

AndersonOrr

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT
WARREN CREST FARM

Design & Access Statement Warren Crest Farm

JOB NO	PROJECT
23046	Warren Crest Farm, Wick Hill Lane, Finchamstead, RG40 3PY
REVISION	DATE
/	13/05/2025



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Introduction

This Design and Access Statement accompanies an application to Wokingham Borough Council to obtain planning permission to construct a new detached dwelling, along with two residential units and a garage at Warren Crest Farm, Wick Hill Lane.

Overview

This report describes the objectives, development and design solutions of the proposed scheme and discusses the conclusions reached.

This application follows a pre-application consultation with Wokingham Borough Council - application reference no. 242753.

This report describes the proposed scheme's objectives, development, and design solutions and discusses the conclusions reached.

This statement should be read in conjunction with the submitted drawings and information.

Planning Statement

Landscape Design

Arboricultural Report

Ecologist

Flood Risk Assessment &

Surface Water Drainage

JPPC Chartered Town Planners

Portus & Whitton

Venners Arboriculture

Ecology by Design

Glanville

SECTION 2.0

Site Overview

2.1 General

Wokingham is a market town and civil parish in Berkshire, about 7 miles east-southeast of Reading and 4 miles west of Bracknell. Wokingham has a town centre, with main residential areas radiating in all directions. The Wokingham built-up area extends beyond the parish boundary, notably Finchampstead to the south and Barkham to the southwest.

Finchampstead, a village and civil parish. The area hosts an abundance of rich woods, sitting on the cusp of the Windsor Great Park.

The application site is located within the southern periphery of Finchampstead. The area is defined by large detached dwellings set in generous grounds. The site lies within the client's wider ownership, making it one of the largest sites in the area.

It is not in an area defined within a Green Belt, National Landscape or Conservation Area. In addition, it is not an area with high archaeological potential.



Right: (Fig. 1) Ariel view of Warren Crest Farm



Right: (Fig. 2) Ariel view of Warren Crest Farm's site boundary

2.2 Character of the Area

The site is within Finchampstead Pastoral Sandy Lowland, characterised by gently to steeply undulating pastures rising to a gentle ridge and set against the wooded backdrop of the Settled and Forested Sands.

The local architecture along Wick Hill Lane comprises detached houses with significant setbacks and driveways with numerous mature trees. The area is also characterised by many large dwellings set on generous plots.

2.3 Topography & Views

The site holds a gradual slope running west to east and is characterised by mature tree screening on all public boundaries.

The site's perimeter is enclosed by field boundaries of hedgerows and treelines. A public footpath runs adjacent to the site's north-western boundary.

Notable views are predominantly out-looking south into the neighbouring fields. In particular, the site benefits from a long-ranging view towards St. James Church.

2.4 Means of Enclosure & Landscape

The area surrounding the wider site is typically subdivided by dense hedges, fencing, and, in some instances, footpaths. A plethora of mature trees also separate the agricultural plots.

The application site is unusual in that it lies on the edge of the settlement, yet it is considerably larger than the neighbouring plots. An Ancient Woodland is located approximately 120m east of the site and partially lies within the client's ownership, but it does not form part of this application.

A detailed appraisal of the landscape and surrounding context has been prepared by Portus + Whitton; please refer to the accompanying report for further details.



Right: (Fig. 3-4) Wick Hill Lane architecture

The northeast boundary borders a residential garden and is defined by a neatly trimmed hedge with several mature trees. The northwest boundary is marked by an existing native hedge and chestnut pale fencing, complemented by a number of mature oak trees in good condition. The northern half of the boundary is enclosed by a shelterbelt of woodland, adding to the natural screening of the site. The southeast boundary beyond the red line area of the site is delineated by an agricultural fence and an overgrown, mature hedgerow. This hedgerow forms a natural link to the surrounding field network. The southwest boundary is largely open, with a significant gap along approximately half of its length.

This arrangement results in the existing house being screened from most public views, with only limited visibility.

2.5 Existing Buildings

The existing property is accessed via Wick Hill Lane. However, the principal entrance is not visible from much of the lane; the existing dwelling, therefore, does not significantly contribute to the lane's character. The plot itself is best described as secluded due to its location and established vegetation, but it should be noted that the agricultural buildings are more prominent.

The site includes an existing dwelling with an associated garage, an outbuilding and a garden; besides the dwelling, there are several redundant farm buildings and pastoral fields. It borders agricultural land within the applicant's ownership in all directions.

The existing property features traditional building forms and materials typical for the 1970s. The pitched roof and the external walls combine red brickwork and interlocking tiles, most of which are covered in moss. The property has aged poorly, and some elements of the existing structure are falling into disrepair.

