



Planning, Design & Access Statement

Dairy Cottage, Heathlands Road, Wokingham

Full Planning Application : June 2024



1.0 Background

1.1 Introduction

This Planning, Design and Access Statement is submitted on behalf of Hall Hunter for the demolition of Dairy Cottage and 4no other lawful dwellings and the replacement with 3no detached 4 and 5 bedroom properties with associated car ports and landscaping.

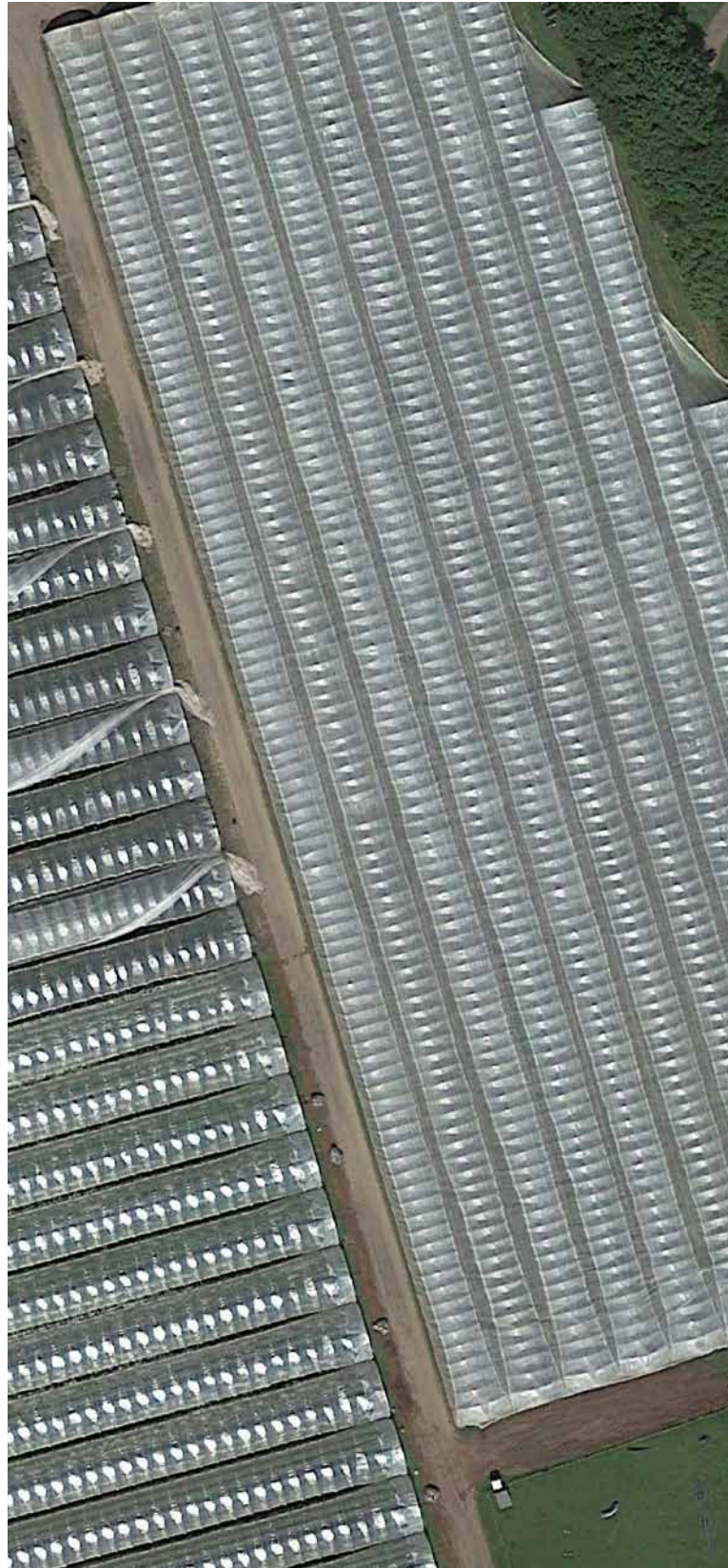
This statement is prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (SI 2015/595).

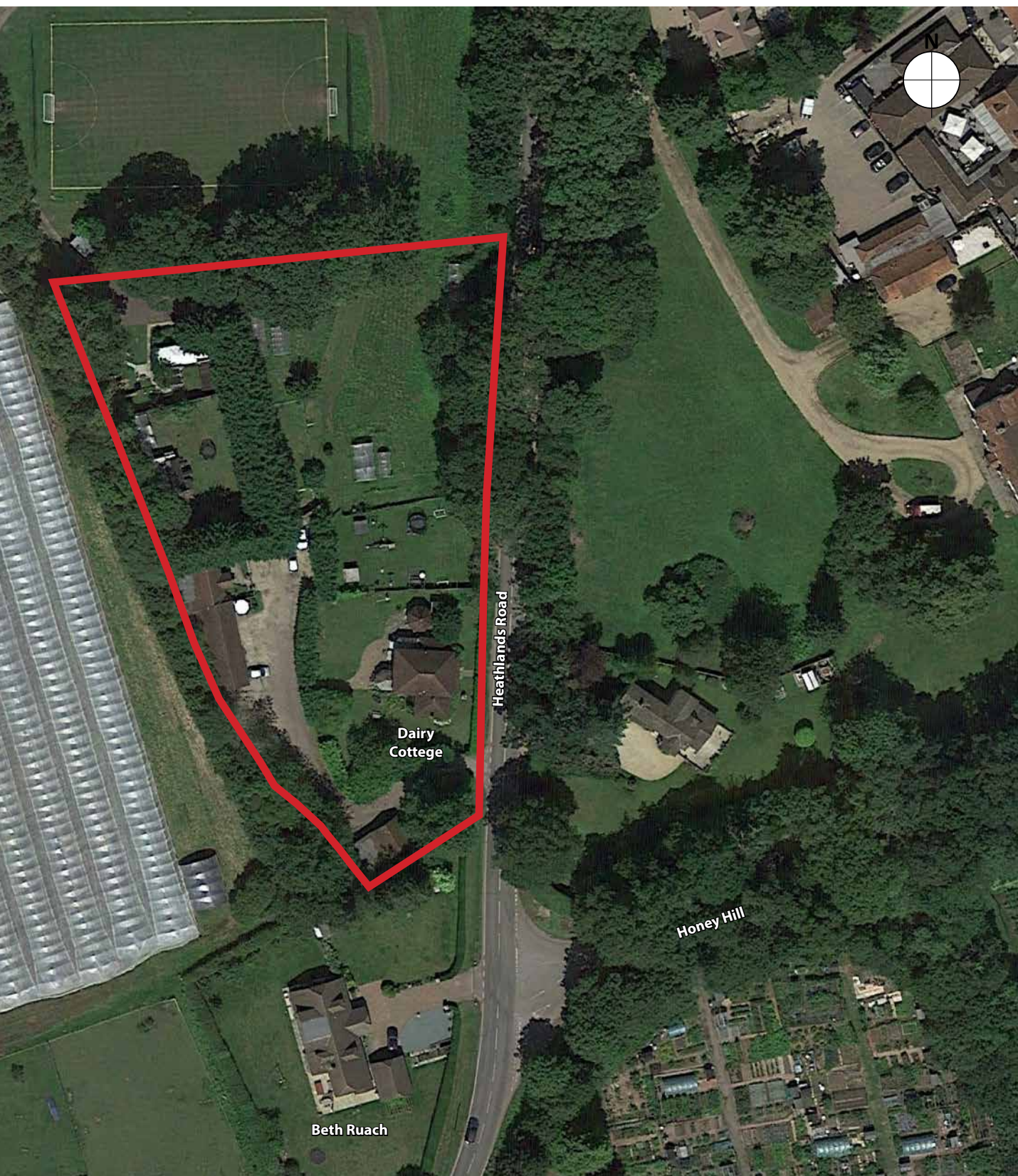
1.2 Location

The application site is located on the fringe of Heathlands Farm along Honey Hill, Wokingham, Berkshire. Heathlands Farm lies within open countryside, with the wider locale being farmland although the Dairy Cottage site itself sits along a ribbon development of housing fronting Honey Hill.

