 2000

Mrs L Baker
Environmental Services Dept
Planning Services
PO Box 157
Shute End, Wokingham

Dear Mrs Baker

Re: Planning Applications No F/2000/0577 & F/2000/0578
Site Address: 97-99 Pound Lane, Sonning, Berks.

The initial shock and dismay I felt on learning that the handsome No 97 Pound Lane was earmarked for demolition and redevelopment was somewhat tempered by the discovery that the site was entrusted to Bewley Homes Ltd, a builder with rather more ideas than most. Nonetheless I am bemused by one or two aspects of the proposal.

Clearly the much-vaunted character of this part of Sonning lies not only in the size of each plot, but in the eclectic yet complimentary nature of the dwellings. A stroll up Pound Lane, along Holmemoor Drive and back down West Drive will disclose at least fifty different styles of house, almost all built this (last) century. Some are simply brash while the attractiveness of others lies in their studied understatement, others still may charm in that demure, unprepossessing fashion of Middle England. One thing not yet to be found is an enclave of virtually identical properties in a Close. If my understanding of Local Authority requirement for development in this area is correct, this proposal falls between two styles: 'In Line' and 'Backland'. However, this land parcel would appear to satisfy their need for suitable 'Brownfield' sites to relieve increasing pressure on 'Greenfield'.

Messrs Bewleys' plan reveals a scheme of eight detached dwellings, each with double garage and additional off-road parking (admirable, environmentally sound) served by a single 4.8m carriageway. Am I wrong in thinking the maximum number of such dwellings egressing into a single carriageway is five? Assuming a 9m adopted roadway with it's attendant paraphernalia (raised kerbs, pathways, drains, flood sumps, lighting, 4.5m sight line north?) egressing into the existing thoroughfare would be innappropriate to the purposes of both Developer and Planning Authority, could not the dwellings be served by two separate drives, 4/4 or 5/3? Would not such a configuration, careful not to create 'crossroads' with the accesses oposite, be practicable?

Alternatively, could not the number of houses be reduced? Larger plots, larger houses: simple arithmetic shows the investment value to be the same, common sense decrees that such a development would be more in keeping with the neighbourhood. Such pragmatism would be a more efficacious balm to the furrowed brow of Old Sonningensia than any number of appeals and rejections, culminating in either pyrrhic victory or abject capitulation. Progress in this cobwebby corner is inevitable, but let's for once try and get it right: for everyone concerned. The character of this area was wrought by the vagaries of change over a long period of time: The best way for that character to be sustained is to continue to accept careful, considered innovation. We can all play a part in that. In my experience, collaboration is far more rewarding than confrontation.

Yours sincerely

Is this an objection??

K L S Dennis

MS

Silverdale,
Mustard Lane,
Sonning,
Berkshire
RG4 6GH

PLANNING SERVICES	HPT
COL	TLS
DC	ENF
APP	
CS	
05 78 14 MAR 2000	
COPIES TO: Pound Lane	ACK: ✓
	FILE:

Dear Mrs Baker,

Ref: F2000/0577/05

97-99 Pound Lane

I wish to object most strongly to the above planning application. I give the following reasons.

1) This section of Pound Lane is already extremely busy and, at certain times of the day, there are long queues of traffic trying to get to the A4. Eight extra houses will cause further traffic. Also, with the likelihood that there will be insufficient off road parking in front of the houses, there will probably be on road parking adding to the congestion in the area.

2) If this planning permission is given, all the surrounding houses could be given similar permission. This could mean that the current seven houses could turn into approximately 60 houses. This would cause an unacceptable level of traffic congestion between the A4 and Duffield Road

turning so causing potential dangerous traffic situations as people try to turn out of side turnings across the traffic.

3) This type of development will change the whole character of the area and will de-value the surrounding houses and area. It turns a well laid out section of housing into a densely populated area.

