

MEMORANDUM

From:	Brigitte Crafer Landscape Architect		
Service	WBC Landscape and Trees	App No:	261132
Address:	Land Adjacent to Hucklebury, Waingels Road, Charvil, RG10 0UA.		
Proposal:	Permission in principle application for the proposed erection of a maximum of 6 no. dwellings (or a minimum of 4 no. dwellings) including formation of access from Waingels Road.		
Type of Development:	Minor Dwellings (1-9) PiP		
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 and Character

The site is located on the south side of Waingels Road, and accessed via an area of land within the east side of Huckleberry. The dwellings proposed on site will not have a street frontage, being a backland site and located to the rear of gardens of adjacent dwellings.

The site extends for 140m from the entrance on Waingels Road past a dwelling known as Malma and the rear gardens of Oaklands, The Ramblers, Paradise and Floreat in Beggars Hill Road, and backing onto the gardens of Huckleberry, Hillray House and Woodpeckers facing Waingels Road. The southern part of the site includes a passing place, and outbuildings to the east and appears to extend across part of the rear garden of Hillray House. The southern part of the site is adjacent to the Local Wildlife Site known as 'Norris Copse Bird Sanctuary'. Which comprises of eutrophic standing water a Berkshire Priority Habitat. A short distance to the west of the site is an area of 'Ancient, Semi Natural Woodland' (ASNW) protected by TPO0028/1971.

There are trees along the site boundary with Huckleberry which will need to be protected and retained during development in order to comply with Policy CC03 as will all trees within and outside the site where root protection areas extends into it. An Arboricultural Implications Assessment (AIA) to BS5837:2012 will be part of the technical information that is required. If the trees cannot be successfully retained and protected in accordance with Policy CC03 of the Local Plan, the proposals will not be supported.

Landscape Character

The site is within the J4 'Woodley-Earley Settled and Farmed Clay' landscape character area (LCA). (See Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment – 2019) A moderate quality landscape with low sensitivity and a considerable capacity for change. The eastern site boundary is adjacent to the neighbouring LCA B1 'Loddon River Valley and Open Water' which has a moderate landscape quality, moderate sensitivity and a modest capacity for change.

The site is much more akin to the **B1 LCA**
'Valuable Landscape Attributes' for LCA B1 include;

Undeveloped riverine character from network of rivers, drainage ditches and restored lakes provide a sense of place along with the wooded context of natural and restored woodland fringing carr vegetation and pollarded willows around flooded gravel pits.

Remnant pockets of traditional pasture, and a mosaic of ecologically valuable wetland and woodland habitats including BAP priority habitats designated LWS where restored gravel pits support a diverse range of birds and nationally scarce flora.

Popular recreational facilities at Dinton Pastures Country park. Built development is confined to small clusters around fords, although the urban influence of Woodley to the periphery.

Localised areas of tranquillity particularly around restored lakes and away transport corridors and visual influence of adjacent settlements.

The Key Issues affected the B1 LCA include;

Changes to woodland through loss of species diversity and lack of management, pathogens and climate change and the use of chemicals resulting in polluted run off affecting water quality.

Loss of landscape features such as pollarded willows, waterside pasture including wet meadows as a result of intensive grassland management and changes in agricultural practice including pony paddocks on settlement edges. Loss and fragmentation of wetland habitats as a result of scrub encroachment.

High demands for recreation and erosion of rights of way and ecological and landscape features as a result of expanding population and demand for new

residential development on the floodplain impacting and fragmenting landscape character.

The Landscape Strategy for B1 LCA is;

To conserve and enhance the restored wetland character of the floodplain, employing management improvements to increase its robustness. The key aspects to be conserved and actively managed are the restored gravel pits with their important wildlife habitats and fringing wooded areas as well as the traditional pasture and associated features.

In terms of development, the aim is to avoid the spread of development onto the floodplain and avoid the amalgamation of adjacent settlements

The Landscape Guidelines for LCA B1 pertinent to the site include;

Conserve and enhance the intrinsic character and beauty of the riverine landscape corridor and the restored gravel pits. Conserve and enhance the wooded character of the landscape, the BAP priority habitat woodland copses and fringing carr, particularly surrounding the large lakes where it provides ecological habitats and creates an enclosed and secluded character.

Conserve, enhance and manage wetland, grassland and pasture habitats. Particularly protect BAP priority habitats from development, changes in land use and encroachment by secondary woodland and scrub. Consider further opportunities for the recreation of riverside meadows or permanent pasture to restore and extend grassland habitats. The area forms part of the Loddon Valley Gravel Pits BOA, a network of habitats has been identified as a target for recreation of fen, meadow and grassland habitats and restoration and positive management of wet woodland. An appropriate wetland and grassland management regime to enhance biodiversity is critical.

Conserve and enhance the integration of urban edges on the edge of the floodplain through hedges, wooded boundaries, occasional scrub planting, and large-species trees to provide visual screening. Conserve and enhance the rural character of the open floodplain landscape avoiding the spread of development on to the floodplain.

Proposed layout

A very basic drawing from Charlesgate Homes is submitted showing the rough division and layout of the residential plots access from Waingels Road and adjacent plots.

Critical to the application is the design and landscaping of the entrance and impact on existing vegetation from visibility splays.

The Indicative Site Plan shows a rough layout and division of the land into 6 plots, and includes a landscaped passing place, narrow spaces for greening along the site

access road which is 7 m wide overall and 5m wide leaving 1m wide token green verges or less either side.

The design / orientation of the plots either facing the access road or side on to it will provide more opportunity for landscape screening to the road improving on the very narrow green strips either side which will end up as messy, hard to maintain strips that reduce the quality of the development. The thresholds between access road and frontage will need careful attention to detail to ensure the integration of urban edges, especially where plots are adjacent to other established dwellings. The relationship with the existing landscape to the southern boundary with the Local Wildlife Site and the watery landscape must also be an important consideration in terms of run off from gardens adversely effecting the biodiversity.

The plots are mostly generous although not clear of the built footprint. In this location it will be important in this countryside location to ensure that the development is landscape led. Local Landscape Policies CC03 and TB21 provide important advice to support this approach. A Landscape Strategy will be an important document to be submitted alongside a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment to comply with Policy CC03 and Paragraph 2.19 of the Local Plan.

Summary

The site is a backland development with the southern boundary adjacent to Norris Cope a Local Wildlife Site. The site land appears to be within the curtilage of adjacent dwellings; Huckleberry, Hillray House and possibly some dwellings facing Beggars Hill Road. As such the development is development in private residential gardens and contrary to Policy TB06 which states;

The Council will resist inappropriate development of residential gardens where development would cause harm to the local area. Proposals for new residential development that includes land within the curtilage or former curtilage of private residential gardens will only be granted permission where;

The proposal makes a positive contribution to the character of the area in terms of;

- The relationship of existing built form and spaces around the buildings within the surrounding area
- A layout which integrates with the surrounding area with regard to the built up coverage of each plot, building lines, rhythm of plot frontages parking areas and;
- The existing pattern of openings and boundary treatments on the site frontage
- Providing appropriate hard and soft landscaping particularly at site boundaries
- Compatibility with general building height within the surrounding area

The site must provide an adequate size and dimensions to accommodate the development proposed in terms of the setting and spacing around buildings, amenity space, landscaping and space for access road.

As the site is located in the countryside the proposals are contrary to Policy CP11 of the CS. The site is also a backland site and contrary to Policy TB06

Conditions & Reasons (if required)

Date:	18.6.26	Signed:	BRC
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