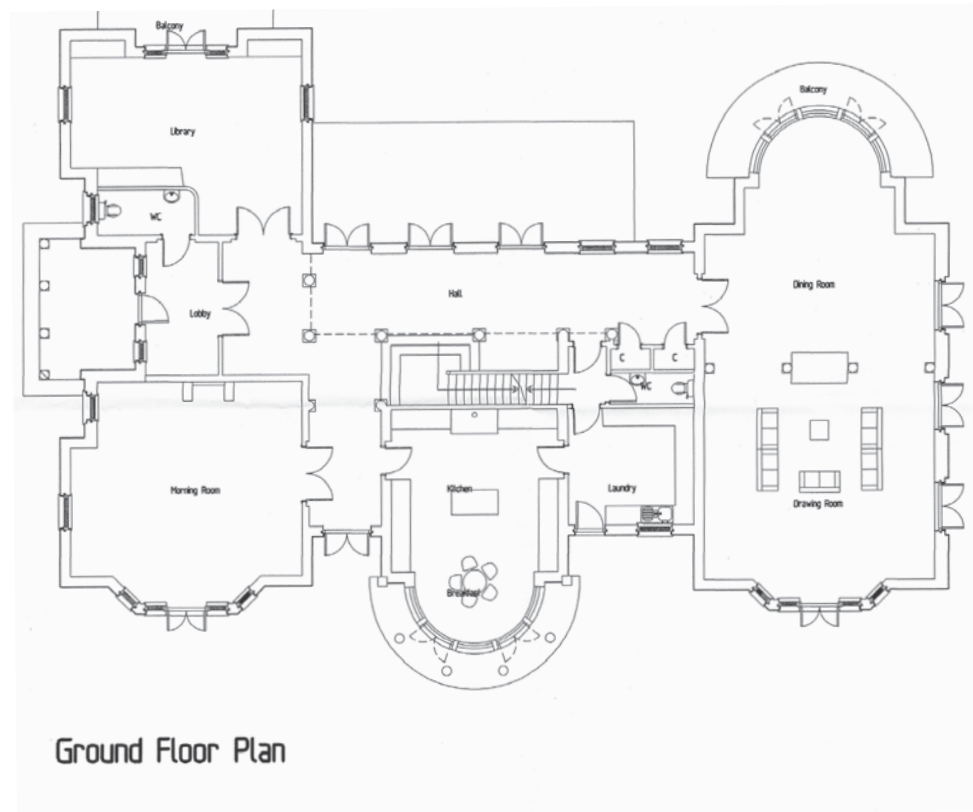
Walkers passing the property can achieve only limited views of the site interior from the main entrance. Views from the adjacent footpath are almost entirely obstructed by mature vegetation.



Right: (Fig. 5-6) Photographs of Warren Crest Farm

2.6 Local Architecture

Blencathra, Finchampstead, Wokingham



Above: (Fig. 7-8) Approved planning drawings of local architecture

2.6 Local Architecture (continued)

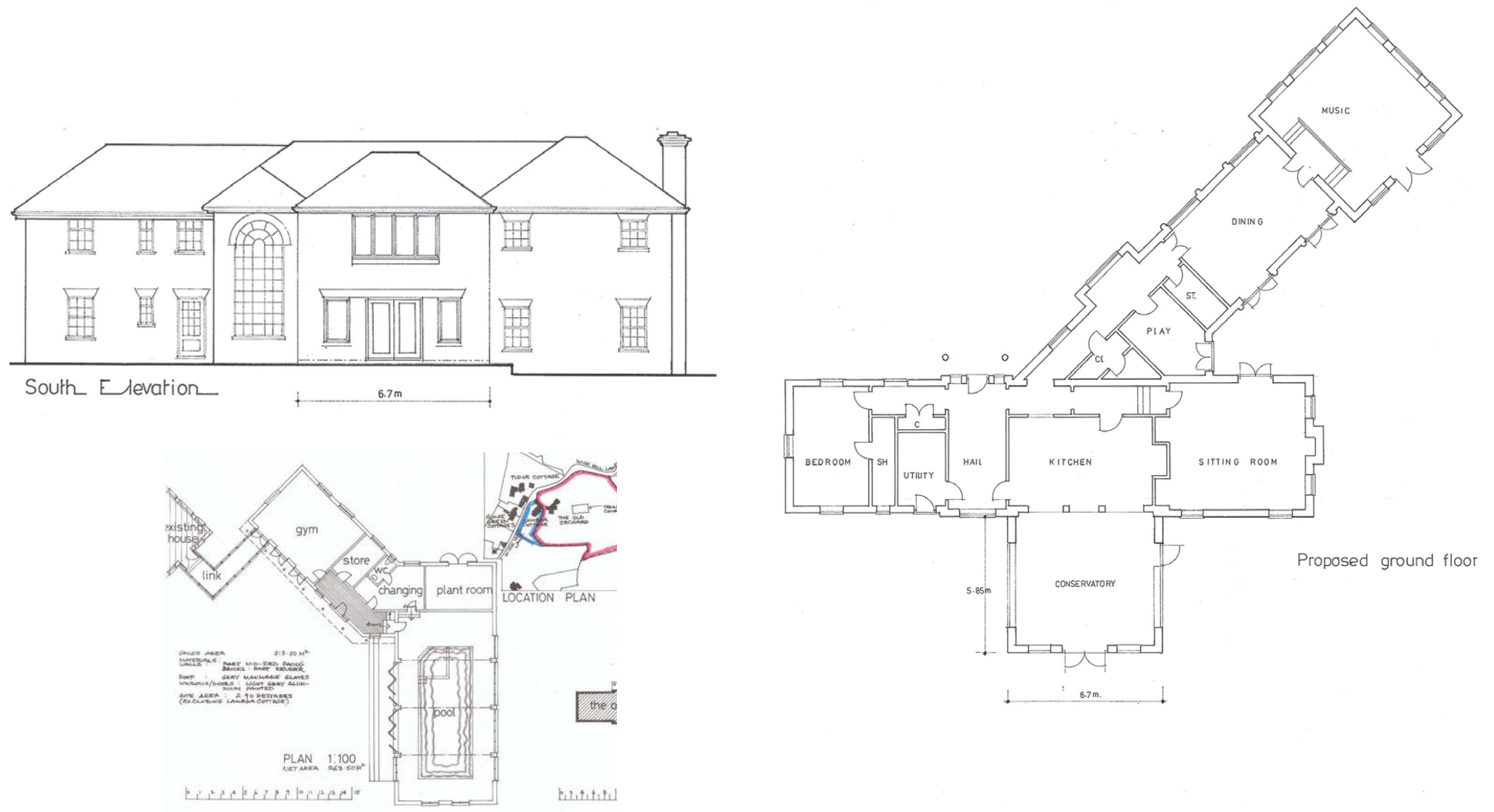
Wildedge, The Ridges, Finchampstead, Wokingham



