

**TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990**

**MR MARTIN KEMBALL**

**PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT**

**LAND NORTH OF ORCHARD COTTAGE**

**HONEY HILL  
WOKINGHAM  
BERKSHIRE  
RG40 3BA**

**Proposed erection of a detached dwelling with detached  
car port and cycle store (self-build)**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This planning statement is submitted in support of a full planning application by Mr Martin Kemball for the following:

*'Proposed erection of a detached dwelling with detached car port and cycle store (self-build)'*

- 1.2 The statement is divided into the following chapters:

- Introduction
- Site and Surrounding Area
- Planning Policy Context
- The Application Proposal
- Design and Access
- Summary and Conclusions

- 1.3 This statement will examine all relevant planning policies both local and national and will demonstrate that the application proposal is both sustainable and in full compliance with policy guidance.

- 1.4 Reference will be made in particular to the fact that the Council does not have a five year supply of housing. The most recent published figure contained within the Wokingham Borough Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement of 31 March 2023 (published 26 January 2024) is that on 31 March 2023, the Council could only demonstrate a 3.2 year housing land supply.

- 1.5 The most important policies for determining the application are out-of-date and paragraph 11d(ii) of the NPPF is therefore engaged (i.e. the 'tilted' balance).

1.6 This particular proposal will also provide for the following substantial benefits:

- Retention and enhancement of all of the boundary screening;
- Provision of a low-density form of development that reflects the character of the area;
- A high quality and sustainable dwelling that will be constructed as a 'self-build' dwelling;
- Biodiversity enhancements;

1.7 The following reports accompany the submission:

Landscape Visual Assessment – LVIA Ltd

Arboricultural Impact Assessment – Mark Welby

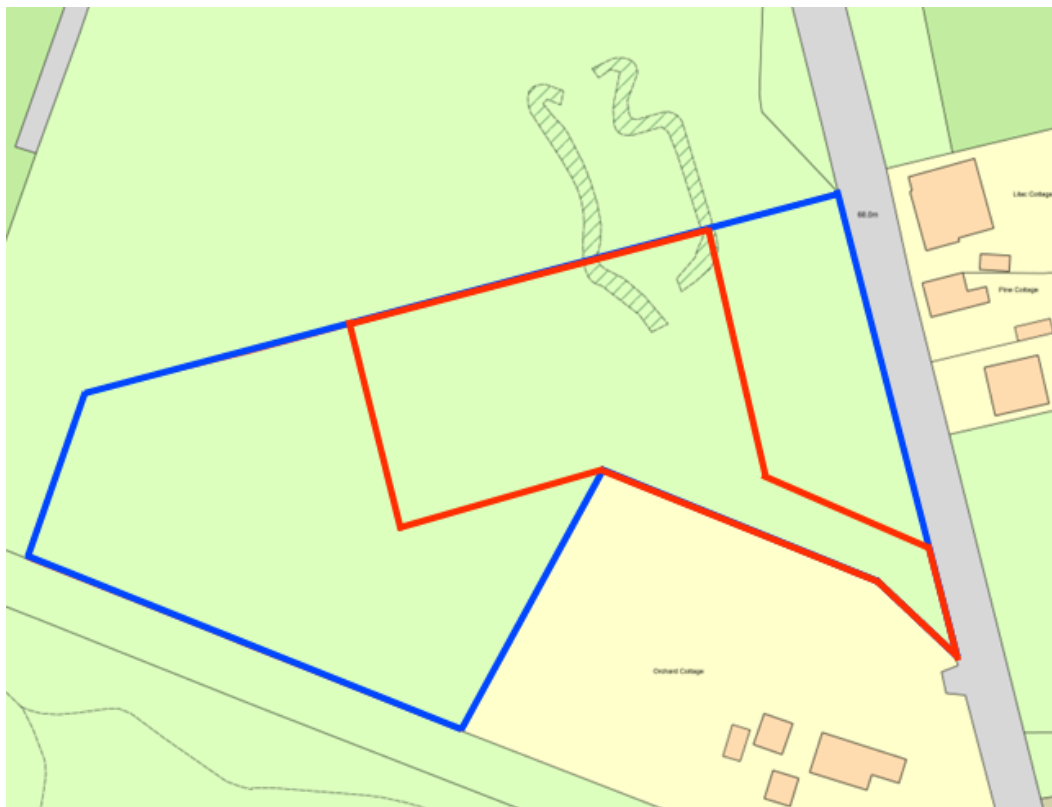
Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Reptile Survey – John Wenman Ecological Consultancy

