Application No: O/2002/7756 KL

WOKINGHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACTS

Notification of Refusal of Permission

Bewley Homes Plc
C/O Charles Planning Associates
39 Locks Heath District Centre
Locks Heath
Southampton
Hants
SO31 6DX

Application Number: O/2002/7756

Parish:	**SHINFIELD**
Location:	**Land Between Woodcock Lane, Basingstoke Road & Grazeley Road, Three Mile Cross, Reading.**
Proposal:	**Outline application for the proposed erection of approximately 270 units , the creation of new vehicular accesses, provision of public open space and footpaths and cycleways.**

The Wokingham District Council in pursuance of their powers under the above Acts and Regulations hereby **Refuse Permission** for carrying out the above development in accordance with the application and the accompanying plans submitted to the Council, the reasons for which are specified hereunder.

Reason
1. The site is allocated for possible long-term development within the Wokingham District Local Plan (as proposed to be modified), and not development within this plan period, due to the considerable infrastructural constraints within the immediate area. Development of the site within this plan period would therefore represent unsustainable development, and would be contrary to the advice of Planning Policy Guidance Note 3, and contrary to policies C2, C5 and H5 of the Berkshire Structure Plan, and policies WH1, WH2B, WOS2 and WCC1 of the Wokingham District Local Plan (as agreed to be amended).

Reason
2. In accordance with the sequential approach adopted in the site selection process for the Wokingham District Local Plan, the Council has allocated sufficient land to meet the Berkshire Structure Plan requirements for the period to 2006. Therefore the development of this greenfield site is unnecessary, and could lead to the development of greenfield land in advance of previously developed land, contrary to advice within Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 and contrary to policy H2 of the Berkshire Structure Plan.

Reason
3. The proposed development would generate additional traffic onto the main road network which is congested, particularly at peak times. A number of improvements are proposed for this area to ease congestion, improve road safety and also to encourage more walking, cycling and use of public transport. However, there is no guarantee that the schemes at Junction 11, Mereoak roundabout and the Mereoak Park and Ride would all be completed within the timescale of this planning application. Accordingly, it is considered that the proposed development is contrary to Policies OS1, LD5 & LD6 of the Berkshire Structure Plan, WOS1, WOS3 & WOS4 of the Wokingham District Local Plan (as proposed to be modified).

Reason
4. Insufficient information has been submitted in respect of the proposed access arrangements and extent of off-site works to be carried out as part of the proposed development. Clarification has been sought with regard to the position and type of the proposed westernmost access to Grazeley Road, visibility splays, bus, pedestrian & cycling facilities, proposed junction improvements and traffic calming. In the absence of such matters being satisfactorily addressed, it is considered that the proposal is contrary to Policy LD5 of the Berkshire Structure Plan and Policies WT2, WT7, and WT11 of the Wokingham District Local Plan (as proposed to be modified).

Reason
5. In the absence of the provision of a newt survey it is not possible for the local planning authority to determine whether the proposal will have an adverse impact upon the newts within the area. As such it considered that the proposal is contrary to policy EN8 of the Berkshire Structure Plan, and policy WNC3 of the Wokingham District Local Plan (as proposed to be modified).

Reason
6. In the absence of an archaeological survey the planning authority is unable to determine the possible effect of the development upon any potential archaeological remnants. As such the proposal is considered contrary to policy EN6 of the Berkshire Structure Plan, policy LBE22 of the Loddon Area Local Plan and policy WHE15 of the Wokingham District Local Plan (as proposed to be modified).

Reason
7. The proposal is likely to involve the loss of a significant hedgerow on the site. No mitigation has been suggested for the loss of this hedgerow. As such the proposal is considered contrary to policy EN8 of the Berkshire Structure Plan, Policy LC10 of the Loddon Area Local Plan and policy WNC5 of the Wokingham District Local Plan (as proposed to be modified).

Reason
8. In the absence of the satisfactory provision of adequate services, amenities and infrastructure needs, the proposal would have an unacceptable adverse impact upon the amenities of the area. The proposal is therefore considered contrary to policies LD6 and R5 of the Berkshire Structure Plan, Policy LPS1 of the Loddon Area Local Plan and policies WOS4 and WR7 of the Wokingham District Local Plan (as proposed to be modified).