Above: (Fig. 9-10) Approved planning drawings of local architecture

2.6 Local Architecture (continued)

The Old Orchard, Wick Hill Lane, Finchampstead



Above: (Fig. 11-13) Approved planning drawings of local architecture

2.7 Ecology

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Preliminary Roost Assessment have been undertaken by Ecology by Design in support of this application. The report concludes that there is lack of robust data for the presence of roost, therefore it is considered that a mitigation licence in this instance is not required and a precautionary approach to safeguard any bats present is recommended in this case.

The reports also notes that the presence of scattered trees and buildings on the site offers suitable nesting habitats for birds. An active robin nest was discovered in a gap in the brickwork on the west elevation of the main dwelling. The installation of a bat box will mitigate this risk.

The report concludes that the proposed works will not affect other statutory or non-statutory protected sites.

In summary, the report suggests that the site's ecological value would be unlikely to significantly change. Several ecological recommendations and mitigation measures are recommended to ensure the site's environmental value is retained and potentially enhanced. The measures will be incorporated within the proposal.

A Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment has been prepared in support of this application. The proposals would deliver the required net gains for biodiversity, consistent with Policy TB23 and the NPPF. This will be achieved by creating new habitat on-site within the applicant's own land.

2.8 Arboriculture

A detailed assessment of the existing trees has been undertaken by Venners Arboriculture, alongside a Landscape Appraisal prepared by Portus + Whitton. The reports provide details about the composition and condition of the trees on site. The quality of the surveyed trees ranges from low to moderate quality. While the trees add to the character of the immediate local landscape, many are located

primarily within the site and are not visible from the surrounding area. A small amount of low-quality fruit trees and one moderate quality tree would be removed as part of this proposal.

Overall, the tree removal would not impact the visual quality of the landscape and the character of the surrounding area. The proposed layout retains and respects the significant and important trees, and it is considered to be compatible with both their current presence and future growth.

2.9 Flood Risk & Drainage

Evaluation of the Environment Agency flood data indicates that the site is not within an area designated as a flood risk.

The proposed surface water drainage strategy incorporates sustainable drainage methods, utilising a combination of permeable paving and geocellular soakaway.

A detailed Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Drainage Strategy has been prepared by Glanville; please refer to the accompanying report for further details.

Building Design

3.1 Objective

The proposal seeks full planning consent to demolish the existing dwelling, garage, and outbuildings to construct a new detached dwelling.

To ensure the proposed development has been fully considered and will positively improve the site surroundings, the finalised design incorporates the following principles:

- Carefully considered high-quality design and external appearance to ensure that there will be no harm to the setting of the area;
- To ensure that the scheme would not negatively impact the character and the appearance of the area, high-quality planting across the site has been proposed, as well as pertinent landscaping surrounding the proposed new dwellings;
- Building forms, heights and massing appropriate to the site's context;
- Low energy use dwellings to follow the fabric-first approach.



- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| 1. Proposed planting | 2. Existing access retained | 3. Proposed cottage & garage/flat |
| 4. Existing public footpath | 5. Existing driveway | 6. Existing agricultural track |
| 7. Existing hedge | 8. Proposed parking/turning area | 9. Proposed garage |
| 10. Existing outbuilding f (to be retained) | 11. Proposed replacement dwelling | 12. Proposed planting |
| 1. Existing outbuilding d (to be demolished) | 2. Existing outbuilding e (to be demolished) | 3. Existing outbuilding c (to dismantled and re-built if possible) |
| 4. Existing garage b (to be demolished) | 5. Existing dwelling a (to be demolished) | |