Transport Statement – Dermot McCaffery

## 2 THE APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1 The application site is located on the western side of Honey Hill. It currently comprises of undeveloped land with no planning history. The site sits immediately to the north of Orchard Cottage and to the west of a short row of properties (Lilac Cottage, Pine Cottage and Rose Cottage). To the south is the St. Sebastians Memorial Hall and car park. Therefore, whilst the site is located within land defined as 'countryside' in the adopted Proposals Map, it is clearly not a site that can be described as being isolated. The site entrance is only 100m to the north-west of the settlement boundary with Crowthorne (Pinewood), which is defined as a 'Modest Development Location' under CS Policy CP9 (Scale and location of development proposals).

### Site location



Development Plan Proposals Map extract

Application site

Pinewood (Crowthorne) Modest Development Location



### **3 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT**

- 3.1 Relevant planning policy guidance falls within the National Planning Policy Framework (2023) and the Development Plan which comprises of the Wokingham Core Strategy and the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan. The site is not covered by a 'made' neighbourhood plan.

**i) National Planning Policy Framework (2024)**

- 3.2 The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies and how these should be applied. It confirms that applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise (paragraph 2). The NPPF must be taken into account in the preparation of the development plan and is a material consideration in planning decisions. Paragraph 231 of the NPPF confirms that the policies in the Framework are material considerations which should be taken into account in dealing with applications from the day of its publication.
- 3.3 Paragraph 7 of the NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to achieve sustainable development, including the provision of homes. There are three overarching objectives to sustainable development (paragraph 8) which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways: economic, social and environmental objectives. The environmental objective includes the need to make efficient use of land and to improve biodiversity. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 10).
- 3.4 Paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF states that "where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

- i) The application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed, or
  - ii) Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.'
- 3.5 Paragraph 39 states that Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way and that decision makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.
- 3.6 Paragraph 70 states that small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area and are often built-out relatively quickly. To promote the development of a good mix of sites, local planning authorities should support the development of windfall sites through their policies and decisions (paragraph d).
- 3.7 Chapter 11 is concerned with making effective use of land. Paragraph 123 states that planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.
- 3.8 Paragraph 129 states that planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account:
- The identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it;
  - Local market conditions and viability;

- The availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use;
- The desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), or of promoting regeneration and change; and
- The importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.

3.9 Paragraphs 131 - 141 are concerned with achieving well-designed and beautiful places. Paragraph 131 states that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

3.10 Paragraph 135 states that planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- Are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increase densities);
- Establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;

- Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development;
- Create safe and accessible environments which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

ii) **The Development Plan**

a) **Wokingham Core Strategy (2010)**

3.11 Relevant policies include:

- **Policy CP1:** Requires that a number of criteria are met. These include: maintaining or enhancing the high quality of the environment; providing attractive, functional, accessible, safe, secure and adaptable schemes; demonstrate how they support opportunities for reducing the need to travel particularly by the car; and contribute towards reaching zero – carbon development as soon as possible.
- **Policy CP3:** Requires, amongst other matters, that new development is of an appropriate scale, mass, activity, built form, height, materials, character and design quality. Proposals should not adversely affect the amenities of neighbouring land uses. Paragraph c) requires that sites are used to their full potential.
- **Policy CP6:** The policy is concerned with managing travel demand. It states that proposals will be granted for schemes that:
  - Provide for sustainable forms of transport to allow choice;
  - Are located where there is a choice of transport modes available;
  - Improve existing infrastructure;
  - Provide appropriate parking;
  - Mitigate any adverse effects upon the highway network;
  - Enhance road safety;

- Do not cause highway problems.
- **Policy CP11:** Is concerned with proposals for development on sites located outside of the Development Limit (including Countryside). The policy sets a series of criteria which new developments are required to meet including the following:
  - It does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings;
  - It is contained within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion, or in the case of replacement buildings would bring about environmental improvements;
  - In the case of replacement dwellings the proposal must:
    - i) Bring about environmental improvements; or
    - ii) Not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building
- **Policy CP17:** Policy CP17 states that the Borough requires at least 13,230 dwellings in the period 2006-2026. This housing target is based on achieving the overall requirements (South East Plan) which has since been revoked.

b) Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014)

3.12 Relevant policies include:

- **Policy CC01:** Policy CC01 states that there will be a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Planning applications that accord with policies in the Development Plan will be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no policies relevant to the

application or relevant policies are out of date the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

- **Policy CC02:** Policy CC02 confirms that the development limits are defined on the Policies Map.
- **Policy CC03:** Policy CC03 is concerned with Green Infrastructure, trees and landscaping. It states that development proposals should protect and retain existing trees, hedges and other landscape features.
- **Policy TB21:** Policy TB21 states that proposals must demonstrate how they have addressed the requirement of the Council's Landscape Character Assessment including landscape quality, landscape strategy, landscape sensitivity and key issues.

### iii) **Supplementary Planning Documents**

#### Borough Design Guide SPD

- 3.13 The purpose of the guide is to provide general design guidance for all development sites and detailed design guidance for certain topics, these being, residential, streets and spaces, car parking and non-residential development issues. The revised guidance has now been adopted by the Council.
- 3.14 The guidance sets out a number of key urban design objectives, as follows:
- Context and character;
  - Connection and accessibility;
  - Sustainable communities;
  - Sustainable development;
  - Inclusive design process.

- 3.15 In terms of Character and context, it is stated that new development should relate well to its surroundings, including topography and orientation of the site; existing natural and landscape features of value; heritage assets and their setting; the local settlement pattern and network of routes and neighbouring properties.
- 3.16 Section 4 concerns residential development. Garden size should relate to the house type and to the proposed number of occupants. The guidance states that the Council's minimum garden length of 11m is a generally accepted guideline for private garden space, provided that space is useable. Useable gardens should be roughly rectangular in shape; receive direct sunlight for some of the day; be capable of accommodating activities such as sitting, play, clothes drying and outside storage space; and should provide a secure external access to the rear garden for cycle storage. The application proposal meets these requirements in full.
- 3.17 The guidance sets out the minimum privacy and amenity distances as follows:
- Front to front across a street: 10m
  - Rear to rear of dwellings: 22m
  - Flank to boundary: 1m
  - Flank wall to rear of dwelling: 12m
- 3.18 These lengths are increased where development is over a two storey height although it should be noted that this is measured to eaves. The proposed development meets all of the above standards both for 2 and over two storey development.
- 3.19 The guidance also states that all dwellings must provide adequate internal space in an appropriate layout to accommodate a range of lifestyles. Living areas and bedrooms should be large enough to accommodate a range of private and communal activities. The standard for minimum combined floor area of living, dining and kitchen space is 31sq.m (based on 6 bed spaces). Double bedrooms should be a minimum of 12sq.m and single bedrooms a minimum of 8sq.m. Guidance is also

given regarding storage space and room configurations. The proposal comfortably meets all of the above standards.

- 3.20 The guidance states that dwellings must be designed to provide appropriate levels of daylight and sunlight for new and existing properties. New housing should be designed to provide a reasonable outlook for each dwelling; be dual aspect where possible; avoid north facing, single aspect flats; and to have no material impact on levels of daylight in the habitable rooms of adjoining properties. This can be assessed using the methodology set out in report BRE 209 'Site layout planning for daylight and sunlight'.
- 3.21 A residential design checklist is provided at para 4.13. This statement has assessed the proposal against each of the checklist requirements and found it to be compliant in all areas.

## **4 THE PLANNING APPLICATION**

4.1 The application proposal is for the redevelopment of the site to provide 1no. self-build dwelling with a detached car port and cycle store. The applicant (Martin Kemball) is registered with the Council's 'Register for a Self-Build Home' at Part 1 of the register.