Reason

9. The proposal does not make adequate provision for affordable housing in accordance with Policy H8 of the Berkshire Structure Plan, Policy SH8 of the South East Area Local Plan and Policy WH7 of the Wokingham District Local Plan (as proposed to be modified).

Informative

1. You are advised, in compliance with the Town and Country Planning (General Development procedure)(England) (Amendment) Order 2000, that the following policies and/or proposals in the development plan are relevant to this decision:

Berkshire Structure Plan Policies C2, C5, H5, H9, LD5, LD6, OS1, EN8, EN6 and R5.
Loddon Area Local Plan Policies LH8, LBE2, LBE22, LPS1, LR2 and LC10.
Deposit Draft Wokingham District Local Plan Policies WH6, WOS1, WOS2, WOS3, WOS4, WT2, WT7, WT11, WCC1, WCC2, WBE1, WNC3, WNC5 and WR7.

Informative

2. In the event of a satisfactory s106 agreement or unilateral agreement being signed to secure the contributions within the reasons for refusal 8 and 9, these reasons shall be withdrawn.

T. G Watson

Trevor Watson
Development Control Manager
Date: 11/12/2002

Notice checked by: _____

If this notice grants permission to proceed with the proposal the applicant is reminded that it relates to planning permission only and does not constitute approval under any other legislation including Building Regulations.

APPEALS TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

PLANNING & ADVERTISEMENT APPEALS

1) If you disagree with the decision of the your local planning authority to refuse planning permission or you do not think that conditions placed on an approval are justified or reasonable, then you can appeal to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions.

   If you want to appeal you must do so within **6 months** of the date of the decision notice for **planning applications** and within **8 weeks** in respect of **advertisement applications,** using a form you can get from The Planning Inspectorate. They can be contacted on (0117) 372 6373 or you can write to them at ; Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol. BS1 6PN.

2) In some exceptional circumstances an appeal can be considered if more than 6 months or 8 weeks have elapsed since the date of your decision. If the 6 month/8 week time limit has expired and you wish to appeal please contact the Planning Inspectorate to find out if they are willing to accept it.

3) The Secretary of State does not have to consider an appeal if it appears that the local planning authority could not have granted planning permission for the proposed development or could not have approved permission without the conditions it imposed while having regard to the statutory requirement of the development order or any directions given under the order. In practice The Secretary of State does not normally refuse to consider appeals solely because the local planning authority based its decision on a direction given by him.

4) It is a statutory requirement for all appellants to copy their appeal forms direct to Wokingham District Council, Planning Services, P.O. Box 157, Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham, RG40 1WR, at the same time as the appeal is sent to the Planning Inspectorate. Details of this procedure will be included on the appeal forms.

PURCHASE NOTICES

1) If the local planning authority or the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions refuses permission to develop land or grants it subject to conditions, the owner may claim that the land cannot be put to a reasonably beneficial use in its existing state or cannot make the land capable of a reasonably beneficial use by the carrying out of any development which has been or would be permitted.

2) In these circumstances the owner may serve a purchase notice on the District Council in whose area the land is situated. This notice will require the Council to purchase an owners interest in the land in accordance with the provisions of Part XI of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971.

COMPENSATION

1) In certain circumstances compensation may be claimed from the Local Planning Authority if permission is refused or is granted subject to certain conditions by the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions on appeal or on reference of the application to him. These circumstances are set out in Section 114 and related provision of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

09.OCT.2002 7756

1789/a

SECTION 66 CERTIFICATE

Application No.

09 OCT 2002

Please fill in both Certificate A, B, C or D and the Agricultural Holdings Certificate. Delete sections not relevant.

CERTIFICATE A

I certify that:

at the beginning of the period of 21 days ending with the date of the accompanying application, nobody, except the applicant, was the owner of (a) of any part of the land to which the application relates.

(a) "Owner" means a person having a freehold interest or leasehold interest the unexpired term of which is not less than 7 years.

OR

CERTIFICATE B

I certify that:

~~I have~~/The applicant has* given the required notice to everyone else who, at the beginning of the period of 21 days ending with the date of the accompanying application was the owner (a) of any part of the land to which the application relates, as listed below.

