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HERITAGE CONSULTANCY

Land North of Broadwater Lane, Hurst, Berkshire RG10 0DS

A Planning Rebuttal



Project Ref: RHC 2026-07
Date: 27/02/2026
Client: Dr and Mrs J. Lade

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Date: February, 2026

Document Control Grid			
Revision	Date	Author	Status
A	26.02.26	RWM	Internal review draft
B	27.02.26	RWM	Client draft
C	28.02.26	RWM	Final version

Report front cover: Oblique aerial view, looking north-east, of the Broadwater Lane application site and surrounding parts of Hurst and Whistley Green villages.

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1. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- 1.1. This Planning Rebuttal for Heritage has been prepared by Dr Richard Massey, in his capacity as Director of Ridgeway Heritage Consultancy.
- 1.2 Dr Richard Massey has over 29 years' experience of working in the heritage sector, both in curatorial and commercial capacities, and advising on archaeological and heritage management for a wide range of commercial and residential developments. He has widespread experience of providing heritage advice and preparing planning and consent applications for clients in both private and public sectors, both as a commercial consultant, and as a former Inspector of Ancient Monuments at English Heritage (now Historic England). This has included high-level planning advice on all aspects of the management of the historic environment, and the mitigation of impacts to urban areas and heritage settings.
- 1.3 I was a local resident for over 40 years, and have a detailed knowledge of, and interest in, the historic environment of Berkshire and surrounding counties. My work as former project manager at Cotswold Archaeology has included work for local authorities and private clients regarding a wide range of heritage assets across southern England, including both rural and Conservation Area settings. Since establishing an independent consultancy practice in 2020, I have undertaken project work within a wide variety of planning contexts, including at Southampton, Gosport, Portsmouth, Reading, Oxford, Cheltenham, Richmond, London SW1, Edgbaston, Windsor, Marlow, Bristol, Whitchurch, Christchurch, Frome and Pewsey.
- 1.4 I have had extensive experience of planning appeals, at both Written Representation and Public Inquiry levels. Amongst others, this has included appearance as expert witness at Inquiry for Fort Gilkicker, Gosport (2009), Llanvapley, Monmouthshire (2014), Saxonvale, Frome (2016) Wisley, Surrey MDA (2017), and Minchens Lane, Bramley Solar Scheme (2023). Recent Appeals by Written Representation have included those at Pinks Hill, Fareham, Blagrove Street, Reading, Winkfield Row, Berkshire and Great Bedwyn, Wiltshire.
- 1.5 The evidence I have prepared and provided in this Written Representation is true, and has been prepared and given in accordance with the guidance of my professional institutions, the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA), of which I am a full member, and the Society of Antiquaries, of which I was elected a fellow in 2020.

2. THE STRUCTURE OF THIS PLANNING REBUTTAL FOR HERITAGE

2.1 I am instructed to present a Planning Rebuttal in respect of heritage matters in relation to the current planning application for land north of Broadwater Lane. My evidence will deal with the nature of the revised Application Site, the proposed development, the built and landscape context of the Application Site and its visual relationship with heritage assets, and the conformity of the proposed development with local and national planning policies. The planning rebuttal is structured as follows:

- Section 3: Introduction, providing a description of the revised Application Site;
- Section 4: provides a description of the heritage constraints affecting the revised Application site;
- Section 5 summarises the historical development of the revised application site;
- Section 6: summarises the planning history of the revised Application Site, including the outcome of the 2025 Appeal;
- Section 7 comprises a description of the proposed development;
- Section 8 provides an assessment of the heritage impacts associated with the revised scheme; and
- Section 9 comprises a Conclusion to this Planning Rebuttal, and a rejection of the claims made on heritage grounds by the applicant.

2.2 This Planning Rebuttal document has been prepared following the previous reports and assessments made in response to earlier proposals for the residential development of land north of Broadwater Lane, Hurst. These include a Heritage Statement (Ridgeway Heritage Consultancy 2024), and an Appeal Statement for Heritage (Ridgeway Heritage Consultancy 2025), which should be referenced in conjunction with this rebuttal report.

3. A DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION SITE

- 3.1 The Application Site comprises an irregularly shaped parcel of land, of 0.95ha in area, which is bordered by mature vegetation, agricultural land to the north and north-east, and by residential properties along Broadwater Lane and Hogmoor Lane (Fig. 1 and report front cover). That part of Hurst village represented by Wards Cross mostly comprises modern residential dwellings located along a network of minor roads leading off Broadwater Lane, School Road and Orchard Road, which are interspersed with a number of historic buildings. The plan and extent of the revised Application Site is partly determined by existing land boundaries and properties, which form the backdrop to views from Broadwater Lane and Hogmoor Lane. The wider surrounding landscape to the north and north-east of the Application Site comprises a mix of arable and pastoral fields of irregular size and plan, incorporating number of historic hedgerow boundaries.

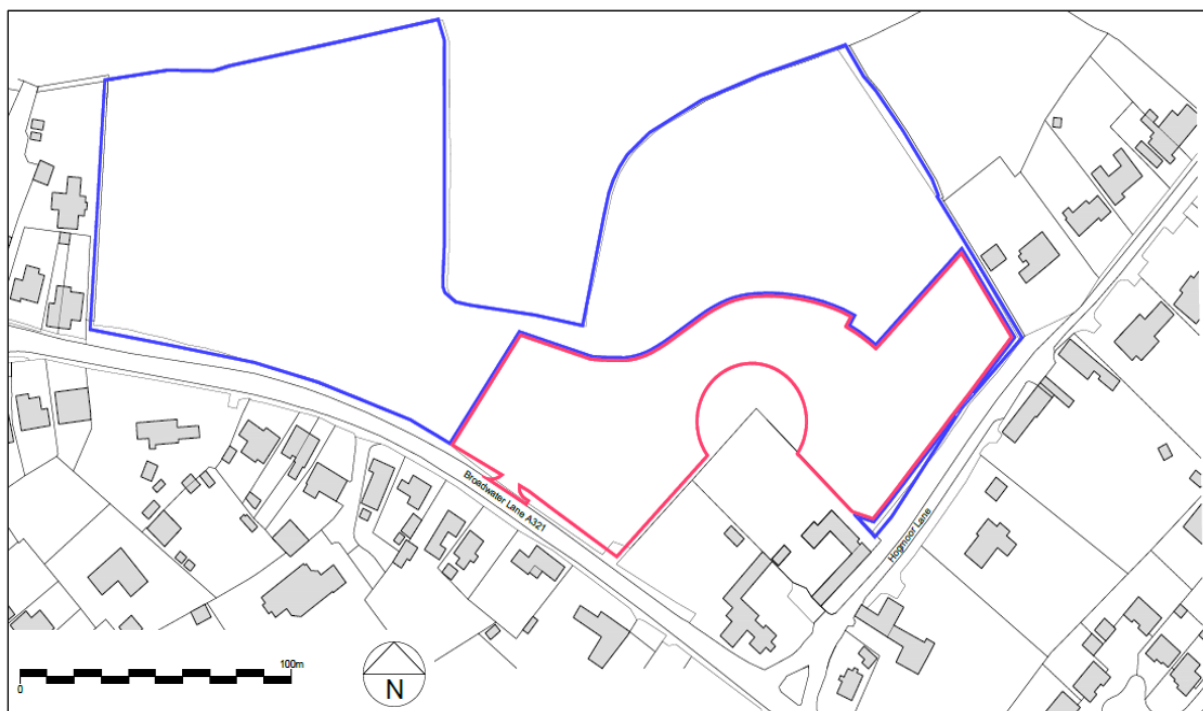


Fig. 1: Proposed site plan for the revised scheme with field boundary outlined in blue (Radley House Partnership).

- 3.2 The revised Application Site, of 0.96ha, consists of two distinct development areas, with that to the west, comprising Plots 1-3, facing onto Broadwater Lane, and that to the east, comprising Plots 4-7, facing onto Hogmoor Lane (Figs. 1 and 19). The two areas would each be linked by an internal access roadway, with respective separate access-points off Broadwater Lane and Hogmoor Lane. The eastern development area would effectively represent the eastern third of the 2025 Appeal

Site. The land comprising the current Application Site is largely level, and managed as pasture (Figs. 22 and 23). On its south-western side, bordering Broadwater Lane, the Site is bounded by a tree-lined grass verge. The eastern boundary of the western part of the Site is formed by the rear boundaries of Grade II-listed Wards Cross House and adjoining, and locally-listed, Long Barn, with the northern boundary largely following an existing field boundary with mature trees and hedgerows. This boundary continues eastward, unmarked by any visible features, to enclose the larger, eastern element of the Site. This element is bounded on the eastern side by Hogmoor Lane, with the southern boundary formed by the plot containing Long Barn (Figs. 1 and 19). The western boundary at this point is formed by the plot boundary of Apple Tree Cottage on Hogmoor Lane (Figs. 1 and 21).