4.2 This chapter of the statement assesses the proposal against relevant national and local planning policies and specifically against the following considerations which are set out below:

- The principle of development and housing land supply;
- Three objectives to sustainable development;
- Impact on the landscape character of the surrounding area;
- Trees;
- Biodiversity;
- Transportation;
- Summary and conclusions

### **i) The Principle of Development**

4.3 The application site sits approximately 100m to the north-west of the settlement of Pinewood (Crowthorne) in land defined as being 'countryside'. Crowthorne is identified in the Core Strategy as a 'Modest Development Location' which is suitable for modest levels of development. However, the policies that establish the development limits are out of date due to the fact that the Council do not have a NPPF compliant housing land supply (five years). This factor alone reduces the weight that can be applied to the conflict with the Council's locational policies.

- 4.4 Paragraph 78 of the NPPF states that LPAs should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies, or against their local housing need where the strategic policies are more than five years old.
- 4.5 The Council does not currently have an adequate supply of housing with the updated Standard Method confirming that the revised annual supply now equates to 1,336 dwellings per annum . The most recent published figure contained within the Wokingham Borough Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement of 31 March 2023 (published 26 January 2024) is that on 31 March 2023, the Council could only demonstrate a 3.2 year housing land supply. In line with footnote 8 to paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF, the development plan policies which are most important for determining the application are therefore deemed out of date.
- 4.6 The 'tilted balance' contained in paragraph 11(d) (ii) of the NPPF is therefore engaged in respect of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. This states that permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.
- 4.7 The adverse impacts of permitting this development are not considered to be of such magnitude that they would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the identified benefits associated with this proposal. As set out below, this proposal is a well-designed and sustainable form of development which will not result in harm to the landscape character of the area. It is also located conveniently to the settlement edge in a sustainable location. Therefore, in applying the presumption in favour of sustainable development, the proposal would not result in a level of harm that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the identified benefits. The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in principle.

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**ii) The Three Objectives to Sustainable Development (Paragraph 8 of the NPPF)**

- 4.8 Economic objective: The redevelopment of the site to provide for a new dwelling will provide benefits to local businesses in the immediate vicinity. In addition, the development would provide initial short-term employment in the construction industry followed by longer term benefits in terms of additional support for a variety of local business including pubs, restaurants, shops, local trades and private leisure and recreational establishments. None of the land is in use as agricultural land.
- 4.9 Social objective: The application would make a small contribution to the local housing stock. Noting the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, this contribution towards the Borough's identified shortfall in housing land supply should be afforded substantial weight. The occupants of the property would contribute towards the local community and the proposal would fulfill a positive social role. The provision of a self-build dwelling meets an identified local and national need.
- 4.10 Environmental objective: The site will make effective use of land in accordance with paragraph 11 and Chapter 11 of the NPPF. Whilst the site is located in land defined as 'countryside', it is not in an area which contains or affects assets of particular environmental importance and is not protected land. Existing trees will be retained and protected with only 10no. low quality trees proposed for removal. The proposals are therefore considered to enhance the 'high quality' of the environment in line with CS Policy CP1.
- 4.11 Having regard to the above considerations, the policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance do not provide a clear reason for refusing the development proposed. There are no significant adverse impacts that would 'significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal' and the proposal would make a meaningful contribution to the supply of housing in the Borough where there is a substantial shortfall.

**iii) Impact on the character of the area**

- 4.12 The proposed new dwelling would sit comfortably within its plot and due to its relatively small scale and low ridge height, would not be unduly prominent in the street scene and would not have any adverse effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
- 4.13 The applicant commissioned a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVIA Ltd) which confirmed the following:
- The visual effects are generally localised and limited due in part to dense intervening mature vegetation between the viewer and the site, the topography of the area and the similar setting of the proposed scheme formed by existing properties;
  - The site is only partially visible from the four assessed viewpoints. None of the assessed views can be considered to be subject to a material change;
  - The visual impact of the development on the open countryside is assessed as a worst-case scenario to have a moderate impact (i.e. not a material change) from three of the viewpoints. Other viewpoints offer only limited views due to vegetation acting as a visual barrier;
  - With suitable mitigation the proposal will have a minor visual impact and a minor/negligible landscape impact (i.e. not a material change).
- 4.14 Therefore, in conclusion, the proposal is sympathetic to the site's location and transitional role adjacent to the settlement edge. It will not be in conflict with CS Policies CP1 and CP3 and MDD Policy TB21 which requires an assessment of landscape quality. These issues have all been assessed fully within the LVA produced by LVIA Ltd.