Owner's(a) name	Address at which notice was served	Date on which notice was served
BISSETT TRUST & JACOB TRUST	COURT FARM, RAG HILL, ALDERMARSTON, READING, BERKSHIRE	8 OCTOBER 2002

+ See Note (a) to Certificate A

OR

CERTIFICATE C

I certify that

● I/The applicant* cannot issued a certificate in accordance with either paragraph (a) or paragraph (b) of Section 66(1) of the Act in respect of the accompanying application.

● I have/The applicant has* given the required notice to the persons specified below, being persons who at the beginning of the period of 21 days ending with the date of the application were owners (a) of any part of the land to which the application relates.

Owner's(a) name	Address at which notice was served	Date on which notice was served

(b) Insert description of steps taken.

● I have/The applicant has* taken all reasonable steps open to me/him/her* to find out the names and addresses of the other owners (a) of the land, or of a part of it, but have/has* been unable to do so. These steps were as follows:

(b) .....

.....

(c) Name of local newspaper circulating in the area where the land is situated.

(d) Date of publication (which must be not earlier than the beginning of the period of 21 days ending with the date of the application).

● Notice of the application as attached to this Certificate, has been published in the (c) .....

on (d) .....

1769/b

CERTIFICATE D

I certify that

● I/The applicant cannot issue a certificate in accordance with paragraph (a) of Section 66 of the Act in respect of the accompanying application.

● I/The applicant have/has taken all reasonable steps open to me/him/her to find out the names and addresses of everyone else who, at the beginning of the period of 21 days beginning with the date of application was the owner (a) of any part of the land to which the application relates, but have/has been unable to do so. These steps were as follows:

(b) .....

.....

● Notice of the application as attached to this Certificate, has been published in the (c) .....

on (d) .....

OR

(b) Insert description of steps taken

(c) Insert name of local newspaper circulating in the area where the land is situated.

(d) Insert date of publication (which must not be earlier than the beginning of the period of 21 days ending with the date of the application).

ALL APPLICANTS MUST COMPLETE THIS SECTION

Agricultural Holdings Certificate

One or other section must be crossed through as not applicable.

If any of the site is part of an area of land which is let or there is an agreement to let the land for agricultural purposes to a tenant, it may be an agricultural holding. Further advice may be obtained from the Department.

If the applicant is the sole agricultural tenant he or she must delete the first alternative and insert "not applicable" as the information required by the second alternative.

● None of the land to which the application relates is, or is part of, an agricultural holding.

OR

● I have/The applicant has given the required notice to every person other than my/him/herself who, at the beginning of the period of 21 days ending with the date of the application, was a tenant of an agricultural holding on all or part of the land to which the application relates, as follows:

Tenant's name	Address at which notice was served	Date on which notice was served
BISSETT TRUST & JACOB TRUST	COURT FARM, RAG HILL, ALDERMARSTON, READING, BERKSHIRE	8 OCTOBER 2002

Signed ..... CHARLES PLANNING ASSOCIATES .....

On behalf of ..... BEWLEY HOMES PLC .....

Date ..... 8 OCTOBER 2002 .....

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT, 1990
TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING GENERAL DEVELOPMENT ORDER 1988
Certificate under Section 66

09.OCT.2002 7756

1769a

WOKINGHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATION

PART 1

APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT DEVELOPMENT - TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACTS

Please answer **ALL QUESTIONS** in **BLOCK LETTERS**. If a question is not applicable, answer **N/A** in space. Please submit **SIX** copies of this form and plans to:-

THE DISTRICT PLANNING OFFICER
WOKINGHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL
PLANNING DEPARTMENT
P O Box No. 157
COUNCIL OFFICES
SHUTE END
WOKINGHAM
BERKSHIRE, RG40 1WR