The site is located 1.7 miles south of Wokingham town centre and 8.4 miles southeast of Reading. Wokingham train station lies approximately 2 miles to the northwest with railway links to Reading and London Waterloo. The nearby A329 links to the M4 at Junction 10, with onward connections to the wider road network. Heathrow international airport is 16 minutes away to the north east.

The site is not listed, nor is it within a conservation area.





Aerial photo of site and surroundings

2.0 The Existing Site & Context

2.1 Existing Site

The site is located to the west of Heathlands Road. The site has a relatively small change in level across its length and no change across its width. There are established trees located on the sites perimeter. An access footpath runs along the eastern edge of the application site boundary and vehicular access to the site is down a gated driveway.

Dairy Cottage itself is a 4-bedroom detached property with its own bothy. It is a fairly nondescript red brick cottage and lacks the thermal performance of a modern-day property. Four other lawful dwellings exist within single storey buildings to the north and rear of the site. There is a general lack of cohesion between the dwellings and the massing is spread awkwardly around the site.



1. Rear (west) of Dairy Cottage



2. Driveway entrance



3. South-western edge of site



4. South-western edge of site



5. Existing access and double garage



6. Lawful dwelling to the north of the site

2.0 The Existing Site & Context



7. Poor quality landscape and boundary treatment



8. Existing Leyland Cypress hedge



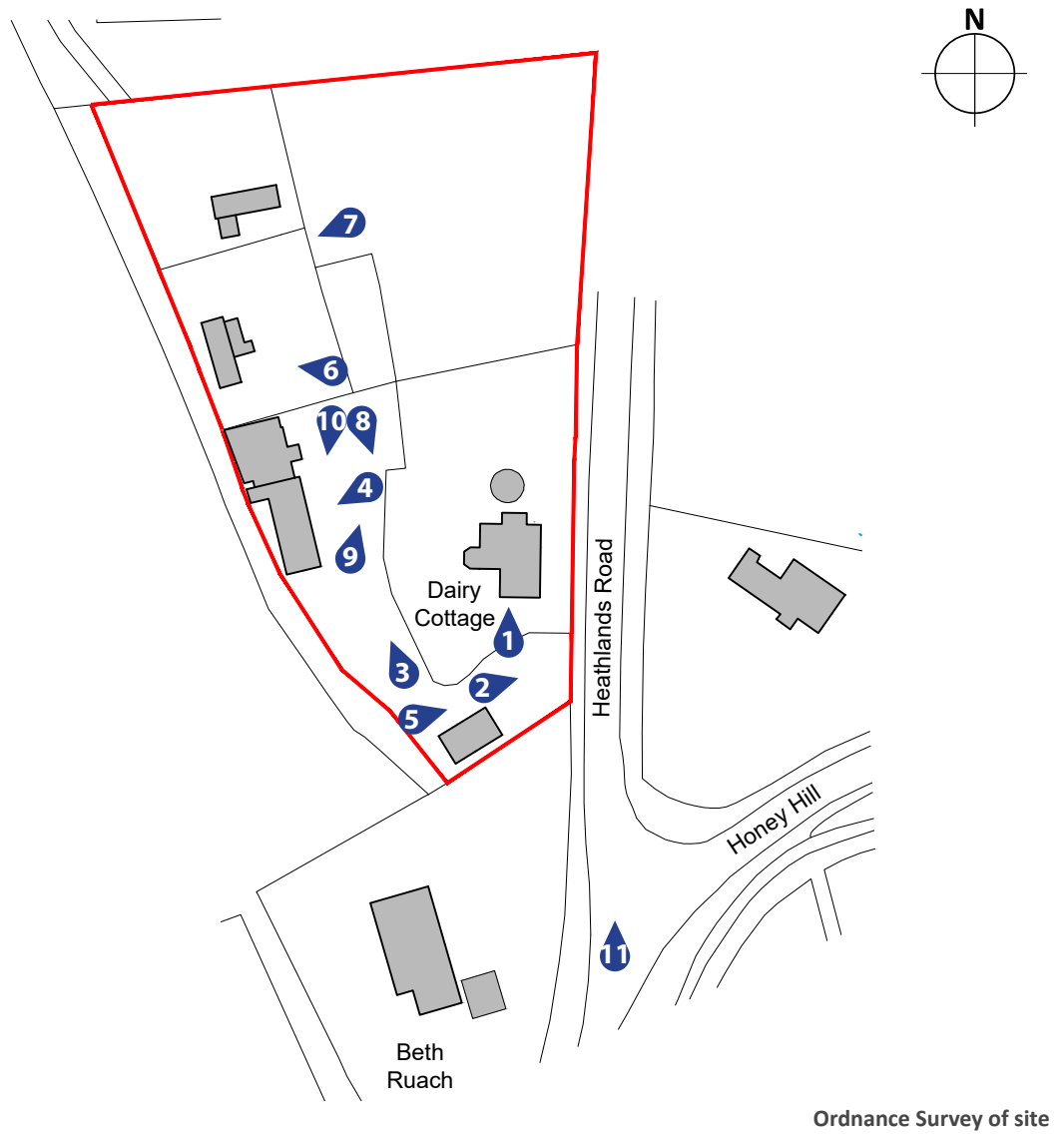
9. Car parking within the site



10. Lawful dwellings along the western boundary



11. Dairy Cottage as glimpsed from Honey Hill



2.0 The Existing Site & Context

2.2 Site context

The neighbouring properties located on Heathlands Road have a variety of materials and styles following the mixed character of the area.

Bay windows, square frames and a variety of roof pitches contribute to the consistent pattern that forms the street as a collective. Individual characteristics like the choice of material and shape of roof gable strengthen the properties of each building. Dormer windows and brick chimneys appear on some of the properties.

The dwellings in this area are set back from the road, providing parking, and many have gated driveways.



Adjacent dwellings



Adjacent dwellings



Adjacent nursery



7 Easthampstead Road



1 Easthampstead Road



Queen's Oak Finchampstead



The Ridings



7 Easthampstead Road



Wellingtonia Avenue



Wellingtonia Avenue



Wellingtonia Avenue



Wellingtonia Avenue



Wellingtonia Avenue



Wellingtonia Avenue

3.0 Design Framework

3.1 Introduction

This section sets out the key policies and guidance which form the framework within which the design of the scheme has been developed.