**iv) Trees**

- 4.15 The application proposals ensure that all trees of amenity value can be retained following the redevelopment of the site. The proposal would result in the loss of 10no. low-quality trees which are all internal to the site and therefore have lesser wider value as a result. The new driveway will utilise the existing entrance and will be constructed above ground using a 'non-dig' surface to minimise impact on underlying roots (see Arboricultural Impact Assessment). Tree removal is not required to achieve the required visibility splays at the site entrance.
- 4.16 The new dwelling is sited outside of all root protection areas and to provide enough space for amenity space to serve the new occupants. The proposal will not lead to situations where excessive shading could result in requests for heavy tree pruning or tree removal. The conclusion of the AIA is that the development will have a low arboricultural impact. The proposals therefore meet MDDL Policy CC03 as the proposal will protect and retain existing trees, hedges and landscape features.

**v) Biodiversity**

- 4.17 The application is accompanied by two biodiversity reports: a Reptile Survey and a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA). Both reports have been provided by John Wenman Ecological Consultancy.
- 4.18 In respect to the Reptile Survey, this encompassed a total of 21 artificial refugia being set out on 7<sup>th</sup> Mar 2024 and left in situ for two weeks before surveying commenced (24 May – 21 June 2024). A peak count of 30 sub-adult slow-worms and adult slow-worms were recorded. Section 7 of the report outlines a series of mitigation measures. The proposals provide the ability to retain 0.6Ha of suitable reptile habitat which equates to 58% of the total reptile habitat currently used. An in-situ approach for the receptor site will be adopted for the welfare interest of the slow-worms and grass snakes to help achieve the objective of no net loss to the conservation status of this species.

4.19 The PEA confirms that the proposed self-build application would qualify for exemption from mandatory BNG requirements (i.e. no more than 9 dwellings and an area less than 0.5Ha). The PEA makes the following recommendations:

- SANG contributions towards TBHSPA
- Appropriate buffer zones for priority habitat and biodiversity features;
- Buffer zones and sensitive lighting scheme for bats;
- Ground level tree assessment for bats (if tree removal is required);
- Reasonable avoidance measures for GCN;
- Reptile presence/absence survey
- precautions for nesting birds; and
- Biodiversity enhancements.

4.20 The proposals also provide opportunities for the following enhancements to the site's biodiversity value:

- Stag beetle loggeries;
- Wildlife friendly landscaping;
- Integrated bat and bird boxes;
- Ensuring ecological permeability for hedgehogs;

#### **vi) Transportation**

4.21 The application proposal is accompanied by a Transport Assessment provided by Highway Planning Ltd. This confirms that the site already has an existing vehicular crossover and in addition is well related to local bus stops on Nine Mile Ride and New Wokingham Road. Suitable visibility can be provided at the junction with Honey

Hill and only minimal trimming of existing vegetation is required to achieve this. Parking and turning space meet the Council's standards.

- 4.22 There are therefore no overriding highway reasons why the proposals should not be granted permission. Given the fact that the development can be accommodated without raising any transportation or highway issues, the proposal is considered to be compliant with CS Policy CP6.

