

Date: 21 March 2025
Application: 250604



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

WBC Landscape and Trees

Development Management &
Compliance

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Dear WBC Landscape and Trees,

Permission In Principle Consultation

Application Number: 250604

Applicant: The Owner and/or Occupier

Site Address: Sulby Croft, Heathlands Road, Wokingham, RG40 3AR

Parish: Wokingham Without

Grid Reference: Easting - 482524, Northing - 165671

Type of Development: Minor Dwellings (1-9) PiP

Proposal: Permission in principle application for the proposed erection of up to 5 no. dwellings, following demolition of the existing dwelling.

Case Officer: Connie Davis

Development Management has received the above application and we require your comments on the proposal using the recommended memorandum below. The documents associated with this are available to view in NEC DM using the application number 250604. Alternatively, public documents are available to view on the Council's planning application search page: [Wokingham Borough Council Online Planning](#).

Please index your response into NEC DM against the application. If you are recommending conditions, you should give a reason with reference to relevant policies. A list of standard conditions can be found on the Z Drive at: [Z:\Standard Planning Conditions](#).

Your observations are required in respect of this application within **10 working days** of the above date or **15 working days** if the development type is classed as a major development.

Yours sincerely,
Development Management & Compliance

MEMORANDUM

From:	Brigitte Crafer Landscape Architect		
Service	WBC Landscape and Trees	App No:	250604
Address:	Sulby Croft, Heathlands Road, Wokingham, RG40 3AR.		
Proposal:	Permission in principle application for the proposed erection of up to 5 no. dwellings, following demolition of the existing dwelling.		
Type of Development:	Minor Dwellings (1-9) PiP		
Site Visit Made:	Yes/No		

Summary Of Recommendations

- ☐ No comment
- ☐ No objection
- ☐ No objection subject to conditions (and reasons) **stated below**
- ☐ Request further information before determination as **stated below**
- ☒ Objection due to the reason(s) **stated below**

Comments On Proposal

Site Location

The site is a large detached dwelling in a large plot with generous gardens and a tennis court. The site is surrounded by single and groups of trees, and a small woodland. These trees are protected by TPO1960/2024. To the north of Heath Lodge, a similarly sized dwelling also in a generous plot surrounded by trees.

The site is located in the countryside, has not been identified for development in the local plan and is contrary to Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy. The site is located close to the southern end of Heathlands Road and the junction with Nine Mile Ride. Heathlands Road is one of the long straight hunting routes known as 'rides' through the historic Windsor Forest. There is no footpath along either side of the road which is a dangerous walk for pedestrians.

To the north and west of the site is Gorrick Plantation a large areas of woodland that is a Local Wildlife Site. The rides provide a structure not only for settlement but for local rural businesses and access to open spaces for recreation.

The settlement character directly south of the site along Nine Mile Ride comprises mostly semi-detached and detached dwellings facing the ride or in short 'closes' leading from the ride such as Grove Close and St. Sebastians Close.

Along Heathlands Road the settlement character changes to large dwellings in generous plots which extends for half of the length of the road thereafter there are several businesses of fruit farms and garden centres, and closer to the junction with Easthampstead Road is Holme Grange School.

Landscape Character

The site is located within the 'Forest and Rides Valued Landscape' (see Valued Landscape Assessments 2024). Development proposals located within or affecting a valued landscape should have particular regard to the following attributes:

- a) Landscape quality (condition); - is good
- b) Scenic quality; - is high
- c) Rarity;
- d) Representativeness; - The site is located in a representative location
- e) Conservation interests; - There are trees protected by TPO on the site and future Veteran tree.
- f) Recreation value; - no PRow or roadside footpath to Heathlands Road
- g) Perceptual aspects; and
- h) Associations. – The rides conjure royal associations being associated with Queen Anne and the royal pursuit of hunting.

Development proposals affecting Valued Landscapes will only be supported where they protect, and where appropriate, integrate with and/or enhance the special features, characteristics and qualities of the landscape, unless the benefits of the development in that location clearly outweigh the harm.

The forested landscape provides a backdrop to settlement and forms the basis of the high quality M1 landscape character area known as 'Finchampstead Forested and Settled Sands' a high quality landscape.

The 'Valued Landscape Attributes' of the M1 character area relevant to the site are;

- Large expanses of mixed woodland containing mature trees which are important ecological habitats and provide a sense of place and history as well as opportunities for recreation. Stands of Scots pine provide characteristic landmark features.
- The distinctive pattern of interconnected woodland and forestry, interspersed with sandy heaths, lakes, bogs and wet woodland and occasional pastoral fields which provide scenic quality and visual diversity (a variety of colours and textures and changing seasonal interest) and provide a naturalistic sense of place to the suburban development
- Acid heathland, large lakes and bogs which provide nationally important BAP priority habitats, nationally recognised as SSSIs, as well as opportunities for recreation.
- Distinctive long straight historic roads following the route of rides through the former Royal Forest of Windsor which provide a cultural record of the past as well as allowing views into a landscape well enclosed by trees.
- Settlement pattern of low density post-war properties in large plots along long straight rides and notably the occasional wooded gaps between areas of

settlement. Integration of development in the wooded landscape and absence of commercial, industrial buildings /large or tall built structures.

