

MEMORANDUM

From:	Lindsey Abbott Tree & Landscape Officer		
Service	WBC Landscape and Trees	App No:	260287
Address:	Land to the rear of 16 and 17 Arnside Close, Twyford, RG10 9BS.		
Proposal:	Full application for the proposed erection of 1 no. detached dwelling with associated parking, amenity space and access including creation of a new dropped kerb.		
Type of Development:	Minor Dwellings (1-9)		
Site Visit Made:	Yes – 13/03/2026		

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 Council's Tree and Landscape Officer recommends refusal of the proposed erection of 1 no. detached dwelling with associated parking, amenity space and access including creation of a new dropped kerb.

The Officer visited the Site on 13 March 2026 and observed the proposed Site, which is a form of Backlot Development; it is located within the rear residential gardens of 16 and 17 Arnside Close. However, the proposed development does have its own street frontage along Chaseside Avenue. The Officer also walked the nearby streets to understand the neighbourhood character and amenity spaces, described below.

The Officer observed the Site from outside the existing timber fence running along the southern and western boundaries of 17 Arnside Close. She observed an open and green space sloping down to the west. She observed adjacent properties, to understand how they might be impacted by this proposed development, including:

- the properties of 16 and 17 Arnside Close and the detached garage belonging to 17 Arnside Close to the east
- the properties located on the opposite side of Chaseside Avenue Site to the south

- the row of adjacent terraced garages along Chaseside Avenue to the west
- the terraced properties 1 – 11 Chaseside Avenue. The rear gardens of 1 and 3 Chaseside would back onto the proposed development.

Twyford Parish Council's Planning & Amenities Committee in a comment submitted on 4 March 2026, requested that "the proposal is carefully assessed against the full requirements of TB06 to ensure that any development is appropriate, proportionate, and consistent with the established character of the area." Policy TB06, Development of Private Residential Gardens, is in the Wokingham Borough Development Plan (the Local Plan). The Officer includes the relevant policy and response below. She also examined and responded to Wokingham's Borough Design Guide SPD (2012), Section 4.10 Backland Development, which gives more specific guidance relevant to the proposed development type.

Policy TB06: Development of Private Residential gardens

1. The Council will resist inappropriate development of residential gardens where development would cause harm to the local area.

2. Proposals for new residential development that includes land within the curtilage or the former curtilage of private residential gardens will only be granted planning permission where:

- a) The proposal makes a positive contribution to the character of the area in terms of:
 - i. The relationship of the existing built form and spaces around buildings within the surrounding area;
 - ii. A layout which integrates with the surrounding area with regard to the built up coverage of each plot, building line(s), rhythm of plot frontages, parking areas, and
 - iii. Existing pattern of openings and boundary treatments on the site frontage
 - iv. Providing appropriate hard and soft landscaping, particularly at site boundaries.
 - v. Compatibility with the general building height within the surrounding area
 - vi. The materials and elevational detail are of high quality, and where appropriate distinctive and/ or complementary
- b) The application site provides a site of adequate size and dimensions to accommodate the development proposed in terms of the setting and spacing around buildings, amenity space, landscaping and space for access roads and parking
- c) The proposal includes access, which meets appropriate highway standards
- d) The proposal does not lead to unacceptable tandem development
- e) The design and layout minimises exposure of existing private boundaries to public areas and avoids the need for additional physical security measures.

3.27 This policy enhances policy CP1 Sustainable Development of the Core Strategy, as well as CP3 General Principles for development.

Response:

The Officer can appreciate that the proposed development thoughtfully addresses many of the Policy points. The proposal falls short in the following areas that correspond by number to the points above:

1. The proposed development has already caused harm to the local area through the felling of the two mature trees located within the incidental amenity space of 17 Arnside Close and directly in front of the parcel of the proposed development. A fuller response on that matter is provided below.