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY
09 OCT 2002
7756

1.	**APPLICANT'S NAME**	BEWLEY HOMES PLC		
	ADDRESS	INHURST HOUSE, BRIMPTON ROAD, BAUGHURST, HAMPSHIRE		
	POST CODE	RG26 5JJ	**PHONE**	REFER TO AGENT
2. If the applicant has an agent, all correspondence will be sent to the agent	**AGENT'S NAME**	CHARLES PLANNING ASSOCIATES		
	ADDRESS	39 LOCKS HEATH DISTRICT CENTRE, LOCKS HEATH, SOUTHAMPTON, HAMPSHIRE		
	POST CODE	SO31 6DX	**PHONE**	01489 577946
3. On the plans show the SITE outlined in RED. Show also OTHER land in the applicant's ownership or control in BLUE.	**SITE LOCATION**	LAND NORTH OF GRAZELEY ROAD, THREE MILE CROSS, WOKINGHAM, BERKSHIRE.		
4. WHAT IS THE APPLICATION FOR? Give brief details and state for what purpose this site and any buildings will be used.		RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF APPROXIMATELY 270 UNITS, THE CREATION OF NEW VEHICULAR ACCESSES, PROVISION OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACE, FOOTPATH LINKS AND CYCLEWAYS.		
5. Give the area in hectares or part of a hectare	**AREA OF SITE**	9.24 ha (EXCLUDING HIGHWAY AUTHORITY LAND)		
6. State the applicant's interest in the land e.g. owner, prospective purchaser, lessee	**OWNERSHIP**	PROSPECTIVE PURCHASER		
7. List all the plans and drawings submitted with the application	**PLANS/DRAWINGS**	SEE ATTACHED SCHEDULE		

8. DOES THE APPLICATION INVOLVE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING ? Tick the boxes(x)	**CHANGE OF USE**	☑	**REDEVELOPMENT**	☐
	ERECTION OF NEW BUILDING	☐	**ALTERATION or EXTENSION**	☐

9. WHAT TYPE OF APPLICATION IS THIS ? Tick one box only

OUTLINE PERMISSION	☑	See question 10
FULL PERMISSION	☐	
APPROVAL OF DETAILS/RESERVED MATTERS	☐	State relevant outline permission number. Also complete Question 10.
TEMPORARY PERMISSION	☐	State period required
RELAXATION OF CONDITIONS	☐	State relevant application number. Conditions to be relaxed

10. IF THIS IS AN OUTLINE APPLICATION OR AN APPROVAL OF RESERVED MATTERS, which details, if any, do you wish to be considered as part of this application ?

EXTERNAL APPEARANCE	☐	**SITING**	☐
MEANS OF ACCESS	☑	**DESIGN**	☐
		LANDSCAPING	☐

11. WHAT IS THE EXISTING USE OF THE LAND AND/OR BUILDING(S) e.g. residential, industrial, etc. If the site is vacant say so, and also state its previous use and when that ceased.	AGRICULTURAL/ARABLE
12. DOES A PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY CROSS OR ABUT THE SITE OR THE PROPOSED ACCESS?	YES[redacted] — If yes, show existing route(s) and any proposed alternatives on the plans
13. ARE THERE ANY TREES ON THE SITE? IF YES, ARE ANY TO BE FELLED?	YES[redacted] NONE — If yes, please show their positions, spread and species on the plans and which, if any, are to be felled.
14. STATE EXTERNAL MATERIALS TO BE USED.	
15. HOW WILL THE SITE BE ENCLOSED? Say whether walls, fences or hedges, and give height, colour and materials. If the site is divided into plots, say how each is to be enclosed.	
16. HOW WILL SURFACE WATER BE DISPOSED OF?	TO EXISTING WATER COURSES (VIA SWALE ATTENUATION PONDS)
17. HOW WILL FOUL SEWAGE BE DISPOSED OF?	To existing system YES/[redacted] If no, please give details
18. WHAT ARE THE ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS? AS EXISTING AS PROPOSED Give details of pedestrian and vehicular access	TWO POINTS OF ACCESS FROM GRAZELEY ROAD. JUNCTION IMPROVEMENTS: GRAZELEY ROAD/BASINGSTOKE ROAD/ CHURCH ROAD. EMERGENCY ACCESS AND PEDESTRIAN/CYCLEWAY ONTO BASINGSTOKE ROAD.
19. HAS PROVISION BEEN MADE FOR THE DISABLED? See notes for applicants	YES

20. IF THIS PROPOSAL INVOLVES RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OR THE LOSS OF RESIDENTIAL UNITS, COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING TABLE

