
MEMORANDUM

From:	Built Heritage Officer		
Service	Green Infrastructure	App No:	242421
Address:	School Road, Arborfield Cross.		
Proposal:	Outline application for the proposed redevelopment of the site and erection of up to 95 no. dwellings with associated access, infrastructure, open space, landscaping, and associated works. (All matters reserved except for means of access).		
Heritage Asset:	The Coombe CE Primary School – core late 19th century school building is heritage asset. School House – late 19th century -heritage asset Roadside & open cart shed on the corner of School Road and Wood Lane – heritage assets, seemingly part of the former farmyard to Langleypond Farm(house) which is situated on the eastern side of Wood lane. Langleypond Farm(house) – grade II listed building status. Roadside brick building within grounds of Langleypond Farm(house) – of curtilage listed building status. Arborfield Cross Conservation Area – situated approx. 170m to west of application site. Listed Buildings along with Conservation Areas are classed as designated heritage assets under the NPPF (2024) and in the Council's Local Plan policies.		
Site Visit Made:	No.		

Summary Of Recommendations

From a heritage stance an **objection** is raised to the proposed development of housing on the open field to the west of Wood Lane on the grounds that to do so would be harmful with respect to the historic and visual contribution made by the land both visually and contextually those heritage assets, both non-designated and designated, of the former Langley Farm, situated on the eastern periphery of the application site.

This harm, development on the open field, would have to the wider setting that provides historic context, a visual back drop to which the heritage assets are experienced in, for the designated heritage asset of Langleypond Farm(house) is acknowledged to amount to less than substantial harm. As such, under the NPPF (2024) 'Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against

the public benefits of the proposal...' (para. 215), whilst 'the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application' with 'a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. (para.216)

Comments On Proposal

Whilst there are no known heritage assets within the site itself there are however in the original school building of Coombe CE Primary School, the adjacent School House, along former farm buildings on the corner of School Road and Wood Lane heritage assets that do lie directly adjacent to the site. Whilst to the south-eastern extent of the site there lies on the opposite side of Wood Lane the listed building of Langleypond Farm(house). Whilst within a short distance of the site is the Arborfield Cross Conservation Area, in which there are several listed buildings.

Under the application 180596 that sought housing on the field to the west of Wood Lane that is part of this current application, along with land opposite it on the southern side of School Road was refused. With one of the reasons given for the refusals had been on the grounds of having 'a harmful impact on the setting of the Grade II listed building; the proposed development is within the setting of Langleypond Farmhouse, the proposed development would cause significant harm by compromising the rural setting and eroding the listed buildings significance as well as the form and density not reflecting the historic roadside settlement and the existing pattern of development thereby failing to preserve or enhance the character of the Arborfield Cross Conservation Area.'

With this present application there are however notable differences to the scheme previously refused under 180596, with respect to the land nearest the identified heritage assets formerly of Langleypond Farm. Firstly in the field to the south of School Road does not form part of this application site. And of more importance in the context to the cluster of roadside buildings that includes a number of historic former buildings linked to the listed Langleypond Farm(house), which lies across Wood Lane from them, a greater degree of separation between the farm buildings and the proposed indicative layout of the new housing. The improved sense of open space around the historic former buildings of Langleypond Farm is a welcomed improvement over earlier proposals, although with the land rising to the west the new buildings could well be seen as a backdrops the roadside buildings, especially when approaching them from the east along School Road.

From the submitted indicative layout plan, subject to the later submission of fuller details being provided, the proposed residential development would seem likely to cause negligible visual harm the wider setting of those designated heritage assets given their distance from the site, and there intervening trees that screen the site from views of it. That said however during those times in the year when there is no foliage on the trees there would seem to be a possibility that development on the site or lights from dwellings and street lighting could become discernible in views towards the site from Arborfield Cross Conservation Area and from Langleypond Farm(house)

In conclusion, from a heritage stance under this current application when compared to the 2018 refused proposal it is considered the proposals offer an improved degree of separation and open area to the eastern end of the application site, which creates a more notable unbuilt and open puffer zone rear and to the north of roadside farm buildings and the listed farmhouse on the opposite side of Wood Lane. That said the proposal is still in the proposed development of housing on the open field to the west of Wood Lane harm to a degree with respect to the historic and visual contribution made by the land both visually and contextually those heritage assets, both non-designated and designated, of the former Langley Farm

Date:	11/12/2024	Signed:	Keith Frost Built Heritage Officer
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