Right: (Fig. 14) Proposed Block Plan for Warren Crest Farm

3.2 Amount

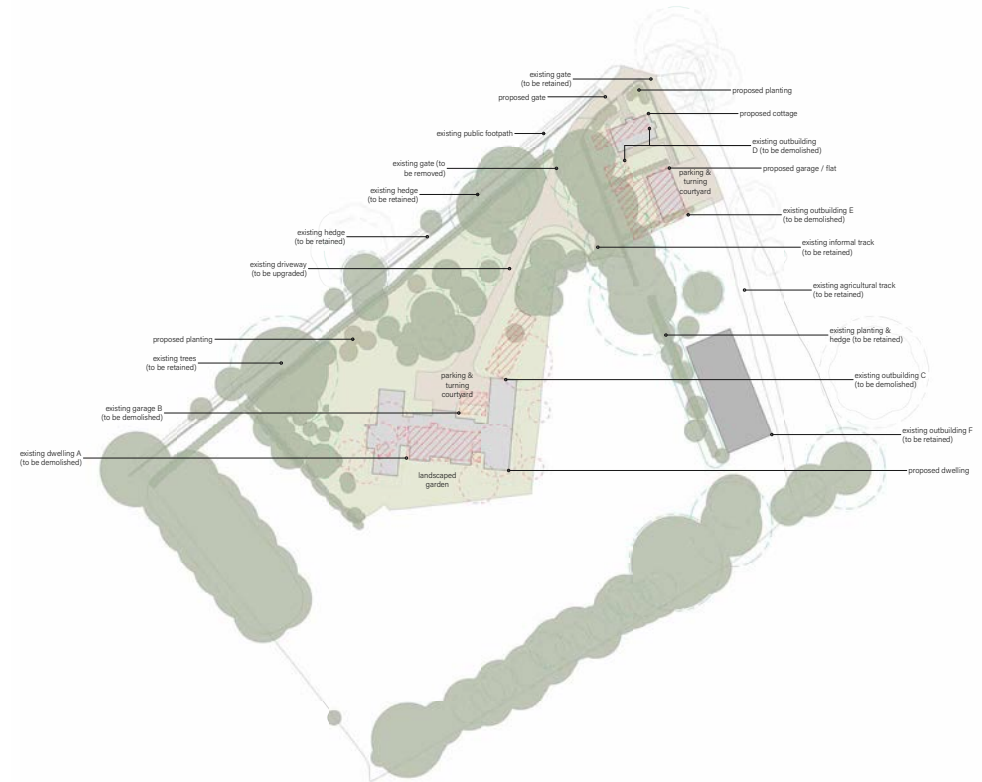
The proposal seeks full planning consent to demolish the existing dwelling, garage, and outbuilding to construct a new detached dwelling.

In addition, this application proposes two small dwellings in place of the three approved under planning application no. 233112. The prior approval was granted for the proposed change of use of the existing agricultural buildings as three dwelling units and an accompanying garage.

The combined footprint area of the proposed residential accommodation totals 773m². In comparison, the total footprint of the recently approved schemes is 873m². Thus the proposal represents a reduced of 100sqm built area and offers a more compact building arrangement on site as illustrated on Fig. 17 below.

The proposal should be considered within the broader context of the entire farm, rather than solely the residential curtilage. It is also worth highlighting that the proposed scheme creates an arrangement of building forms that appear as collection of agricultural building that have be enlarged and extended over time which is in keeping with the character of the site.

A footprint analysis of relevant local buildings has been conducted, demonstrating that, in relation to the size of the site, the proposed building's footprint is in keeping with the surrounding area and does not appear out of character - please refer to Fig. 17 below.



