



PART 6

THE DESIGN REVIEW PANEL PROCESS

FIRST DESIGN REVIEW PANEL FEEDBACK (30TH APRIL 2025)



Design submitted for pre-application to be reviewed by Wokingham DC, subsequently reviewed by The Design Review Panel on the 30th April 2025

- The Design Team has engaged with the Design Review Panel at the correct stage of the process.
- It is considered the site has the potential to be suitable for a paragraph 84 (e) dwelling.
- It is not felt the proposals have yet met the requirements Para 84 (e) of the NPPF in terms of design, however the early stage of the design process is noted.
- It may be beneficial to strengthen the analysis of local built-form character in order to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the “defining characteristics of the local area”.
- The Design Team has a good understanding of the nature of the site itself and of the constraints to development.
- It may be helpful to more clearly document the optioneering exercise which led to the choice of the preferred location of the new house within the site.
- The “Design Strategies” outlined by the Design Team as the underlying basis of the design are supported by the Panel.
- The client brief may benefit from being expressed in more detail.
- The Panel is supportive of the light touch concept.
- The aesthetic of a pavilion in the woods is appealing but could perhaps be developed more ambitiously.
- The Panel is not yet convinced by the T-shaped plan, and it may be helpful for alternatives to be optioneered.
- It may be beneficial for consideration to be given to accommodating the garaging in a free-standing garage elsewhere on the site.
- It is considered to be important that the access driveway and parking/turning area, is treated sympathetically and has a rural feel.
- The interface of the building and the woodland may benefit from being designed sensitively.
- The Panel suggests that further thought be given to how the external spaces are used and whether it would be helpful to define a domestic curtilage that is demonstrably different from the more natural areas of the site.
- The emerging sustainability and energy strategy for the project is promising but may benefit from being developed further as the design progresses.
- It may be beneficial for net biodiversity gain to be quantified using the Natural England/DEFRA Biodiversity Metric.
- It may be beneficial for careful consideration to be given to artificial light spill and external lighting design.
- The ways in which the project will raise the standards of design in rural areas, an essential criterion of Paragraph 84 (e), may need to be demonstrated as part of any future planning application.

SECOND DESIGN REVIEW PANEL FEEDBACK (14TH NOVEMBER 2025)



Design submitted for pre-application to be reviewed by Wokingham DC, subsequently reviewed by The Design Review Panel on the 14th November 2025

The clarity of the presentation is welcomed, as is the detailed design narrative and the manner in which the Design Team have explained the evolution of the proposal. It is evident from the material presented and from the discussion that a substantial amount of optioneering, testing and refinement has taken place since the previous review, and the Panel acknowledges the effort involved in exploring the conceptual, spatial, material and landscape strategies in greater depth. **It is also Recognised that the Design Team continues to approach the project with a clear intent to create a dwelling that sits sensitively within its woodland context and responds to the high bar of Paragraph 84(e) of the National Planning Policy Framework.**

- The presentation is clear and thorough, and the Panel notes the significant development work undertaken since the April review.
- The revised concept of pavilion-like volumes is felt to create a more sensitive and responsive relationship with the woodland.
- The narrative of a house of the woods is strengthened, supported by the study of glades, canopy layers, light and spatial gaps.
- Contextual analysis is more comprehensive, with clearer explanation of settlement pattern, woodland character and site evolution.
- The distinction between unmanaged scrub, self-seeded growth and meaningful woodland is helpful for establishing an accurate ecological baseline.
- The landscape strategy is progressing well, with clearer curtilage definition, modest domestic areas and a thoughtful approach to woodland management.
- It may be beneficial to confirm that the produce garden receives adequate sunlight given the maturity of surrounding vegetation.
- Consideration of bats and the minimisation of artificial light spill may support future submissions.
- The emerging roof concept is promising but may benefit from further refinement to ensure technical clarity at junctions, rooflight locations and overlapping planes.
- A clearer hierarchy of roof planes may help avoid visual complexity where multiple elements converge.
- The internal environment appears positive, with good permeability and use of timber; secondary bedrooms may benefit from adjustments to improve natural light and outlook.
- There may be an opportunity to strengthen the relationship between the living space and the entrance-side water feature.
- The arrival sequence is improved; however, the garage appears visually prominent and may benefit from a calmer, more recessive expression or adjusted orientation.
- Future submissions may benefit from a clearer explanation of surface water, wastewater and filtration arrangements.
- The rainwater collectors may benefit from a calmer, less industrial expression to sit more quietly with the building and woodland setting.
- The sustainability ambitions are noted and welcomed and may be strengthened by consolidating the narrative around environmental performance.
- **Overall, the proposal is progressing positively and is felt to be moving towards addressing the policy requirements of Paragraph 84(e), subject to further refinement of the points above.**

