

Proposal: Ascot House, Finchampstead Road, Wokingham, RG40 2NW

App no: 242066

Date: Nov 27th 2024

Ref: 158-NT-01_A

Clarification following comments from the WBC Landscape Officer

This note provides clarification on points raised by the WBC Landscape Officer on the appraisal of predicted visual effects in the Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (TVIA) which accompanied the planning application.

WBC consider that for a few close viewpoints, particularly from existing dwellings in Kendrick Close and Norton Road, the effects will be adverse in direction, whilst the TVIA predicts that visual effects will be neutral i.e. neither beneficial nor adverse in direction.

Visualisations of the Proposals (Appendix B of the TVIA; appended to this note for convenience) demonstrate that the proposed extension to Ascot House will be visible in views looking east from Wellington Road and from Kendrick Close (although it will not be visible from further afield or from more sensitive locations such as areas of public open space or the conservation area).

Whilst the TVIA (para 4.17) acknowledges that there will be changes in the view from some neighbouring properties, the report provides an assessment of the effects on views from publicly accessible locations and it is not a residential amenity assessment. This is because, whilst residents can be sensitive to changes in views from their properties, there is no right to a private view in planning policy and the guidance in GLVIA3¹, from which the TVIA methodology is derived, places emphasis on assessing visual effects on public areas, rather than on private residential properties.

The visualisations demonstrate that the proposed extension to the existing building will not appear out of scale or introduce disproportionate form or overly intrusive elements to the townscape. As the TVIA notes, it represents a gradual increase in scale from the lower rise residential form to the east to the larger scale built form to the west, complementing the existing varied local roofscape, as required by the Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan SPD.

The TVIA concludes that there will be change in local views from some publicly accessible locations; the effects on the views are predicted to be 'moderate and neutral'. The assessment of the effects as 'moderate' acknowledges that there will be change in views from Kendrick Close and Wellington Road. The assessment of the effects as 'neutral' in direction - rather than adverse - is because change does not automatically equate to harm and the Proposals will not introduce any incongruous features to the prevailing pattern of townscape and there would be neither a worsening nor a betterment of the existing situation.

The landscaping scheme

WBC comment that, due to proximity to the building, the specified trees are not large growing species and will not provide any mitigation for the increased height and massing of the building.

This is agreed - the assessment of townscape and visual effects does not assume any mitigation resulting from the proposed tree planting.

¹ Landscape Institute and IEMA (2013) *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment; Third Edition, 2013*

Representative View 1 – Kendrick Close



Representative View 1 - Existing view



*Representative View 1 - Proposed view following completion of construction (mortar and brickwork will weather and age in subsequent years)
N.B. Landscape proposals to frontage are not shown*

Representative View 2 – Pavement on Finchampstead Road



Representative View 2 - Existing view



Representative View 2 - Proposed view

Representative View 3 – Wellington Road

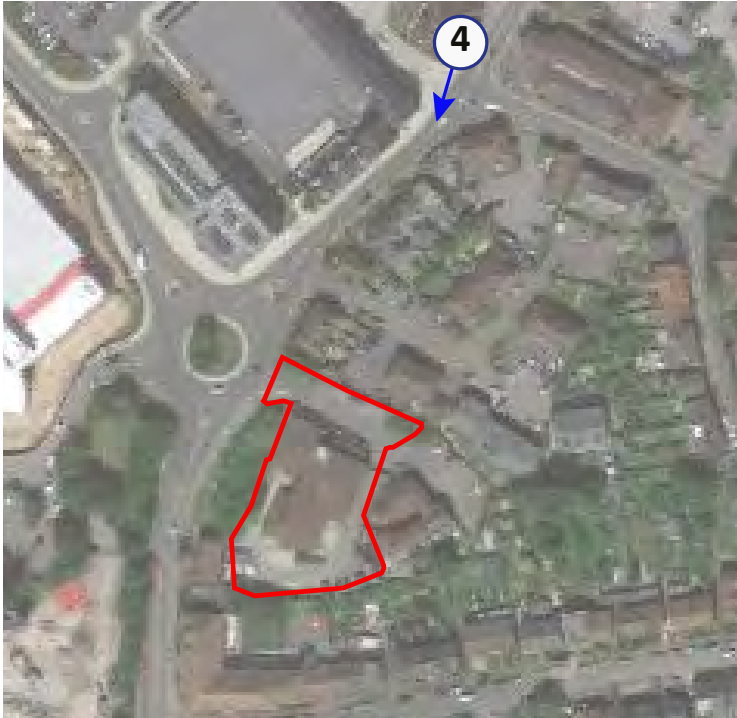


Representative View 3 - Existing view



*Representative View 3 - Proposed view following completion of construction (mortar and brickwork will weather and age in subsequent years)
N.B. Landscape proposals to frontage are not shown*

Representative View 4 – Denmark Street



Representative View 4 - Existing view



Representative View 4 - Proposed view

Representative View 5 – Wellington Road

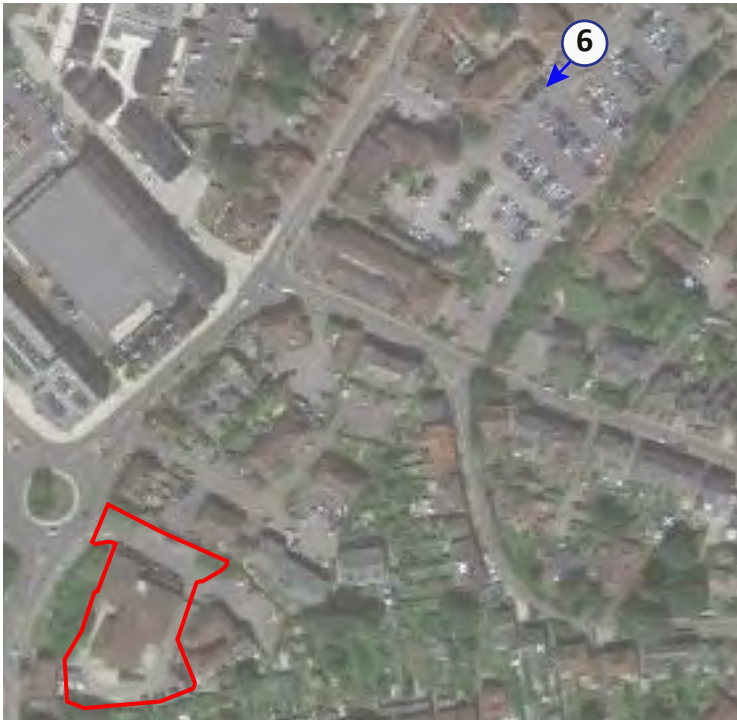


Representative View 5 - Existing view



Representative View 5 - Proposed view

Representative View 6 – Denmark Street Car Park



Representative view 6 - Existing view



Representative View 6 - Proposed view

Representative View 7 – Wellington Road



Representative View 7 - Existing view



Representative View 7 - Proposed view