Historic Landscape Character

- 3.3 The area surrounding Hurst village is broadly characterised as one of reorganised fields of post-medieval date, with hedged boundaries. These include fields created from Enclosure in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. All of these were registered as agricultural land in *c.* 1760, the date of Rocque's map (Fig. 12). While the East Berkshire Historic Landscape Character study (Lödöen and MacDonald 2019) claims limited evidence for early field systems in this area, the evidence of aerial photography and Lidar (not illustrated) provides clear indications of neighbouring ridge and furrow cultivation and historic land boundaries, demonstrating that a number of medieval open fields were enclosed and amalgamated in the post-medieval period. There is also a high incidence of later parkland and designed landscapes, including those of Whistley Park, located 600m to the south-west, and Haines Hill to the north.
- 3.4 Rural settlement in this area is dispersed, and historically has comprised scattered farmsteads and small village settlements. In the eighteenth century, Whistley Green was dominated by dispersed farms and dwellings, many of which were of medieval origin. Formerly extensive areas of unimproved land, principally marshland, but including smaller areas of open heath, were converted to farmland in the early modern period (Lödöen and MacDonald 2019, 215). Woodland is dispersed, and mostly comprises small, isolated areas of broadleaf copse. Areas of woodland to the north and east of the Application Site include planted woodland belts surrounding Haines Hill Farm. There are no neighbouring areas of ancient or ancient replanted woodland (Lödöen and MacDonald 2019, 274).

4. HERITAGE CONSTRAINTS OF THE APPLICATION SITE

- 4.1 The Application Site is located at a distance of 1.2km from the Hurst Conservation Area, but is adjacent to a part of the village designated as an Area of Special Character (AOSC) (Fig. 2). The Application Site therefore has no visual or other associations with the Conservation Area, which is centred on St Nicholas' Church and adjacent buildings, forming a localised historic core within a wider area of dispersed settlement. The revised Application Site itself contains no known heritage assets, but is partly included with an area associated with recorded archaeological remains of several periods. The Application Site is closely adjacent to, and within the settings of, four Grade II-listed buildings on the south-western side of Broadwater Lane, and two Grade II-listed buildings located on Hogmoor Lane, together with two non-designated buildings of historic interest. The Application Site is also situated within a part of the open rural hinterland of Hurst village, which historically has comprised part of its associated farmland, and which comprises an important aspect of its historic context and setting.

The Hurst Area of Special Character

- 4.2 The Application Site is located directly adjacent to the Hurst Area of Special Character (AOSC), as identified by Policy TB26 of the adopted Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (Fig. 2). All parts of the Application Site are located outside the AOSC, with the exception of the proposed vehicle access bellmouth on Broadwater Lane. This designation covers those settlement areas which while not meriting formal designation as Conservation Areas, retain aspects of historical or traditional character. The designated Special Character Area runs along Broadwater Lane, and includes historic buildings, both listed and non-listed, on the south-eastern and south-western sides of the revised Application Site. These include the plot boundaries of Wards Cross House and Long Barn to the south-east (Fig. 3), with the south-eastern course of the AOSC boundary including Grade II-listed The Old Post House on the south-eastern side of Hogmoor Lane (Figs. 1 and 2).
- 4.3 The primary heritage interest of the AOSC derives from its component listed and non-listed historic buildings, which comprise a significant and coherent group, and are illustrative of the post-medieval development of the village. In addition, elements of nineteenth and twentieth-century infill development are not without merit, and are illustrative of later historical development. Collectively, the form, layout and historic character of these buildings contribute importantly to local character and sense of place. The statement made in the applicant's heritage statement report that the AOSC has 'some', but not 'special' architectural and/or historic interest is disputed.

Notwithstanding the elements of nineteenth and twentieth-century infill development, the individual historic buildings would be of sufficient interest for inclusion in a Conservation Area.

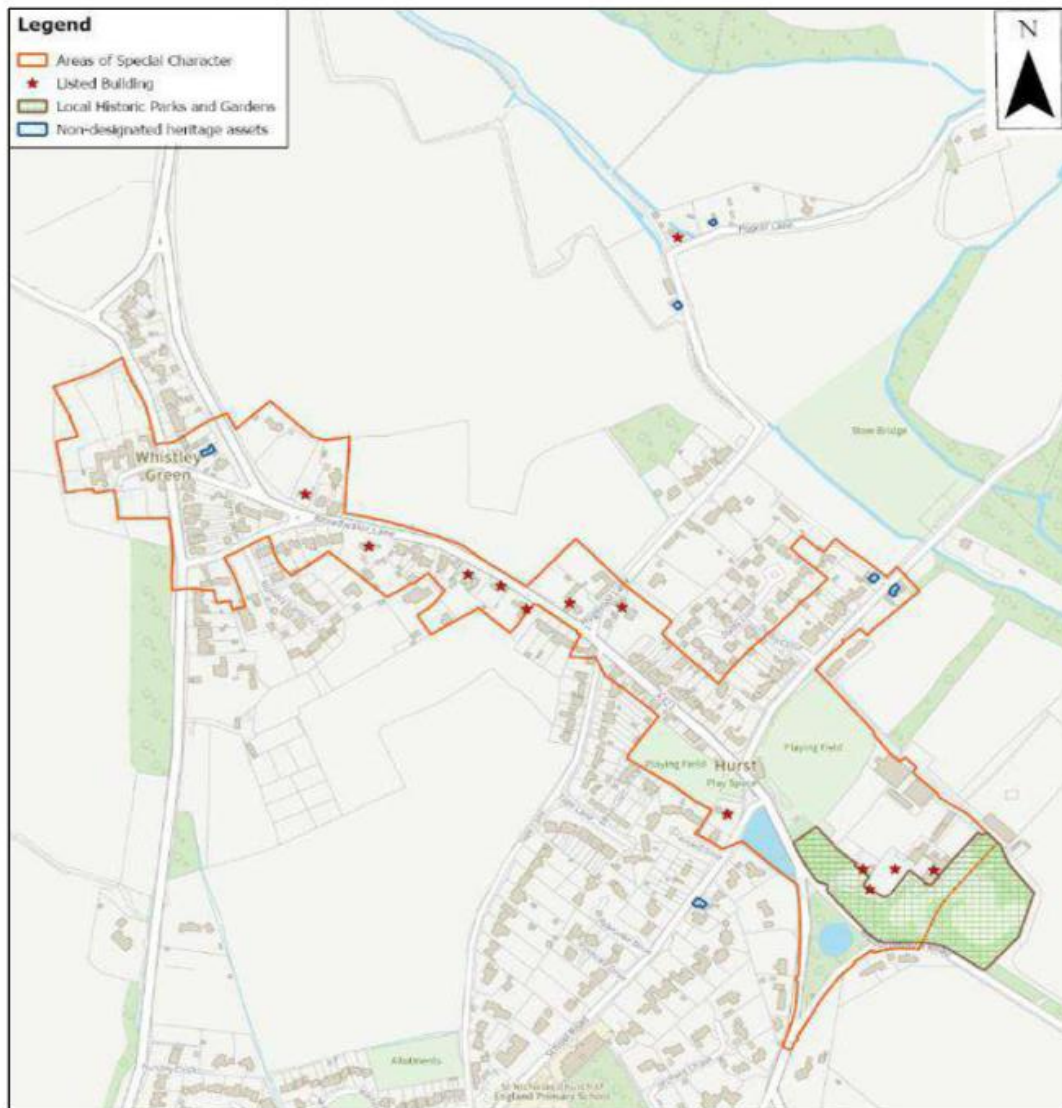


Fig. 2: Plan of the Hurst Area of Special Character (AOSC)(Wokingham Borough Council).

- 4.4 While the revised Application Site does not actually lie within the AOSC, it directly abuts it, together with the plots of some of its most significant heritage assets. As part of a surrounding area of undeveloped farmland which has retained much of its historic character, the Application Site does lie within the immediate setting of the AOSC, and within an aspect of setting which both complements, and contributes importantly to, the significance of the AOSC and its component historic buildings. The claims made in Paras 4.6 to 4.8 of the applicant's heritage statement report are therefore disputed. The Appeal Inspector observed that the Appeal Site and surrounding fields

formed a backdrop to the AOSC, and by implication comprised a significant element of the historic setting of the AOSC and a number of heritage assets within it.

