

RETROSPECTIVE PLANNING STATEMENT

Property: 43 Arbor Lane, Winnersh, RG41 5JE

Local Planning Authority: Wokingham Borough Council

Background

This application seeks retrospective planning permission for a timber post and rail fence installed along the front boundary of the property along Arbor Lane. The fence replaces a previously established hedge which had become overgrown, difficult to manage, and detrimental to visibility for vehicles travelling in both directions along Arbor Lane. 2no. brick piers are also included to form the driveway, with a motorised sliding solid timber gate.

The works form part of a wider scheme of frontage improvements aimed at enhancing the appearance, usability, and long-term maintenance of the property.

The application is for householder planning consent, and so is understood to be exempt from any mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain under Paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. As a result, a Biodiversity Survey and Report has not been prepared for this application.

Reason for the Works

The original hedge:

- Had become difficult to maintain
- Presented an overgrown and inconsistent appearance
- Restricted visibility for vehicles and pedestrians

The replacement boundary treatment, including post and rail fencing and *Griselinia littoralis* hedging:

- Provides a neat and consistent frontage
- Is appropriate to the residential character of the area
- Improves ease of maintenance
- Enhances visibility compared to the previous hedge

Impact on the Street Scene

The development has resulted in a noticeable improvement to the appearance of the property frontage.

- The fence is of a simple, traditional design
- Materials are typical of residential boundary treatments
- The structure is visually lightweight and not intrusive

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- It reflects similar boundary treatments seen elsewhere in the local area.
- The proposed sliding gate is also of a traditional design, and similar in nature to neighbouring properties.

Feedback from dozens of neighbouring residents has been positive, noting the improved appearance of the site.

Highway and Safety Considerations

The fence has been carefully positioned and designed to ensure that it does not adversely affect highway safety.

- The fence is approximately 1.2 metres in height
- It is set back a minimum of 2.5 metres from the highway
- The open post and rail design maintains clear sightlines
- It replaces a dense hedge that previously restricted visibility
- The brick piers forming the vehicular access are set 5m from the carriageway, allowing a vehicle to wait for the gate to open without encroaching on the highway. The sliding gate will sit on the inside of the brick piers, and will also not prohibit vehicular movement in and out of the property from the carriageway.

As a result:

- There is no obstruction to visibility for vehicles or pedestrians
- There is no material harm to highway safety
- Visibility along Arbor Lane and at the junction with Barley Gardens is maintained and improved compared to the previous situation

Planning Considerations

It is acknowledged that planning permission is required as the fence exceeds 1 metre in height adjacent to a highway.

However, the key consideration is whether the development results in material harm.

In this case:

- There is no adverse impact on visual amenity
- There is no harm to highway safety
- The development is modest, appropriate, and typical in nature

Other key considerations:

- The fence is only marginally above the limit
- The open design reduces impact vs a solid fence

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- The previous hedge hugely exceeded 1m in height and was of greater visual mass and height

Conclusion

The replacement boundary treatment represents an improvement over the previous overgrown hedge and does not give rise to any material planning harm.

The development is:

- Appropriate in scale and design
- Compatible with the character of the surrounding area
- Beneficial to both appearance and safety

This application has been considered against the principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which requires that development:

- Functions well and adds to the overall quality of an area
- Is visually attractive and sympathetic to local character
- Creates safe and accessible environments
- Does not result in unacceptable impacts on highway safety

At the local level, the development has been assessed against policies within the Wokingham Borough Council Local Plan, in particular:

- Policy CC03 (Design and the Quality of Development) – which requires development to be of a high quality design that responds positively to local character and contributes to a sense of place
- Policy CC06 (Managing Travel Demand) – which seeks to ensure that development does not compromise highway safety and promotes safe movement for all users

The proposed boundary treatment complies with these policies as:

