

MEMORANDUM

From:	Brigitte Crafer Landscape Architect		
Service	WBC Landscape and Trees	App No:	242654
Address:	Ye Olde Leathern Bottel, 221 Barkham Road, Wokingham, RG41 4BY.		
Proposal:	Full application for the proposed erection of a single storey extension to the existing public house to include remodelled pub/kitchen, first floor extension and loft conversion to create 5no. rooms of accommodation along with changes to fenestration and installation of additional roof lights plus associated changes to access, parking and other ancillary works.		
Type of Development:	Minor All other developments		
Site Visit Made:	Yes/No		

Summary Of Recommendations

- ☐ No comment
- ☐ No objection
- ☐ No objection subject to conditions (and reasons) **stated below**
- ☐ Request further information before determination as **stated below**
- ☒ Objection due to the reason(s) **stated below**

Comments On Proposal

SITE LOCATION

The site is located along Barkham Road, which is a Green Route as per the Designations Map. Green Routes so named, apply to key routes in the borough that are mostly lined with significant trees, woodland and landscaping. Many of the trees along the Green Routes are protected and some are recognised as Veteran trees, as is the case with Barkham Road.

The site is located in the countryside between the settlements of Wokingham and Barkham. The existing entrance to the Olde Leathern Bottle Pub extends into the site to the northwards to a large car park which is edged with a consistent tree screen to the paddock beyond. The whole site is characterised by trees; to the front of the site, there were until Summer '23, 2 large fine Oak trees to the west of the entrance, and another equally fine Oak tree on the corner of the access to Bottel Farm. There

is tree screening to the east along Limmerhill Lane, and trees screening the boundary with Bottel Farm. The site is very typical of the wooded character of the J2 landscape and setting of dwellings along Barkham Road. In fact, there is clear tract of woodland from Bottel Copse in the south to Fox Hill woods to the north-west, which is only broken by the paddock to the north.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

The Green Route of Barkham Road marks the division between landscape character areas (LCA) J1 and J2. The site is located on the southern edge of J1 'Wokingham and Winnersh Settled and Farm Clay' but is more akin to LCA J2 'Arborfield Cross Settled and Farmed Clay' where the key characteristics comprise; a gently undulating landscape with consistent patterns of water bodies including wet woodland and wetland habitats often designated as LWS such as Bottel Copse. A wooded context is provided by characteristic mature hedgerow and in-field trees, combined with woodland belts, BAP priority habitats and ancient woodlands and the wooded hills on the horizon which combine to create a loose sense of enclosure. A network of busy roads connect small nucleated villages such as Barkham and tend to be rural in character with ditches and hedges, and hedgerow trees (such as the site boundaries).

The site is typical of this landscape character.

The Landscape Strategy for LCA J2 is to conserve and enhance the remaining rural character of the landscape. The key aspects to be conserved and enhanced are the field patterns with mature hedgerow trees, wetland and woodland habitats, rural lanes and historic features. In terms of development, the aim is to integrate new development into its landscape setting and retain the open and rural character of the landscape between settlements.

The site is located in the 'Barkham Bearwood Valued Landscape'. The Valuable Landscape Attributes for J2 relevant to this application are;

Pattern of arable and pastoral fields, which provides a rural character away from settlement, and creates an important separation between settlements.

Mature hedgerow trees and in-field trees which provide a wooded character and visual interest within the landscape.

Rural settlement pattern of farms, hamlets and small nucleated villages outside the urban area which provides a rural character and a link to the past.

Recreational value of the network of rights of way between settlements.

Views across the landscape to surrounding character areas, particularly across the river valleys to the west and to the wooded hills to the north and south provides a loose sense of enclosure.

Trees within the application site are protected by TPO 1933/2023 which consists of an Areas and individually protected trees. Along Limmerhill Lane to the NE the hedgerow is protected by TPO 1949/2024, which also includes other Areas of protected trees within the site to the north, and single trees.

The site is opposite an area TPO ref. 5/1972 consisting of a line of mature trees that provides a screen between Barkham Road and Folly Court. Opposite the site to the west is Bottel Copse a Local Wildlife Site of wet woodland and lowland mixed deciduous woodland. The woodland is protected by TPO1648/2018. There are many trees along both sides of Barkham Road assessed as Veteran trees by the Wokingham District Veteran Tree Association (WDTVA). The site, set just back from the Barkham Road is at the top of one of the small undulating valleys typical of the character area. To the north the land slopes down across open paddocks to a brook.

Arboricultural Information

An Arboricultural Impact Assessment - DPA – October 2024 is submitted with the application. Small sections of a group of trees and shrubs G3, 2 trees T4 and T25, and a section of hedge will need to be removed to facilitate development. A Tree Survey Schedule and 'Existing Site Layout – Tree Survey' – Dwg. Ref. DPA-5070-01 Rev. B Oct. '24, and 'Existing Site Layout – Tree Protection Plan' – Dwg. DPA-5070-02 Rev. B and 'Proposed Site Layout (Tree Protection Plan) – Dwg. Ref. DPA-5070-03 Rev. B are included.

A previous application 231900 previously demonstrated in the 'Proposed Site Layout – Tree Protection Plan' that of the predicted western visibility splays, grazes the edge of the Oak T1. This tree is recognised as a Veteran tree by the Woodland Trust, and is on the Ancient Tree Inventory Ref. 46688. These are not shown on the current 'Proposed Site Layout - Tree Protection Plan'.

Recent applications on this site include;

PA 231900 – 8/23 for the creation of a new access, a very similar configuration as this current application except the new application has the addition of a footpath all the way along the SW and W side of the road and a footway extending partially into the site from the entrance.)

PA 232621 – 10/23 for 60 dwellings (accessed by the proposed new access see above, on land to the north of the pub.

Proposals

The proposals are for;

Full application for the proposed erection of a single storey extension to the existing public house to include remodelled pub/kitchen, first floor extension and loft conversion to create 5no. rooms of accommodation along with changes to fenestration and installation of additional roof lights plus associated changes to access, parking and other ancillary works.

Conclusion

It is clear from the Proposed Site Plan – Drawing No. LWD02-MAA-00-XX-DG-A-0002 - Rev.PO7 that the key issue of the application is the access to the site beyond to the north (also subject of previously refused planning applications, including the an application for 60 dwellings), which is clearly not required to build the extension to the pub, as the existing access, parking and landscaping still functions extremely well.

The reconfigured access is an incongruity of the application and would still have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the area and the countryside.. The access will give the appearance of an adopted road, with engineering operations and lighting associative with a permanent feature that will compromise the rural character of the country pub and its wooded setting, which ultimately will result in an urbanising feature that fails to uphold the existing high quality of the setting.

The proposals are contrary to Policies CP1, CP3 of the CS and Policies CC03 and TB21 of the Local Plan, I am unable to support them.

Conditions & Reasons (if required)			
Date:	10-12-24	Signed:	B. Crafer