- 4.5 Contrary to the claim made in Para 4.9 of the applicant's heritage statement report, direct westward and north-westward views are possible across the Application Site from Hogmoor Lane. The quoted 'vegetated borders' on the north-western side of the Lane have since been cleared, offering unrestricted views (Figs. 20 and 21). The Application Site forms an immediate backdrop to both Grade II-listed Wards Cross House and the locally-listed Long Barn, and is located within the wider settings of Grade II-listed The Old Posting House and the group of buildings along Broadwater Lane (Figs. 3, 20, 23 and 25). Proposed development along the frontage of Hogmoor Lane would wholly alter its rural character and the setting of the AOSC. In this context, it is disputed (Para 4.10) that Hogmoor Lane has a 'suburban' or 'semi-rural' aspect. Existing westward views from the Lane incorporate an open fieldscape and emphasise its rural character (Figs. 10, 20 and 21).

Listed Buildings

- 4.6 The Area of Special Character includes the listed buildings associated with Broadwater and Hogmoor Lanes, together with parts of Whistley Green, to the north-west (Fig. 2). The majority of the listed buildings within the environs of the Application Site, on Broadwater Lane and Hogmoor Lane, are attested on the 1812 Enclosure Map, and the 1842 Tithe Map (Figs. 14 and 15). These include Elder Cottage, Parker's Cottage, Bower Cottage, Buttercups, Ward's Cross House and The Old Posting House. With the exception of Parker's Cottage (1979), these buildings were all added to the National List in October, 1983 (Fig. 3). In addition to these designated heritage assets, the eastern element of the revised Application Site directly orders two non-listed buildings of historic interest, namely Long Barn (Fig. 3, No. 6) and Munfin House (Fig. 3, No. 8).
- 4.7 Buttercups is a good example of a seventeenth-century timber-framed house, which in this case has been subject to eighteenth-century and later alterations (NHLE 1117319). It has a plain-tiled roof and prominent chimneys, with external box-framing, much of which has been obscured by render and hung tiles, although brick-infilled box framing is exposed to the right (Figs. 3 and 4). The four-bay frontage, with a gabled wing to the left, is set back from Broadwater Lane on a somewhat irregular alignment. The significance of Buttercups derives principally from its built form and historic fabric, as a surviving vernacular building of post-medieval and later date. Its extensive plot, which comprises its primary setting, has been subject to a number of historic changes.



Fig. 3: Plan of the revised Application Site, with locations (Nos. 1-8) of historic buildings assessed for setting impact within this report. Munfin House is located at the right-hand edge of the plan.



Fig. 4: View, looking south-west, of the main front of Buttercups (Historic England).

1. Buttercups

- 4.8 The Application Site is obliquely visible in westward views across Broadwater Lane from the driveway entrance of Buttercups, although much of the frontage of the house is screened from the roadside by a high hedge and timber fence. The Application Site comprises part of the unchanged historic landscape context of this house, with which it is likely to have had a functional relationship in the post-medieval and early modern periods. It therefore comprises an aspect of wider setting which contribute to significance.

2. Bower Cottage

- 4.9 Bower Cottage is a timber-framed cottage of seventeenth-century date, with brick infill and a gabled, plain-tiled roof (NHLE 1117398) (Figs. 3 and 5). There is a prominent side-stack to the left, and dormers on the front and side elevations. This originally comprised a very small, vernacular dwelling, which was considerably extended to the rear in the early twentieth century, in a comparable style. It currently presents a three-bay frontage to Broadwater Lane, although its rear extension is readily visible within views from the road. The cottage occupies a narrow plot, which has historically been subdivided to accommodate a neighbouring dwelling.
- 4.10 The principal significance of Bower Cottage relates to its built form, as a surviving seventeenth building which comprises part of the historic development of the village, although such significance relates principally to its original form and fabric. Bower Cottage is set back from the frontage of Broadwater Lane, and a later brick wall and boundary hedge partly screen the frontage of the Cottage in views from the Lane, with the Application Site visible in westward views from the front of the house and from the driveway entrance. The primary aspect of setting which contributes to the setting of Bower Cottage comprise its curtilage, which includes a substantial garden at the rear. It has been surrounded in both side by later developments, including the late nineteenth-century Hope Cottage on the eastern side. Any visual connection with contemporaneous historic buildings to the east, including Parker's Cottage and Elder Cottage (Figs. 3, 6 and 7), has been obstructed by intervening later developments. In addition, Bower Cottage can be seen in conjunction with the Application Site in some views along Broadwater Lane. The Application Site comprises part of the unchanged historic landscape context of this house in the post-medieval and early modern periods, and therefore comprises an aspect of wider setting which contributes to significance.

3. Parker's Cottage

- 4.11 Parker's Cottage was formerly known as The Old Post Office (NHLE 1136017), and is depicted on historic mapping. It is of eighteenth-century date, of two storeys, and of timber-framed construction, with painted brick infilling (Figs. 3 and 6). There is a two-bay front elevation on Broadwater Lane, with a thatched roof which is hipped to the left. There is a prominent twentieth-century gabled extension to the right, and to the rear, which is of two storeys and of a slightly greater roof-ridge height than the historic range. The two building ranges are connected by a lower link structure. The significance of Parker's Cottage derives principally from the built form and fabric of the historic range, which forms a somewhat incoherent frontage with the modern addition. In common with the other listed buildings surrounding the Application Site, Parker's Cottage is importantly illustrative of a phase of dispersed post-medieval development surrounding Hurst village which is closely related to patterns of historic land use.



Fig. 5: View, looking south-east from Broadwater Lane, of Bower Cottage.

- 4.12 Parker's Cottage is located close to the road frontage with a modern brick wall and railings (Figs. 3 and 6). It therefore has a more direct visual relationship with the Application Site than most buildings on the southern side of Broadwater Lane. The principal aspects of setting which contributes to the significance of the Cottage comprise its plot and adjoining roadway, together with its close and unaltered relationship with adjacent Elder Cottage which represents part of its

setting and historic context. The open ground of the Application Site, which is fully visible to the north of Broadwater Lane, also comprises part of the historic landscape context and setting of Parker's Cottage, and contributes to its significance (Figs. 22-24). The Cottage is also seen in conjunction with the Application Site in northward and southward views along Broadwater Lane.

4. Elder Cottage

- 4.13 This building is of seventeenth-century date, with early eighteenth and twentieth-century extensions to the left and rear, and a central, gabled projection (Figs. 3 and 7). The cottage is of two storeys, with tiled, hipped roofs, and is of partly timber-framed construction, with brick infill. There are some later applied elements of 'timber-framed' detail, with a substantial brick stack on the eastern side of the rear range. The principal significance of Elder Cottage relates to its built form and historic fabric, as a surviving example of a post-medieval vernacular building, which is importantly illustrative of the historical development of the settlement.



Fig. 6: View, looking south, of the road frontage of Parker's Cottage.

- 4.14 The cottage is partly set back from the road frontage, and its curtilage and gardens comprise an important aspect of setting. It is partly screened from Broadwater Lane by a high brick boundary wall and hedge. A gap on the eastern side, with a farm gate, provides access to a field to the rear of the property. This is depicted on historic mapping (Figs. 15 and 16), and also contributes to the setting and significance of Elder Cottage. The Cottage is not situated immediately opposite the Application Site, but partly faces the timber fence which forms the plot boundary of Wards Cross House. It only partly adjoins the south-eastern boundary of the Application Site, although there is

inter-visibility with the eastern end of the Site in northward views, which are partly obstructed by boundary vegetation along Broadwater Lane. This therefore comprises part of the wider setting and historic landscape context of the building, which also contributes to significance.



Fig. 7: View, looking south-west from Broadwater Lane, of the north and east elevations of Elder Cottage, with the gateway and field access on the eastern side.

5. Wards Cross House

- 4.15 Listed as Hunter's Cottage (NHLE 1117408), Wards Cross House is of seventeenth-century origin, with exposed timber-framing and painted brick infill, and a later, eighteenth-century addition, of brick construction. It is a two-storey dwelling, with hipped roofs of plain tiles. The single timber-framed bay is located to the rear (Figs. 3 and 8). The primary significance of Wards Cross House derives from its historic fabric and built form, as a vernacular building of early date, with later adaptations and extensions. Setting also contributes to this significance, including the adjoining thoroughfares of Broadwater Lane to the south, and Hogmoor Lane on the eastern side. The adjacent building of Long Barn, on Hogmoor Lane, originally comprised part of a farmyard associated with Wards Cross House, but is now in separate occupancy.
- 4.16 Wards Cross House has an extensive garden plot on the north-western side, representing a former paddock or orchard depicted in historic mapping (Figs. 15 and 16). This is bounded by a timber fence on the western side, from which extensive views of the Application Site are possible (Fig. 25). Wards Cross House has an historical association with the Application Site through common

nineteenth-century ownership by one Thomas Garth, as part of the Haines Hill Estate (Fig. 14); Victoria County History 1923). The paddocks depicted on the Enclosure and Tithe maps immediately to the east of the property have been incorporated in the extensive garden on the western side. As a former farmhouse, an historical functional association can be claimed to have existed between this property and the Application Site, and clear north-westward views of the Site are possible from the garden (Fig. 25). The massing and scale of proposed dwellings would be readily visible from Wards Cross House, and the proposed development would therefore directly impact its setting and remove any sense of a rural context and historic association.