Further considerations include the relevant policies of the Planning Practice Guidance and Supplementary Planning Guidance.

3.2 Local Planning Policy

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act affirms that applications for planning permission must be determined by the Development Plan unless material considerations (including the National Planning Policy Framework) indicate otherwise.

The Development Plan for Wokingham Brough Council comprises:

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021) and associated National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG);

Wokingham Core Strategy (Adopted 2010);

Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (Adopted 2014).

Other important material considerations include various adopted Supplementary Planning Documents, the 2021 Local Plan Update: Revised Growth Strategy Consultation. The relevant policies in determining this application are set out below.

Wokingham Core Strategy (CS)

CP1 – Sustainable Development
CP3 – General Principles for Development
CP5 – Housing Mix, Density and Affordability
CP6 – Managing Travel Demand
CP7 – Biodiversity
CP8 – Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area
CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals
CP11 – Proposals Outside Development Limits (Inc Countryside)

Wokingham Borough Council MDD Local Plan

CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
CC02 – Development Limits
CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction
CC05 – Renewable Energy and Decentralised Energy Networks
CC06 – Noise
CC07 – Parking
CC08 – Safeguarding alignments of the Strategic Transport Network & Road Infrastructure
CC10 – Sustainable Drainage
TB07 – Internal Space Standards
TB21 – Landscape Character
TB23 – Biodiversity and Development

National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF was first published in 2014 and has subsequently received several revisions and updates, the most recent being December 2023.

The NPPF establishes a clear and compelling presumption in favour of sustainable development, which sits at the heart of the planning system. The presumption is indicated by paragraph 11 which states that applications should be approved where they accord with the development plan, without delay and that where policies are out of date, planning permissions should be granted.

There are three dimensions to sustainable development, referred to in paragraph 8:

- An Economic objective – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation.

- A Social Objective – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations, by fostering a well-designed environment with accessible services and open spaces that reflect the current and future needs and support communities health, social and cultural wellbeing and;
- An Environmental objective – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making efficient use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.



The application's support for these objectives, through the delivery of housing and the provision of a pleasant environment that responds to its surroundings, is addressed throughout this statement and elsewhere in the other supporting documents that form the submission.

The NPPF emphasises delivering development which will both stimulate the economy and deliver the housing needs of local communities.

In this context, the development will assist with the delivery of that objective through the provision of new homes, in a sustainable location to benefit the housing growth. In positively affecting this, the application should be approved in accordance with paragraph 11 of the NPPF regardless of the status of the Council's land supply position, due to the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 38 requires local planning authorities to approach decisions of the proposed development in a positive and create ways to foster and aid the delivery of sustainable development. They should use the full range of planning tools available and work proactively with applicants to secure development that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of an area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development when possible.

Paragraph 47 states that "decisions on applications should be made as quickly and within statutory timescales unless a longer period has been agreed by the applicant in writing." Paragraph 49 advises that in the context of the framework's presumption in favour of sustainable development, arguments that an application is unlikely to justify refusal.

Paragraph 74 requires that LPAs should identify and update annual a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement, or against their local housing need where the strategic policies are more than five years old. Paragraph 75 confirms that a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, with the appropriate buffer, can be demonstrated where it has been established in a recently adopted plan, or in a subsequent annual position statement.

The government attaches a great deal of importance to design. It is committed to "building beautifully" as part of the drive to boost the supply of housing. Section 12 of the NPPF outlines the need to ensure good design as a key outcome of the planning process, including a number of specific references to assist decision-makers.

Paragraph 120d states that the development of under-utilised land, with specific reference to areas where land supply is otherwise constrained. Paragraph 123 recommends that authorities take a positive approach in the consideration of former applications for alternative use of land which are not allocated for that use in the adopted local plan.

Paragraph 126 states that at the core of planning and development is the utilisation of high-quality design to create beautiful and sustainable buildings and places, to live and work.

LPAs should provide clear guidance on how to achieve high-quality design as detailed in Paragraph 128. Local design codes should be consistent with general principles of the national design guide, and the national model design guide code, whilst reflecting the local character of an area and design preferences.

3.0 Design Framework

It is required by paragraph 130 that the quality of design plays an important part in the decision-making process regarding the proposed development. Decisions should ensure that developments will function well, are visually attractive, and be sympathetic to local character. A strong sense of place should be maintained, with the density of the site optimised, including green space and support for local services.

Paragraph 132 states that design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals and applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement regarding elements of the application should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot.

Paragraph 134 requires local authorities to refuse development that is poorly designed, especially if there is a failure to meet requirements of local national policy. It also makes clear that favourable weight should be given in the decision-making process to development that does operate this guidance. Especially, if there is evidence of outstanding design that promotes sustainability.

Paragraph 170 requires the planning system to contribute to and enhance the natural environment.

Paragraph 8(c) of the Framework sets out the planning system's environmental objective which seeks to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural environment, including helping to improve biodiversity and mitigating and adapting to climate change. An objective reiterated within Chapter 15 and specifically Paragraph 174(d), which states that development should minimise impacts on and provide net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.

National Planning Practice Guidance

The National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) was published online in March 2014 and is periodically updated. It advises that:

"The National Planning Policy Framework represents up-to-date Government planning policy and must be taken into account where it is relevant to a planning application or appeal. If decision takers choose not to follow the National Planning Policy Framework, clear and convincing reasons for doing so are needed. A development that is consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework does not remove the requirement to determine the application in accordance with the development plan unless there are other material considerations that indicate otherwise."

The Guidance advises that the statutory development plan is the plan for the future development of an area. It comprises:

"Local plans - development plan documents adopted by local planning authorities, including any 'saved' policies from plans that are otherwise no longer current, and those development plan documents that deal specifically with minerals and waste.."

Regarding how decisions on planning applications must be made, it advises that the National Planning Policy Framework stresses the importance of having a genuinely plan-led planning system. Where a proposal accords with an up-to-date development plan it should be approved without delay, as required by the presumption in favour of sustainable development within Paragraph 11 of the NPPF.

Mirroring Paragraph 11 of the NPPF, the PPG advises that where a development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, applications should be determined in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development.



Wokingham Core Strategy

Policy CP1 of the Adopted Core Strategy (2010) 'Sustainable Development' aims to grant planning permission for proposals that maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment in addition to minimising and limiting any adverse impacts on the environment. Proposals will also be granted permission where they contribute towards the goal of reaching zero-carbon development as soon as possible through minimising energy and water consumption and including appropriate on-site renewable energy features.

Policy CP2 of the Adopted Core Strategy (2010) 'Inclusive Communities' seeks to ensure that new development contributes to the provision of sustainable and inclusive communities (including the provision of community facilities) to meet long term needs. The policy states that planning permission will be granted for proposals that address the requirements an ageing population, particularly in terms of housing, health, and wellbeing.

Policy CP3 of the Adopted Core Strategy (2010) 'General Principles for Development' states that planning permission will be granted for proposals that are of an appropriate scale, mass, layout, built form, height, and utilise materials and character which are sympathetic to the area providing a high quality of design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users. The policy recognises the importance of providing an accessible and adaptable scheme which has no detrimental impact upon important ecological or heritage landscapes, and ultimately contributes to a sense of place in the buildings themselves and in the way they integrate with the surroundings.

