



Land North of School Road,

Arborfield Cross,

Wokingham

Design & Access Statement

croudacehomes

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1. Introduction

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We were appointed by Croudace Homes, Vortal Homes Limited and Falcon Developments (SE) Limited to support the Outline Planning Application of Land North of School Road, Arborfield Cross. This Design and Access Statement will follow best government guidance for design and comply with the structure required by Wokingham Borough Council.

We have developed the structure below to ensure the development is rooted in a context analysis, responds to its setting, answers to our vision, and proposes high-quality design solutions. This aims to enhance the area and provide much-needed homes for the community.





2. Our Vision

Our Vision for Land north of School Road is to create a new neighbourhood that compliments and respects the existing Local Character of Arborfield Cross. The design will aid **Placemaking** through the use of best practice guidance. Our approach to biodiversity starts with the retention of the majority of existing vegetation and **Nature**, and our proposals include 50% ecology gain and enhancements to existing landscape features. Considering the current climate emergency we are committed to the **Sustainability** of the proposals. Part of building healthy communities revolves around alternative modes of transport and **Active Travel**, and so our design will be inclusive and encourage healthy lifestyles for the new and existing community.



3. Context Analysis

In this section we analyse the wider and immediate context of the site allowing us to form an understanding of the opportunities to drive the appropriate design principles forward.

The Site is ideally located to the northeast of the rural and green village of Arborfield Cross, south west of Wokingham. In its wider setting the site benefits to access to different modes of transport leading to London, Oxford and Reading. The M4 is easily accessible providing further links East and West.

- Site Location
- Existing Settlements
- National Landscape Areas
- Motorways
- Main Movement
- Railway Line
- Train Station
- Heathrow International Airport

To Southampton

To Midlands & North of England

To Midlands & North of England

London

Arborfield Cross

Arborfield Cross

Surrey Hills National Landscape

Chilterns National Landscape

North Wessex Downs National Landscape

To South Wales & South West England

Reading

Wokingham

Bracknell

Camberley

Frimley

Farnborough

Basingstoke

Woking

Slough

50KM

3.1 Planning Context

The development plan for the purposes of this application is:

- The Core Strategy (CS), adopted on January 2010;
- The Managing Development Delivery (MDD) Local Plan, adopted on February 2014;
- Saved Policy NRM6 (Natural Resource Management) of the South East Plan;
- Joint Minerals and Waste Plan, adopted January 2023; and
- The Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan, made on April 2020.

Wokingham Borough Council is currently preparing a New Local Plan which will put in place a new planning strategy for the period to 2040, when adopted would replace the current Local Plan (Core Strategy and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan).

Work carried out to date includes an Issues and Options consultation 2016 (Regulation 18) which took place between August and September 2016, the Homes for the Future consultation which took place between November 2018 and February 2019, the Draft Plan consultation (Regulation 18) which took place between February and April 2020 and the Revised Growth Strategy consultation (Regulation 18) which took place between November 2021 and January 2022.

At the Full Council meeting held on the 25th July 2024, the leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Conway provided an update on the progress of the emerging Local Plan following the results of the general election. Councillor Conway stated that it was the intention to

present the final publication version of the Local Plan Update at the meeting, however this has been delayed due to outstanding final inputs from consultees and assurances from external legal advisors on soundness. It was confirmed that the publication version will be brought to the next Full Council meeting on the 19th September 2024.

At the time of writing, a final publication version of the Local Plan Update has not been available, given this doubt and having regard to Paragraph 48 of the NPPF, the early stage of plan preparation and the uncertainty noted above, the Emerging Local Plan is considered to have very limited weight as a material consideration at present.

Published on 26th January 2024, the Wokingham Borough Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement sets out the housing completions at 31st March 2023 and the supply of deliverable sites for the subsequent five year period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2028.

By utilising the Government's standard method to establish the latest Local Housing Need figure of 795 additional homes per annum from 1st April 2023, a five year requirement of 3,975 dwellings was identified.

In assessing housing need against the total deliverable sites across the period of 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2028, Wokingham Borough Council can demonstrate a housing land supply of 3.2 years; this represents a significant shortfall.

3.2 Responding to National and Local Guidance

Within the analysis of the context we take into consideration any design policy or guidance document that might be relevant for the area. We have identified the following relevant documents:

- **Arborfield Garrison Strategic Development Location (SDL) Supplementary Planning Document (2011, WBC)** - The SDL creates the opportunity to re-use a substantial area of brownfield land at Arborfield Garrison. The location is identified in the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy as being capable of accommodating around 3,500 new dwellings with associated transport and green community infrastructure.
- **The National Design Guide (NDG)** - Published on October 2019 the NDG addresses the question of how we recognise well-designed places, by outlining and illustrating the Government's priorities through the demonstration of meeting ten key characteristics. These characteristics work together in a mutually supporting way, to create the physical character of a place, nurture and sustain a sense of community, and positively address environmental issues affecting climate.