Fig. 8: View, looking south, of the rear elevation of Wards Cross House (Historic England).

6. The Old Posting House

- 4.17 The Old Posting House is a two-storey cottage of seventeenth-century date, with exposed timber framing and painted brick infill (NHLE 1117408) (Figs. 3 No. 7, and 9). The building is of T-plan, with a gabled, tiled roof. A single-storey, timber-framed range of outbuildings extends to the frontage of Hogmoor Lane on the western side. The significance of The Old Posting House relates primarily to its historic fabric and built form, as a vernacular building of seventeenth-century and later date, and evidence of timber-framed construction. It is relatively set back from the frontage of Hogmoor Lane, from which it is partly screened by high hedges and the attached single-storey outbuilding. It is also flanked by modern dwellings, so that inter-visibility with the Application Site is partly obstructed by the intervening built-form of Wards Cross House, and the Long Barn, on

the western side of the Lane. However, the Application Site comprise part of the wider rural setting of The Old Posting House, which contributes to its significance.



Fig. 9: View, looking east from Hogmoor Lane, of The Old Posting House.

Non-designated buildings of historic interest

- 4.18 Heritage assets within and surrounding the AOSC include both statutorily designated buildings and Buildings of Local Traditional Character, which are accepted as being ‘locally-listed’. In addition to these, the HEPT specifies a range of ‘Undesignated heritage assets that positively contribute to the AOSC,’ together with heritage assets which are outside the AOSC, but which are within its proximity. Two non-designated historic buildings are considered for the purposes of this rebuttal report.

Grappenhall/Munfin House

- 4.19 Munfin House (formerly know a Grappenhall) stands on the east side of Hogmoor Lane, opposite the eastern element of the application site (Figs. 3, No. 8, and 10). There was a building on this site in 1840, which was recorded as two houses with gardens. The house has a long frontage of six wide bays facing Hogmoor Lane, which is set back behind a brick wall, hedge and garden. Machine-sawn timber framing is infilled with brick panels laid in a mix of patterns. The central and outer bays are distinguished by wide gables with scalloped bargeboards. The house has a plain clay tile-covered roof with brick stacks, and its style and materials indicate an early twentieth-century date. There are open views from the house across the eastern, Hogmoor Lane element of the application Site, which emphasise its rural setting, and contribute to its significance (Fig. 21).



Fig. 10: View, looking north-east along Hogmoor Lane, with the frontage of Munfin House to the right.

Long Barn

- 4.20 Long Barn comprises former agricultural buildings which have undergone late twentieth-century conversion to a dwelling (Figs. 3, No. 6; 11 and 20). A single-storey, weather-boarded range on the Hogmoor Lane frontage is features prominently in views from the southern end of the Lane. Historically, Long Barn was associated with Wards Cross House, as a farmstead. The considerable area of surrounding land farmed from this property included the Application Site and surrounding areas, indicating a significant historic relationship which emphasises the importance of its current rural setting. However, the tenorial relationship between Long Barn and surrounding land has long been broken. The two-storey brick-built element of the house, to the north-east, is visible in views along and from Hogmoor Lane, with a hedgerow boundary at the road frontage. Long Barn is currently bounded on its north-western and north-eastern sides by a high boundary, with little visual linkage with open land beyond.



Fig. 11: View, looking west from Hogmoor Lane, of the road frontage of Long Barn.

5. THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE APPLICATION SITE

- 5.1 The surrounding area is associated with scattered finds of prehistoric and Roman date, with no clear indication of settlement patterns or activity. Recorded medieval evidence within areas surrounding the Application Site indicates that these were integral to the development of Hurst village, with scattered settlements, including elements of a shrunken village at Whistley Green, and an agricultural hinterland. The shrunken village may relate to the settlement recorded as *Unissclea* in thirteenth-century documents (Gelling 1973, 100). Stratified medieval material and a wider area of surface material recorded by the East Berkshire Archaeological Survey (Site MED 17; SU793 742; BHER 03251.01.000) (Ford 1987) appears to represent an area of occupation. Medieval material was also recorded at Whistley Court Farm (SU 790 743; Ford 1987), and was also recorded by evaluation (SU 791 745; BHER 02533.00.000) (Trust for Wessex Archaeology 1986). Early post-medieval pottery recorded at SU 791 745 (BHER 02533.01.000) may represent a house site (ibid.)

Documentary and cartographic evidence

- 5.2 Whistley and Hurst are documented as pre-Conquest settlements. A tenth-century charter of 968 records that the manor of Whistley was given to Abbot Wulfstan of Abingdon Abbey by King Edgar (Farrar 1984, 15). The Domesday Survey of 1086 records that:

‘The Abbey holds Whistley itself, and has always held it. Before 1066 it answered for ten hides, now for seven hides. Land for 12 ploughs, 16 villagers and pigs; fishery at 300 eels. The value was £ 10 now £6.’

- 5.3 Continuing clearance of the neighbouring Windsor Forest in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries enabled the formation of a number of new manors, including that of Broad Hinton which included much of the land to the north and east of Hurst. This manor passed successively from Henry de Mara, to Peter de Monfort, and then to the Earl of Warwick. By the end of the fifteenth century, this manor was held by the Nevill family. However, by the early sixteenth century, Abingdon Abbey remained the principal landowner in Hurst parish. At the Dissolution, these landholdings were conferred on Richard Ward, a member of the royal household (Farrar 1984, 41).



Fig 12: Extract from John Rocque's *Map of Berkshire*, of 1761 (Royal Collections Trust).

- 5.4 Historic mapping from the mid-eighteenth century onwards provides evidence of the long-term continuity of land use and settlement on and around the Application Site, which appears to have remained broadly unchanged from the early post-medieval period. Rocque's map of 1761 depicts buildings along Hogmoor Lane, including the present Wards Cross House and Old Posting House, together with buildings along the southern side of Broadwater Lane, most if not all of which represent the existing structures on this side (Fig. 12). The clustering of buildings around the converging road junctions, just to the north-west of the Site, largely conforms to the existing plan of Whistley Green.
- 5.5 Rocque's map, and that of Thomas Pride, of 1790 (Fig. 13), confirm a basic rural layout which has remained largely unchanged since that time. Pride's map offers greater scale and detail, with more accurately depicted building plans. Of interest is the estate of Haines Hill, just to the east of the Application Site and the property of Broadwater to the north-west. Neither map, however, is of sufficiently large scale to provide any depiction of land boundaries, although the eighteenth-century network of roads and lanes is largely recognisable today.



Fig. 13: Extract from Thomas Pride's *Map of Ten Miles Around Reading*, of 1790 (Reading Library).

- 5.6 Greater detail is provided by the larger-scale Enclosure Map, of 1812, and the Hurst Tithe Map, of 1842 (Figs. 14 and 15). Both continue to depict the Application Site as open agricultural land, which appears to be situated within a single land parcel with hedged boundaries. This distinctly-shaped field has clearly survived in the modern landscape and confirms this field boundary, along with the paddock on the north-western side of Wards Cross House, as historic features. The land in question was evidently in the ownership of Lady Eyre in the early nineteenth century. This field is shown as subdivided on the Tithe Map of 1842 (Nos. 287 and 288), possibly indicating a change of ownership (Fig. 15).
- 5.7 Both maps depict Wards Cross House, together with properties on the southern side of Broadwater Lane, which must at least include Elder Cottage, Parker's Cottage and Buttercups, with Huntsman's Cottage on the northern side of the lane, to the west of the Application Site. Both maps therefore represent a detailed record of the layout of properties and farmland divisions on this side of the village from the post-medieval period. It is therefore important to recognise that many of the principal landscape features depicted on this historic mapping record, including individual dwellings, boundaries, roadways and patterns of land use, have remained largely unchanged since the time of their creation, despite the presence of later infill developments.



Fig. 14: Extract from the *Hurst Enclosure Map*, of 1812 (Berkshire Record Office).



Fig. 15: Extract from the *Hurst Tithe Map*, of 1842 (Berkshire Record Office).