Policy CP4 of the Adopted Core Strategy (2010) "Infrastructure Requirements" aims to ensure that development proposals include appropriate arrangements for the improvement or provision of infrastructure, services, community and other facilities required for the development.

Policy CP5 of the Adopted Core Strategy (2010) 'Housing Mix, Density and Affordability' asserts that planning permission will be granted for residential development providing a mix and balance of densities, dwelling types, tenures, and sizes.

Policy CP6 of the Adopted Core Strategy (2010) 'Managing Travel Demand' states that planning permission will be granted for schemes that provide sustainable forms of transport to allow choice, are located where the distance people need to travel is minimised, and no highway problems will be generated. Proposals should also provide appropriate vehicular parking having regard to car ownership, ensure that road safety is enhanced, and improve facilities for

pedestrians and cyclists including those with reduced mobility and other users.

Policy CP7 of the Adopted Core Strategy (2010) 'Biodiversity' states that the degree of protection given will be appropriate to the status of the site in terms of its importance. The policy seeks to restrict adverse impacts on protected species, habitats and other features of biodiversity or geodiversity value.

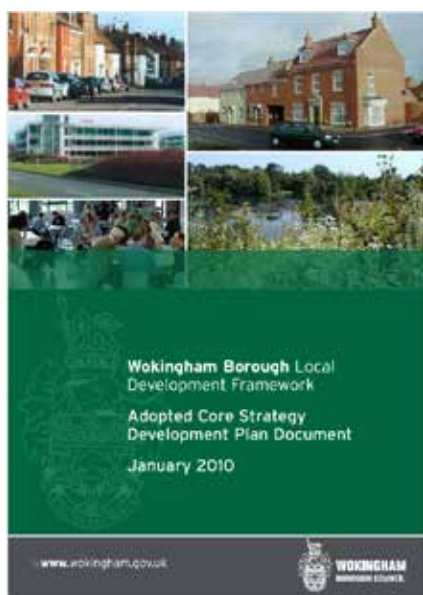
Policy CPB of the Adopted Core Strategy (2010) "Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area" seeks to ensure that development proposals that are likely to have a significant impact on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area demonstrate that adequate measures to avoid and mitigate any potential adverse effects are delivered.



Policy CP9 of the Adopted Core Strategy (2010) "Scale and Location of Development Proposals" states that The scale of development proposals in Wokingham borough must reflect the existing or proposed levels of facilities and services at or in the location, together with their accessibility.

Policy CP11 of the Adopted Core Strategy (2010) 'Proposals Outside Development Limits' states that in order to protect the separate identity of settlements and maintain the quality of the environment, proposals outside of development limits will not normally be permitted. However, permission will be given in scenarios where the proposed development does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion from original buildings and is for the purposes of essential community facilities which cannot be accommodated within development limits.

Policy CP17 of the Adopted Core Strategy (2010) 'Housing Delivery' stipulates that provision will be made for the development of at least 13,230 dwellings and associated development and infrastructure in the Borough in the period 2006-2026.



3.0 Design Framework

Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (MDD Local Plan)

Policy CC01 of the MDD (2014) 'Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development' reinforces that Planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for Wokingham Borough will be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Policy CC02 of the MDD (2014) has regard to 'Development Limits' establishing that planning permission for proposals at the edge of settlements will only be granted where they can demonstrate that the development, including boundary treatments, is within development limits and respects the transition between the built-up area and the open countryside by taking account of the character of the adjacent countryside



and landscape.

Policy CC03 of the MDD (2014) 'Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping' sets out that development proposals should demonstrate how they have promoted the integration of the scheme with any adjoining public open space or countryside, protected and retained existing trees and hedges, and incorporated high quality, native planting, and landscaping as an integral part of the scheme.

Policy CC04 of the MDD (2014) 'Sustainable Design and Construction' states that all development, including conversions, alterations and extensions shall incorporate suitable waste management facilities, including on-site recycling

Policy CC0? of the MOD (2014) 'Parking' details that planning permission will only be granted where the proposal demonstrates that the proposed parking provision meets the standards set out in Appendix 2 of the MOD, and that the new scheme retains an appropriate overall level of off-street parking.

Policy CC09 of the MOD (2014) and Policy NEB of the Draft Local Plan (2020) 'Development and Flood Risk (from all sources)' requires development proposals to take into account all sources of flood risk and historic flooding at all stages. Proposals must be consistent with the guidance in paragraphs 99-104 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); the Technical Guidance to the NPPF and demonstrate how they have used the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) to determine the suitability of the proposal. Where required, suitable and appropriately detailed flood risk information will need to accompany a planning application.

The MOD (2014) also states with Policy CC10 'Sustainable Drainage' that all developments must ensure surface water arising from the proposed



development including taking into account climate change is managed in a sustainable manner and demonstrated through either a Flood Risk Assessment or Surface Water Drainage Strategy. All development proposals are also required to incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) where practicable, which must be of an appropriate design to meet the long terms needs of the development.

Policy TB06 of the MOD (2014) 'Development of Private Residential Gardens' states that The Council will resist inappropriate development of residential gardens where development would cause harm to the local area. 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:

- The proposal makes a positive contribution to the character of the area;
- 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;

- The proposal includes access, which meets appropriate highway standards;
- The proposal does not lead to unacceptable tandem development; and
- The design and layout minimises exposure of existing private boundaries to public areas and avoids the need for additional physical security measures.

Policy TB21 of the MDD (2014) 'Landscape Character' states that proposals must demonstrate how they have addressed the requirements of the Council's Landscape Character Assessment. Proposals should also retain or enhance the condition, character and features that contribute to the landscape.

Policy TB23 of the MDD (2014) 'Biodiversity and Development' states that planning permission for development proposals will only be granted where they comply with Policy CP7 and can demonstrate how they provide opportunities, including through design, layout, and landscaping to incorporate new biodiversity features or enhance existing.

Local Plan Update: Revised Growth Strategy Consultation

Policy H2 of the Revised Growth Strategy Consultation (2021) 'Sites allocated for residential/ mixed use development' lists the sites retained as allocations for residential development. Within this list is 31-33 Barkham Ride, Finchampstead (The Site) for 66 units.

3.3 The National Design Guide

The National Design Guide was initially published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in September 2019 and updated in January 2021. It is a response to the 'Living with Beauty' report published in January 2020 by the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission.

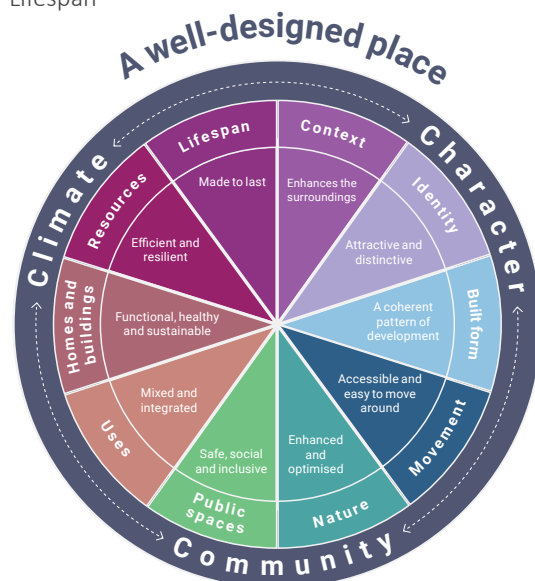
This guide illustrates how well-designed places that are beautiful, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice. It forms part of the Government's collection of planning practice guidance and should be read alongside the separate planning practice guidance on design process and tools.

