

MEMORANDUM

From:	Brigitte Crafer Landscape Architect		
Service	WBC Environmental Health	App No:	261530
Address:	Springwood House, The Ridges, Finchampstead, Wokingham, RG40 3TA.		
Proposal:	Full application for the erection of 2no. buildings for storage of domestic grounds maintenance equipment, associated hard surfacing and erection of a fence (retrospective).		
Type of Development:	Minor All other developments		
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

The site is located in the countryside and comprises 2 fields.

It is a retrospective application. As such no tree information was provided.

The site is characterised by a rural setting and Dell Road from which Site A is accessed is a rural lane characterised by mature hedgerows to both sides of the lane where residential development is more subservient to the landscape.

Site B is to the east of Site A.

The fields are slightly sloping and the applicant states that 2 buildings are required for the storage of machinery and tools to maintain the landscape.

SITE A – Building 1

Building 1 is set back from the site entrance with the road and a mature hedgerow. It is 10m long x 5 m wide x 3.9m high. It is made of natural materials clad in timber with a clay tiled roof. The access track set back behind the gate and curves to access the building and is about 59m in length. It is set back 20m behind the existing hedgerow which effectively screens the building in summer although in winter is more likely to be seen. The access track includes tarmac between the road and the

gate, after which there is an area of granite setts, and then the rest of the driveway surfaced in gravel.

The building could to all intents and purposes be a dwelling. A close board fence 1.3m high is located set back behind the mature tree boundary – which may have replaced a deer fence, and screened from the view, although may be more obvious in winter. A railed gate replaced a timber farm gate. A close board fence is out of character in this location.

The applicant has mentioned that tools and vehicles have been stolen on 2 occasions which is the reason for building the 2 secure stores for the tools/machinery. However, by installing gates more associated with a non-rural setting in some ways draws attention to the building. The access drive sounds as though it will replace a more informal access track. This is a larger building than Building 2 which is screened from public view. Building 1 will be perceived from the road in winter. An evergreen hedge may help to screen it to a greater degree.

SITE A – Building 2

The proposed building is set back from Dell Road beyond existing trees and not perceived from the road. Building 2 is 6m wide by 7m long. It is 4m high, made in timber with a tiled roof.

I have no objection to Building 2 – although it looks as though it has been constructed in root protection areas of trees. If this had come in as a normal planning application we could have secured the protection of nearby trees.

SITE B – Fence

A 1.2m high post and rail is proposed in this location which is much more in keeping with the rural location than the close board fence. It is not clear if the same post holes would have been used to erect the fence – or if new post holes were dug, which would be in root protection areas of existing trees. The damage will have been done.

I have no objection to the use of this type of fence in this location which is more in keeping.

CONCLUSION

Should the scheme be awarded permission I suggest a change to the design of the access gate to be more in keeping with the rural character, and the addition of evergreen planting to screen the building from the road for effectively in winter. The close board fence is out of character but screened from the road. An evergreen hedge could provide further screening. The 1.3m high fence should not set a precedent for the use of a 1.8m high close board fence in the countryside.

Conditions & Reasons (if required)

Date:	13.8.26	Signed:	BRC
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