2. a.

i and ii. The relationship of the existing built form and spaces around buildings within the surrounding area would become cramped and change the rhythm of plot frontages, since currently there are no dwellings along this stretch of Chaseside Avenue. The plot coverage of the proposed development is likely to feel cramped and in opposition to the generous open plan development of the neighbourhood which features grassy incidental amenity space with footpaths in front of the dwellings.

iii. Existing pattern of openings and boundary treatments on the site frontage would be changed by the proposed development. Specifically, an (unlabelled) retaining wall is proposed to hold the grade of the proposed sloped driveway and the amenity space (location of felled mature trees) in drawing Site Plans Existing & Proposed (Ref: JGJS, RG109BS.02, October 2025). A retaining wall is inconsistent with the existing character and boundary treatments of the street scene. The Officer concedes that the “the location of the garden area (to the rear) and parking/access arrangements (to the side) [does] reflect the design, layout and general form/character of development in the area” as seen in the drawing above and mentioned in section 6.19 on page 18 of the submitted Planning and Design and Access Statement. (Ref: JCPC, January 2026)

iv. Not enough information is known to assess whether the proposal provides “appropriate hard and soft landscaping, particularly at site boundaries.” ‘New Planting’ is shown along the north and west boundaries of the rear garden and “grass” in both the front and rear garden on the Proposed Site Plan in Context drawing included in the Site Plans Existing & Proposed drawing (Ref: JGJS, RG109BS.02 Rev A, October 2025). No replacement trees are indicated.

v. and vi. The proposed dwelling’s architecture is for other consultees to comment on. Vi. b. about the application site is met in some ways, however the useable space of the garden is reduced by some of the built form (the living room). As per the Wokingham Borough Design Guide, Section 4 Residential, the minimum garden length of 11m is a generally accepted guideline for private garden space, provided the space is usable. (p. 46) The Officer measured the drawing mentioned above and it appear the garden is

approximately 7.5m from the exterior living room wall and 10.5m from the kitchen exterior wall to the end of the rear garden (northern boundary)

The Officer reviewed Wokingham's Borough Design Guide SPD (2012) which gives more specific guidance on Backland Development in Section 4.10. (p. 54) Backland Development must address several criteria, which the proposed development has done in a creative manner. Nevertheless, the proposed development fails to address the following two points within section 4.10:

- not harm the character of the local area, for instance if existing trees on the plots contribute to a characteristic 'green backdrop';
- be accessed without harming the character of the existing street frontage, and with no loss of important features, whether these are existing buildings or the green gaps between existing buildings;

Response to Design Guide SPD (2012) Point 1:

Unfortunately, two (unprotected) mature trees located within the property boundary of 17 Arnside Close where recently felled much to the consternation of neighbours, including six who submitted comments at the time of this response. One comment from a resident states:

"These mature, healthy, Copper Beech Trees were felled on the morning of Friday 20th February 2026 by "Oakfall Tree Surgery" of Basingstoke, and I was informed by them on-site that this was authorized by (and presumably also paid for by) "The Developer." (Mr R.H. Morrad, 4 Chaseside Avenue, Twyford, Berkshire, RG10PBT, submitted 16 March 2026)

The trees were identified as Purple Norway Maples / Acer platanoides 'Crimson King' by Michael Pearce, Team Leader Operational Tree Management through a desktop inspection and report undertaken on 13 March 2024 and described below. Private residents, however, refer to the trees as Copper Beeches.

Unaware of the tree felling, Twyford Parish Council's Planning & Amenities Committee, made this comment:

"Additionally, the Committee highlights the presence of two mature trees at the front of the proposed property. These trees are considered important landscape features, and the Committee trusts that any development will ensure their protection, both during construction and in the long term." (4 March 2026)

Photographs have been included below from Google Streetview taken in June 2025, which show these mature trees in situ, and by the Officer of saw dust and the tree stumps cut flush with the grassy amenity space. The Planning Officer should note that the trees were within the property of 17 Arnside Close as indicated on WBC's internal mapping system and not on Council land as referenced in residents' comments.

The Officer did not observe many mature trees within the development, except for a few coniferous trees with most trees of the small flowering ornamental variety in this neighbourhood. Given this, it is understandable that Twyford Parish Council and

concerned residents might have identified these two trees as “important landscape features” within the neighbourhood. Given their height and bold deep purple colour when in leaf, the Officer might go further and call the felled trees visual landmarks used by residents as points of reference for navigation. The fact that several residents understood the trees to be on “Council land” as referenced in their comments, suggests that the trees were seen as a common, shared good. The Officer concurs that these two mature trees made a significant contribution to the character of both the proposed site and the surrounding neighbourhood and could reasonably be regarded as local landmarks.