	No. OF DWELLINGS/HABITABLE ROOMS PROPOSED	TO BE RETAINED	TO BE LOST
HOUSE	/	/	/
BUNGALOW	APPROXIMATELY	NONE	NONE
FLAT/MAISONETTE	270 UNITS	/	/
OTHER	/	/	/

* STATE No. OF HABITABLE ROOMS

21. DOES THE PROPOSAL INVOLVE ANY NON-RESIDENTIAL BUILDING OR USE? [redacted]/NO — If YES, complete Part 2 of the form

22. DOES THE PROPOSAL INVOLVE THE WINNING, WORKING OR PROCESSING OF MINERALS; THE DISPOSAL OF MINERAL WASTE, OR THE DEPOSIT OR PROCESSING OF REFUSE AND WASTE MATERIALS? [redacted]/NO — If YES, please ask for and complete Part 3 of the form

23. STATE THE FEE ENCLOSED WITH THIS APPLICATION
The current scale of fees is enclosed. If you believe a reduced fee or no fee is payable, say why.

£0.00 - no fee is applicable.
Application represents revised/duplicate proposal to earlier application (LPA Ref: O/2002/7137)

I hereby apply for permission in respect of the particulars described above and in the attached plans and drawings. If planning permission is granted, the development must be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved plans. Failure to do so could result in enforcement action being taken. Permission under the Town & Country Planning Acts does not obviate the possible need to apply for Building Regulations approval.

SIGNED [signature] ON BEHALF OF BEWLEY HOMES PLC DATE 8 OCTOBER 2002

CHARLES PLANNING ASSOCIATES

Before submitting the application check that it is complete, that all questions have been answered and that the site boundary and the new work are clearly edged in red on the plans. Every application must be accompanied by the appropriate certificate and fee. See "NOTES TO HELP APPLICANTS".

Development Control Ref No:	Received	Listed by:	Parish
O/2002/7756	09/10/2002	N/A	Shinfield

Applicant: Bewley Homes
Location: Land Between Woodcock Lane, Basingstoke Road and Grazeley Road
Proposal: Outline application for residential development of approximately 270 units, new vehicular accesses, provision of public open space, footpath links and cycleways.

FOR CONSIDERATION BY: Development Control Committee
REPORT PREPARED BY: Head of Planning and Transportation and Kerrin Lithgow

SUMMARY:

Proposal
The proposal is in outline with only the means of access to be determined. The indicative layout plan shows 7 x 5 bedroom dwellings, 72 x 4 bedroom dwellings, 71 x 3 bedroom dwellings, 89 x 2 bedroom dwellings, and 31 x 1 bedroom dwellings. Of these dwellings 25% are to be affordable housing units.

The attached report will be subject to some changes following Council's Executive Committee on the 4th of December, at which the Inspector's Report will be formally considered.

RECOMMENDATION:

REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION

Background Papers

Held by: Planning Reception
Division: Development Control
Dept: Environmental Services

Contact No: 0118 974 6428/ 6429
E Mail: development.control@wokingham.gov.uk

NB: All reports seek to identify environmental, community safety and equal opportunities implications. Consultation with residents and organisations which has or is about to take place, will also be reported.

BACKGROUND

1 **HISTORY**

This is a 9.24 hectare triangular shaped site currently in agricultural use. There are existing residential properties to the east and southern sides of the site. The A33 and Woodcock Lane run along the northern boundary of the site.

There was a separate outline application for consideration on this site, which has now gone to appeal. The application consisted of the same number of dwellings, and was an identical application in all aspects asides from some policy details in the written statement. The application will be considered at a public inquiry set to begin on the 18th of March 2003.

There has been a previous outline application on the site for 150 dwellings. This application was applied for in 1998 and was also the subject of an appeal against non-determination. The appeal was withdrawn.

2 **CONSULTATION**

Policy and Plans: No additional comments to make above that which were made in the last application. Which was *'Objects to the application. Proposal is considered to be premature to the council's deliberations on the Local Plan Inspector's Report. Any approval could undermine a sustainable development approach and conflict with the Inspectors recommended overall strategy as outlined in policy WH1 of the WDLP'.*

Access and Movement: The same comments as per the previous application, which was: *'Clarification is sought in relation to a number of technical highway aspects in respect of this planning application. Requests permission is refused on the basis that the development is premature pending completion of the improvement works at M4 Junction 11, A33 Mereoak Lane and the Mereoak Park and Ride scheme'.*

Babtie (Archaeological Consultants): Application has potential archaeological implications. The site has the potential to contain prehistoric and medieval remains and consequently requires an archaeological evaluation to be undertaken in order to establish the potential impact of the development on any remains present.