5.8 Tithing records (Berkshire Records Office) indicate that, in 1842, neighbouring landholdings (ie. Plots 289-293) had remained in the same ownership as shown on the earlier enclosure map. This included the house and gardens at Wards Cross House and the Long Barn, on Hogmoor Lane.

Plots 289 and 292 respectively comprised an orchard and pasture, while Plots 197, 311 and 312, to the north and north-west, were owned by John Leveson and Lady Eyre since 1812. These Plots and Plot 293 were apparently all under arable cultivation at this time (Figs. 14 and 15).

- 5.9 The larger-scale Ordnance Survey maps of the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries provide greater survey accuracy and more detail, although few changes in the layout of buildings and land boundaries are apparent by this time (Figs. 16 and 17). A number of infill nineteenth-century plots are evident on the Ordnance Survey map of 1909, particularly along the road frontage to the east of Wards Cross House, although the basic post-medieval plan has otherwise survived remarkably intact (Fig. 17). Significantly, the United States Air Force vertical aerial image of 1944 indicates little further change during the first half of the twentieth century, despite the rapid growth of neighbouring village centres (Fig. 18).

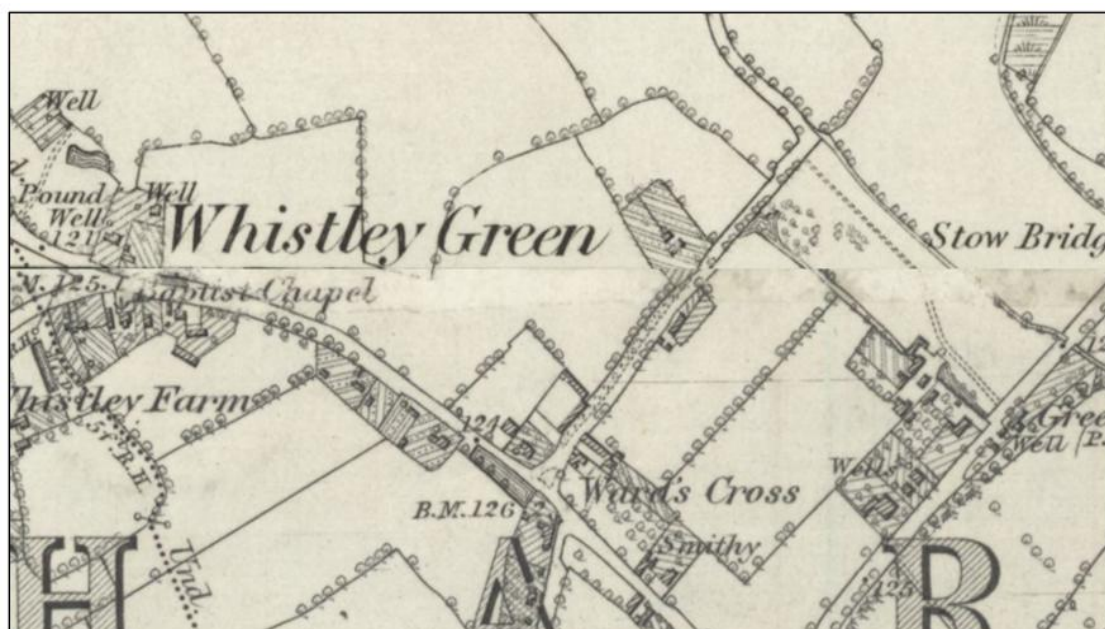


Fig. 16: Extract from the Ordnance Survey six-inch England and Wales series, surveyed in 1877 (National Library of Scotland).



Fig. 17: Extract from the Ordnance Survey 25-inch England and Wales series 1842-1952, surveyed in 1909 (National Library of Scotland).



Fig. 18: Vertical aerial image of the land surrounding Broadwater Lane and Hogmoor Lane, Hurst in 1944 (Historic England Archive, Extract from USAAF photograph: Sortie US/PH/GP/LOC208, March 8th 1944).

6. PLANNING HISTORY

The 2024 Outline Planning Application

- 6.1 An original outline application submitted by Shorewood Homes in 2024 (ref. 240583) was for:
‘The Construction of nine detached dwellings of Broadwater Lane, with three access points off the Lane’
The 0.92ha Application Site relating to this application was located within designated countryside adjacent to both Broadwater Lane and Hogmoor Lane, and situated outside, but bordering, the settlement limits of Hurst village. The Application Site was bounded on the southern, north-western and south-eastern sides by the Hurst Area of Special Character (AOSC).
- 6.2 The application was refused under delated powers on 29th November, 2024. Refusal Reason 5 of the Decision Notice (CD 3.1) stated that:
‘The proposal would result in the loss of the historic settlement gap between Hurst Village and Whistley Green, replacing this with suburban linear development which detrimentally harms the edge and setting of the Hurst Area of Special Character. Due to the loss of an open green field, which is an important rural characteristic of the setting of the Special Character Area. This is contrary to TB26 of the Managing Delivery Document (2014) and the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).’
- 6.3 The Delegated Officer’s Report of November 29, 2024 stated the position of the Local Planning Authority with regard to a number of relevant planning policies and criteria expressed within them:
Built Heritage:
‘The site is located on the border of (but affecting) Hurst’s Village Centre Area of Special Character, and near to Buttercups, a Grade II-listed building, Bower Cottage, a Grade II-listed building, Parkers Cottage, a Grade II-listed building, Elder Cottage, a Grade II-listed building, Ward Cross House, a grade II listed building and Long Barn, a non-designated heritage asset. Therefore, the proposals are subject to assessment under policies TB24 and TB26 of the MDD Local Plan. From historic Ordnance Survey mapping of 1873 it appears the application site has been unchanged over all that time.
- Designated heritage assets:*
- 6.4 ‘Policy TB24 of the MDD Local Plan seeks to conserve and enhance designated heritage assets in the Borough and their settings by:

- a. Requiring works to or affecting heritage assets, or their setting, to demonstrate that the proposals would at least conserve and, where possible enhance the important character and special architectural or historic interest of the building, Conservation Area, monument or park and garden including its setting and views.
- b. Supporting development proposals or other initiatives that will conserve and, where possible, enhance the local character, setting, management and historic significance of designated heritage assets, with particular support for initiatives that would improve any assets that are recognised as being in poor condition or at risk.

Area of Special Character (non-designated Heritage assets):

- 6.5 Policy TB26 of the MDD Local Plan seeks to protect and enhance Areas of Special Character. The policy states:
1. Planning permission will only be granted for proposals to or affecting Buildings of Traditional Local Character and Areas of Special Character where they demonstrate that they retain and enhance the traditional, historical, local and special character of the building or area and its setting. Paragraph 209 of the NPPF (now Paragraph 216) states that “The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.” Paragraph 214 of the NPPF (now Paragraph 221) states that “Local planning authorities should assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies.” The southern boundary of the application site falls within Hurst’s Area of Special Character (“AOSC”), and strongly correlates to its northern limit in providing a valuable setting for the wider AOSC. The site is also bound by the AOSC to the east and west.
- 6.6 ‘While settlement limits often combine historic settlements to acknowledge existing built form, this does not detract away from retained historic separate identity. The site represents an area of open land that provides both a historic and visual sense of separation between the historic community of Whistley Green and the part of Hurst that initially developed around the historic Hurst Lodge and the former farmhouse of Ward’s Cross, at the junction with Hogmoor Lane. Historically, the green gap on the southside of Broadwater Lane between Whistley Green and Hurst Village has been subject to incremental infill development, with the dwellings directly adjacent to the

application site (to the south) being constructed as late as the later 20th century. These two communities have been identified by the Council as an area of special character, in part due to the listed buildings and on the merits of those late nineteenth /early twentieth-century developments, including infill development, which in part define the character of the area.

Landscape Character and Valued Landscape:

- 6.7 Policy TB21 of the MDD Local Plan states that “Proposals shall retain or enhance the condition, character and features that contribute to the landscape.” The Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment 2019 (WDLCA) shows the site sits within the C2 Hurst River Terrace Landscape Character Area. The WDLCA lists the following Valuable Landscape Attributes for the C2 Hurst River Terrace LCA: • Peaceful and open character of the undeveloped arable and pastoral landscape when removed from the intrusion of major roads to the south, which provides an escape in close proximity to the urban population.