The National Design Guide addresses the question of how we recognise well-designed places, by outlining and illustrating the Government's priorities in the form of ten characteristics. The choices made in the design process contribute towards achieving these characteristics and shape the character of the place.

The 10 characteristics of the National Design Guide

Well-designed places have individual characteristics which work together to create its physical distinctiveness. The ten characteristics highlighted in the National Design Guide help to nurture and sustain a sense of community and work to positively address environmental issues affecting climate. They all contribute towards the cross-cutting themes for good design set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. The ten characteristics which are set out in the Design Guide and will be extensively considered in the design development of this scheme are:

- Context
- Identity
- Built form
- Movement
- Nature
- Public spaces
- Uses
- Homes and Buildings
- Resources
- Lifespan



The ten characteristics of well designed places
(National Design Guide, September 2019)

3.0 Design Framework

3.4 Other Design Guidance

In addition to the National Design Guide, the emerging development proposals have been designed with reference to a number of relevant design guides as follows:

- Manual for Streets (2007) (MfS 2, September 2010);
- Secured by Design;
- Living with Beauty (2020);
- Building for a Healthy Life (2020); and
- Places Where People Want to Live (2018).



3.6 Site Considerations



Constraints plan

4.0 Proposals

4.1 Overview

This application is seeking planning permission for the construction of 3no dwellings following the demolition of the existing dwellings at the Dairy Cottage site. The proposed development, described within this section has been designed following an analysis of the local character to understand the opportunities presented by the site for a characterful and distinctive development.

4.2 Design and Scale

The proposed detached dwellings are one and a half storeys, with two storey elements, arranged either side of an access road. Spacing is particularly generous and the buildings are set well back to allow for a parking in front of the dwellings as well as generous landscaping. The three plots are complimented by an area of landscaped open space that makes the most of the established tree backdrop. House designs have been led by a study of the local vernacular looking at high-quality examples within this section of the borough.

Plentiful use of the roofscape for each unit keeps height and scale down so the houses appear to hunker down in their landscaped setting. The use of soft landscaped boundary treatment and traditional materials on the houses all helps with the rural aesthetic.



Proposed site layout plan

4.0 Proposals



Existing site massing model



Proposed site massing model

4.0 Proposals

4.3 Site Layout

The site layout is driven by a desire to bring the three dwellings together into a small community. Much improved access is brought into the site in a central position with each of the three dwellings separate driveways springing off this access. Plots one and two benefit from large south facing gardens, and all plots garden depths are in excess of 25m. Built form is located in areas where there is previous development, albeit the new forms consolidate the massing on site from the sprawling and haphazard existing forms.

The landscaped setting is key to setting the dwellings within their surroundings. Over 2,400m² of open space is provided and this is located directly under the highest value trees, so that they are then not in rear gardens and under future pressure of pruning or felling. This new open space has ample opportunity for new native planting and an informal walkway to be enjoyed by future residents.



4.0 Proposals

4.4 Amount

The proposed scheme will provide 2 x 4 bedroom houses and 1 x 5 bedroom house, for market sale.

4.5 Density

The development of 3 dwellings on the 0.650 hectare site generates a density of 5 DPH (Dwellings Per Hectare), easily commensurate to the local surroundings and lower than the density currently on site.



	Lawful on site	Lawful +35%	All on site	All +35%	Proposed
Footprint (m²)	435.9	588.5	670.8	823.4	479.1

4.0 Proposals

4.6 Scale

The proposed dwellings are one and a half storeys with two storey elements, reflecting the scale of dwellings found within the local area.

4.7 Appearance

The appearance of the proposed development has been prepared using detailing and materials found within the local area. The design principles of the proposals are as follows:

- The use of red brick, consistent in colour with the brick type and detailing used in traditional buildings found in the local area.
- Reddy brown hanging tile from first floor upwards and featuring club tile detailing.
- Well proportioned gables, dormers and fenestration to articulate the dwellings.
- Clay roof tiles in accordance with the local vernacular.
- The use of natural timber work supporting porches and bay windows.
- Brick built chimneys to frame each of the three houses.

The development will use a unifying palette of materials, but variations in form, size and style will create a distinctive character and identity for the development.

Dwelling Materials

A simple palette of high-quality materials is proposed:

- Red multi stock brick
- Off white render in limited areas
- Red/orange vertical hanging tile
- Red/brown plain clay roof tiles
- Natural timber porch and bay posts
- Brick built chimneys

A number of architectural details will be used to bring interest to the elevations:

1. **Brick headers to window openings**
2. **Bonnet hipped roofs**
3. **Timber porches in a variety of forms**
4. **Club tile decorative patterns within the tile hanging**
5. **Exposed rafter feet and black painted barge boards**
6. **Tile hung and lead lined dormer windows**