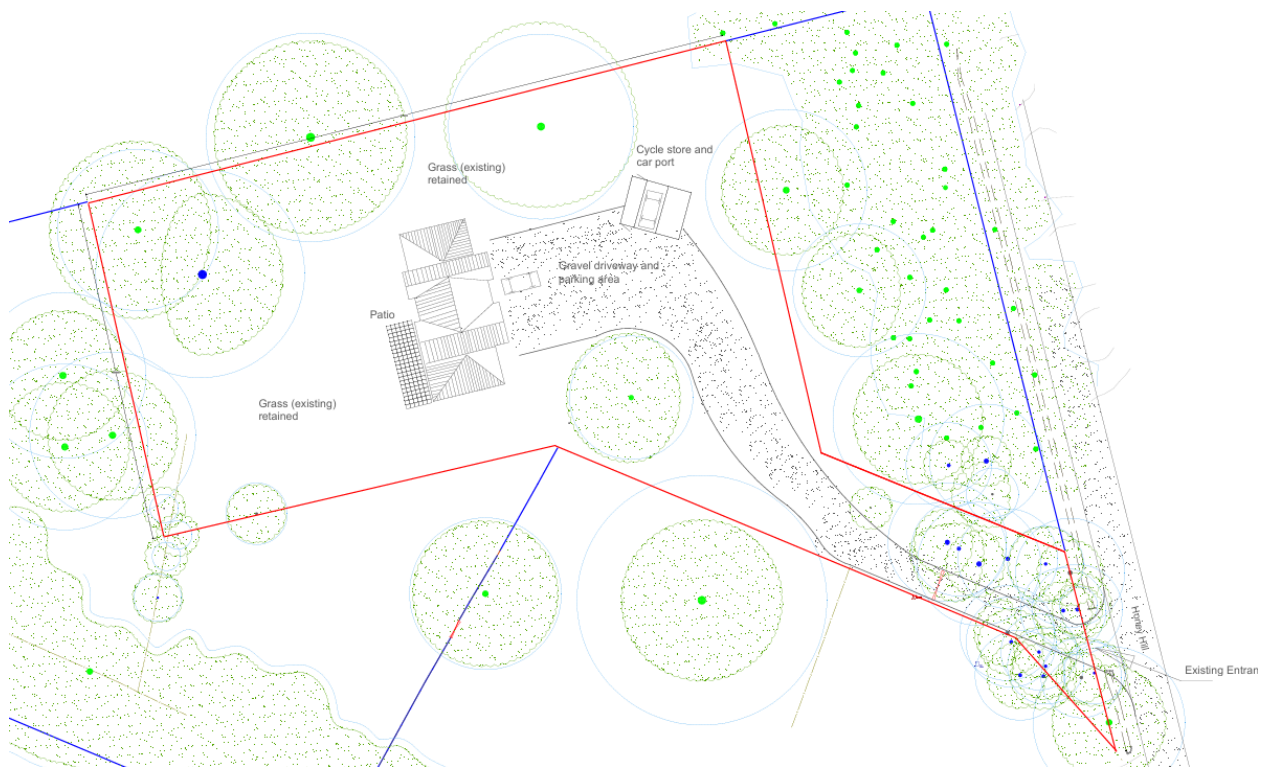
**vii) Summary and conclusions**

- 4.23 In summary, the proposal provides for a well-designed dwelling that can be accommodated on the site without materially harming the landscape character of the wider area. The proposal would result in minimal tree loss and will achieve numerous biodiversity enhancements. The site can be accessed safely and meets all highway standards.
- 4.24 As a result, the adverse impacts of permitting this development are not considered to be of such magnitude that they would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the identified benefits associated with this proposal.