Right: (Fig. 15) Proposed Site Plan for Warren Crest Farm



EXISTING BUILDINGS



CURRENT CONSENT



PROPOSED NEW DWELLING

Right: (Fig. 16) Site Analysis for Warren Crest Farm

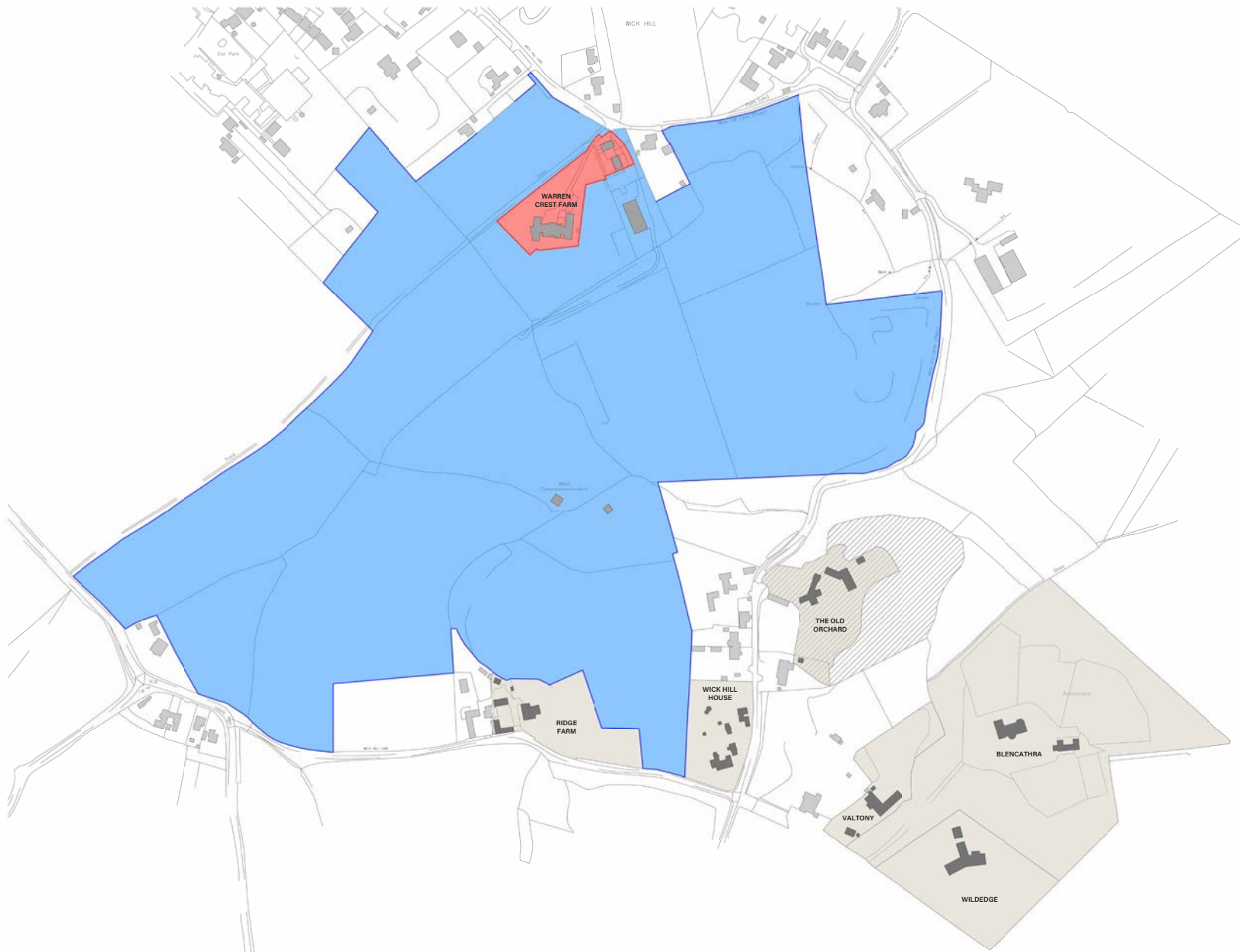


Table 2 - Relevant Contextual Plot Analysis

NOTE: approximate information

PROPERTY	FOOTPRINT (M ²)	PLOT AREA (M ²)
RIDGE FARM	466m ²	7,851m ²
WICK HILL HOUSE	470m ²	6,082m ²
THE OLD ORCHARD	600m ²	8,296m ²
VALTONY	473m ²	6,044m ²
BLENCATHRA	602m ²	47,923m ²
WILDEGE	632m ²	11,887m ²
AVERAGE	541m ²	14,681m ²
REPLACEMENT DWELLING	610m ²	6,121m ²

Right: (Fig. 17) Contextual Analysis

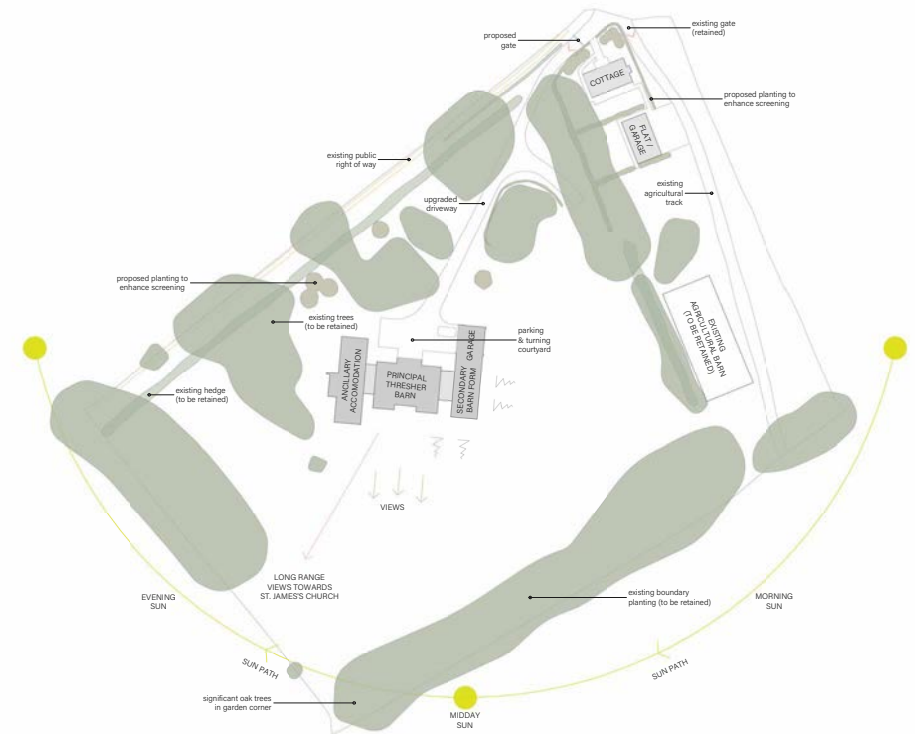
3.3 Layout

The proposed dwelling follows the orientation of the existing property. The scheme's location aims to connect more with the broader area; the openings will frame views of the surrounding countryside and a long-ranging view towards St James's Church.

The internal layout of the building has been developed to reflect the client's requirements. The structure can be divided into a series of distinct elements, each with its own use.

The central element of the building will be used as the main reception space of the house; this lies on a north-to-south axis. This element also contains the main bedrooms. The wing to the west houses the leisure facilities, including a swimming pool, gym and changing provisions. The wing to the east houses the primary living and service accommodation; this includes an integrated garage and ancillary back-of-house uses.

The collection of the building components creates a layout that forms a series of building elements, each addressing a different aspect of the site.