4.0 Proposals

Wall materials



Red multi stock brick



Brown Tile Hanging



Render

Roof materials



Brown Tile

Roof detailing



Bonnet Hipped Domers



Gabled Domers

Timber detailing



Oak Frame Porch



4.0 Proposals

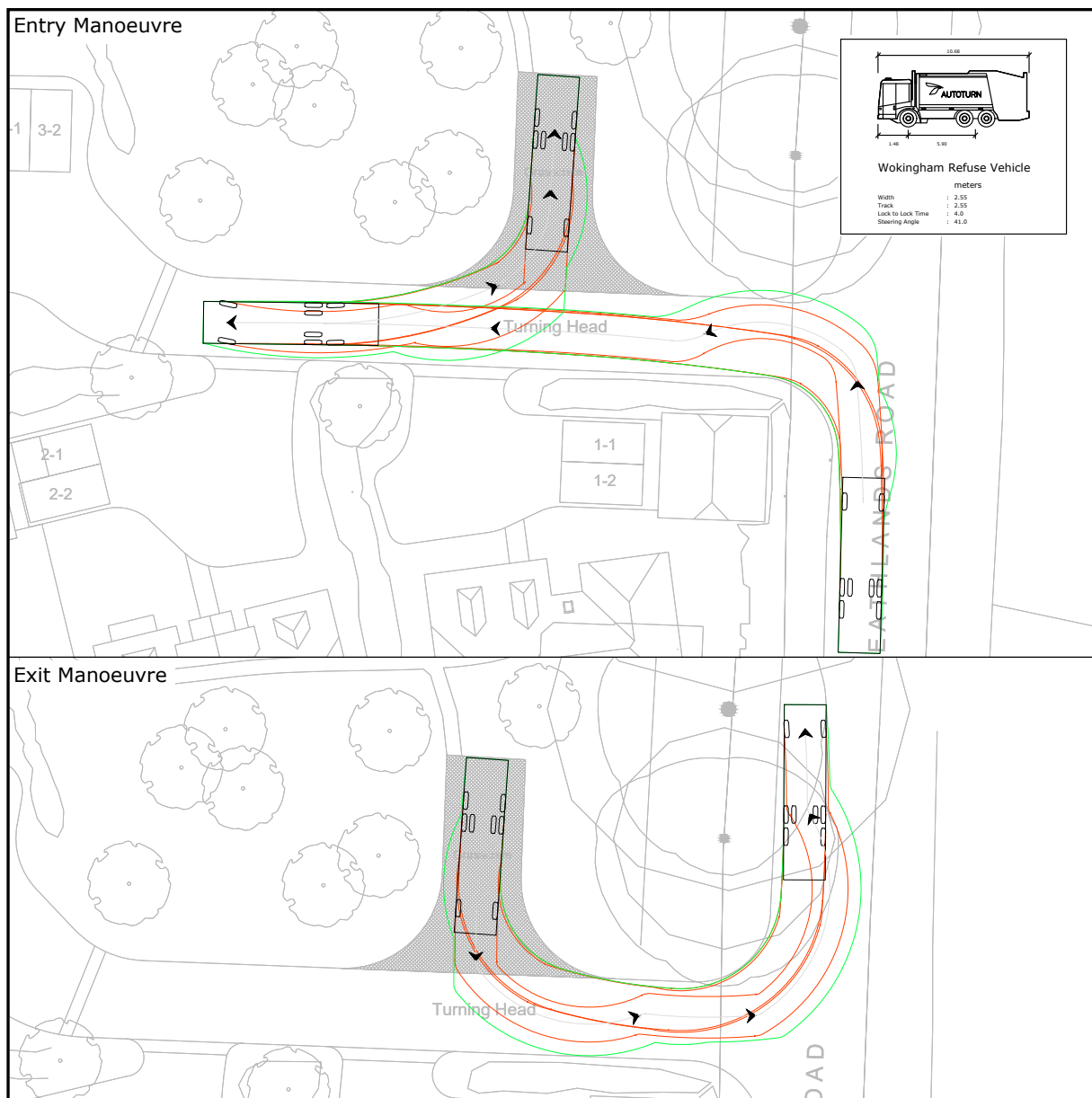
4.8 Access and Parking

The site is accessed from a newly formed junction off Heathlands Road, more central to the red lined site. This is both further away from the junction with Honey Hill and has better sight lines to the existing access.

The new access road includes a turning head to ensure there is ample space for fire and refuse vehicles to enter and leave in a forward gear.

All three plots are provided with a private driveway and car port, sufficient for a minimum of four cars per property. A cycle shed will be provided to allow for secure, on-plot cycle parking. A dedicated electric charging point will be provided on the side elevation of all houses, within easy reach of the driveway.

Refuse and recycling bins are stored within a shed in each of the gardens and then bins are presented along the access road on collection day.



Refuse vehicle tracking diagrams

4.0 Proposals

4.9 Trees

None of the trees are protected by tree preservation orders. An Arboricultural Assessment and Method Statement submitted in support of this application explains that the proposal will result in the loss of several low quality and small trees. Those that are category A or B are all retained and the significant category A trees are retained within open space outside of private curtilage to avoid pressure of pruning or felling from residents in the future. Generous and more appropriate tree planting is proposed in replacement for the low grade trees lost.

4.10 Ecology

Arbtech Ecologists have produced a preliminary ecological appraisal (PEA), a Preliminary roost assessment (PRA), phase II bat surveys and a BNG assessment demonstrating a higher than 10% net gain. These reports accompany this application.

4.11 Sustainability

Domestic waste and recycling

Storage and collection of refuse and recyclable waste has been considered as an integral part of the design process.

Provision will be made within dwellings for the storage of recyclable waste to assist in encouraging recycling within the household. This space will generally be provided either in kitchens or utility rooms.

External residual and recyclable waste storage will be within rear gardens for houses.

Energy

The new houses will provide the following in their specification:

- Air tightness standards will be enhanced demonstrating an improvement above the Building Regulations.
- Improved thermal detailing.
- Insulation will exceed Part L of the Building Regulations by 25%.
- All windows will be double-glazed.
- A Home Owners' Pack will be provided.
- Electric vehicle charging points will be provided for every property.

Flooding

To slow down the surface water run-off rates and reduce the risk of flooding elsewhere, the following drainage features have been incorporated into the proposed development:

- The amount of hard landscaping will be minimised, whilst the use of porous and permeable surfaces will be maximised.
- All surface water will be disposed of through the use of a SuDS strategy.

4.0 Proposals

Community

A Home Owners' Pack will be provided with the dwellings which will contain at least the following information:

- Local transport services.
- Utility suppliers.
- Energy efficiency.
- Local amenities.
- Refuse collection.
- Recycling facilities.
- Local organisations and community groups.
- Environmental technologies installed in the home.
- Water efficiency information.

Open space

The provision of good quality recreational and amenity space is an important part of sustainable residential development. The proposed scheme is integrated within the wider landscape context. The total amount of public open space and amenity grassland on site is 2.150m².

Adaptability

The new homes will be designed to provide the opportunity for residents to work at home, having sufficient space and facilities and being equipped with suitable outlets that will enable the occupants to have data access and necessary power supplies.

Parking

Sustainable transport seeks to reduce the use of the car and thus encourage alternative modes of transport. The number of parking spaces provided is considered to be appropriate for the proposed mix and the location of the site.

Cycling

In order to encourage cycling as an alternative mode of transport to journeys by car, these proposals are well integrated with the pedestrian and cycle movement network in the surrounding area which will provide safe and convenient access by cycle to local facilities.

Cycle storage is provided in dedicated stores within each dwelling's own carport. Secure storage provision will further encourage their ownership and use.

Materials

Consideration will be given to the use of local materials and suppliers where viable to reduce the transport distances and to support the local economy. Consideration will be given to the following measures:

- Use of 'A' rated materials as assessed using the BRE Green Guide to Specification for Buildings wherever possible
- Use of timber, the source of which is certified by FSC / PEFC or an equivalent approved certification body where practical
- Use of insulation materials with zero ozone depletion potential



4.0 Proposals

4.12 Crime Prevention and Community Safety

The layout has been designed to prevent crime and the fear of crime in accordance with government guidance set out in *“Safer places – the Planning System and Crime Prevention”* (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, April 2004). In particular, the development will incorporate the following features:

- Traditional streets that are overlooked by the surrounding houses so that they feel safe, both in the daytime and at night.
- Exposed back garden boundaries will be minimised to minimise the risk of unauthorised entry to properties from the rear.
- The dwellings will comply with Building Regulations Part Q.

4.13 Inclusiveness - Access for All

In accordance with the guidance and requirements for access, highlighted in Section 3.0 of this document, the dwellings have been designed to comply with Approved Document Part M of the Building Regulations (2016) and the requirements of the Equality Act (2010):

- The proposed development will place an emphasis on pedestrian, mobility impaired and cycle use over car travel.
- The development has been designed to allow movement choice. Means of travel other than the car will be encouraged.
- Parking will not dominate the development.
- The internal layout of the dwellings will allow for wheelchair or mobility impaired access in accordance with Approved Document Part M of the Building Regulations (2016).



