
MEMORANDUM

From:	Brigitte Crafer Landscape Architect		
Service	WBC Landscape and Trees	App No:	250632
Address:	Land North Of The Vale, Forest Road, Wokingham, RG40 5QY.		
Proposal:	Outline application for the proposed erection of 1 no. dwelling and associated works.		
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

The site is located in the countryside and Policy CP11 of the CS applies.

The site is located along Forest Road a Green Route and a straight road that extends from Wokingham to Binfield. The site is located towards the north part of an extended long and narrow plot that already includes Cherry Trees, a substantial detached dwelling facing Forest Road, to the rear of Cherry Trees is a dwelling known as 'The Caravan at The Vale', to the rear of the Caravan is a building known as 'The Chalet at The Vale', and to the rear of the chalet are 2 quite large outbuildings, beyond which is the site. To the north of the site is an open area of grass.

The site is located in Landscape Character Area (LCA) I1 'Ashridge Farmed Clay Lowland';

'A simple farmed landscape dominated by open arable fields and some pasture, with mature hedgerow trees marking former hedge lines. Wooded horizons created by large deciduous blocks line a subtle ridgeline, cut by a network of small tributary streams. Settlement is focused on ribbon development along the local roads, scattered farmsteads and manor houses. The strong rural character is only affected by the M4 and A329 (M) which cut through the area'

The I1 LCA is not in the 'Valued Landscape' but has the following **Valuable Landscape Attributes** that relate to the site;

Strong rural character of the rolling agricultural landscape with its subtle wooded ridges, large woodlands and sparse settlement which create a strong sense of place.

Large deciduous woodland blocks, including BAP priority habitats and ancient woodland, provide scenic variety and a sense of enclosure in the open landscape as well as important ecological habitats.

Characteristic mature in-field and roadside oaks in the open arable fields which provide a sense of place.

Wooded skyline which provides a backdrop to the surrounding areas.

Remote quality due to the scarcity of settlement and relative inaccessibility by footpath which results in a sense of tranquillity despite proximity to urban centres and motorways.

Key Issues relating to the site include;

'Hedgerow loss associated with the expansion of fields and intensification of agriculture'.

'Lack of the recruitment of young trees (through natural regeneration or planting) required to rebalance the age structure of parkland and hedgerow trees is an on-going threat to the character of the landscape'.

The Landscape Strategy is to conserve and enhance the existing rural character. The key aspects to be conserved and actively managed are the characteristic wooded ridges and woodland, including ancient woodland. In particular there are opportunities to restore coppice management, and reinstate and repair key hedgerows with hedgerow standards.

In terms of development, the aim is to conserve the sparse settlement pattern through controlling development.

Landscape Guidelines include;

Reinstate or repair hedgerows with native species and reconnect remnant standard oak trees with restored historic hedgelines where there are opportunities to do so. Plan for the next generation of hedgerow trees with a programme of tree planting.

Conserve and enhance the integration of urban edges through wooded boundaries and large-species trees to provide visual screening and a positive interface between the built up and rural areas that provides an appropriate setting for Wokingham town.

Site

The site is located in a pocket of development along Forest Road which contains Reheboth to the east – an educational centre, and Harp Farm to the west consisting of a dwelling and commercial buildings that extend northwards. The site is part of

the central extended plot which consists mostly of dwellings except for the building at the rear of the extended plot.

There are no protected trees on the site but there is boundary planting of trees and hedges to the east and a hedge to the western boundary. The dwellings are landscaped with hedges trees and shrubs.

The site does not have a road frontage.

The development can be classed as backland and Policy TB06 development of private residential gardens applies. *The Council will resist inappropriate development of residential gardens where development would cause harm to the local area.*

Proposals for residential development that includes land within the curtilage or former curtilage of private residential gardens will only be awarded where; it makes a positive contribution to the character of the area such as; the relationship of the existing built form and the spaces around the buildings within the surroundings area, a layout that integrates the surrounding area with regards to building lines, rhythm of plot frontages, parking areas and the existing pattern of openings and boundary treatments on the site frontage.

The building must provide a site of adequate size to accommodate the development proposed in terms of setting and spacing around buildings, amenity space, landscaping and space for access roads and parking.

There is no detail of the plot layout other than the position and footprint of the building. It is noted that the site spans east to west boundaries and there is remaining green field land to the north of the application site.

No landscape features will be adversely affected as the site is a grassy area with hedgerows to the east and west and semi open boundary to the south, open to the north. The site is accessed via Forest Road and extends initially to the other dwellings on the site, and finally to the application site. It is noted that there is no 'defensible space' or semi-private space to the side of the existing dwellings in the case of vehicles and pedestrians passing by.

There is no adverse visual impact from the surroundings as the site is well-screened. The site is located in a pocket of development to the north of Forest Road.

Should the application be approved a Landscape Condition is required that considers the issue raised such as the lack of defensible space between dwelling and the access road, and the planting of new trees within /close to existing and proposed hedges in accordance with the Landscape Guidelines and Policy TB21 which requires;

Proposals to demonstrate how they have addressed the requirements of the Council's Landscape Character Assessment, including the landscape quality,

landscape strategy, landscape sensitivity and key issues. Proposals shall retain or enhance the condition, character and features that contribute to the landscape.

Conditions & Reasons (if required)

Date:	23.4.25	Signed:	B. Crafer
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