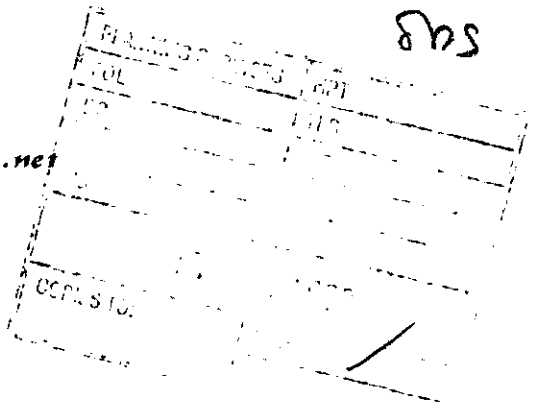
I hope that due attention will be paid to all the objections raised and that this development will not be allowed to proceed.

Yours sincerely,

Rosemarie Edwards

Red Lodge
Old Bath Road
Sonning on Thames
Berkshire
RG4 6TQ

0118 969 5638
e-mail: redsonning@clara.net



Mr Chris Wood
Wokingham District Council
Environmental Services Dept
Planning Services
PO Box 157
Shute End
Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WR

11 March 2000

Dear Mr Wood,

Ref: Application nos: F2000/0577 and F2000/0578

I have strong objection to these two planning applications on the following grounds:

1) The proposal to replace two existing houses with eight fairly large properties would create an estate of very high density compared to the surrounding properties. This high concentration would be a very significant change to the existing character of the area.

2) The proposals for a 4.8 metre road access to the properties are inevitably inadequate due to the restricted space in which these eight properties are proposed to be built.

3) The proposed access to Pound Lane is at a point which would create a very substantial additional traffic hazard for the following reasons:

- Pound Lane is extremely busy at that point near the large roundabout junction with the A4.
- Pound Lane is a rather narrow road considering the large volume and speed of traffic which it is handling at this point.
- Traffic coming from the A4 towards Woodley is inevitably travelling at excessive speed at this point and the risk of accident would be high. Indeed traffic is often accelerating swiftly away from the roundabout when entering Pound Lane.
- Stopping distance from the A4 roundabout to the proposed site access is not adequate, given the various hazards involved
- The lines of site at the junction of the proposed site together with Pound Lane would be very poor, again significantly increasing the likelihood of accidents.
- There are a number of children making their way to the primary school in the Sonning Village direction, and the proposals would increase the likelihood of a serious pedestrian accident in this area, with the possibility of this involving a young child.

- The number of turning movements and junction crossings which would take place at the junction of the access with Pound Lane would create an additional unacceptable hazard.

4) There will be a significant reduction in the existing light and air enjoyment of neighbouring properties, particularly those properties directly adjacent to the proposed site.

5) There is a possibility that sewers in the area would be overloaded, given the very significant change in proposed housing density.

6) It would appear that in any event the existing properties have not been displaying, as required, the red planning application notices which should appear at both 97 and 99 Pound Lane. I have not seen a notice displayed at either property during the last seven days.

It would also appear to be the case that some felling of mature trees has recently taken place at number 97 Pound Lane in anticipation of the Council's consideration of the application.

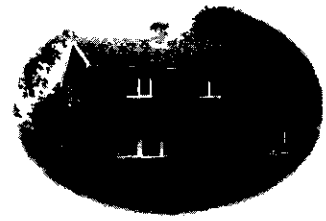
In summary I believe that the proposal is untenable on a number of grounds as stated above and should therefore be rejected by the Council.

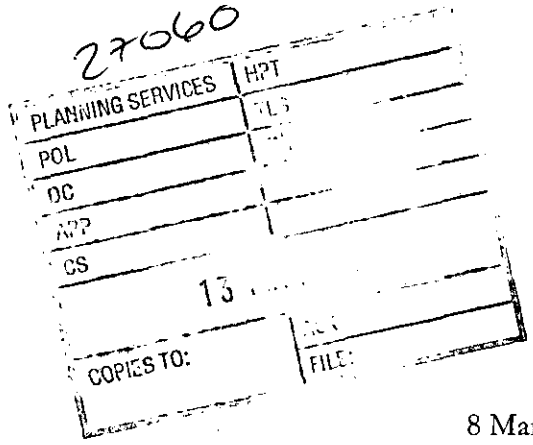
Yours sincerely,



Maurice Lawson

Acorns West Drive Sonning Berkshire RG4 6GD Tel/Fax 0118 944 2877





Mrs L Baker
Wokingham District Council
Shute End
Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WR