THIRD DESIGN REVIEW PANEL FEEDBACK (22ND JUNE 2026)

COMMENTS

- The proposal has continued to progress positively through the design review process.
- **The Panel feels that the proposal now meets the very high bar of Paragraph 84(e) of the National Planning Policy Framework.**
- The comments and suggestions made by the Panel are intended to assist further refinement, presentation and delivery, and are not matters on which the Panel’s policy view depends.
- The “House of the Woods” concept has continued to become more convincing and more clearly articulated.
- The falling leaves narrative provides a clear framework for the architecture and landscape.
- The pavilion-like arrangement beneath a layered roof canopy is felt to create a distinctive and appropriate response to the woodland setting.
- The garage is improved, with reduced massing and a more recessive character, but further imagery may help demonstrate how the garage door, cladding, roof and arrival elevations remain subordinate to the dwelling.
- The driveway approach is improved, with a better balance between screening, reveal and arrival.
- Overall, the Panel is supportive of the proposal and feels that it meets the Paragraph 84(e) policy threshold, with the remaining points relating to refinement, explanation and detailed control.



Design submitted for pre-application to be reviewed by Wokingham DC, subsequently reviewed by The Design Review Panel on the 22nd June 2026

SUGGESTIONS

COMMENT	RESPONSE	LOCATION
The final submission may benefit from a clearer overlay of the proposed building with the tree survey, to demonstrate how the woodland shapes the plan, massing and orientation.	B.J.Unwin, has produced a tree survey report with the proposal overlaid for clarity and to demonstrate the relationship between the house and the trees. The drawing effectively demonstrates how the building’s location has been informed by the existing woodland, showing how the principal volumes respond to the tree structure, create views and openings, and are arranged in direct response to the site’s natural character. It reinforces that the dwelling has been carefully designed around the woodland, rather than simply being inserted into an existing clearing.	Drawing 3001- Proposed block plan overlaid with tree survey
The rationale for the five principal volumes may benefit from further explanation, including the influence of the client brief, existing trees, light, views, movement, enclosure and arrival.	These design principles have been explored, looking into the views from open spaces, views from cellular spaces, internal functions of each volume, and how the sun path is considered.	7.4
The rafters and roof edge may benefit from a more recessive expression so that the falling leaves concept remains visually clear.	The roof edge has been detailed to clearly express the different roof planes to reinforce the ‘fallen leaf’ concept. The roof edges were previously softer and it was recommended by DRP2 that ‘a clearer hierarchy of roof planes may help avoid visual complexity where multiple elements converge.’	7.7 7.8
The roof concept has considerable potential, but further testing of roof geometry, rooflights, junctions, drainage, fascia depth, soffit treatment and structural expression may help protect the clarity of the idea through delivery.	Engineers HRW and Hawkes have collaborated on the roof structure. The brief to HRW was to create a proof of concept with the roof structure, sizing all the key primary and secondary structure, and ensuring that load paths could be brought down within existing walls.	9.5 – 9.8
The legibility of the roof geometry may benefit from further testing, particularly where triangular rooflights and intersecting planes are introduced.	Hawkes has produced indicative structural sections to assist with clarifying junctions, and construction build-ups.	9.5 – 9.8
Window dressings to the principal glazed areas may benefit from careful integration so that they remain compatible with the external architectural character.	Every window is framed by the vertical timber fins which make up part of the vertical cladding strategy.	9.3
The façade treatment and louvres may benefit from further testing so that they sit quietly beneath the roof and do not compete with the primary roof concept.	The louvres will be finished in recessive matt black metal to match the colour tone of the darker shadow gap timber on the lower plinths and upper elevations. This helps maintain the floating box aesthetic for each of the four building volumes.	9.3