Reading Borough Council: Comments still not available – to be reported at committee.

Loddon Valley Ramblers: Footpath Shinfield 25 and 26 run across and alongside the site. Ramblers are ken to see that this is protected, secure, landscaped and has a sensible walking surface.

Environment Agency: No objection in principle to the development, provided that conditions are imposed on any planning permission granted.

Landscape and Trees: Further information on trees (ie tree survey) and landscape setting, quality and detailed proposals for new landscape structures will be required to support any progress on this proposal.

West Berkshire Council: Comments received from three councillors. Concerns regarding the traffic impact on the roundabout at the junction of Basingstoke Road/A33 Dual Carriageway. Increase in traffic at this roundabout will cause

further problems for car users from Mortimer. Increase in traffic at the M4 Junction 11. Proposals for junction improvements will not be helped by increase of residential traffic during peak hours. Mature trees on the site should be retained via TPOs. Two responses in favour of the application – as the site is surrounded on two sides by existing housing and is constrained on the third by a major road, thus should not object. No objection from a separate councillor as the site does not break the line of the A33 by-pass.

Wokefield Parish Council: Application will lead to more congestion on the entry to the roundabout at the junction of Mere Oak Lane and the A33. Increased traffic is currently causing tailbacks of up to a mile on these two roads between 8am and 10am and this should be seriously considered.

Burghfield Parish Council: No objection, but the development should not commence until all of the proposed improvements at junction 11 of the M4 motorway are completed. All issues in relation to the local infrastructure, including education and the provision of services should be carefully evaluated. The effect on the locality west and north of the proposed development should be ascertained to ensure that the local roads are not subjected to even greater volumes of immovable traffic.

Shinfield Parish Council: Objects to the development, on the grounds of prematurity, both in relation to the designation of the land involved, and in relation to the traffic issues within the area. Objection in relation to the lack of services and its location within an unsustainable location. Objection in that the application refers to a housing shortfall in the district, which until the Urban Capacity study is published is not correct. Objection on the grounds of the massive disruption that this development would have when considered in conjunction with the transport improvements in the area (Mereoak Roundabout and Junction 11 of the M4).

Sport England: Application and accompanying material provides no indication of whether any contribution will be made to the provision of new or improved sporting facilities on and/or off the site, as required by Sport Englands Policies, and as required by Wokingham District Council policies, and as required by *PPG17: 'Planning for Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation'.* Sport England therefore registers its objection to the proposal.

Berkshire Unitary Authorities Joint Strategic Planning Unit: Objection on transport grounds. Insufficient evidence to demonstrate that the development complies with Policies LD5 of the BSP and T1 and T5 of the DDBSP.

Density of the development appears rather low and in conflict with policy H6 of the DDBSP.

Applicant needs to demonstrate that appropriate measures can be taken to ensure no unacceptable impact on the highway network.

Residential development may only be acceptable in the area once works on the Park and Ride together with any highways improvements have been completed.

Transport Statement refers to factors effecting travel choice and the potential for travel by foot, cycle, bus, rail and car, however, there is a lack of detail.

Further work needs to be undertaken on the connections to any existing or proposed primary schools.

Details of proposed parking on site needs to be supplied and should be in line with emerging parking standards and related to public transport accessibility and enhancements.

In conclusion – there is currently insufficient evidence to demonstrate that the development complies with Policies LD5 of the BSP and T1 and T5 of the DDBSP. Consequently, an objection is raised on transport grounds.

Need for any further social infrastructure, particularly educational facilities, should be addressed under Policy LD6 of the BSP and Policy DP4 of the DDBSP.

Thames Water: No objection to the application.

Drainage: No objection, subject to conditions.

Public Rights of Way Officer: No objections.

Environmental Health: No objections to the application, subject to conditions.