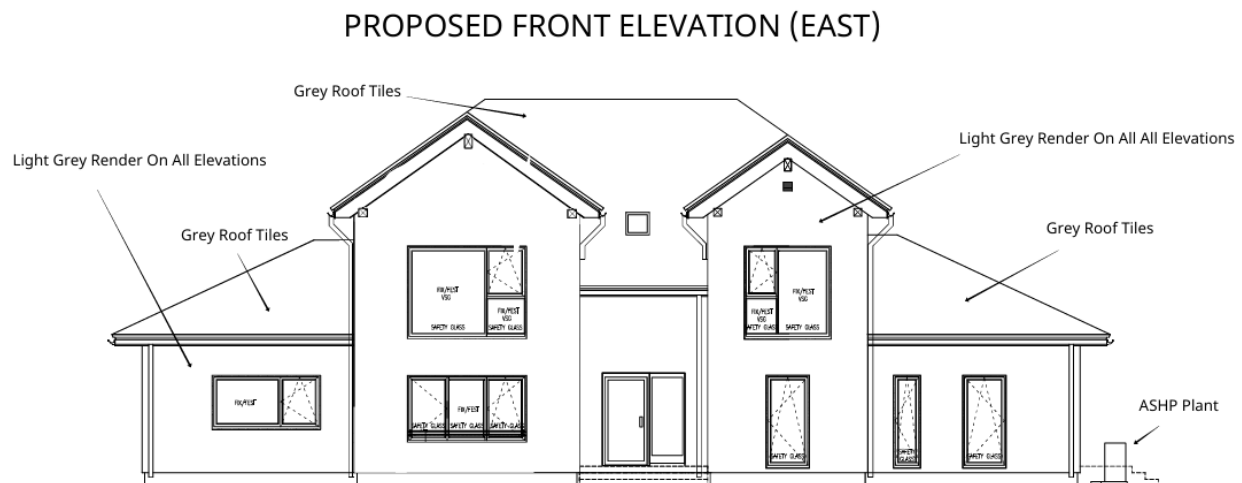
## 5 DESIGN AND ACCESS

- 5.1 Layout: The proposed dwelling will be frontage facing thereby reflecting the orientation of other neighbouring properties including the run of properties on the opposing side of Honey Hill. The new dwelling will be sited centrally within its plot and accessed via an existing crossover. The proposed new car port will be sited to the front. The existing tree belt along Honey Hill will be retained in full which will effectively filter and screen all views from the public domain (see LVA). The tree belt is circa 25m in depth.

### Proposed site layout



- 5.2 Use: The application site currently has no established or allocated land use (nil use). The proposal seeks to change the use of the red line area to residential use with the blue line area remaining outside of the established curtilage.
- 5.3 Amount: The proposal is for the introduction of 1no. new family sized dwelling which will be built as a self-build.
- 5.4 Scale: The proposal provides accommodation over two floors. The maximum eaves will be 6m and the maximum ridge height will be 8.8m. The scale will be minimised through the use of pitched roofs and single storey side wings.



- 5.5 Appearance: The proposed new dwelling will have a contemporary appearance allowing light penetration to into the property through the use of extensive rear facing glazed areas (west facing). Typical materials include light grey render with matching grey roof tiles (see below).

Front Elevation



Rear Elevation



- 5.6 Landscaping: The proposal retains the important tree belts along the road frontage. By re-using an existing access point onto Honey Hill, the site will not be excessively opened up to external views and will remain, as a result, self-contained and hidden from public view.
- 5.7 Access: The proposal will re-use an existing access point onto Honey Hill (see Transport Statement). This will provide safe access and egress ensuring that the proposed use of application site would not unacceptably impact on highway safety. The proposal otherwise meets all parking and highway standards.

## 6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

### 6.1 The application should be supported for the following reasons:

- i) The Council remain unable to demonstrate an adequate housing land supply (i.e. 5 years) and there is a consistent history of under delivery in the Borough. The updated Standard Method now requires an annual supply of 1,336 dwellings in the Borough. There are no significant adverse impacts that would 'significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal'. The proposal would make a meaningful contribution to addressing this shortfall by providing one new dwelling in a sustainable location close to the settlement edge with numerous other planning benefits. CS Policies CP1, CP3, CP7 and CP11 are either out-of-date or at the very least should be afforded reduced weight.
- ii) When assessed against other policies in the NPPF there is not considered to be any conflict. The proposal meets each of the three objectives to sustainable development i.e. the economic, social and environmental objectives. The additional householder expenditure has the potential to provide significant benefit to existing businesses in the area.
- iii) The proposal would not result in a material change to the landscape character of the site (see LVA) thereby ensuring that there is no conflict with MDDL Policy TB21. The proposal would not result in the loss of any high-quality trees. All other trees can be adequately retained and protected, and new planting is recommended in addition to be dealt with through a planning condition. There are no substantive reasons to oppose the proposals on arboricultural grounds (see report produced by Mark Welby) and the proposals meet the requirements of MDDL Policy CC03.
- iv) The proposal is for a low-density, high-quality development that will provide generous new space for landscaping as well as retaining and enhancing

existing landscape buffers. The proposals meet the design requirements set down with CS Policies CP1 and CP3, the Borough Design Guide and paragraphs 131-141 of the NPPF.

- v) The proposal will not harm existing habitats at the site in terms of reptiles (Reptile Survey) bats and birds. The PEA confirms that there are numerous opportunities for biodiversity enhancements. The proposal as a self-build is exempt from mandatory BNG requirements.
- vi) The proposed development would not harm the living conditions of occupiers of the closest properties who are all distant from the application site. The proposals will provide for a high-quality living environment for future residents. The proposals meet CS Policy CP3 and paragraph 135 of the NPPF as a high standard of amenity for existing and future users will be provided.
- vii) Parking and access are provided in accordance with adopted standards. The site is accessible to local schools and shops and is close to existing bus links on Nine Mile Ride and New Wokingham Road. The proposals are consistent with the requirements of CS Policy CP6.