8 March, 2000

Dear Mrs Baker,

Planning Application 97-99 Pound Lane
Ref: F/2000/0577/0578

We would like to express our concern over the proposed erection of eight dwellings plus garages on the above site and would ask that this application is rejected. We have three main objections:

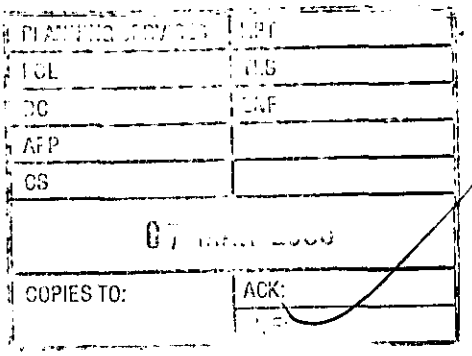
1. To have eight dwellings on the site where there are currently two would significantly change the character of Pound Lane on this side of the A4.

2. Pound Lane, this side of the A4, is extremely busy. To have an entrance for so many vehicles on to Pound Lane so near to the roundabout would be dangerous and a potential accident blackspot.

3. You will remember that there was an absolute insistence that the entrance to West Court was situated in West Drive, rather than Pound Lane, because the planners would not accept another road entering Pound Lane at this point. To ensure consistency of planning strategy, it would be unacceptable if this proposal was allowed to change a concept so well established during the West Court approval process.

Yours sincerely,

Gordon and Mary Jones



DNS

"Gaybowers"
95, Pound Lane,
Sonning,
Berkshire,
RG4 6GG.

6th. March 2000.

Lynette Baker,
Environmental Services Department,
Planning Services,
P.O. Box 157,
Shute End, Wokingham,
Berkshire, RG40 1WR.

Dear Madam,

Re. Application No.-F/2000/0578 - 97 - 99 Pound Lane, Sonning Berks.

With reference to your letter of the 18th. February 2000 subject as above I would like the following comments to be taken into account when considering and hopefully rejecting this Application.

I am the Owner/Occupier of 95, Pound Lane, Sonning, which borders 97,Pound Lane therefore I and my family have a direct interest in any new development permitted on land adjoining mine.

Your attention is drawn to the very important fact that both 97 and 99 Pound Lane are substantial and very desireable individual residential properties in excellent state of repair fully contributing to the unique character of Pound Lane south. It is to be regretted that the owners of these two properties have been persuaded to to participate in a development scheme which requires the demolition of their existing houses and erection of eight new houses which, if permitted, will totally and irrevocably diminish the character of the immediate neighbourhood.

There are of course other reasons, of a technical nature, why this application should be refused eg. Highways including close proximity to major A4 roundabout, access and egress to and from proposed development for both vehicles and pedestrians and intrusion into the right of adjoining properties to enjoy existing benefit of light air and privacy. I am confident that you will have such matters very much in mind when considering this application.

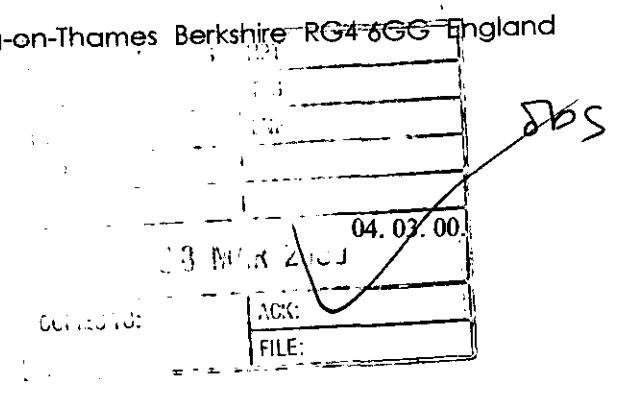
I express the very sincere hope that you will not permit the unique character of Pound Lane south to be in any way changed and that you will see fit to refuse this application. I await to learn the result of your deliberations.