Countryside Officer: Comments are as per the previous application. Most importantly, applicant has failed to provide information on the great crested newts, destruction of an important hedgerow, and has failed to provide a survey of the barn for any bats that may be present.

Trail Riders Fellowship: Concern that inevitably construction traffic will use this lane with long term degradation. Status of the lane must be clearly stated to any house purchasers otherwise will be creating a situation of possible conflict.

Neighbours Objections: 20 objections received in total. Objections in relation to:

- Road concerns – in particular traffic congestion, reconstruction of Junction 11 of the M4, poor condition of Grazeley Road, poor condition of intersection of Grazeley Road and Basingstoke Road
- Insufficient Local Amenities – in particular lack of places within local schools, and lack of places within local GPs, also lack of recreation grounds.
- Removal of a green band between the village and the Reading outskirts
- Proposed site of the playground too close to the main road
- A proposed pond in the children's play area/park
- Met Office site was not considered by the Inspector. Approval of the Met Office dwellings should reduce pressure on the rest of the District.
- Considered inappropriate development – density and size of the development is inappropriate for this semi-rural location.
- Unsuitable for development as is boggy and waterlogged, is also flanked by two busy roads.

3 APPRAISAL

Main issues:

A. Principle of the development. Policy C2, C5 and H5 of the Berkshire Structure Plan; policies WOS2, WCC1, WCC2, WH6 and the Housing Density Policy of the Wokingham District Local Plan (Deposit Draft) as modified.

B. Density and housing mix. Berkshire Structure Plan policy H9; Loddon Area Local Plan policy LH8; Wokingham District Local Plan (Deposit Draft) policy WH6; Planning Policy Guidance Note No. 3.

C. Effect on neighbouring properties. Loddon Area Local Plan policy LBE2; Wokingham District Local Plan (Deposit Draft) policy WBE1.

D. Access and Movement. Berkshire Structure Plan policies LD5, LD6 and OS1; Wokingham District Local Plan (Deposit Draft) policies WOS1, WOS3, WOS4, WT2, WT7, and WT11; Planning Policy Guidance Note No. 13.

E. Ecological Issues. Berkshire Structure Plan policy EN8 Loddon Area Local Plan LC10, Wokingham District Local Plan (Deposit Draft) WNC3 WNC5

F. Archeological Issues. Berkshire Structure Plan policies EN6; Loddon Area Local Plan LBE22.

G. Services, Amenity and Infrastrusture Requirements. Berkshire Structure Plan policies LD6 and R5; Loddon Area Local Plan policies LPS1 and LR2; Wokingham District Local Plan policies WOS4 and WR7.

H. Flooding Issues.

I. Comments of the Parish Council and local residents.

A. <u>Principle of the Development</u>
The site is located outside of the settlement boundary and within the Green Gap adjoining Three Mile Cross.

The Local Plan Inspector has recommended that the application site be allocated for housing in the Local Plan. Consequently, the impact of the development on the countryside, green gap and proposed Area of Special Character (within Three Mile Cross) would have been considered by the Inspector in reaching his decision that the site should be allocated for housing.

Having said this, It is considered, in relation to policies within the WDLP, that the application is premature to the Council's deliberations on the Local Plan Inspector's Report. It is currently anticipated that the Council will formally consider the Inspector's Report on the 4th of December 2002.

At April 2002 the housing land deficit in the district was 1,142 (or 1,314 using the Inspector's method). This compares to a potential supply of around 2,300 dwellings from the sites recommended by the Local Plan Inspector. Therefore, the potential supply from the Inspector's recommended sites significantly exceed the current deficit. Furthermore, this excludes any allowance for supply from brownfield sites as detailed in the Council's Urban Capacity Study (to be published concurrently with the Council's considerations on the Inspector's Report).

The Inspector recognised that the capacity of the sites he recommended could exceed the Council's deficit in housing land supply (paragraph 5.984). He consequently indicated (paragraph 5.984) that the Council could place sites on a reserve list. Any site on a reserve list could be used to either overcome a deficit arising from a delay in bringing forward one of the sites identified in Policy WH2, or could form a reserve for the next Plan period (paragraphs 5.94 and 5.95). As

explained in the paragraph above, the size of the shortfall to be addressed by the sites recommended by the Inspector at April 2002 is significantly lower than that which was anticipated in 1999 (which was circa 1600 as opposed to the 1,142 identified today). It is therefore likely that not all the Inspector's recommended sites would be identified as priority sites.

