

MEMORANDUM

From:	Brigitte Crafer Landscape Architect		
Service	WBC Landscape and Trees	App No:	242043
Address:	100 Finchampstead Road, Wokingham, Wokingham, RG40 2NT.		
Proposal:	Full application for the demolition of the existing four bedroom detached house and construction of 2 no. new four bedroom detached houses and 1 no. new three bedroom detached house with associated parking, cycle storage, bin stores and new access.		
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 along Finchampstead Road in Wokingham, in a highly visible and urban location not far from the junction with Molly Millars Lane and the railway bridge. However, the existing dwellings along this part of the road set a broad character of large, red brick often detached dwellings in well landscaped plots where dwelling are set back some distance from the road, and that imparts a various character that both sets the tone for this part of the road, and that relates well to the vernacular character of the town in its use of red brick, interesting detailing such as barge boards, tiling, porches and awnings.

Finchampstead Road is a Green Route that can be seen on the Designations Map, and is also one of the main 'rides' which are a consistent feature of the area of Wokingham known as Finchampstead North and these rides such as Nine Mile Ride and Sandhurst Road are characterised by mature, protected and often Veteran Oak trees. The rides are the historic hunting tracks through the royal forest of Windsor and today can be seen as the routes along which housing developed, along the rides and between the remnant areas of forest, which gives the area a more settled character.

Although there are no protected trees on the site, there are trees that provide a setting and character to the plot aside from the unremarkable dwelling and its typical but uninspiring boundary treatment of close board fencing that divides the plot from its neighbours. The front site boundary is marked with a low hedge which extends to frame the entrance to number 102 to the south of the site. Trees are a key component of the site and the adjacent area – particularly to the east and the railway line, where mature trees line the route. Trees are key features in the adjacent gardens of the dwellings around the site.

I note that no tree information is submitted with the application. There are trees and hedges existing on the site that contribute to the site character as well as the landscape character along the street, and it is particularly important that as much of the vegetation is retained and protected through development as possible to comply with Policy CC03d of the Local Plan. Existing trees and hedges in most places help to contribute to a sense of place in the buildings and spaces themselves (see Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy). Please submit an Arboricultural Implications Assessment to BS5837:2012 asap.

The site layout consists of 2 front facing detached dwellings set back from the Finchampstead Road footway by about 11m. Both dwellings have spacious rear gardens measuring between 15 and 16m in depth. Both dwellings have sun rooms at the rear of the house. It is surprising that the space between the 2 dwellings measure under 2m. The size of the 2 dwellings is 9m wide x 15.95m and 9m x 16m depth – which makes the very narrow space between the 2 dwellings (1.7m) appear as discordant with the building height of 8.55m and the width 9m, especially where a side access is also proposed. The 2 dwellings are slightly different in design but capture the variations in style found along the other parts of the road.

Plot 3 is located to the rear of Plots 1 and 2. The design resembles that of a chalet bungalow style is 11.2m x 9.5m x 6.9m high, it too has a large garden 18m x 11.5m depth. Access to Plot 3 is to the driveway of Plot 2 from where it leads to the side of the house to reach Plot 3. It has a detached built garage whilst the front facing dwellings have 3 parking bays set back from the road edge. The private drives from Finchampstead Road are over 5m wide – which seems very wide for a single dwelling of Plot 1, and the shared drive to the side of Plot 2 could be seen as a disadvantage. There is a large amount of space given over to hard landscaping reducing the amount of space available for boundary landscaping. There is little of a buffer zone between the flank wall of Plot 2 and the extent of the overall site boundary. There are no examples of such wide access driveways in the vicinity, and the amount of hard landscaping perceptible in the view is very urbanising – which is contrary to the prevailing character and pattern of openings along Finchampstead Road. Additional spaces for soft landscaping should be identified.

The Council's 'Building Design Guide' includes in Chapter 4 advice on residential design;

R11 New housing should be designed to create street scenes with a coherent character, that relates well to, or enhances existing street scenes (in terms of scale, rhythm, proportion, height, materials and colour), particularly in areas where built form contributes significantly to local character.

R12 Boundary treatments should be designed to contribute positively to the character of the areas and to the quality of the public realm.

Overall, more consideration should be given to providing a greater amount of incidental soft landscaping around Plots 1 and 2 that front the Green Route. Policy CC03b requires that development provide new or protect and enhance the Borough's Green Infrastructure networks including the need to mitigate potential impacts of new development. Section e of the Policy requires high quality, ideally native planting a landscaping as an integral part of the scheme.

Policy CP3 requires that development is an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area together with a high quality design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users (including those within the development), including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life.

Contribute to a sense of place in the buildings and spaces themselves and the way the integrate with their surroundings, especially existing dwellings, including the use of appropriate landscaping.

Please provide the Arboricultural Implications Assessment to BS5837:2012 asap.

Conditions & Reasons (if required)			
Date:	17.9.24	Signed:	B. Crafer