Yours faithfully,

W. A. Warbey.

Egmont House 101a Pound Lane Sonning-on-Thames Berkshire RG4 6GG England

Bernard Crowley



Planning Dept. Wokingham District Council.
Shute End. Wokingham.

Re:-Application F/2000/0578. 97/99 Pound Lane.

Dear Officers,

Although as of Mar.3 no orange notice was on public display,I was advised of this proposal by Sonning Parish Council and have seen the plan of the proposed development. Apart from the obvious ie that the proposal is quite out of character with this part of Pound Lane,I have the following concerns.

Roading: appears somewhat narrow and I do not recall a footpath.

Access: The proposed access road is close to the A4 roundabout and is in a 30MPH zone. However numerous cars coming off the A4 where they have been moving at 60+ MPH are travelling well in excess of 30MPH when entering Pound Lane. Note further the somewhat limited line of sight due to walls either side of exit.

Drainage: Already there are problems with drainage in this part of Pound Lane.Are there any proposals to improve drainage before additional demands are placed on the system?

Safety: I have observed school pupils from West Drive cycling to school are already having considerable difficulty in entering and particularly crossing Pound Lane.

General:Prior to the DoE Inspector overturning the WDC rejection of the West Court development this part of Pound Lane consisted of detatched houses on relatively large plots. The tall substantial and intrusive blocks of the West Court development represented the first successful assault on this harmony. Although the Inspector insisted that the West Court development should not be seen as a precedent, it was soon seized on by the Sonning Golf Club for their high density proposal. In this case, the DoE Inspector concurred with the WDC rejection.

We now have yet a further scheme for an unsympathetic development totally out of character with the area. The recent downing of two fine trees no doubt being a preliminary to further mayhem.

It is submitted that this section of Pound Lane has already made a disproportionate contribution to high density accomodation (West Court) and what remains of the original vision should be left undisturbed.

Yours faithfully,

Phone/fax: 0118 969 3284 **International:** 44 118 969 3284

PLANNING SERVICES | HPT
POL | TL
DC
DS OBS | LCB
COPIES TO:

Your Ref: Lynette Baker / F/2000/0577

The Copse
103 Pound Lane
Sonning
RG4 6GG

2 March 2000

Dear Madam

Application No F/2000/0577

Site Address: 97-99 Pound Lane, Sonning

As a resident in Pound Lane since 1979 **I am objecting in the strongest terms** at the intention to **squeeze in eight large houses** into an area that currently accommodates two units. If the development is allowed to proceed the whole character and charm of the current street scene will be placed in jeopardy. The density of houses proposed is alien to this side of Pound Lane south of the A4.

Traffic tears down this stretch of road and the sight lines from the proposed exit to the roundabout are **inadequate to ensure safety**. I would anticipate at least sixteen cars endeavouring to exit on to Pound Lane plus cycles, etc., and, in my view, this is an accident waiting to happen! A walk or ride to the local village school on the other side of the A4 roundabout is fraught with potential danger. . .

Reduction of sun and light on the three properties adjoining the sight is also a major factor as is the potential disturbance and noise in comparison to the current tranquil setting. Eight adjacent squashed houses represents a very different situation and would certainly change the current status quo.

The properties opposite the proposed exit would suffer extreme inconvenience because of the additional traffic hassle. **Flooding** is also a problem in this area of Pound Lane and very special care would have to be taken by the developers to upgrade the existing drains that currently are wholly inadequate. Heavy rain always causes the road to flood.

The Parish Council is against this Application as are all residents in the surrounding vicinity. I urge Wokingham District Council Planning Committee to reject this Application.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to object.

