

MEMORANDUM

From:	Catherine Brimble Senior Landscape Officer		
Service	WBC Landscape and Trees	App No:	252179
Address:	Unit 1, 171 Evendons Lane, Wokingham, RG41 4EH.		
Proposal:	Application for the approval of reserved matters pursuant to outline planning consent 231351 for the erection of a 64-bed care home (Use Class C2) with site access, parking, hard and soft landscaping and other associated works following demolition of existing commercial buildings. Reserved Matters to be considered for Landscaping, Siting, Scale and External Appearance.		
Type of Development:	Major 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

Revised information has been submitted with this application to address a number of the issues raised by officers, and this includes a landscape response by ijAL dated November 2025. I have amended my comments as necessary where issues have been resolved or clarified, but there are still a number of concerns that remain to be addressed.

This RM application has been submitted alongside a condition's application 252255.

Design and Layout

A DAS has now been provided however there is very scant information provided as to the development of the design, scale and external appearance of the care home which was not addressed as part of the outline application. Several CGI images were provided at outline as to what the building could look like with limited details given in the outline DAS indicating the building would be 2.5 storeys high and contain three wings connected by 2 'glazed links'. The floor plans and elevations now provided through this RM application show a large bulky building with no differential

in the roof heights to distinguish the three separate wings and neither is there any reference to the glazed links between the wings. The main elevation which includes the front entrance, draws attention to the two of the gable-ends of the wings which are partially blank due to a lack of windows. Overall, the design of the care home building will need to address the requirements of Core Strategy policy CP3 which state proposals should be of an *appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area together with a high quality of design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life*. Also, the Wokingham Borough Design Guide principles NR5, NR6 & NR7 provides further information on the need to reduce the massing and form of the building and to introduce some articulation into the roofline.

The DAS contains a Site Sections Plan which also includes a plan showing the footprint of the care home at outline and how this has changed as part of this RM application. Further details and explanation of these changes including the proposed increase in the footprint of the building, will need to be provided in the DAS. The section is not particular clear due to the inclusion of the existing trees along Evendons Lane and therefore these mask the difference in heights of the proposed care home in relation to the Rosary Cottage.

I have mentioned the issues of ground level change in relation to trees within the arboricultural section below but it is important to reiterate here that we will need to fully understand the proposed level changes across the site. This information is required especially if these changes impact on the existing landscape features to be retained or will increase views of the care home due to a rise in levels at the southern end of the site.

Further information has been given regarding the location of the bin store which is shown adjacent to the site entrance in an area identified on the parameters plan as green infrastructure. Although it is understood that the location at outline was shown in the RPA's of the Scots Pine trees I would point out that a large proportion of the Pines are now being removed plus the foundation of the bin store could be easily designed to reduce the impact on the trees. As previously stated we consider this proposed location is not acceptable and will need to be relocated to the side of the care home as previously indicated on the Indicative Site Layout provided with the outline application. Wokingham Borough Design Guide principle NR11 clearly indicates that servicing of non-residential buildings should be sensitively considered and located away from the arrival points and street frontages.

With regard to the location of the cycle store, I still consider its current location is visual dominant being opposite the site entrance when this area should be used for planting to ensure the level of landscaping that relates to the semi-rural character of the site and countryside location. I note in the landscape response that the cycle store should be in main sight of the main entrance of the building, however where it is located it is not in sight of the main entrance to the building as it is tucked round the corner. An alternative location would be opposite the main access into the building and close to the pedestrian access. With appropriate landscaping and a lightweight foundation design in the RPA of tree #19 this would be a much better solution.

Details of the six additional structures shown on the Proposed Site Plan have now been provided. However, I don't accept that these can't be rationalised in some way to reduce the number of separate structures. Perhaps bespoke structures could be built rather than buying off the shelf products. As previously stated it is important that the open spaces around the care home are relatively structure free as this is still a countryside location and proposals will need to respond to its setting in accordance with Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21.

Arboriculture

An Arboricultural Report (revision A) including a Tree Protection Plan by Mark Welby dated 13th November 2025 has now been submitted as part of this RM application as requested.

The AIA and Tree Protection Plan have been amended to address the issues I have raised in my earlier comments as follows:

- The number of dead stems of Scots Pines identified as group #17 have now been identified.
- The mixed broadleaf hedgerow (# 12) along Evendons Lane is also now shown as being removed as it can't be retained due to proposed level changes.
- The parking bays within the RPA of #28 a category B Oak, are now identified as being of a no-dig construction on the TPP.
- The AIA has now been updated to consider the impacts of the proposed site compound area on the adjacent trees.

I have no objection to these amendments and note that additional planting has been proposed where these removals are now shown (see landscape section below).

One area that has not been fully resolved is the issue regarding a change in levels across the site. Paragraph 5.15 (4th bullet point) of the Arboricultural Report states that inside the exclusion zone the following will apply.

No lowering of levels for any purpose (except removal of grass sward using hand tools)

The levels around the parking bays in the RPA of tree #28 are shown to be lowered so it is not clear how a no-dig surface can be implemented in this location. As previously stated there appears to be other conflicts where proposed changes in ground level across the site encroach into the construction exclusion zone inside the tree protection fencing when considering the Proposed Levels drawing provided through the condition's application. This is not acceptable and will need to be re-examined to design out any ground level changes in these areas, as ground level changes however small could lead to the decline in health of the retained trees.

Landscape

A revised Landscape Masterplan (P04) and revised detailed landscape drawings (P04) have been submitted as part of this RM application. I note the following changes have been made to respond to my previous comments:

- Additional native mix planting where groups of Ash will need to be removed.

- Additional native mix planting and feathered trees proposed to fill in the gaps which will be created by the removal of a number of the dead and dying Scots Pines (#17).
- Additional native mix planting and specimen trees between the proposed hedgerow and the red line of the site along Evendons Lane to mitigate for the removal of existing vegetation due to increased level changes.
- The existing access off Evendons Lane is now shown for removal and native buffer planting extending across this area.
- Additional small trees have been included adjacent to the parking bays.
- Timber post and rail fencing proposed in the precedent images show a more rural style chestnut cleft fencing which is much more appropriate.

I note that the detailed landscape plans have also been provided with the amendments, however I will comment on these though the conditions application once we have approved the RM application.

Conclusion

Although additional and revised information has been provided with this application there are still a number of issues that need to be resolved to our satisfaction prior to approval.

Conditions & Reasons (if required)

Possible conditions to be suggested once further information has been provided to address my comments.

Date:

10th December 2025

Signed:

C. Brimble