

MEMORANDUM

From:	Brigitte Crafer Landscape Architect		
Service	WBC Landscape and Trees	App No:	243229
Address:	109 Victoria Road, Wargrave, Wokingham, RG10 8AG.		
Proposal:	Full application for the proposed erection of 8no. dwellings following demolition of the existing buildings and structures plus alterations to the existing 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 in Wargrave settlement area which is a modest development location. The site levels drop from around 55.45 at the site entrance to 53.20 at the rear. At the rear (northern) part of the site is low brick wall and the sewer is also located at this end of the site. The northern part of the site backs onto rear gardens of Purfield Drive. The site entrance is from Victoria Road until recently it was between 2 shops, but recently the shop to the west of the entrance has been converted into a detached house with quite a small / modest sized rear garden. The convenience store to the east remains.

The dominant building style closest to the site is Victorian red brick terraces and semi-detached cottages with front gardens edged with brick wall divide from the footway. These buildings are predominantly to the north-east of the site. To the south-west houses are more varied in design broadly 20C styles of semi-detached villas, detached 2 storey and bungalows. The Victorian red brick cottages are the stand out character and include polychromatic brickwork and tiling and crenellated window arches.in contrasting buff shades.

The existing site has been a plant nursery and outdoor growing area for flowering plants as well as several outbuildings. The view of the site from Victoria Road is striking as an open area of land with colourful plants in place of residential dwellings. The views through the site are of vegetation and the vertical elements and colours

of different trees and shrubs that pepper the site and provide a setting for backs of houses on Purfield Drive. The site provides an interlude and breathing space between the dense but attractive housing along Victoria Road.

Overhead mapping shows a site more populated with trees than is shown on the Arboricultural Impact Assessment drawing dated Nov. '24 which shows few on site trees all 'C' quality that cannot be retained with proposed development. Off site tree species includes a 'B' quality Willow to the west and a 'B' quality Lombardy Poplar to the north east corner and 2 'C' quality Lawsons Cypress also off site.

The submitted 'Proposed Site Plan' shows 8 dwellings on the site including; a front facing (to Victoria Road) detached dwelling with flint and brick frontage, 3 pairs of semi-detached dwellings within the site with each pair being offset from the other by 2m (1m in each plot). The design of the dwellings on Plots 2-5 and 6 and 7 is based on 1930s traditional villa style with bay windows on the ground and first floor. There are decorative hung styles with an integral pattern detailing between the upper and lower windows and contrasting brick to the corners. The outward facing flank wall is blank save for a side door entrance at ground floor. There is a 2nd floor in the roof space which elevates the building heights to 9.25m which is large in the vicinity. The remaining dwelling is flatted building with parking beneath.

The access is between Plot 1 and the neighbouring convenience store and extends almost to the end of the site. The layout shows Plot 1 which is 9.4m high x 6.5m depth and 10.8m high. The rear garden is just 7.3m x 12m has off road parking. A visitor parking bay backs onto the rear garden although there is a small area provided for incidental landscaping. The semis are located 2 on the south west side of the site and 1 on the right side. They measure 11.75m deep x 6.85m wide and are 9.35m high. The gardens vary in depth with Plots 2-5 being between 9m – 10m deep, while Plots 6 and 7 are 10.2 and 7m, although Plot 7 is wider. The required depth of gardens for new dwellings is 11m. The flatted block has a very small garden space. All the inside plots have off street parking. The layout includes a 3.7m wide gap at the north end of the site where a sewer is located beneath the ground and is proposed for planting.

A Planting Plan – Dwg. No. TTI-SM-VN271124 Rev. C 18.12.24 shows the area of land at the north end of the site planted with 12 mixed native trees planted to the rear boundary (away from the sewer but not by enough probably) with a wide strip of wildflower planting beneath. In front of this is a scrub strip that is mostly very narrow containing bramble, ornamental low growing Holly, Dog rose Honeysuckle and Hawthorn. Its not clear how high this scrub strip will be maintained at – but if it is at hedge height then the wildflowers will not be seen and cannot be adequately maintained, they usually require at least one cut per year.

Other planting includes hedges around the dwellings comprising of Photinia and an ornamental Privet (why not Ligustrum vulgare the native version?) , and shrub mixes which are acceptable. Trees are planted in a very narrow area of land on a corner – not clear how these will survive.

SUMMARY

A key benefit of the site currently is the views through and across the site of smaller foreground trees and larger native trees in the countryside beyond. With development at the scale and density shown those views will be mostly lost. The dwellings proposed are large and there are potential issues of overlooking into rear gardens of nearby dwellings. The placing and scale of the dwellings does not make the most of the site, and reversing of large vehicles may be a problem. The front facing dwelling does not echo the overriding built character of Victoria Road, and although there are larger dwellings nearby those closest to the site are the Victorian cottages and their attractive detailing. The only green space is at the end of the site and will be largely screened behind the 2 end dwellings.

If the layout was changed to rear gardens backing onto the rear gardens of Purfield Drive and houses facing toward Victoria Drive would open up more space for incidental landscaping which is an important to restore and comply with Policies CP3 and CC03 of the Local Plan. There would be space for a front facing green space that would help to restore the landscape amenity provided currently as well as tree planting along the front of the site and views through between the dwellings to the dwellings/landscaping beyond. The planting plan / BNG provision can be adapted through a revised layout. Space would also be provided for a turning area for larger vehicles.

I have no objection to development on the site but as it stands the layout is not making the most of the site, its location and other opportunities as such is contrary to Policies CP1 and CP3 of the CS and PolicyCC03 and is contrary to the Building Design Guide Chapter 4 policies R1. R2, R3, R6 and R7. R11, R12,

Conditions & Reasons (if required)

See above

Date:	6.2.25	Signed:	B. Crafer
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