As mentioned above, WBC’s Team Leader for Operational Tree Management to undertook a desktop inspection of the two felled trees in order to evaluate the implications of their loss beyond their value as landmarks. The findings provide a monetary valuation of the trees based on their capacity to sequester carbon, highlighting the important role trees play in mitigating climate change. As the trees are no longer present, these figures are necessarily estimates; however, the assessment identified the following:

- T1 (Tree ID: 017327) was estimated to have sequestered approximately 805.9 tonnes of carbon over its lifetime, equating to a value of £68,501.24.
- T2 (Tree ID: 017328) was estimated to have sequestered approximately 2,112.7 tonnes of carbon over its lifetime, equating to a value of £179,581.52.

These trees provided other important environmental benefits, including absorption of particulate pollution and mitigation of urban heat island effect. The value of carbon sequestration can now be quantified, as set out above, the wider question remains as to who is responsible for this loss, and how that responsibility should be addressed.

Removal of these mature trees also directly contravenes Local Plan **Policy CC03: Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping**. Point 2. d. states “new development proposals should demonstrate how they have considered and achieved the following criteria within scheme proposals:

- Protect and retain existing trees, hedges and other landscape features.” (p.9)

Supplemental BE1 Design of New Development, in particular “*when considering applications for new development, redevelopment or extensions, the Council will expect a high standard of design and layout. Development will be expected to:*

- *Be appropriate to the Site in terms of overall scale and extent including structures and hard surfaces;*
- *Respect the character of the area and pay due regard to the layout, spacing and relationship of existing developments to the street pattern;*
- *Be appropriate to the Site location in terms of height, form, massing and external appearance including the colour and texture of external facing materials;*
- ***Pay due regards to significant features of the Site, such as topography, water, mature trees, hedges and existing structures;***
- ***And avoid visual and audible conflict with adjoining land uses and provide and retain suitable boundary treatment and landscaping.***

Response to Design Guide SPD (2012) Point 2:

An unsuitable location, the proposed development is wedged between the rear brick wall of a row of terraced garages and a single detached garage belonging to 17 Arnside Close. Built circa 1960s, these garages are small, usually no longer store modern vehicles due to size constraints, and instead are used as storage units for the 'messier' maintenance activities of modern life, making them incompatible with the front garden of a new home.

Moreover, the front garden of the proposed dwelling and driveway would be located within the incidental amenity space of the neighbourhood as the characteristics of the residential neighbourhood suggest Open Plan Development. Section 2.18 of Wokingham's Supplementary Planning Guidance on Residential Boundary Treatment (Adopted July 2000) states that "*Open Plan developments are designed to be without obvious front boundaries. In these areas, the front gardens themselves provide the open amenity in the area.*" Whilst the front façade of the proposed development is set back behind the line of garages, the development's front garden curtilage, which is also the neighbourhood's incidental amenity space, is small and narrow. This lack of open and expansiveness seems inconsistent with the established character of the area.

This proposal contravenes many Wokingham Borough Local Plan Policies and guidance from the Design Guide. The Officer cannot support the proposal.

Conditions & Reasons (if required)

Date:	19/03/2026	Signed:	L. Abbott
--------------	------------	----------------	-----------