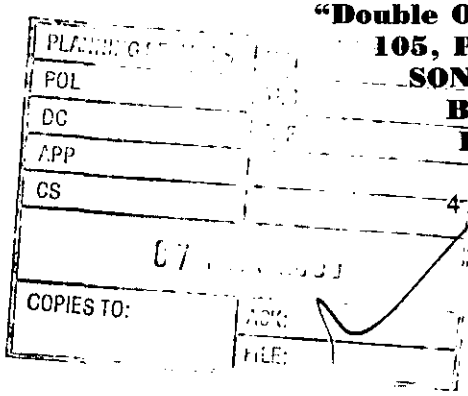
Yours faithfully,

ROGER SIMMONDS

805

"Double Oaks",
105, Pound Lane,
SONNING,
Berkshire
RG4 6GG

4 March, 2000



Mrs L Baker,
Wokingham District Council,
Shute End,
WOKINGHAM
RG40 1WR

Dear Mrs Baker,

Planning application, 97-99 Pound Lane, ref: F2000/0577/0578

I write with reference to the above planning application to erect 8 dwellings and garages on the site of two existing houses.

As a resident of Pound Lane, I wish to register my very strong objections to this application. Two substantial houses in good condition currently occupy the site in question. Demolition of these houses and replacement with a development of 8 houses would substantially change the character of the area, and would lead to a significant loss of amenity on the part of existing residents. The area is currently occupied by houses similar to those on the site in question, with mature and substantial gardens. Introduction of a high-density development such as that proposed would be quite out of keeping with the area.

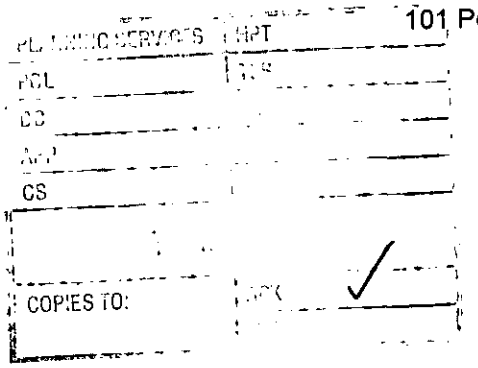
In addition, the site in question is in close proximity to the roundabout where Pound Lane crosses the A4 Bath Road. Although there is a 30mph speed limit on Pound Lane going in both directions, traffic coming off the A4 and heading southwards on Pound Lane is, at the site in question, accelerating away from the roundabout. Having a dense development at this location is likely to lead to congestion and the likelihood of accidents will also be increased. As there are already many issues surrounding traffic safety on Pound Lane, in particular with traffic speed and congestion, and the need for children from parts of Sonning south of the A4 to cross the road to reach schools, the proposed development would lead to additional unnecessary burdens on local residents.

Yours sincerely,

Dr J B Brooke

805

101 Pound Lane
Sonning
Berkshire
RG4 6GG



Wokingham District Council,
Environmental Services Dept,
PO Box 157
Shute End,
Wokingham,
Berks.
RG40 1WR

7th March 2000

Ref. F/2000/0577

Dear Lynette Baker

Thank you for your letter of the 18th February 2000.

I would like to voice my objections to the proposed planning application on several points:

1) I am concerned, with the concept of allowing extra traffic to join and leave what is already a very busy road. My own entrance is some 30 metres further south from the roundabout, than that of the proposed sight. We have had many bad experiences in this vicinity with cars being shunted whilst attempting to turn into and out of drives, from vehicles leaving the roundabout at speed in excess of 35 mph. and accelerating. To increase the risk of an accident, by adding possibly 16 extra cars, seems to be a step too far.

2) Is it really the intention of the developers to attempt to gain permission to erect eight houses on a sight with only a driveway to service all of the amenities.
Is this normal planning policy?
Perhaps it is seen as a cheap option, or is it that they are simply trying to avoid, building a road, so as to rule out opposition from the highways department.

3) Is it the intention of the developers to replace the existing drainage systems, or does this proposed development mean extra flow into the already over-used systems, which as you know already flood at the mere sight of rain.