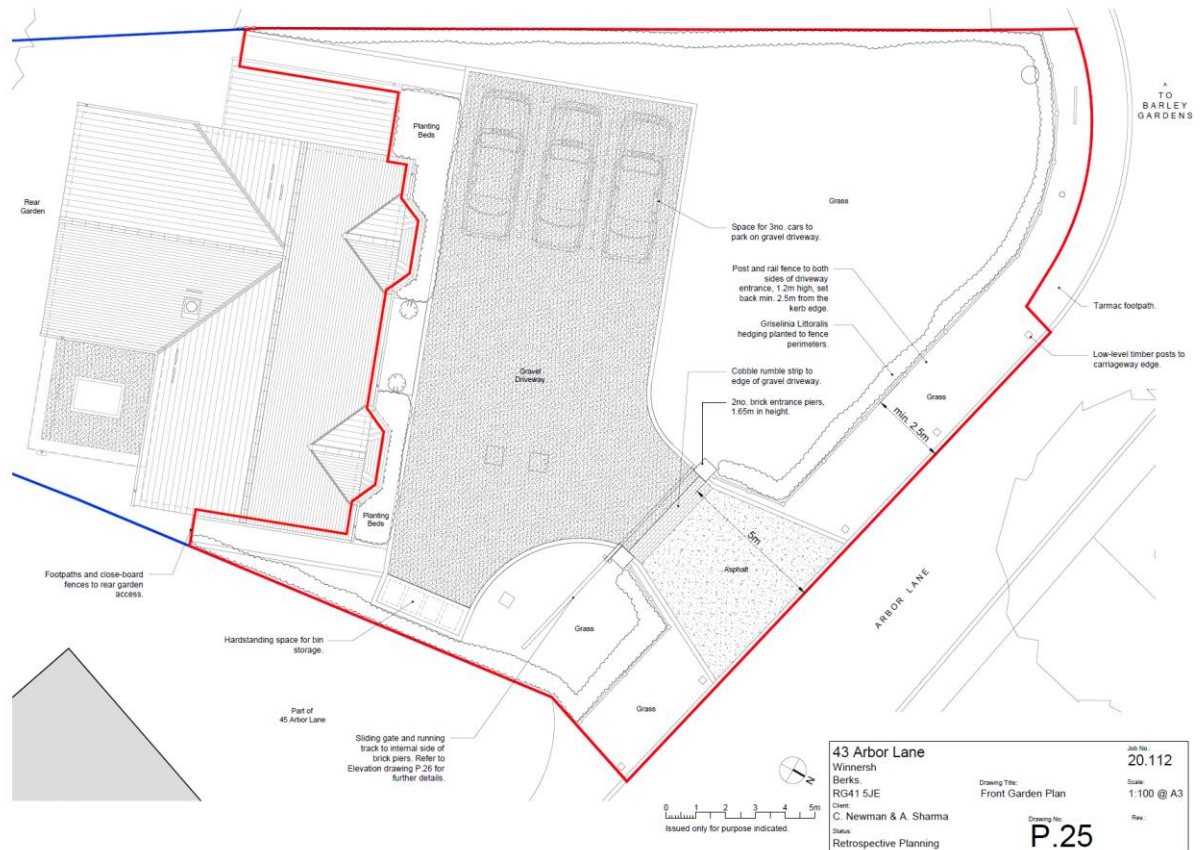
- It is modest in scale and appropriate to the residential character of the area
- The open design maintains visual permeability and is not visually intrusive
- It does not obstruct visibility and does not result in any harm to highway safety

Accordingly, the development is consistent with both national and local planning policy objectives.

For these reasons, it is respectfully requested that retrospective planning permission be granted.

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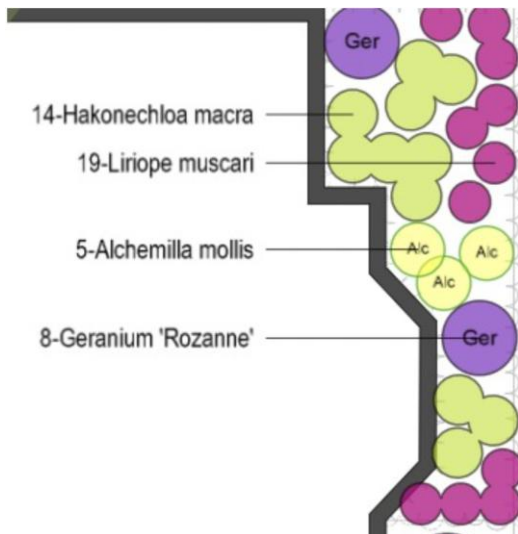
Overview of front garden design and layout



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Planting in front of bay windows

Planting provided in accordance with the planting plan.



Bin store

Bin storage area positioned to ensure it is discreet and does not impact the visual amenity of the frontage.



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Brick piers

Brick piers measuring approximately 1.8m in height, including capping stones to be installed, and 0.56m in width/depth. Set 5m back from the highway.

The positioning and scale ensure that they do not obstruct visibility or vehicular movement



Sliding gates

1 no. motorised solid timber sliding gate will be installed to the inside of the brick piers as described on drawing P.25, with a running track towards 45 Arbor Lane. The gate installation is outstanding, but will be installed as per the example image below. This style of gate is in keeping with neighbouring properties along Arbor Lane, and will be c. 1.5m at its highest. Although the gate will be solid, visibility to the road will remain to either side of the brick piers.



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Rumble strip

Rumble strip installed to remove loose gravel from vehicle tyres and prevent gravel being carried onto the highway.



Tarmac entrance to driveway

Re-laid tarmac entrance constructed to the same specification as previously, with improved finish and no loose material.



Post and rail fence

Post and rail fence approximately 1.2m in height and set a minimum of 2.5m from the highway at all points.

The open design maintains clear sightlines and provides improved visibility compared to the previous hedge, for vehicles travelling in both directions along Arbor Lane, as well as those entering and exiting Barley Gardens.



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Hedging and visibility along highway

Griselinia littoralis hedging planted along the boundary on the inside of the post and rail fence and close board fencing.

This replaces previously overgrown vegetation which had restricted visibility and detracted from the appearance of the frontage.

The new planting provides a well-maintained and visually appropriate boundary treatment.



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Gravel driveway

Permeable gravel driveway reinforced with cellular gridding to prevent the migration of gravel onto the highway.

The layout provides sufficient space for vehicles to turn within the site and exit in a forward gear.



Existing Site Condition (Prior to Works)

The images below show the condition of the site prior to the landscaping works and installation of the current boundary treatment.

The previous frontage was characterised by overgrown and unmanaged vegetation, including dense hedging and bramble growth, which:

- Restricted visibility for vehicles travelling along Arbor Lane
- Reduced sightlines for vehicles entering and exiting the property
- Detracted from the overall appearance of the street scene
- Required significant ongoing maintenance

The photographs demonstrate that the former boundary treatment was visually dominant and lacked permeability, in contrast to the current open post and rail fence and managed planting.

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Photographic Evidence:



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