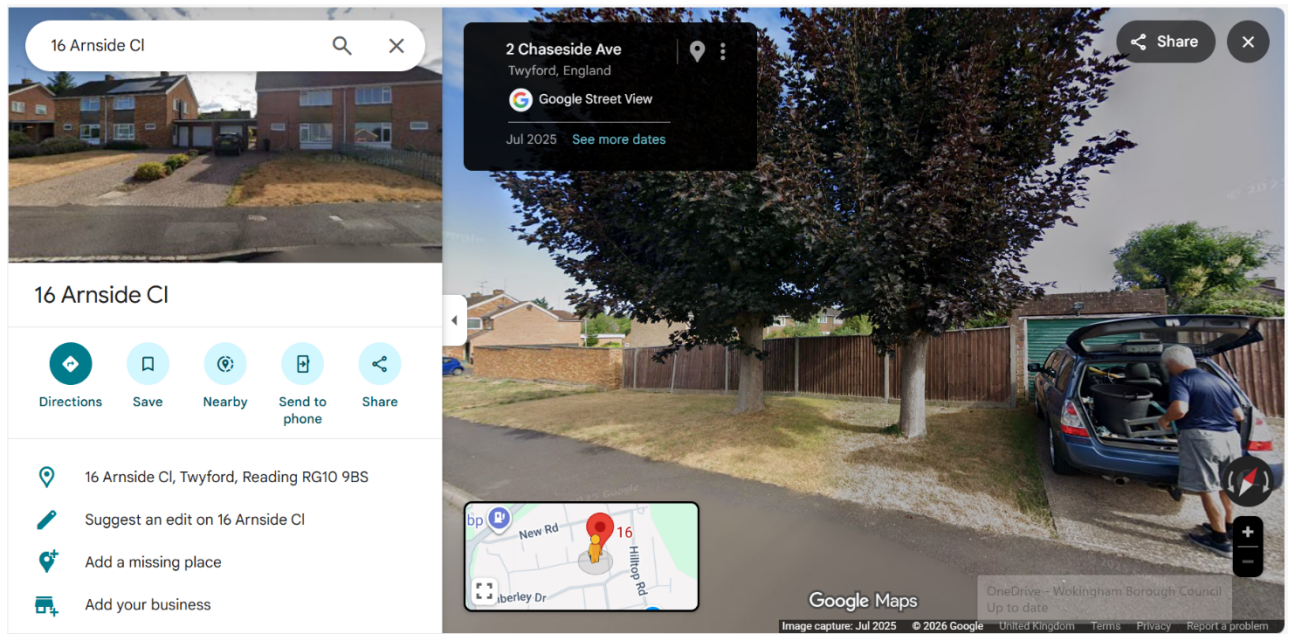


Photo of mature trees along Chaseside Avenue at proposed Site, taken in June 2025 from Google Streetview



Photo above and below of stumps of mature trees along Chaseside Avenue taken by the Tree and Landscape Officer on 13 March 2026





Looking west down Chaseside Avenue



Looking eastern back up Chaseside Avenue towards Arnside Close



Close up of stumps

Report to understand Substantial Monetary Value of Carbon Sequestered in these Mature Trees over their Lifetime (Report as PDF uploaded to NEC separately but key information included below to highlight the worth of the trees)

Author: Mike Pearce, Team Leader Operational Tree Management for Wokingham Borough Council

Date: 13 March 2026

Tree ID: 017327 (T1 in PDF)

Dry weight 537.3 tonnes - Estimated from recorded trunk size, using a Dry Weight conversion table. See [Natural Resources Wales \(NRW\) Carbon Storage Calculator worksheet](#)

Total Carbon Stored: 268.6 tonnes - The total carbon stored in the tree to date. The carbon content of a tree is half it's Dry Weight

Total CO2 Sequestered : 805.9 tonnes (£68501.24) - The Total Carbon Stored, multiplied by 3.67 (One tonne of carbon can be produced from 3.67 tonnes of CO2)

Annual CO2 Sequestered: 1.710 tonnes (£145.36) - The Total CO2 Sequestered by the tree to date, divided by the Estimated Age of the tree. The resulting figure is the estimated amount of CO2 sequestered per year on average over the tree's life so far.

For a healthy tree, the actual rate of sequestration is therefore likely to be higher currently, as it increases as the tree grows larger, whereas this figure spreads the total sequestration to date evenly across each year of a tree's current age.

The societal monetary value of the CO2 sequestered each year. The Average CO2 Sequestered Per Year (in tonnes) is divided by 3.67 (to convert back to tonnes of Carbon), then multiplied by the [UK Social Value of Carbon](#)

Tree ID: 017328

Dry weight 1408.5 tonnes

Total Carbon Stored: 704.2 tonnes

Total CO2 Sequestered 2.112.7 tonnes (£179.581.52)

Annual CO2 Sequestered (£272.20)

Mike Pearce notes that *"if there was an arboricultural report submitted with the planning application, [he] should be able to provide [the Officer] with more exacting values associated with the trees."* This report was conducted as a desktop inspection.