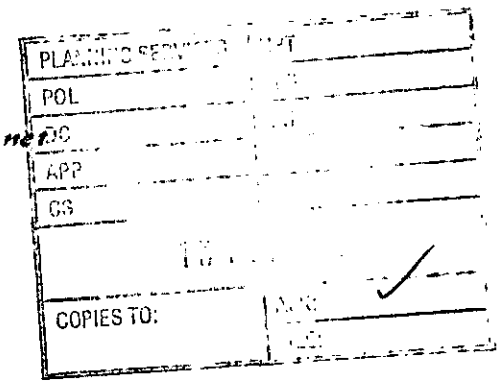
4) Finally the proposed application seems to ignore the area that exists, which is one of large houses with large plots.
Villages like Sonning, need all types of housing, large and small, But If areas are repeatedly broken down into small lot's, then my concern is that we might all be living in a "New Town" if developers get there way.
The planners, we hope have the people and the area foremost in the minds. Unlike the developers who seem to just see £ signs.

Yours sincerely

Stuart W Robertson

Red Lodge
Old Bath Road
Sonning on Thames
Berkshire
RG4 6TQ

0118 969 5638
e-mail: redsonning@clara.net



Mr Chris Wood
Wokingham District Council
Environmental Services Dept
Planning Services
PO Box 157
Shute End
Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WR

11 March 2000

Dear Mr Wood,

Ref: Application nos: F2000/0577 and F2000/0578

Please note my objections to the above two planning applications:

1) Replacing two properties with eight large houses would be a very high density compared with neighbouring properties and this would change the existing character of the area to a very significant degree.

2) I am very worried about the implications for road safety in the area since Pound Lane is an extremely busy, but narrow road. Traffic comes very quickly from the roundabout, and there would be very little room to judge speed and stopping distance properly. As a local teacher I am particularly concerned about the additional hazards that this development would create for children walking to the local school.

I do not think that this proposal is suitable in any way and I believe that it should not be permitted to proceed.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Janet Lawson

Flat 15, West Court
West Drive
Sonning
Berks RG4 6GL
0118 969 3020

DMS

PLANNING SERVICES	HPT
POL	TLS
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APP	
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15 MAR 2000	
COPIES TO:	ACK: ✓
	FILE:

10th March, 2000.

Wokingham District Council
Shute End
Wokingham RG40 1WR

Attention: Mrs. L.Baker

Dear Sirs,

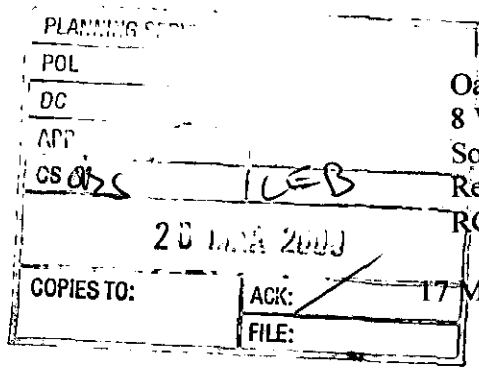
Planning Application Ref: F2000/0577/9578
97-99 Pound Lane

I am writing to express my opposition to the above specified application. I was appalled to learn that yet another development is being considered for this area which is already overcrowded and suffering from dense traffic with consequent air pollution.

The Council must be aware that the roundabout at the junction of the A4 and Pound Lane is very heavily used and that at certain times of the day, it can take as much as 15-20 minutes to get through the village to the bridge. To build yet more homes, on top of the recently completed Shanley House development (just down the A4) can only add to the problem and cause further discomfort to the residents of Sonning. What was once a very pretty village, is becoming more and more congested and is in danger of losing its viability as a village. I hope, therefore, that the Wokingham District Council will not permit any further development of this area.

Yours faithfully,

Rosemary Noël-Clarke.



Oak Lodge
8 West Drive
Sonning
Reading
RG4 6GD

17 March 2000

Wokingham District Council
Shute End
Wokingham
RG40 1WR

Attention Mrs. L Baker

Dear Sirs

Planning Application No. F/2000/0577/0578

I am writing to object to the above planning application on the following grounds:

1. The density of the proposed development would seriously change the character of the area. In this connection it must be borne in mind that it is necessary not only to consider the area along Pound Lane, where the properties in question are situated, but also along West Drive which runs off Pound Lane close to them. If planning consent were to be granted in this case it would almost certainly create a precedent for the back filling of the plots along West Drive. If this were to happen the character of the whole area would be detrimentally changed. There are approximately 35 houses along West Drive most of which have relatively large gardens. An in-fill of this area would, in my view, be catastrophic and would convert what is currently a pleasant and relatively exclusive area into another housing estate.

