

MEMORANDUM

From:	Stuart Ryder Landscape Architect Consultant		
Service	WBC Landscape and Trees	App No:	251318
Address:	Hatchgate End, Hatch Gate Lane, Cockpole Green, Wargrave, RG10 8NE.		
Proposal:	Full application for the proposed erection of 1no. 5 bedroom dwelling to include rooflights, 1no. balcony, 2no. Juliet balconies plus solar panels following demolition of existing dwelling.		
Type of Development:	Minor Dwellings (1-9)		
Site Visit Made:	Yes/Not specifically but area know from recent visit to view other applications in the area		

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

Thank you for consulting us on Landscape and Arboricultural matters with regards to the above application.

Overview

The proposals have been considered in two parts – firstly the replacement dwelling and then secondly the array of PV panels set approximately 50m west of the proposed dwellings.

Before looking at the development proposals the landscape baseline and likely visual receptors are discussed to provide context for the development is proposed. Matters of landscape policy considerations and landscape conditions are set at the end of the note.

Landscape baseline and effects

The Site is located within the E1: Remenham Arable Chalk Plateau as defined in the Wokingham Landscape Character Assessment 2019 set right at the eastern corner and bordering G1: Hare Hatch Farmed Chalk Slopes.

The current Site is a residential location facing out onto the public open space of Cockpole Green. It contains an existing large residence set in large gardens which

is the dominant residential style for the area. The location for the proposed solar arrays appear tight up to the eastern hedge of a paddock to the west of the principle dwelling

The area although pleasant in character terms does not benefit from any statutory landscape designation such as National Park or National Landscape. Nor is it positioned in any Area of Urban Landscape Value, However, it is located within the Remenham Chalk Area of Landscape Value as defined in the Wokingham Valued Landscapes Assessment – September 2024.

Mature trees and the neighbouring Cockpole Green open space appear to be the most notable landscape assets in the area along with the line of large properties that line to the west side of Hatchgate End.

The house does not represent any issues from a landscape character or effect point of view with the replacement of one large dwelling with another one. Nor will the slight change in location on Site appear as encroachment out into the wider countryside as it will still in character terms appear as one of the block of houses along this stretch of the rural road. The change of one property to another represents **Minor, Neutral and Permanent** change with the local landscape particularly as the trees on Site are retained and the character of Cockpole Green will not noticeably alter.

However the solar array is not a typical feature within the rural landscape of the area. Even though it is but a single array of 42 PV Panels it could still be an intrusive element particularly given that the proposed location is within the Remenham Chalk Area of Landscape Value. The location of the array is not actually in a prominent location within the landscape tucked up against a field hedge and there appears to be some regular spaced trees to its open west facing side, possibly orchard planting.

The actual alignment of the array is not facing south but south west which is still an effective direction for energy production. There is no energy storage batteries associated with the array drawing so it is presumed that such elements are not proposed and that the feed is solely to the house. The connection is presumed to run along the redline route that links the house site to the solar site. There is no given duration for the operation of the solar panels but solar parks are typically considered temporary features in the landscape and have an operations licence for 40 years. I consider the introduction of the single array as a **Minor, Adverse and Temporary** change subject to satisfactory landscape mitigation near to the array. Please see the visual effect discussions for more detail on possible additional mitigation planting.

Visual receptors and effects

There are three sets of public receptors and the neighbouring properties as private visual receptors to take into account.

The public receptors are road users on Hatchgate End itself, users of Cockpole Green and walkers on the Chiltern Way that is set approximately 200m west of the proposed solar array. The road and green users would see the new property but not

the solar array and the Chiltern Way users could potentially see the new array but not the new property.

For the road and green receptors the proposed house would appear to be in keeping with the existing form and position of others along Hatchgate End and would not present a discordant element on completion. In visual terms it would appear as a **Minor, Neutral and Permanent** visual effect with one large house unit replacing another. They would however experience disturbance during the construction phase.

The solar array is set approximately 200m away from Footpath WARG25 that forms part of the Chiltern Way that runs to the rear of the Hatchgate End properties before running north between twin hedgelines to join Warren Row Road near the Worsely Lane. At 200m a row of PV Panels would likely be visible but the path is set between hedgelines which restrict views north towards the array. There is also an intervening hedge one field over that adds further screening and the collection of nine spaced trees that I suggested could possibly be orchard trees will add further vegetation between viewer and the array. The visual effect would likely be **Minor, Adverse and Temporary**. To mitigate this adverse visual effect an area of woodland planting could be set as a field corner copse near the west corner of the field in which the array is located (within the blue line boundary) to add further screening particularly for winter months. The position of such a block would not affect the power gain from the PV Panels as no more shade would be cast upon them.

Finally with regards to visual receptors the private receptors are those people living in vicinity of the proposed new house and the solar array. I do not consider that they will have their residential amenity compromised by either the house or solar array. The only place where a notable visual change may transpire is from the rear gardens of the properties if they currently enjoy views south west if they are truncated by the array. I am not able to assess such stopping of views without entry to the gardens and it should be noted that private individuals do not generally have a right to a view. The mitigation appears to allow their end of property hedge grow taller. There also appears to be horse shelters or similar on the most recent Google Earth images (March 18 2025) so the presence of some form of development there will not necessarily be unusual or may already be blocking views.

Landscape Policy Consideration

There do not appear to be any specific landscape proposals accompanying the application for either the house or solar sites.