5.0 Planning Balance

5.1 Planning Balance

The site is located to the west of Heathlands Road, opposite the junction with Honey Hill. The site comprises Dairy Cottage, a 4-bed detached dwelling, and four other lawful dwellings exist within single storey buildings to the north and rear of the site, as well as outbuildings. The condition of the main dwelling is poor. The remaining dwellings within the site comprise former buildings and adapted statics caravans, each of which now benefit from Certificates of Lawfulness.

However, the appearance of the site is of poor quality, and there is a general lack of cohesion between the dwellings due to the organic nature of the site's development. A wide variation in scale, massing, the makeshift nature of the dwelling's design and their siting, has resulted in a site appearance that is ad-hoc in nature and lacking in any meaningful or coherent design intention or coherence.

The site is situated within the designated countryside. However, there is housing located to the south and the east of the site. Local facilities include Billets Public House which is located on Honey Hill and various recreational shopping outlets. There area is characterised by farming with large detached dwellings situated within generous residential plots.

The development of the site constitutes previously developed land.

Core Strategy Policy CP9 (Scale and location of development proposals) directs development to locations within development limits and states that "The scale of development proposals in Wokingham borough must reflect the existing or proposed levels of facilities and services at or in the location, together with their accessibility".

Supporting paragraph 4.52 states that Modest Development Locations, "are those with access to some facilities and services either within them or through good public transport services to major development locations or centres in neighbouring areas e.g. Bracknell, Crowthorne and Reading. It is within the development limits of these settlements where modest development would be acceptable."

The site is within 200 metres of Squires Garden Centre to the south, which has a large food hall selling a wide variety of produce, 200 metres from the Holme Grange shopping complex to the north, which contains a bakery, off licence and cafes and 300 metres west of The Crooked Billet public house. All these local amenities are within recommend walking distances.



Wokingham railway station is within 3.5 kilometres of the site and is served by two trains an hour to London Waterloo, two trains an hour to Guildford and Gatwick Airport and four trains an hour to Reading. While not within walking distance, the station is within cycling distance of the site. In addition, Wokingham station has a large car park which enables linked trips to be undertaken with the majority of long-distance journeys undertaken by train. Crowthorne railway station is within 4.4 kilometres of the site, again within cycling distance and is served by two trains an hour serving Reading, Wokingham, Guildford and Gatwick airport.



It is considered that the proposed development would comply with policies CP1, CP4, CP6, CP9 and CP11 of the 2010 Core Strategy.

The application site lies within the designated countryside and as such should be assessed against Core Strategy Policy CP11 (Proposals outside Development Limits). Policy CP11 states, inter alia, that development proposals will not normally be permitted in the countryside except where specified exceptions apply, including:

5.0 Planning Balance

5) In the case of replacement dwellings the proposal must:

- Bring about environmental improvements; or
- Not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building.

The proposed development would involve the removal of existing dwellings that have negligible architectural merit in terms of design or visual impact on the appearance and character of the area. In terms of environmental sustainability and energy performance, the buildings, including the original house, have very poor energy performance and it is unfeasible to retrofit energy performance features. The poor layout and arrangement of the site make inefficient use of the land, whereas the proposed development provides a concise coherent and legible development with clear opportunities for net gains in biodiversity value. The application proposal is in compliance with Core Strategy Policy CP11.5.

Paragraph 76 NPPF provides that local planning authorities are not required to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing for decision making purposes, if a) their adopted plan is less than five years old; and b) that adopted plan identified at least a five year supply of specific, deliverable sites at the time that its examination concluded.

Paragraph 77 states that "In all other circumstances, local planning authorities should identify and update a supply of specific deliverable sites annually sufficient to provide either a minimum of five years' worth of housing or a minimum of four years' worth of housing if the provisions in paragraph 226 apply."

Paragraph 226 states that, "From the date of publication of this revision of the Framework, for decision-making purposes only, certain local planning authorities will only be required to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of four years' worth of housing (with a buffer, if applicable, as set out in paragraph 77) against the housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies, or against local housing need where the strategic policies are more than five years old, instead of a minimum of five years as set out in paragraph 77 of this Framework."

This applies to authorities which have an emerging local plan that has either been submitted for examination or has reached Regulation 18 or Regulation 19, including both a policies map and proposed allocations towards meeting housing need. These arrangements apply for two years from the publication date of this revision of the Framework.' (NPPF paragraph 226).

Wokingham Borough Council did publish a Draft Local Plan for consultation in 2020, including proposed housing allocations and a policies map. This meets the criteria set out in paragraph 226, requiring a lower 4-year housing land supply. Nonetheless, considering the reduced threshold, the council has not met its Housing Land Supply target

The latest published assessment of housing land supply concluded a deliverable supply of 3.2 years as of 31st March 2023.

Paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF states that where a local authority is unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, the most important policies relating to the application may be viewed as being out of date.

The NPPF further advises that unless specific policies in the NPPF protect the land subject to the application, permission should be granted unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the NPPF as a whole.

This presumption in favour of sustainable development outlined in paragraph 11 of the NPPF is commonly referred to as the 'tilted balance'. It is noted that paragraph 11 of the NPPF does not change the status of the development plan as the starting point for decision-makers.

The application site does not lie within the land of special designation such as Green Belt, or a conservation area. There are no listed buildings nearby or other forms of heritage asset. The land already contains residential dwellings which this development scheme is seeking to remove in favour of better quality development.

Paragraph 84 of the NPPF seeks to avoid new isolated homes in the countryside however, the site is located adjacent to a large cluster of dwellings and commercial development. Furthermore, development would occur on previously developed land. As such, the proposal will not result in isolated new dwellings and will comply with paragraph 84 of the NPPF.

The development proposal is to be determined in accordance with paragraph 11d which would see the granting of consent unless there are significant adverse harms that would be outweighed by the benefits.

5.0 Planning Balance

Appearance and Design

In terms of design, the development proposes to erect three 1.5-storey detached dwellings that are characteristic of residential dwelling within the area. The proposed dwellings will improve the appearance of the site and its contribution to the visual appearance character of the area. New dwellings appear in-keeping and complement the appearance of the area by drawing on architectural features and styles with neighbouring streets. From the plans submitted the style and design of the dwellings would harmonise with the wider area and represent good quality design in terms of height, mass and bulk. Furthermore, the site layout would achieve circa 10 m rear depth for rear gardens as well as provide sufficient space for parking, bin storage and general sympathetic appearance within the streetscene.



The NPPF seeks to ensure developments are sympathetic to local character whilst ensuring not to prevent or discourage innovation or change. In this respect it is considered that the subdivision of the site to comprise new development would not result in adverse impacts on the character or appearance of the area and would comply with policies CP3 and CP9 of the local plan.

With respect to the internal layout due regards has been given to the Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard as encouraged within the NPPF. As such the development would satisfy policy TB07 of the local plan.

Impact on neighbouring amenities

With respect to neighbouring amenity a significant separation exists between proposed dwellings. Great care is taken to avoid loss of neighbouring amenity through loss of privacy, overlooking or overbearing impact. As such the proposed development would conform to Policy CP3 of the local plan.