- Valued areas for recreation including tracts of open access land and the extensive network of bridleways and public footpaths which allow enjoyment of the landscape.
- The continuous network of woodland and forestry which helps to provide physical and visual separation between settlements and to filter and screen views to the settlements within the area, as well as provide an attractive setting to housing.

Key issues include; continued pressure for expansion, infill and densification within existing settlements and is also pressure for backland development to the rear of properties of Nine Mile Ride

The Landscape Strategy for M1 LCA - to conserve and enhance the existing character. The key aspects to be conserved and actively managed are the characteristic forestry and woodland; the rarer open landscapes of heath, mire lakes and pasture; important wildlife habitats; historic landscape features associated with the Royal Forest and recreational use. In particular there is an opportunity to consider restoration of heathland within the woodland context. The aim should be to link and connect existing heathland areas.

In terms of development, the aim is to conserve and enhance the rural setting and gaps between settlements and maintain the low density domestic character of development

Proposal

The site is located in walking distance of Nine Mile Ride just to the south, however there is no pedestrian footway either side of the Heathlands Road in this location making walking dangerous along a straight road where cars gather speed from the junction.

The character of Heathlands Road is tree lined and very much reflects the landscape character of the area. Along this part of Heathlands Road housing is sparse and set back within plots only glimpsed in the views from the road. The site and the neighbouring open field surrounded by forest is a recognised feature of the M1 LCA and provides scenic quality which is also reflected on the east side of Heathlands Road at Heathlands Court a small development of adjoining dwellings, and Heathlands Riding Centre surrounded by pasture fields surrounded by woodland.

Sketches provided of the layout are not to scale, but consist of 5No. 3 storey large detached dwellings that are highly fenestrated and could provide a sense of overlooking to Heath Lodge to the north during the winter.

Currently there is a single dwelling on the site, and there is a single dwelling in the neighbouring plot to the north. The existing gated access will remain and be used by all proposed 5 dwellings. The 'House Replacement' - Site Plan Dwg. No. 919-02-30 2/25 shows the proposed layout with dwellings aligned on the south

side of a dedicated cul de sac in an east – west formation. Gardens are 11m in depth and dwellings have grassy frontages surrounded by hedging.

I note an incursion into the root protection area of protected Oak tree T1 which will need to be sufficiently mitigated by adapting the design so there is no incursion into the root protection area (rpa) of the tree.

An Arboricultural Report – Ref. 2024005 – 10.4.25 the report includes a tree survey schedule and 2 tree protection plans for extending the existing dwelling only and does not relate to the proposed layout for 5 dwellings.

It has been recognised in the report that there is incursion into the root protection areas of some trees and a foundation design using piling to raise the floor level above ground level is proposed. As this report does not relate to the 5 dwellings I cannot fully assess the impact of the development on the existing trees As such the Arboricultural Report is not compliant with Policy CC03d which requires that trees are retained and protected during development.

As the trees on site are protected by TPO 1960/2024 the correct information will need to be submitted prior to planning consent in order that the Arboricultural Report contains the mitigation information for all tree root incursion that can be properly assessed against the proposed scheme and we understand that the type of mitigation proposed can be achieved.

The proposed development for 5 dwellings is more in keeping with the pattern of development to the east of the site at Heathlands Court although these dwellings are associated with a wider pattern of residential development accessed from Heath Ride. An area of similarly patterned development exists on the corner of Nine Mile Ride to Heathlands Road – but Sulby Croft and Heath Lodge are still isolated dwellings by comparison and allowing the scheme could lead to tandem development along the road to the south. Although the development extends back into the site, it extends the settlement further into the countryside to the west towards Gorrick Plantation, a Local Wildlife site.

The site is in the countryside and Policy CP11 applies.

The proposals are contrary to NPPF paragraph 187 a and b;

Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by;

a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);

b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;

The proposals have not addressed the requirements of Policy TB21 which complies with the Council's Landscape Character Assessment including landscape quality,

sensitivity, landscape strategy and key issues. Proposals do not retain or enhance the condition, character and features that contribute to the landscape.

The proposals fail to conserve and enhance the rural setting and gaps between settlements and maintain the low density domestic character of development.

Conditions & Reasons (if required)			
Date:	11.4.25	Signed:	B. Crafer