2. The traffic at this part of Pound Lane is congested and vehicles coming off the A4 towards Woodley do so at speed (despite the 30mph signs) and the creation of a development of 8 new houses along this stretch would be dangerous. The proposed 8 dwellings are substantial and it is probable that the residents in each house would own at least two cars.

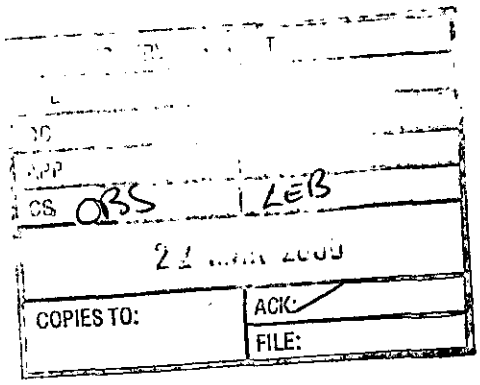
For the reasons stated I recommend that every action be taken to preclude any further increase in the number of dwellings on the plots in question.

Yours faithfully

Mr. A.G. Williams

F/2000/0577
0578

Mr & Mrs D. M. Turner
White Roses, 9 Holmemoor Dr
Sonning-on-Thames, Reading
Berkshire RG4 6TE
Tel. 0118 969 2611



18 March 2000

For attention: Sue Baker

Wokingham District Council
Shute End
Wokingham

Dear Madam

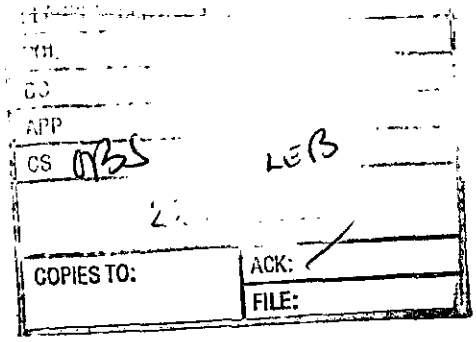
Re: Planning Permission to build houses 97/99 Pound Lane Sonning

We wish to register our very strong objection to any sort of housing development in Sonning. The ethos of this village is being ruined by this sort of planning permission, and already the traffic situation in Sonning is unbearable. To try and get out of any of the side roads onto the A4 during the morning and evening periods is well nigh impossible and any sort of building will produce at the very least, two more cars per house.

Also the traffic going through Sonning and over the Bridge is at impossible levels and any further development can only worsen this situation.

Yours faithfully

A M and D M TURNER



POUND COTTAGE
POUND LANE
SONNING ON THAMES
BERKSHIRE
RG4 6XE

TEL. (0118) 969 3279
E-MAIL : trefor@compuserve.com

17th March 2000

Ref : F2000/0577/0578
Attn : Mrs. L. Baker,
Planning Dept.,
Wokingham District Council,
Shute End,
WOKINGHAM,
RG40 1WR

Dear Madam,

Re : Planning Application - 97-99 Pound Lane, Sonning

We have recently seen the proposed plans for the above site and wish to object to these plans in the strongest terms.

The intention to knock down two fine houses is completely inappropriate. Although outside of the Conservation Area of Sonning, these houses are very much a part of the village and contribute greatly to the character of this part of Pound Lane. Allowing this development would set a dangerous precedent for similar properties all over the village and eventually change the identity of the entire area.

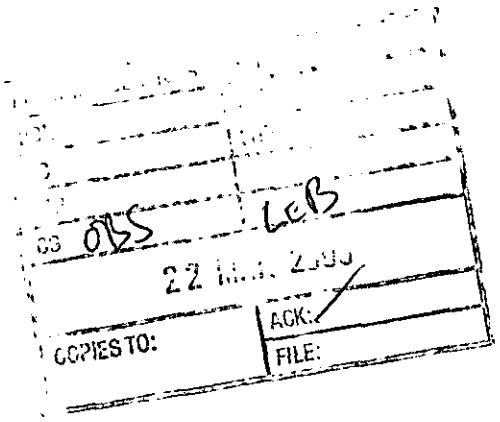
The number of houses to be built is also a matter of great concern, with its building density completely at odds with the surrounding area. The amount of traffic generated (possibly 16 to 20 cars pertaining to the site?) would be unacceptable, particularly bearing in mind its close proximity to the exit from the Pound Lane / A4 roundabout. Exiting (in particular) and entering the proposed cul-de-sac would be a hazardous task bearing in mind the speed of the traffic entering Pound Lane from the A4.