- Rural settlement pattern of small villages with historic cores and farmsteads unified by the cohesive use of redbrick which provides a cultural record of the past and adds local distinctiveness.
- A network of narrow rural lanes with characteristic roadside ditches which contribute to scenic quality.
- Small wetland habitats, including drainage channels and numerous farm ponds which are valued for flora and fauna.
- Gently undulating terrace landform provides open and clear views to the wooded backdrop of the adjacent Loddon Valley. T

he built edge of Broadwater Lane is characterised by gaps in the settlement pattern to the northern edge. This is a special feature of the area of special character. The same is true of the east side of Hogmoor Lane which is characterised by a gap between the few dwellings and provides a clear view of the eastern edge of the site and the mature hedgerow field boundary that extends south across the field toward the southern edge of the site. The landscape attributes applicable to the proposal is the need to retain the settlement pattern (which the site as an existing, undeveloped, greenfield site contribute towards), peaceful character of the undeveloped arable and pastoral landscape, roadside ditches and small wetland habitats. Therefore, residential development within this location would result in the inevitable loss of these features, contrary to the established character of the Hurst River Terrace C2 Landscape Character Area (LCA), and TB21 of the MDD Local Plan.

- 6.8 This application was refused under delegated powers on 29th November, 2024, and was subsequently appealed in August 2025.

The outcome of the 2025 Appeal

- 6.9 The comments of the Inspector's report, of October 17th, 2025 (ref. APP/X0360/W/25/ 3359898) with respect to heritage and landscape matters are reproduced below:

The Listed Buildings

24. I note that the site is separated from these properties by Broadwater Lane, and accept that the evidence does not indicate associative links between the listed buildings and the Appeal Site. I also note that the setting of the listed buildings has suffered some erosion through the introduction of more modern infill development on this side of Broadwater Lane.
25. However, from Broadwater Lane, these buildings are currently experienced and perceived within a largely quiet, open and rural environment because of the character and appearance of the appeal site. There is nothing to indicate any history of development on the appeal site and it is likely that these buildings will have always been set against that backdrop. This relationship can be appreciated both from within the appeal site and from Broadwater Lane.
26. The attributes of the site contribute positively to the setting and therefore the significance of the four listed buildings. Historic England guidance on the setting of Heritage Assets advises that settings of heritage assets which closely resemble the setting at the time the asset was constructed are likely to contribute particularly strongly to significance.
27. That positive contribution would be significantly undermined through increased noise and activity on the site as well as the physical presence of nine well-sized houses. This would be the case even if some dwellings were to be set back from Broadwater Lane and even if a scheme of landscaping were to be implemented.
28. The proposal would cause harm to the setting of Buttercups, Bower Cottage, Parkers Cottage and Elder Cottage. The arising harm to the significance of the assets would be less than substantial.
29. The harm would be towards the higher end within the less than substantial category for Bower Cottage and Parkers Cottage, given they are fully opposite the Appeal Site, and have a close relationship with it and because of the forward positioning of plots 6 and 7. The harm would be at the lower end within the less than substantial category for Buttercups given the development would be set further back at this end of the site and this would also be the case for Elder Cottage given its positioning slightly further along on Broadwater Lane not fully fronting the site.
30. Overall, there would be conflict with Policy TB 24 of the MDLP which amongst other things states that the Council will conserve and seek the enhancement of designated heritage assets in the Borough and their settings by requiring works to or affecting the setting of heritage assets to demonstrate that the proposals would at least conserve the

important character and special architectural or historic interest of the building, including its setting.

31. I must give considerable importance and weight to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings. Harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme.

The Hurst Area of Special Character (AOSC)

- 6.10 32. The AOSC, a non-designated heritage asset, encompasses part of Whistley Green and Hurst. Its significance in part sits with its buildings which are of a variety of ages, designs and materials including buildings and features that are designated and non-designated heritage assets in their own rights.
33. However, the AOSC also includes the land immediately on the boundary of the site adjacent to Broadwater Lane. Whilst the appeal site is not referred to as a component of the AOSC setting, details within the Historic Environment Topic Paper, where referring to this particular AOSC summarise amongst other things that Broadwater Lane is heavily vegetated on the stretch of road between Hurst Village and Whistley Green, with many mature trees and open fields on the northern side of the street. It can therefore be reasonably concluded that the planting on the boundary of the site including T14 and T16 makes a positive contribution to the significance of the AOSC as a backdrop which frames the buildings within it.
34. Whilst I note that the proposal would likely see the provision of substantial landscaping to the boundary as part of any approval, given the risk of deterioration associated with the proposal to T14 and T16 on that boundary, and the importance of those trees within the boundary planting, the proposal would subsequently cause moderate harm to the significance of the AOSC. The proposal would therefore conflict with Policy TB26 of the MDLP which amongst other things states that planning permission will only be granted for proposals affecting Areas of Special Character where they demonstrate that they retain and enhance the traditional, historical, local and special character of the area.

Landscape Impact

- 6.11 35. The appeal site and the wider countryside beyond make for a pleasant backdrop to Broadwater Lane. The residential development on the opposite side of Broadwater Lane is largely continuous, linking Hurst and Whistley Green. This makes it difficult to assess when on the ground on this part of Broadwater Lane where these respective settlements begin and end, meaning that there is no obvious gap between the two settlements in this particular location.
36. The Hurst River Terrace Landscape Character Area (HRTLCA) within which the site sits encompasses land from the A329 (M) to the south incorporating land a short distance to the north of Whistley Green.

37. Its key characteristics amongst other things include being a simple agricultural landscape of mainly arable farmland, with pasture enclosed in relatively large straight-sided fields as well as being a rural and tranquil area. Its valuable landscape attributes amongst other things include the peaceful and open character of the undeveloped pastoral landscape. Amongst the key issues is demand for residential development increasing linear development along rural lanes and continuing to push towards the amalgamation of close settlements Whistley Green and Hurst, impacting rural character.
38. The Landscape guidelines include amongst other things conserving the open and rural qualities of the landscape and maintaining the sparse settlement pattern of villages and dispersed farms through control of new development, avoiding further linear spread of development.
39. Considering the key characteristics, valuable attributes, key issues and guidelines of the HRTLCA against the characteristics of the site as described above, I consider that the proposals could be integrated into the landscape setting without any significant adverse landscape effects.
40. Whilst the appeal site is not currently within an area designated as a valued landscape, the Council has intentions to extend the Haines Hill valued landscape such that it would include the appeal site.
41. However, when referring to the Haines Hill Valued Landscape Narrative and a map which includes the appeal site, the Council's Valued Landscapes Assessment does not refer to the HRTLCA within which the appeal site sits despite referring to other landscape character areas. Whilst I note the site-specific reassessment supplied by the Council, on that basis, I am not confident that the appeal site should be considered as part of a valued landscape based on current evidence.
42. Overall, in conclusion on this main issue there would be no significant adverse impact on the landscape. There would subsequently be no conflict with Policy TB21 of the MDLP which states that proposals must demonstrate how they have addressed the requirements of the landscape character assessment and shall at a minimum retain the condition, character and features that contribute to the landscape. Given my conclusions with regard to valued landscapes there would be no conflict with paragraph 187 which requires that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by amongst other things protecting and enhancing valued landscapes.

7. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

7.1 A Permission in Principle application was submitted by Shorewood Homes on February 9th, 2025, for 'the proposed erection of a maximum of 7 no. dwellings (or a minimum of 5 no. dwellings), including formation of an access from Broadwater Lane' (ref. 260353). The current application represents a revision of the 2024 and Appeal sites, with a partial redistribution of built form from the Broadwater Lane frontage to Hogmoor Lane. The revised proposals have sought to address the reasons given by the planning inspector for dismissing the Appeal. These concluded that the earlier proposed scheme would result in less than substantial harm to the settings of the Grade II-listed buildings on the south side of Broadwater Lane. The Inspector also considered that the proposed scheme would result in harm to the Hurst AOSC, partly due to the effect of the scheme on the mature trees bounding the Site.



Fig. 19: Proposed Site Plan (Radley House Partnership).

7.2 The revised Application Site occupies an area of 0.95ha, and would comprise two distant development areas, to be linked by an internal access road (Fig. 19). The western area, on Broadwater Lane, would comprise Plots 1-3, and the eastern, facing into Hogmoor Lane, would comprise Plots 4-7. The western area on Broadwater Lane would represent approximately one third

of the footprint of the 2025 Appeal Site, with an undeveloped roadside area to the north-west remaining as open land. On its southern side, the western part of the Application Site would be bounded by a tree-lined grass verge and the carriageway of Broadwater Lane. The eastern boundary of this development area is formed by the fenced rear plot boundaries of Grade II-listed Wards Cross House, and non-listed Long Barn (Figs. 1 and 19). The northern boundary partly follows an existing field boundary, before continuing to enclose the larger eastern element of the Site. This eastern area is bounded on the eastern side by Hogmoor Lane, with its southern extent delimited by the plot boundary of Long Barn. The northern boundary is formed by the plot of Apple Tree Cottage, on Hogmoor Lane.