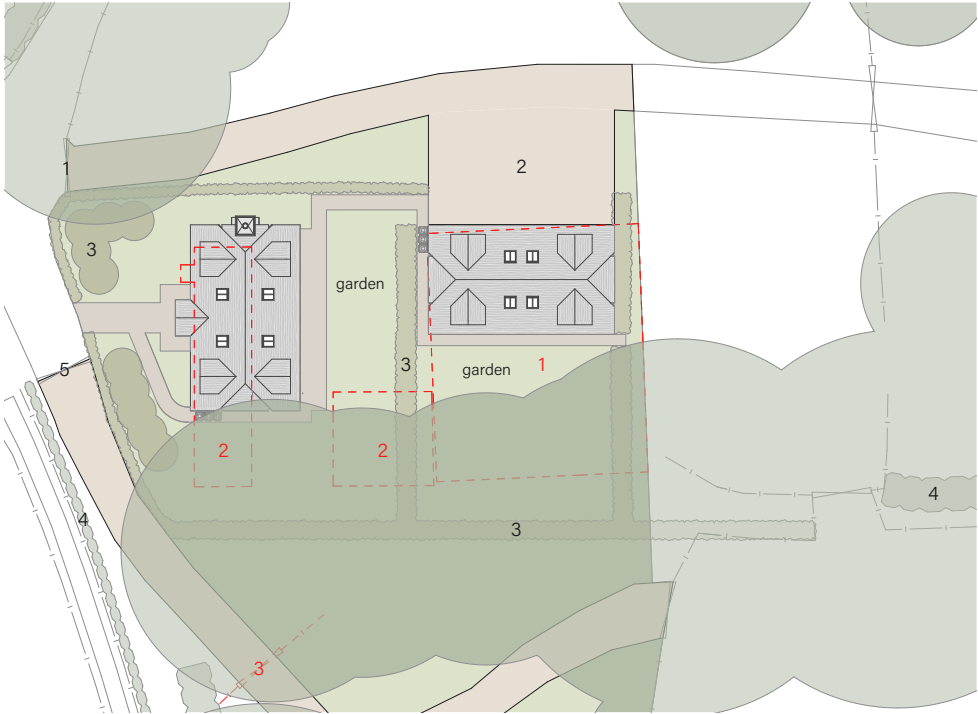
Right: (Fig. 18) Proposed Development for Warren Crest Farm

The conversion of the existing agricultural buildings (D) and (E) into three dwellings and one garage was approved in July 2024 under planning application no. 233112.

This application proposes two small dwellings in place of the three approved under application no. 233112. The proposal is to remove the current non-vernacular agricultural barns and erect two modest dwellings to replace the three permitted barn conversions. The proposed dwellings have been designed to respect local architectural character and offer an improvement over the permitted conversion scheme.

The proposed two-bedroom dwelling acts as a 'gatekeeper's cottage', overlooking the existing site's access, while the proposed garage and one-bed flat above provide ancillary storage and internal/external car parking. These structures are broadly in the same position as the existing agricultural building's footprint. Landscaping and sufficient private garden space are provided for both units.

Likewise, the smaller residential units' internal planning focuses solely on rationalised living and sleeping accommodation arrangements. The cottage incorporates this over two floors, whereas the flat contains this just on the first floor, facilitating a full-width three-bay garage beneath.



- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Existing access (to be retained) | 2. Parking & turning area | 3. Proposed planting |
| 4. Existing trees & hedges (to be retained) | 1. Building e (to be demolished) | 2. Building d (to be demolished) |
| 5. Proposed access | 3. Existing access (to be relocated) | |

Right: (Fig. 19) Proposed Site Plan for the Cottage & Flat/Garage at Warren Crest Farm

3.4 Scale

The proposed dwelling is generally arranged with traditional rectangular building forms and pitched roofs. Each distinct building component is connected by subservient links to ensure the project's design concept is preserved and the dwelling reflects a collection of agricultural buildings.

The scale of the building elements is composed to reflect the hierarchy of the internal spaces. The principal pitched roof element is that of the main entertaining space and some of the living accommodations; this structure incorporates the main bedrooms on the first and second floors. This element was designed as a threshing barn and has been limited to two and a half stories to reduce the general scale and massing of the central form. The second-floor accommodation is within the roof space.

The other building elements are smaller in scale and of varying heights. The two building elements enclose the main structure to the west and east. These subservient wings are 1 ½ storeys.

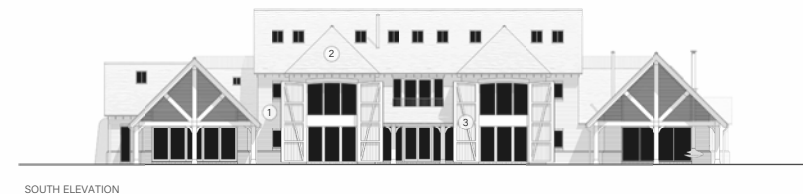
The overall massing of the building components follows the concept of a farmstead. The original house or barn is the principal living structure, which has been adjoined to secondary subservient structures. The composition of the dwelling gives the impression of a collection of rural buildings.

The height of the proposed development has been carefully considered in the context of the residential plot, the whole farm, and the wider area. It should be noted that the farmland is the largest farmland site in the area.

