

MEMORANDUM

From:	Brigitte Crafer Landscape Architect		
Service	WBC Landscape and Trees	App No:	253122
Address:	Land at Cooks Hill Cottage, Bath Road, Knowl Hill.		
Proposal:	Permission in Principle application for the erection of up to 2 dwellinghouses, plus the retention of the existing Cooks Hill Cottage.		
Type of Development:	Minor Dwellings (1-9)		
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 Setting

The site is located to the west side of Bath Road in the village of Knowl Hill, a settlement that is strung out along the A4 Bath Road a Green Route, where residential dwellings with landscaped frontages, manor houses and parkland are located side by side with commercial businesses.

The site proposal is 'Planning in Principle' is for the erection of up to 2 dwellings.

A previous 'Planning in Principle' application for this site was submitted at the end of 2025 and was for up to 5 dwellings.

The site is .72 ha. It has been neglected and is overgrown. Cooks Cottage is derelict but looks like a traditional old brick built cottage. There are also 2 Nissan Huts on the site, and other outbuildings.

The site is covered with an area TPO 1639/2018 which is a far reaching protection order extending far beyond the boundaries of this site.

Valued Landscape and Landscape Character

The site forms part of the eastern boundary of the 'Bowsey Hill Valued Landscape'.

A number of Valued Landscapes within Wokingham Borough were initially identified through a Topic Paper on Valued Landscapes by WBC dated January 2020 to respond to paragraph 187 (a) of the NPPF and prepared as part of the evidence base for the Emerging Local Plan Update and associated Policy NE6. Further work has recently been undertaken to make refinements to the boundaries of the valued landscape areas to update the assessment and this has now been published in the Valued Landscapes Assessment dated September 2024 as part of the evidence studies produced for the current consultation related to the Local Plan Update: Proposed Submission Plan (Regulation 19).

The NPPF indicates that these landscapes will need to be protected and enhanced, so therefore we will need to understand how the proposed development on this site can address this aspect. No information has been provided in this regard and therefore the application does not accord with the requirements of NPPF paragraph 187 (a).

Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (WBLCA), dated November 2019, identifies a number of different landscape character areas (LCA's) across the Borough and provides key information regarding each of the LCA's. This site falls within the G1 'Hare Hatch Farmed Chalk Slopes' landscape character area.

In order to understand the effects of the proposed development on the surrounding landscape character, the application will need to be accompanied by a landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) to support new development within the countryside as required by Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21.

The LVIA will need to fully consider how the proposals address the key characteristics of this landscape character area and specifically how the impacts of the development can be reduced and mitigated by sympathetic and appropriate design principles. No information has been provided with the application to assess landscape character and therefore the application is currently contrary to Local Plan policy TB21.

We would expect a site appropriate landscape strategy / vision for the site to be developed from the findings of the LVIA that complies with Policy TB21 and CC03 of the Local Plan, as well as detailed Landscape and Planting proposals.

An Arboricultural Report and Tree Constraints Plan were submitted with the original application for up to 5 dwellings. The report is dated 2024 is now out of date, so as part of the technical information we require a revised and updated Arboricultural Implications Assessment to BS5837:2012.

The development proposals are now reduced to up to 2 dwellings that can be accommodated on the site whilst retaining the trees, and the landscape character of the site and its setting. Providing the correct policy compliant technical information is submitted I have no objection to the proposals as there will be minimal impact on the landscape of the site and its immediate setting.

Conditions & Reasons (if required)

Date:	14.7.26	Signed:	BRC