- 7.3 Plots 1-3 on Broadwater Lane would contain substantial detached dwellings of presumed two-storey height. These would be associated with single or double garages, and would be recessed from the Broadwater Lane frontage by a four-metre strip containing hedgerow and tree plantings. A wide bellmouth opening on the Broadwater Lane frontage would provide an entrance for the internal access road, which would curve round to the east, to connect with the eastern development area. This internal road would open onto the distribution road leading to the four houses on the Hogmoor Lane frontage, but would offer no direct access to the Lane (Fig. 19). Plots 4-7, would include detached dwellings and plots closely comparable with those of Plots 1-3, which would face more directly onto Hogmoor Lane, although the bordering roadside verge and ditch would be retained. All individual plots would include spacious gardens, with separate garages, which would over time accumulate ancillary structures and features. Proposed dwellings would feature a mix of hipped and gabled roof forms, with contrasting detailing and material palettes.

8. ASSESSING THE HERITAGE IMPACTS OF THE CURRENT REVISED SCHEME

- 8.1 A justification of the proposed scheme and its effect on the historic environment is contained within a supporting heritage statement produced by Asset Heritage Consulting (2026). This section of the Planning Rebuttal report will assess the potential heritage impacts arising from the proposed scheme, and will critique the claims and justifications made in the applicant's supporting heritage statement.

Heritage Settings

- 8.2 The revised scheme would entail a reduction in built form and massing on Broadwater Lane, where it would represent approximately one third of the road frontage occupied by the Appeal Site, with a reduction in the proposed number of dwellings from nine to three (Fig. 19). The three dwellings in Plots 1-3 would be set further back from the road frontage than those of the Appeal Scheme. While this reduction in proposed built form on Broadwater Lane is acknowledged, and the resulting level of impact on the settings of some heritage assets reduced to a limited degree, the heritage statement produced in support of the revised scheme has considerably underestimated the effect of the reduced level of development in this location on both heritage settings and the AOSC.
- 8.3 The applicant claims that the revised scheme layout would permit a substantial landscape buffer on the northern side of Broadwater Lane, although this important spatial division between settlements, and the role of this land as an aspect of historic landscape context, would be substantially reduced by Plots 1-3. Perceptions of the spatial importance and historic significance of the open spaces to the north of Broadwater Lane would be irrevocably altered (Figs. 22, 23 and 25). The existing northward view across open land from Broadwater Lane would be confined to a narrower compass, with the quality of such views compromised by the proximity of a conspicuous modern housing development.
- 8.4 While the potential value of a landscaped buffer-strip on the roadside frontage of partly recessed Plots 1-3 is acknowledged, this in itself would not be sufficient to effectively screen the proposed Plots 1-3 in northward and westward views from Grade II-listed buildings along Broadwater Lane (Figs. 24 and 25). Such a strip would not alter perceptions of an intrusive modern development, particularly in view of the proposed creation of a prominent bellmouth opening for the proposed internal access road on this side (Fig. 19). This aperture would enable clear views of the interior of the development from some locations on Broadwater Lane, and would introduce additional traffic-

flow which would have a further deleterious effect on settings and historic character. Notwithstanding the proposals to soften or limit the visual impact of the proposed scheme, this would still be apparent as a development of distinctly suburban aspect, which would conflict with surrounding built character and heritage settings.



Fig. 20: View, looking south-west, of Long Barn, with adjoining part of the application site visible from Hogmoor Lane.



Fig. 21: View, looking north from Hogmoor Lane and Munfin House across the eastern section of the application site.

- 8.5 In his report, the Inspector noted that ‘any contribution made to the setting of surrounding listed buildings by the Appeal Scheme would be sufficiently undermined through ‘increased noise and activity, as well as the presence of nine well-sized houses’. It is argued that such would substantially remain the case for the revised scheme, notwithstanding the more limited built form along Broadwater Road. In the case of the quieter, more rural aspect of Hogmoor Lane, the effect of the revised scheme would be altogether more marked (Figs. 11, 20 and 21).



Fig. 22: View, looking south across the western part of the Application Site towards Broadwater Lane.

- 8.6 While no development is now proposed within the area directly opposite Grade II-listed Buttercups, it cannot be accepted that the retention of open ground opposite this location would automatically remove any impacts to setting. Plots 1-3 would remain visible from this part of Broadwater Lane in westward views, and perceptions of the historically open setting of this listed building on the northern side would be irrevocably altered by the proposed quantum of development. The degree of setting impact, and resulting harm, would be more limited than in the case of the Appeal Site, but not altogether removed. In this sense, it is not accepted that the revised scheme would result in no impact to the setting and significance of Buttercups (Figs. 3 and 4). It is also disputed that the effects of substantial dwellings on the northern side of Broadwater Lane

would be significantly reduced, or that any resulting noise or activity would be ‘minimal’ in effect, or not affect the ambience or setting of neighbouring listed buildings.

- 8.7 The same considerations must apply to Grade II-listed Elder Cottage (Figs. 3 and 5). While this building would not be directly confronted by substantial modern dwellings within the revised scheme, the three dwellings and associated structures within Plots 1-3 would still be plainly visible in eastward views from this location on Broadwater Lane, and perception of its extensive setting of open farmland on the northern side would be irrevocably altered. While the section of land directly opposite Elder Cottage would remain undeveloped and open, the quality of northward views and this aspect of the historic setting of the building would be more limited and confined. The level of resulting harm to the significance of Elder Cottage would remain largely unchanged, and would be towards the lower end of less than substantial.
- 8.8 The Inspector’s report identified a higher level of less than substantial harm to the significance of Parker’s Cottage and Bower Cottage, in view of the close proximity of elements of the Appeal Scheme. The claims made in Paras. 5.2.15 to 5.2.17 in the applicant’s heritage statement, that setting makes a comparatively limited contribution to overall heritage significance in this case, are disputed. These two Grade II-listed buildings would remain closely adjacent to Plots 1-3 of the revised scheme, and the same degree of setting impact would apply as for the Appeal Scheme, notwithstanding the introduction of an intervening landscaped strip (Fig. 24). Setting impact in this case would be exacerbated by the prominent bellmouth roadway opening onto Broadwater Lane, and by resulting additional traffic movements and activity. It is therefore confidently asserted that a comparably high level of less than substantial harm to the setting and significance of these two listed buildings would apply equally to the revised scheme. In this case it should be acknowledged that these, and the other Grade II-listed buildings on Broadwater Lane, exhibit a degree of group value, and are collectively significant in terms of the historical development of the village and its settlement landscape. In this sense, setting impacts need to be assessed holistically and collectively, ie. within their wider historic landscape context.
- 8.9 The effect of the Appeal Scheme on Grade II-listed Wards Cross House was a notable omission of the Inspector’s report, particularly as this heritage asset adjoined the Appeal Site on its eastern side (Figs. 3 and 8). This building and its plot would be closely adjoined by Plot 3 of the revised scheme, with a substantial modern dwelling directly visible from the listed building, with no intervening screening (Fig. 25). This would remove the important visual connection between this

building and the farmland with which it was historically associated, and would completely remove the aspect of the open, fieldscape setting which contributes importantly to its significance. The level of harm resulting from this impact is assessed as being in the higher level of less than substantial. The claim made in the applicant's heritage statement, that 'there is no objective reason why the new scheme would have any impact on this listed building,' is strongly disputed. Proposed Plots 4-7, together with the proposed access road, would result in a comparable level of impact to the setting and historic landscape context of locally-listed Long Barn, immediately to the north-east of Wards Cross House (Fig. 20).

- 8.10 Consideration should also be given to the wider setting of Grade II-listed The Old Posting House, located on the eastern side of Hogmoor Lane, although this building recessed from the road frontage, and partly screened by boundary vegetation and built form (Figs. 3 and 9). This enjoys some limited views across Hogmoor Lane and the open ground beyond, which would be irrevocably altered by the revised scheme. The claim that the revised scheme would not result in any harm to the significance of this listed building is disputed. The proposed buildings in Plots 4-7 would be fully visible from Hogmoor Lane, and would diminish the quality of views within this thoroughfare, together with its currently quiet and essentially rural character (Figs. 20 and 24). Such impacts would include the setting of locally-listed Munfin House, which includes views of open farmland to the west, which would be irrevocably altered (Fig. 21). The claim made in Para 5.2.30 of the applicant's heritage statement, that the proposed development on this side would not result in any impacts to heritage settings, or that the two non-listed buildings concerned are of notably limited significance, is strongly disputed.