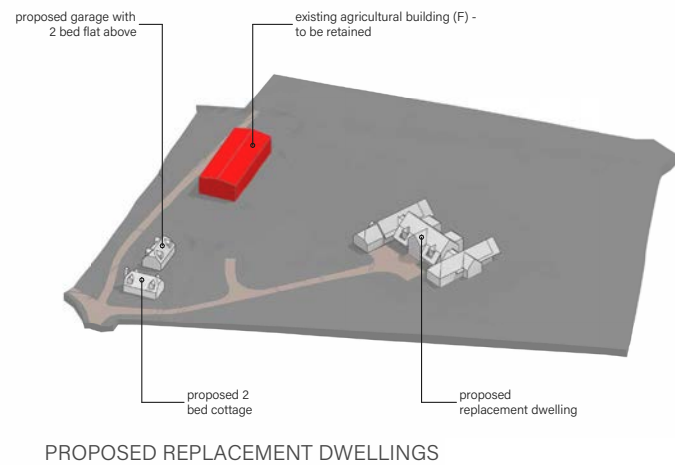
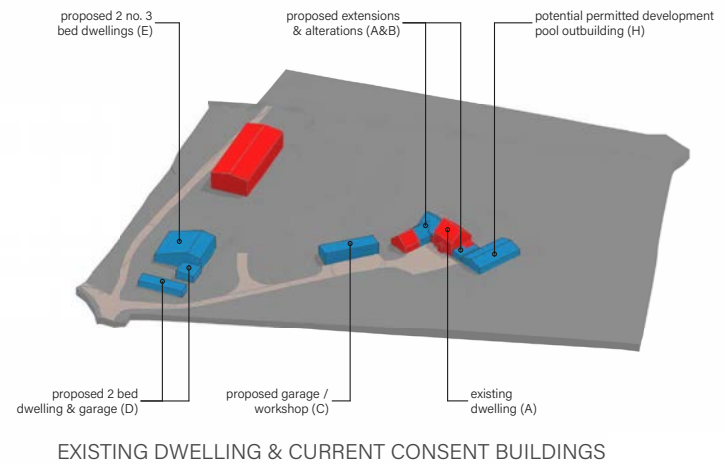
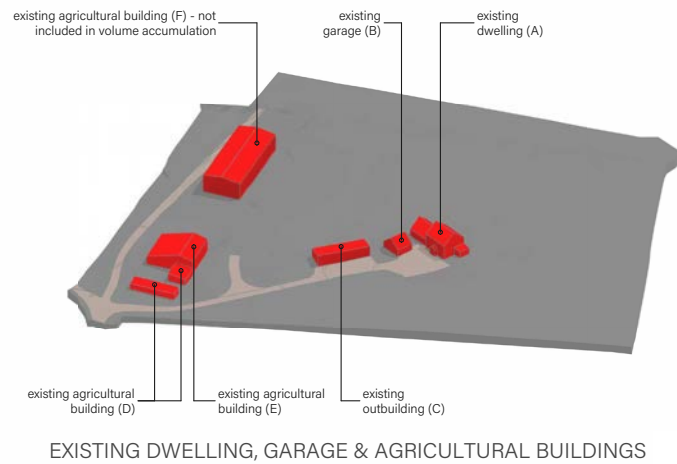
It is important to note that an extension and alterations proposal has recently been approved under planning application no. 241564. This consists of a single-story side extension and a front infill extension, following the demolition of the existing conservatory, the raising of the dwelling's subservient roof and the conversion of the existing garage to create habitable accommodation, and the part conversion of the detached store building to create a workshop and garage plus fenestration changes.

The ridge heights of the proposed small dwellings and the garage have been minimised to a story-and-a-half to reduce their general scale and massing. This is a substantial decrease from the existing agricultural buildings. Hipped roof forms combined with traditional dormer windows and a chimney further articulate their traditional rural essence.

Furthermore, while the proposed dwelling represents an increase in the volume of from the existing, the proposed ratio between building volume and site area will remain significantly lower compared to the nearby properties. Fundamentally, the proposal offers a more compact building arrangement on site.



Right: (Fig. 20-21) Proposed North & South Elevation for the Replacement Dwelling at Warren Crest Farm



Right: (Fig. 22) Comparison Volume Analysis for Warren Crest Farm

3.5 Appearance

The building forms of the dwelling are arranged in a traditional composition with simple rectangular plans and pitched roofs. The proposals are designed to create an aesthetic based on traditional building proportions and roof pitches inspired by rural architectural forms in farmland settings.

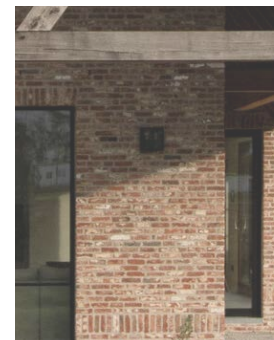
The building will be constructed with a limited palette of high-quality materials. These materials have been selected to reflect the rural setting of the dwelling and include red brick, oak, timber cladding, and clay tiles.

The central element of the dwelling will be built in red brickwork, and the roof will be clad in clay tiles. The adjoining building form to the west will be over-sailed by a clay roof.

The proposed subservient wing to the east has been subdivided into two components with different ridge heights and materials. The external walls combine brickwork and timber cladding under a clay roof.

The design takes precedence from traditional barn structures and features some elements of contemporary detailing, mainly expressed in the size of the openings to the rear. When approaching the dwelling, the extended subservient projections of the house create the entrance courtyard, creating an understated introduction to the property. The proposed front entrance projection with a hipped roof further reinforces the traditional barn aesthetic, being a typical barn characteristic.