Vehicle Movement and Access

This development would be accessed from a classified highway road therefore it is not considered there would be impact on the highway network arising from the proposed dwellings and the proposed development comprises sufficient parking in compliance with Car Parking Supplementary Planning Guidance (2001).



Biodiversity

Policy CP7 seeks to conserve and enhance biodiversity within the borough, with particular emphasis on the protection of legally protected species. New development proposals should protect biodiversity and provide for the long-term management, enhancement, restoration and, if possible, expansion of biodiversity including through restoration or creation of suitable semi-natural habitats and ecological networks to sustain wildlife.



The ecological assessment concludes that the proposed development achieves Biodiversity Net Gain and as such the proposed development would conform to Policy CP7 of the core strategy and would deliver biodiversity enhancements in accordance with the NPPF, and would be in compliance with the legislation relating to protected species and BNG.

5.0 Planning Balance

Summary

There are no identified harms associated with the development as the site would result in biodiversity net gains, retention of existing trees, improved access and a beautiful development. It can be concluded that no harm would occur from the proposals and that they would amount to an improvement of the site and its environmental and visual impact on the area in line with local and national policy.

The proposed development will create acceptable policy-compliant housing. Given that the council cannot adequately demonstrate a supply of housing land capable of delivery to meet the five-year worth of requirement. Paragraph 11d(i) requires that in these scenarios the Council should apply a tilted balance which places additional weight on approving development unless significant adverse impacts would occur from the approval which would prevent the Council from doing so.

In accordance with, section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, having undertaken the balancing exercise, it is considered that there are no adverse impacts which would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of development should be approved.

The proposed development would be of an appropriate size, scale, siting and design that would maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the area and would maintain existing residential amenities. There would be no harm to neighbouring amenity and would not prejudice highway safety. The applicant has agreed to appropriate mitigation to avoid harm to the TBHSPA.



6.0 Conclusion

6.1 Conclusion

The proposed development is of an appropriate size, scale, siting to respect and enhance the character and appearance of the local area. The site offers a unique opportunity to improve the whole site and create a building and landscaped scheme reflective of its rural position. The scheme has the following benefits:

- Provide three bespoke detached family dwellings suitable for the local setting.
- Remove all scattered and ugly current built form and consolidate into three high-quality homes.
- Retention of all category A and B trees with additional native tree and hedge planting.
- Improvements to landscaping with net gains in biodiversity, for habitats and hedgerows.
- New and improved vehicular access onto Heathlands Road.
- Four car parking spaces per dwelling in excess of council guidance.
- Electric vehicle charging to all three dwellings.

It is therefore considered that the proposed development is in accordance with the development plan and planning permission should be granted.



7.0 Appendix

7.1 Response to The National Design Guide

CONTEXT

Understand and relate well to the site, its local and wider context. Valuing local heritage, history and culture.

Response

The early sections of this Design & Access Statement show the relationship of the site with its surrounding context. The site being set within ribbon development has led to a low-density series of detached family dwellings.



IDENTITY

Response to local character. Creation of a character and identity which is coherent, identifiable, visually attractive and suited to the local context

Response

The existing landscape framework of the site, i.e. its strong identity through boundary cover, is retained. The proposed new dwellings create individual homes but drawn from an appreciation of the local vernacular. The realisation of this development will strengthen the sense of place in this pocket site.



7.0 Appendix

7.1 Response to The National Design Guide

BUILT FORM

Compact form of development which makes efficient use of land to optimise density. Well designed places using of the right mix of building types, forms and scale. Provision of destinations where people will meet and come together as a community strengthening local character

Response

The proposals sections of this document explain the design principles of the development which have been informed by a design process that consolidates built form on site. The three new houses aim to provide a cohesive identity and replace poor quality built form that exists on site.



MOVEMENT

Provision of a well-designed and connected network including public transport, walking, cycling and cars. Safe, direct and convenient routes accessible to all. A clear hierarchy of streets that are easy to navigate. Well designed parking that is safe and meets the needs of different users. Access for servicing by refuse collection, deliveries and removals to be well-integrated.

Response

Movement is limited to in and out from the Heathlands Road access. Shared surface and extensive landscaping outside of private ownership make the most of the movement in and out of the site.



7.0 Appendix

7.1 Response to The National Design Guide

NATURE

Provision of high quality green spaces with a variety of landscapes and activities including play that are robust and fit for purpose. Enhanced water management and sustainable drainage systems. Biodiversity gains through enhancement of ecosystems. Existing areas of valuable biodiversity to be protected and enhanced. Priority given to rare habitats and species

Response

The site has established boundary trees and hedgerow. This is retained and enhanced with an area of open space dedicated to enhancing the under-canopy of the trees and providing new planting opportunities.



PUBLIC SPACES

Well-designed, inclusive and fit for purpose spaces to support an active life for everyone, encouraging people to walk and cycle rather than drive whilst addressing the needs of those with disabilities. Amenity spaces that feel safe and secure. Public areas that encourage social interaction providing comfort, relaxation and stimulation for all, helping to combat social isolation and loneliness

Response

The large trees that front Heathlands Road contribute to the rural feel of this area. With their retention and the enhanced new planting will continue to contribute to the local area. Dedicated open space is provided to enhance the setting of the dwellings.



7.0 Appendix

7.1 Response to The National Design Guide

A MIX OF USES

Provision of local services and facilities with an integrated mix of housing tenures and types to suit people at all stages of life. Provision of tenure neutral homes and spaces. Developments should be socially inclusive maximising potential for social integration and removing features that could create actual or perceived barriers

Response

The site is proposed for a residential use which is the only use relevant in this location. However, a large area of shared and public open space at the front of the site provides wider benefits to the area.



HOMES AND BUILDINGS

Provision of well-designed, functional, comfortable and secure buildings to promote quality of life. Buildings should be energy efficient and encourage sustainable lifestyles. External spaces including parking should be fit for purpose, of a high quality and convenient. Attention should be applied to the way buildings function on a day-to-day basis with regard to waste management, exterior details and cycle storage.

Response

The sustainability section of this document and accompanying energy report show how the scheme works efficiently, will meet modern building regulations, and is fit for purpose.



7.0 Appendix

7.1 Response to The National Design Guide

RESOURCES

Following the energy hierarchy by reducing energy need, improving energy efficiency, maximising use of renewable and low carbon energy sources and using fossil fuels from clean technologies. Use of durable materials with reduced environmental impact and modern construction techniques to improve efficiency. Maximise resilience by taking account of weather, flood risk and extremes of temperature.

Response

New dwellings have been designed to maximise their energy efficiency and are future proofed through generous design. The use of traditional materials will not only help to place the development into its existing context, but also maximise the resilience of the dwellings for the future.



LIFESPAN

Ensuring places are robust, well-managed and maintained and with clearly defined boundaries between private, public and shared spaces. Homes should be designed to be flexible and adapt over time to changing lifestyles, needs and the introduction of new technologies. Places should engender a sense of ownership in their occupants by including features that encourage users to care for them

Response

The proposed houses and external spaces have been designed to be robust, with a clear definition between public and private areas. Homes are designed to be flexible and adaptable with spaces in excess of National Space Standard minimums and generous floor to ceiling heights.





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