Core Strategy(CS) Policies

There are four CS policies typically reviewed with their landscape content or context as summarised below;

- **CP1 – Sustainable development** – landscape is part of the broader aim of maintaining or enhancing the high quality of the environment and the proposals should not fundamentally alter the quality of the local landscape – *general compliance is found*;
- **CP3 – General Principles for development** – with landscape explicitly referenced in sub-point c) which requires ‘*no detrimental impact upon*

*important ecological, heritage, landscape (including river valleys) or geological features or water courses.’ the important landscape features should not experience detrimental effects. Sub-point f) also requires consideration in terms of the ‘use of appropriate landscaping’ in this sense this means planting and hard landscape treatments. In this case the solar array is considered to lead to a detrimental impact on the local landscape but this is considered to be controllable through further mitigation planting - *There is the foreseeable potential for compliance.**

- **CP11 – Proposals outside Development Limits (including countryside)** – seeks ‘to protect the separate identity of settlements and maintain the quality of the environment’ with both these objectives have clear landscape and visual dimensions. *The proposals are able to comply with these objectives.*

Managing Development Delivery (MDD)

With regard to the MDD three policies are generally seen to have a landscape dimension:

- **CC02 – Development Limits** – sub-point 2) includes the need for proposals to respect the transition between the built up area and the open countryside by taking account of the, character of the adjacent countryside and landscape. The house element of the application stays with the established settlement area whilst the array is within a more rural array but is not residential development – *there is likely compliance with this Policy;*
- **CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping** – relates to the form of design proposals and sub-parts 2d) & 3) of the policy are pertinent to these proposals but there is only limited landscaping information provide – *there is the potential to comply with this Policy subject to the satisfactory discharge of suggested landscape conditions;* and
- **TB21 – Landscape Character** – is directly applicable to the principal of whether the proposals can be accommodated at this location and both sub-parts of this policy require consideration. The first part is whether the Wokingham Landscape Character Assessment has been taken into account has not been followed (but I have reviewed it for this consultation note) and the second states, ‘*Proposals shall retain or enhance the condition, character and features that contribute to the landscape.*’ To that end the house does retain the character of the local landscape whilst the solar array does cause localised Minor, Adverse landscape effects which could be further mitigated. *Taken together the proposals have the potential to retain landscape character and there would be compliance with the aid of mitigation planting.*

NPPF

- **NPPF Sections 12 and 15** – which amongst other matters includes Paragraph 135 about the quality of design and Paragraph 187 a) & b) on valued landscape and the intrinsic qualities of countryside – Both parts of this development are considered to generally conserve the appearance of the local landscape as a piece of countryside. *There is general compliance with NPPF 187 parts a) or b) whichever is deemed applicable.*

Conditions & Reasons (if required)

The following landscape and tree related conditions are suggested to you:

Landscaping

Prior to the commencement of the development there shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority a scheme of landscaping, which shall specify species, planting sizes, spacing and numbers of trees/shrubs to be planted, and any existing trees or shrubs to be retained.

Planting shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the building(s).

Any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the date of the planting (or within a period of 5 years of the occupation of the buildings in the case of retained trees and shrubs) die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species or otherwise as approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason - To ensure adequate planting in the interests of visual amenity. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21 (and TB06 for garden development).

Retention of trees and shrubs

No retained tree shall be cut down, uprooted or destroyed, nor shall any retained tree be topped or lopped other than in accordance with the approved plans and particulars, without the written approval of the local planning authority. If within a period of five years from the date of the planting of any tree that tree, or any tree planted in replacement for it, is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies, another tree of the same species and size as that originally planted shall be planted at the same place, unless the local planning authority gives its written consent to any variation

Reason - To secure the protection throughout the time that development is being carried out, of trees, shrubs and hedges growing within the site which are of amenity value to the area. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21.

Protection of trees

a) No development or other operation shall commence on site until an Arboricultural Method Statement and Scheme of Works which provides for the retention and protection of trees, shrubs and hedges growing on or adjacent to the site in accordance with BS5837: 2012 has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. No development or other operations shall take place except in complete accordance with the details as so-approved (hereinafter referred to as the Approved Scheme).

b) No operations shall commence on site in connection with development hereby approved (including any tree felling, tree pruning, demolition works, soil moving, temporary access construction and or widening or any other operation involving use of motorised vehicles or construction machinery) until the tree protection works required by the Approved Scheme are in place on site.

c) No excavations for services, storage of materials or machinery, parking of vehicles, deposit or excavation of soil or rubble, lighting of fires or disposal of liquids shall take place within an area designated as being fenced off or otherwise protected in the Approved Scheme.

d) The fencing or other works which are part of the Approved Scheme shall not be moved or removed, temporarily or otherwise, until all works including external works have been completed and all equipment, machinery and surplus materials removed from the site, unless the prior approval in writing of the local planning authority has first been sought and obtained.

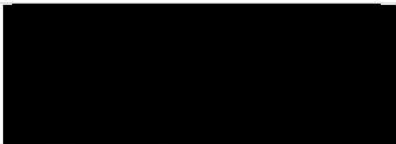
Reason - To secure the protection throughout the time that the development is being carried out of trees shrubs or hedges growing within or adjacent to the site which are of amenity value to the area, and to allow for verification by the local planning authority that the necessary measures are in place before development and other works commence Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21.

Licence for operation of solar array

That the duration of operation for the solar array is a maximum of 40 years before re-submission of materials to replace or *continue the operation of the solar array.* The maximum number of Photo-voltaic panels is 42No. and they shall be no bigger than those indicated on the Approved Drawings.

Reason – To protect local landscape character by placing a maximum number of Photo-voltaic panels allowed in the redline boundary of the Site.

Please contact us if we can be of further assistance and we trust these comments assist in your determination of this Planning Application.

Date:	22/7/25	Signed:	
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