- **The Arborfield & Newland Village Design Statement (VDS)** - Outlines the community's vision for preserving the rural character of the parish while guiding future development. The document emphasises the area's low-density housing, use of local red brick, and buildings that blend into natural green spaces. Key guidelines include maintaining the rural landscape, encouraging diversity in housing styles, setting buildings back from roads, and using sustainable building practices. The VDS also highlights the importance of preserving farmland, trees, and hedgerows, as well as the careful integration of new developments to maintain the area's historical and architectural character. It stresses the need for adequate off-road parking, the use of traditional materials, and minimising light pollution to protect the area's distinct rural ambience.
- **Arborfield & Barkham Neighbourhood Plan** - The plan area for this neighbourhood plan was approved by Wokingham Borough Council in July 2014. The Neighbourhood Plan was relaunched in 2016 with a reinvigorated Steering Group representing both parishes.

3.3 Movement & Facilities

Walking/Wheeling/Cycling Public Transport

Pedestrian footways are provided along the southern side of School Road. The pathways feature frequent dropped kerbs at crossing points and intermittent street lighting. The site benefits from an extensive network of Public Rights of Way (PROWs), including byways on Cole Lane and Wood Lane. Wokingham Borough Council has proposed new PROWs and identified Greenway Routes, enhancing connectivity.

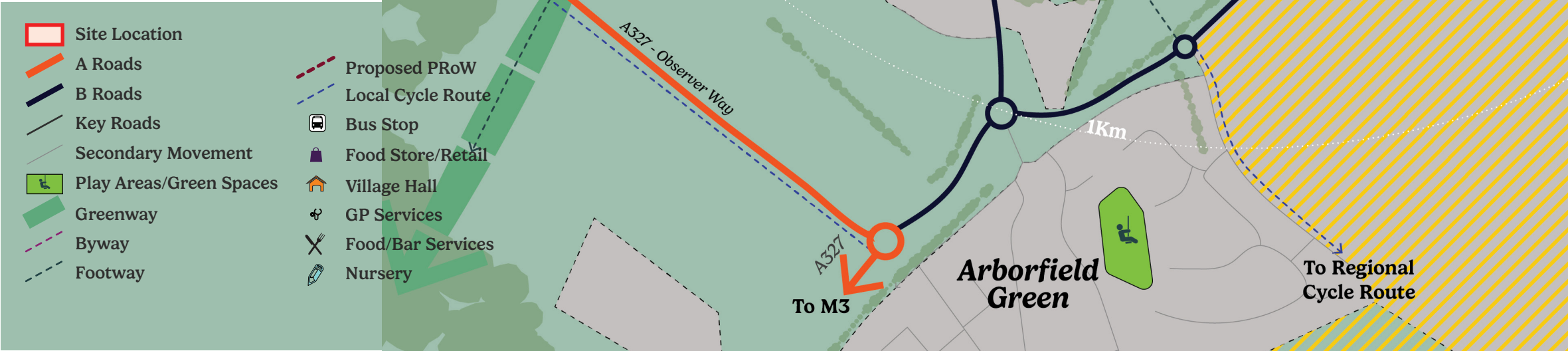
The site is within walking distance of local amenities such as a convenience store, village hall, The Coombes Church of England Primary School, and the Bull Inn. Additional housing will support the viability of these local services. Further afield, Arborfield Green offers more services accessible by walking, cycling, or bus.

The area is served by existing cycle routes, including a Regional Cycle Route passing through Arborfield Green, linking Crowthorne, Swallowfield, and Greenham, and intersecting with National Cycle Route 23 at Beech Hill. The site is within a five to eight-kilometre cycle distance from Arborfield Green, Wokingham, Winnersh, Barkham, and Reading, providing access to additional services.

The nearest bus stops are The Swan stops, approximately 250 to 500 metres from the proposed Cole Lane access, providing access to the 145 and 3 Leopard bus routes. Wokingham railway station, about 5 kilometres from the site, is accessible by a 20-minute cycle or a 30-minute bus ride. The station offers cycle and car parking spaces and serves the Waterloo-Reading Line and North Downs Line.