The building materials have been selected to follow the local vernacular of Finchampstead and agricultural buildings within the local context. The mixture of materials designates the different building elements and their uses; this creates the impression of a slow, organically developed farmstead. The dwelling has been designed to combine both residential and agricultural materials to reflect its semi-rural setting.



Right: (Fig. 23-26) Proposed North Elevation & materiality precedents



Right: (Fig. 27-35) Proposed Design Precedents for the Replacement Dwelling at Warren Crest Farm

3.6 Landscape

The landscape proposals for the project play a key role in connecting the building with the site and broader context. The existing landscape assets have been retained and enhanced. Ornamental planting and lawn areas have been restricted to small areas directly adjacent to the dwelling. The informal gardens occupy the remaining space within the site, this includes wildflower meadows.

The informal landscaping will ensure the proposal is bedded within the site and the rural landscape. Care has been taken to avoid the over-development of the site.

Further details of the landscape proposals can be found within the landscape master plan prepared by Portus + Whitton.

3.7 Sustainability

A detailed Sustainability Statement has been prepared by Anderson Orr in support of this application. Please refer to this document for the principals incorporated into the design to minimise the proposal's environmental impact.

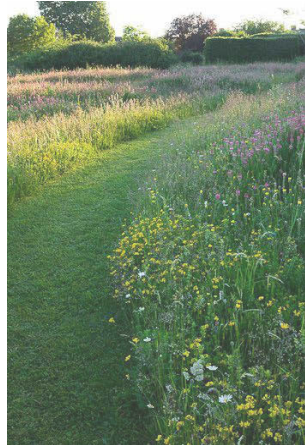
3.8 Access

The following access component of this statement relates only to "access to the development" and, therefore, does not extend to internal aspects of the proposed plots.

- The existing site access at Warren Crest Farm, Wick Hill Lane, will be retained;
- Access for waste and recycling collection and emergency vehicles will be directly from Nine Mile Ride (B3430);
- Hardstanding areas and level thresholds will be incorporated to provide wheelchair users access to the dwellings;
- Bin and recycled waste storage areas and bicycle storage areas will be provided as indicated on the drawings.
- The scheme benefits from more than adequate provision for off-road parking spaces that meet the local authority parking requirements.



Right: (Fig. 36) Winter View - Proposed Replacement Dwelling



Right: (Fig. 37-46) Proposed Landscape Precedents for the Replacement Dwelling at Warren Crest Farm

3.8 Consultation

The recent pre-application consultation established the principle of the replacement dwelling, and replacing two agricultural buildings with two residential units and a garage was generally accepted and supported. As a result of the consultation, the dwellings have been designed to ensure they sit comfortably within the site and positively contribute to the broader landscape. Further information on the design is provided in the following sections.

In response to pre-application comments, the following changes were made:

- Hardstanding: the area of hardstanding has been significantly reduced
- Appearance: we have amended the external materials to enhance the traditional appearance of the dwelling
- Ridge height: we have reduced the overall ridge height
- Footprint: we have reduced the footprint of the proposed dwelling
- We made further minor tweaks to the roof as suggested to simplify the roof forms
- Sitting: it has been amended to ensure that the proposal would not expand built form and associated amenities outside of the site's existing residential curtilage

The following measures have been adopted to ensure that it sits comfortably within the site and would positively contribute to the broader landscape as illustrated on the images to the right:

- Retention and enhancement of boundary planting and mature trees to keep the enclosed character of the site;
- Reducing the spread of built form within the site by consolidating the forms into a single dwelling;
- Strengthening the planting along the western boundary to retain the rural feel of the public footpath running past the replacement dwelling.



Right: (Fig. 47-48) Winter View - As existing with recently approved extensions & proposed dwelling



Right: (Fig. 49) Winter View - Proposed Replacement dwelling

Summary

The design of the proposed dwelling has been carefully developed in the context of the edge of settlement location and in keeping with the existing character of Wick Hill Lane and the semi-rural nature of the site.

The report describes the building design, which has been thoughtfully developed to evoke the character of a cluster of structures similar to a traditional farmstead, reflecting the current use of the wider site. The design incorporates high-quality materials and subtle contemporary detailing to present a modern interpretation of a traditional building form.

The site is enclosed by mature vegetation, specifically on its north and eastern boundaries and beyond in all directions, forming a robust screen on these aspects. The proposed dwelling is served by a generous surrounding landscaped space and an adequate parking area. Therefore, the redevelopment of the site presents no risk to the wider context. The proposal will be predominately concealed by the sites tree lined perimeter. At the limited points where glimpses of the new dwelling occur, the building forms have been designed to ensure the structure sits comfortably within the landscape.

It is important to consider the impact of the proposal in relative terms. The application site already has existing planning consents to extend the existing dwelling, to construct a new swimming pool outbuilding and to convert existing farm buildings to residential use. Developing the existing house with further ancillary outbuildings would increase structures spread across the site. In contrast, the proposed replacement building will embrace all accommodation within a single building envelope.

The replacing the existing unattractive farm buildings with a new cottage would greatly enhance the visual quality at this part of Wick Hill Lane. While the retention and enhancement of the landscape of the site, together with the containment of the accommodation within fewer structures, would result in a neutral longer term impact on the visual amenity of the site.

The proposal presents an opportunity to replace a property in a state of disrepair with an exemplar country home.