

MEMORANDUM

From:	Brigitte Crafer Landscape Architect	To (Case Officer):	Connie Davis
Service	WBC Landscape and Trees	App No:	250835
Address:	Land adjacent to Hutts Farm Cottage, Blagrove Lane, Wokingham, RG41 4AX.		
Type of Development:	Minor Dwellings (1-9)		
Proposal:	Outline application for the proposed erection of 3 no. detached dwellings with associated parking and access. (All matters reserved except for means of access and layout.)		
Site Visit Made:	Yes/No		

Summary Of Recommendations

- ☐ Recommend approval but with condition(s) & reason(s) **stated below**;
- ☐ Recommend approval with no conditions
- ☐ Recommend refusal for the reason(s) **stated below**;
- ☐ Negotiate the amendments **stated below**; or
- ☒ Request further information before determination as **stated below**.

Comments On Proposal

The new layout shows the number of dwellings reduced from 5 to 3 which are situated in a group in the centre of the site, an improvement on the original scheme.

Although the layout is improved there are still some issues; the site entrance which should be positioned between the RPAs of T29, and T21 (A Notable Tree on the ATI) which are both 'A' quality trees. It would be possible to do this by moving the entrance further north by 8.5m so that the southern line of the entrance is roughly aligned with the northern extent of the RPA of T21. This would result in the removal of T23 and T24 'C' quality Hazel and Hawthorn which is preferable to further incursion into T21 an 'A' quality tree. The entrance could be extended further north to just before it touches the RPA of T29 'A' quality Oak. T25, T26 and T28 are 'C' quality Hazels which can easily be replaced whereas mature 'A' quality Oaks cannot and should be retained with no incursion from development.

On this site it is important to retain the treelined character of the lane, and it is possible to do this without incursions into high quality trees, their setting and growing environment. This is echoed in BS5837:2012 which states;

BS 5837 (2012), Section 5.3 'Proximity of structures to trees' states at 5.3.1 'The default position should be that structures are located outside the RPAs of trees to be retained. However, where there is an overriding justification for construction within the RPA, technical solutions might be available that prevent damage to the trees'

I see no overriding justification for the current proposals to develop within the RPA of important trees on site.

Likewise incursions into T23 from a path – development should avoid incursions into the RPAs of trees – especially in this rural location where retaining the setting must surely be in the interest of the development.

As it stands, the location of the dwelling on Plot 1 is too close to T19 an 'A' quality Oak tree and there will be a slight incursion into its RPA from the foundation design. As mentioned above there is no need for encroachment into the 'A' quality or 'B' quality trees.

Dwellings should not be located so close to the trees than the canopies are touching the buildings as in the case of T1 and T19 on Plot 1. It is an unsustainable relationship that may end up with the felling of the tree and is unacceptable. Plot 1 needs to maintain a healthy distance from the canopy of both trees, and changes to the layout must ensure this is the case. It is not sufficient to say that the trees can be crown reduced, as they will continue to grow back, and it is not sustainable in the long term to regularly crown reduce trees.

There is no need for foundations for fencing to be dug in the RPA of 'A' quality Oaks. Placing close board fencing to the plot boundary with Hutts Farm Cottage is out of character with the rural setting. Instead of the ubiquitous close board fencing a native hedge to be planted along this boundary which must be planted in an arc around the stems of both T1 and T2 which will need to avoid the thick network of roots where necessary around the main stems so be offset from it by a suitable amount to achieve this, or a minimum of 2m from the trunk, with planting being overseen by the Arboriculturalist. All the internal garden boundaries should be fenced with deer fencing to a height of 1.6m and native hedge planting in 2 rows either side of the fence. The hedge will attain height of a 1.8m close board fence very quickly. This approach is intended to maintain the rural character of the plot in this rural setting rather than introduce urbanising elements that would be totally out of character.

The front hedge shall be retained and enhanced allowing for visibility splays.

Please note my comments to ensure that the layout and access, and impact on the trees and setting meets with Policy in order that the proposals comply with Policies CC03/2d and TB21 of the Local Plan, and Policies CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy.

Conditions & Reasons (if required)

See above

Date:	28.8.25	Signed:	B. Crafer
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