We urge you to reject the proposal forthwith.

Yours faithfully,

Patricia Fisher

Patricia and Trefor Fisher.



10 Hawthorne Way
Sonning
Reading
Berkshire
RG4 6TG

18 March 2000

Mrs L Baker
Wokingham District Council
Shute End
Wokingham
RG40 1WR

Dear Mrs Baker

Reference F2000/0577/0578
Planning Application - 97-99 Pound Lane, Sonning

We are disappointed to hear that a development of 8 dwellings plus garages is planned for the above site in Pound Lane, Sonning.

To contemplate building more houses in an area already suffering from heavy traffic flow is unbelievable. In addition the density of the proposed development of 8 dwellings in this position would change the character of the area considerably

We sincerely hope this planning application is turned down.

Yours sincerely

Mr & Mrs E R Wittig

Stuart Michael Associates
CONSULTING CIVIL ENGINEERS
PLANNING • DESIGN • PROJECT CO-ORDINATION

29 Kingfisher Court, Hambridge Road
Newbury, Berkshire RG14 5SJ
Newbury Tel: 01635 551511
Fax: 01635 550405
Egham Tel: 01784 471923
Fax: 01784 432319
e-mail: stuartmichael@btinternet.com

Our Ref: 1114/RMEH/fhr

27 March 2000

P10.
19013.
22.
SNA

Wokingham District Council
Environmental Services Department
P O Box 153
Shute End
WOKINGHAM
Berkshire RG40 1WL

FAO: Mr S N Auton

Dear Sir

Re: PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT POUND LANE, SONNING
VEHICULAR ACCESS

We refer to your letter dated 22 March 2000 and your telephone conversations with Dave Barker and the undersigned.

We note your concerns regarding traffic queues on Pound Lane and vehicle speeds. We have been asked by our client to address these concerns with a view to overcoming potential highway objections.

We should be grateful if you would ask the Planning Officer to hold the Application in abeyance for a period of 4 weeks to permit us to undertake traffic surveys and prepare supplementary technical submissions for your consideration.

Meanwhile, we should be pleased if you would forward us a copy of your comments on the Application.

Yours sincerely

R M E Hewitt
STUART MICHAEL ASSOCIATES

cc: A Brooks – Bewley Homes Plc
R Gandy – PDA

Partners: S. M. Atkinson B.Sc (Hons), C. Eng., M.I.C.E., M.I.H.T., M.A.P.M.
R. M. E. Hewitt B.Sc (Hons), C. Eng., M.I.C.E., M.I.H.T.
Associates: S. W. Andrews M.I.H.T.
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Tel. No. 0118 974 6332 (Direct Line) Fax. 0118 974 6313

Date: 7th April 2000.

Your ref. 1114/RMEH.fhr

My ref. SNA/NK/P10 [19013]

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Mr. R. M. E. Hewitt,
Stuart Michael Associates,
29 Kingfisher Court,
Hambridge Road,
Newbury, Berkshire.
RG14 5SJ

Dear Mr. Hewitt,

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT - 97-99 POUND LANE, SONNING

I refer to your letter dated 27th March regarding the recent Planning Application for the above.

It is not possible for the Application to be held back, as you request, as it has been registered. The only way would be for the Application to be withdrawn. (Practically, I doubt if it would be dealt with within the four weeks you mention as the workload of our Planning Officers would probably preclude this.

I enclose a copy of my response to the Planning Officer as requested.

If you have any further queries please contact me again.

Yours faithfully,

S. N. AUTON
Senior Assistant Engineer

Enc.
cc Mrs. L. Baker, Planning