Local Highway Network

Arborfield Cross can be accessed by the B3030. The construction of the A327, linking to the M4 to the north, has reduced the traffic movement through Arborfield Cross.

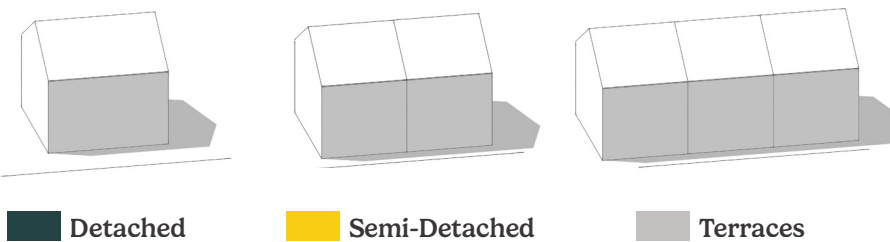


3.4 Character Analysis

This character analysis includes an interpretation of documents and guidance's for the area to propose best design principles for new developments. The result of this will be a range of design cues to inspire our proposals for the site.

Arborfield Cross is a semi-rural area village community. Over the years it has seen change through the establishment of military depots and improved transport links to Wokingham, Reading and London. There is a mixture of housing, ranging from 15th century cottages through to modern housing.

The rural setting of Arborfield Cross defines the character of the village. The attractive landscape comprising farmland and woodland is punctuated with small settlements, hamlets and individual dwellings which form the thriving parish community. There is a strong attachment to the rural and village character of the area which will be reflected in our goals to maintain the individuality of Arborfield Cross and respect its boundaries with other villages and hamlets.

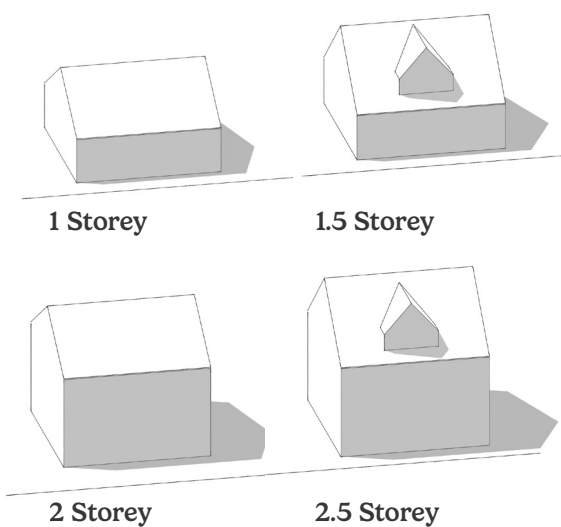


Urban Form

- Eversley Road is characterised by a strong linear street pattern reflecting its purpose as a main vehicular movement corridor.
- Characterised by a varied vernacular resulting in variations in the building line and creating an informal, urban character.
- Comprises an informal, more rural character with medium to low density dwellings and a less continuous building line.
- Setbacks vary along the length of the street.
- Mainly semi-detached and terraced houses. With some detached houses within large plots.

Built /Plot Form

- Building heights vary from 1 storey to 2.5 storey creating variation in the roofscape and street scene.



Public Realm and Open Space

- Incidental green spaces are present throughout the village and create an attractive street scene.
- Proximity to the surrounding countryside further contributes to an overall green and rural character.
- Street trees are located within the street scene and around the incidental green spaces.
- Residential properties comprise front gardens with mature vegetation which contributes to a greener character, softening the built form.

Parking

- On plot parking, to the front and to the side of dwellings in private driveways

Details and Materials

- Red brick on many buildings with some use of buff brick
- Occasional use of render, cream or white
- Roof materials are largely dark clay tiles
- White framed casement windows typical of 20th Century residential homes
- Gable fronted and gable sided roofs
- Predominantly natural boundary treatments including mature hedge and grass lawns. Planting is often combined with low brick walls adding variety to the street scene.
- There are some examples of driveways with no boundary treatments which create an urban character along those sections of the street



^Informal, more rural character on Eversley Road



^Natural boundary treatments including mature hedge



^Large setbacks allowing ample space for front parking and grass lawns



^Semi-detached dwellings with front parking



^Use of red brick



^Wide frontage semi-detached units with large courtyard parking

3.5 Site Assessment

Site Description

The Site is located to the north of School Road. It is bounded by agricultural land to the north, Wood Lane to the east, School Road and the Coombes Church of England Primary School to the south and Cole Lane to the west, as shown in the adjacent plan.



^View from junction of Wood Lane and Footpath BARK4



^Cole Lane Footway to the north west of the site