Landscape Setting and the AOSC

- 8.11 It is also strongly disputed that the current Application Site makes no contribution to the AOSC. While much of Hogmoor Lane lies outside the boundary of the AOSC, the westward views from it which incorporate open fields to the west comprise an important part of the setting and context of the AOSC (Figs. 20 and 1). It is acknowledged that while WBC Policy TB26 does not preclude development within the setting of an AOSC, it is made clear that such development should protect the special character of the area, with special regard given to historical context, outbuildings, scale, form, massing and materials. Such development should also retain key architectural features and detailing which contribute to character. While the revised scheme would introduce dwellings of a scale and form appropriate to the immediately surrounding area, it would

fail to comply with the special character or historical landscape context of the AOSC, and would therefore be inappropriate in this location.



Fig. 23: View, looking south-west across the Application Site, from a location close to Long Barn.

8.12 While the AOSC principally concerns an area of built townscape interest, this cannot be divorced from its wider landscape context, and the relationship between its built form and wider rural setting, which is of some historic interest. Such visual and contextual relationships are particularly significant at the margins of a village settlement, as must be the case here. The current Application Site comprises part of an open rural landscape which directly borders the AOSC, but is not part of it (Figs. 22 and 23). This juxtaposition offers both a contrast and complement to built form within the AOSC, which is part of an historic rural settlement which has always been enclosed, and defined by, areas of open farmland. The area of surrounding farmland comprises a dominant feature in such a relationship. Any partial replacement of this aspect of historic setting, by what could be described as an enclosing development of suburban character, would be directly visible within outward views from the AOSC, and would considerably detract from its character, and the contribution made by such views to significance (Figs. 24 and 25). It is therefore argued, further to the point made in Para 8.11 above, that the revised scheme would be contrary to Policies TB21 and TB26 of the MDD Local Plan.

- 8.13 The Application Site indisputably comprises part of a significant and historic settlement gap between Hurst village and Whistley Green, to the north. This gap of open countryside is significant in that it represents a clear, open distinction between two neighbouring village settlements (Fig. 23 and report front cover). This is important in an area which is otherwise characterised by extensive twentieth-century village expansion and connecting ribbon developments. The proposed development on the Broadwater Lane side would partly erode the spatial distinction between adjoining villages, and leave a reduced strip which would be vulnerable to future infill development. The distinctive, and spatially distinct, rural character of Hurst village contrasts with the extensive modern developments surrounding the neighbouring settlements of Twyford, Winnersh and Wokingham, and such surviving character should be preserved.
- 8.14 As with the Appeal Scheme, the current revised scheme would visually separate this part of Hurst village from its open landscape setting to the north, and would erode the significant spatial distinction between Hurst and Whistley Green. The proposed layout would continue to impact the quality of northward views from some heritage assets on Broadwater Lane, and of westward view from Hogmoor Lane, and would not avoid a degree of setting impact to Grade II-listed Buttercups and Elder Cottage. The proposed scheme would divorce a number of listed and non-listed historic buildings from their historic landscape context. This includes available views north-westward from Wards Cross House, and Long Barn (Figs. 23 and 25). Hurst village has retained a distinct historic and spatial identity, with an unchanged landscape setting on its north-western side which contributes importantly to the setting and significance of historic buildings, and to the setting and rural context of the AOSC.
- 8.15 Contrary to the views expressed within the applicant's heritage statement, the revised scheme would result in unacceptably adverse effects to the wider landscape settings of a number of designated and non-designated historic buildings, and of the Hurst Area of Special Character. It would also erode an area of open farmland on the margins of the village which is an important and largely unchanged historic survival. While not formally designated as such, this surviving fieldscape is integral to its historic landscape context of the village, and forms an important settlement gap. While the overall level of harm to heritage assets and landscape resulting from the revised scheme is assessed as being in the middle range of less than substantial, this would extend to the higher range of less than substantial in the case of some individual heritage assets. This planning rebuttal document for heritage therefore endorses many of the assessments and opinions expressed in an earlier Heritage Statement report (RHC 2024), and subsequent Appeal Statement (RHC 2025). The

revised scheme would conflict with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policies TB21, TB24 and TB26 of the WBC MDD Local Plan.



Fig. 24: View, looking north from Parker's Cottage and Broadwater Lane, of the proposed western section of the Application Site.



Fig. 25: View, looking north-west across the proposed western section of the Application Site, from the garden of Wards Cross House.

9. CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 Earlier assessment has demonstrated that the current Application Site and surrounding area have comprised part of the agricultural environs and landscape context of the village since the medieval period. In addition, the evidence of historic mapping confirms that the Application Site and adjoining land to the north of Broadwater Lane have remained largely unchanged since at least the eighteenth century, with surviving field boundaries. The proposed development would detract from an important aspect of the historic setting of the village, and would remove an aspect of historic landscape setting which contributes to the significance of a number of listed buildings. It would also erode the currently clear spatial distinction between neighbouring village settlements.
- 9.2 The Application Site is located within the settings of six individual Grade II-listed buildings, and two non-listed buildings which have been identified by the local authority as being of historic interest. These buildings predominantly comprise vernacular dwellings of seventeenth-century origin, which will historically have been closely related to surrounding farmland. This assessment has considered the effect of the proposed development on the historic landscape character, and on the settings and significance of individual heritage assets. Of the six listed buildings assessed, only one, The Old Posting House, would have very little visual linkage with the Application Site, due to the presence of intervening vegetation and built form. Principal impacts to setting would be principally associated with Wards Cross House, and with Bower Cottage and Parker's Cottage located on the south side of Broadwater Lane.
- 9.3 Almost all the assessed Grade II-listed buildings affected are of seventeenth-century date or origin, and are considered to represent a distinct historical phase of development which will have had a functional relationship with surrounding land. Despite later developments, these are still legible as a phase of post-medieval rural dwellings which are of comparable character and construction. They cannot be divorced from historic patterns of land use within and surrounding the Application Site, which makes an important contribution to their significance. The wider landscape setting of the village has remained largely unchanged since the period of the buildings' construction, despite a number of later infill developments on the southern side of Broadwater Lane. The revised scheme of residential development would continue to obstruct some views from Broadwater Lane across open land to the north, and from Wards Cross House, and would therefore adversely affect the historic and current setting of these historic buildings and their visual relationship with an open rural setting. Such would to some extent remain the case with Grade II-listed Buttercups and Elder

Cottage, from which the proposed scheme would be at least partly visible. Such negative impacts should also be considered on a collective as well as an individual basis.

9.4 The current revised scheme is claimed to represent a response to the objections of the Planning Inspector to the Appeal Scheme. However, in effectively displacing a proposed quantum of development from the Broadwater Lane frontage to that of adjoining Hogmoor Lane, the applicant has not dispelled the impacts to heritage settings associated with the Appeal Site, but has merely extended them, by transferring part of the Application Site to Hogmoor Lane. It is therefore asserted that the overall aggregate level of setting and landscape impacts, and resulting harm, both to individual heritage assets and the AOSC, remains broadly the same as for the Appeal Site. The proposed reduction in development footprint along Broadwater Lane has not fully addressed previous objections relating to setting impact, and to the removal of an important settlement gap and the open rural context of this part of the village. There is therefore fundamental disagreement with the estimations of harm to the significance of heritage assets and the AOSC presented in Section 6.2 of the applicant's heritage statement. In particular, the estimates of low or no resulting harm estimated for Parker's Cottage, Bower Cottage and Wards Cross House are considered to be misleading, and are strongly contested. No explanation has been given as to why the impacts and levels of harm associated with the revised scheme are lower than those quoted for the Appeal Scheme, despite the fact that respective levels of inter-visibility and relationships to proposed development would remain essentially unchanged in these cases.

9.5 On the basis of this assessment, the proposed development north of Broadwater Lane would result in a demonstrable level of harm to the collective and individual significance of affected listed buildings, through change to their setting. Such harm would also result from development within part of the historic landscape context of the village, and the Hurst Area of Special Character.

Paragraph 212 of NPPF states that:

'When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance'.

and Paragraph 213 states that;

'Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing

justification. Substantial harm to, or loss of Grade II-listed buildings, or Grade II-registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional.’

- 9.6 On this basis, the revised scheme would not conform to the requirements of Policy TB24 of the Wokingham Local Plan (2014), or Policy CP3 of the Wokingham Borough Council Core Strategy. It would also be contrary to aspects of supplementary planning guidance relating to design and new developments. In addition, it would be contrary to the provisions for protecting the settings of listed buildings contained in NPPF and the 1990 Planning Act.

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RIDGEWAY

HERITAGE CONSULTANCY

5 Orchardleigh View, Frome, Somerset, BA11 3SB
0118 9333 147 | www.ridgewayheritage.com | richard@ridgewayheritage.com