To assist the Council's assessment of his recommended sites, the Inspector has proposed a policy for selecting housing sites (Policy WH1) in paragraph 5.118. This recommended policy states:

> *"The Council will identify new housing allocations based on a sequential approach starting with the re-use of previously developed land and buildings within urban areas. If insufficient land is available from that source, then sites that form urban extensions and then new developments around centres which are served by good public transport corridors will be selected. All allocations will be subject to the council's objective of creating sustainable forms of development and an assessment based on highway, infrastructure and environmental criteria."*

With regard to the application site, it is noted that out of those sites within the Spencers Wood/Three Mile Cross area, it is the furthest from the defined Local Shopping Centre in Spencers Wood, and other local facilities (health, education, community facilities). In addition, it is recognised that significant additional infrastructure and services are either planned or need to be provided in this area. These include improvements to Junction 11 of the M4 together with the Mereoak roundabout on the A33 and a new/relocated primary school to serve Spencers Wood. Advice in PPG3 (paragraph 33) indicates that there is a need to ensure that new infrastructure is co-ordinated with housing. This also indicates that the level of development recommended by the Inspector in this area may not be appropriate, particularly as the highway improvements are unlikely to be completed until late 2005/early 2006. With such a delay in the provision of the necessary infrastructure, any residential development in this area may only be acceptable once this has been provided. Consequently, if the Council were to apply the Inspector's recommended policy (WH1) to the recommended sites in the Spencers Wood/Three Mile Cross, it is unlikely that this site would appear at the top of the Council's list, particularly in comparison with other sites across the district, and might therefore be identified as a reserve site in accordance with the Inspectors recommendation at paragraph 5.986 of his report.

Therefore, given that there will be at least a 1,000 dwelling oversupply from the Inspector's list of recommended sites (compared with the size of the deficit which also excludes the Council's Urban Capacity Study), to grant permission for this site at this stage would have adverse implications for the provision of sustainable development in the district.

Consequently, until the Council has formally considered the Inspector's Report, this proposal is considered to be premature and should be refused on the basis of principle, as any approval could undermine a sustainable development approach and conflict with the Inspector's recommended overall strategy as outlined in policy WH1.

The above comments will need updating at committee, depending on the outcome of Council's Excutive Committee of 4th December, at which the modifications are being discussed.

B. Density and Housing Mix

The density of the proposed development (as shown on the illustrative layout) would be 29.2 dwellings per hectare, just below the minimum density of 30 dwellings per ha. recommended by PPG3. This number of dwellings was arrived at following the inspectors recommendation for 270 dwellings for the site.

The density is somewhat higher towards the centre of the site, with apartments focused around a central courtyard. It is considered that these higher density dwellings would not be out of character with the area as they are remote from existing development, and would be integrated within the new development proposals. It is considered that in this case the aims of PPG3 in relation to density would be met by these illustrative proposals.

The proposed housing mix is as follows:

No. of bedrooms	**Proposed development**	**%**	**Mix required by Policy WH6**
1	31	11	At least 45% 1 and 2 b/r *(44% provided)*
2	89	33	
3	71	26	30% *(26% provided)*
4	72	27	Not more than 25% 4 and 5 b/r *(30% provided)*
5	7	3	
Total	270	100%	

The proposed dwelling mix is considered acceptable under Policy WH6 as it largely meets with the requirements as set out above.

C. Effect on Neighbouring Properties

The proposed layout plan is illustrative only, but nevertheless shows how the proposed number and dwelling size mix could be accommodated on the site, and the information given below is based on the illustrative plan.

There would be ample distance from the rear of the existing dwellings on the north of Grazeley Road and the proposed plots 101-110. Distances of between 34 to 45 metres are indicated. To the west of the site, there is one dwelling north of the petrol station with a rear elevation that faces on to the proposed plot 251. The distance between these two dwellings is approximately 11m. It is considered that this may be a matter that would need addressing at any

Reserved Matters stage, but is not of sufficient significance to be considered in detail now.

On the whole it is considered that these distances are acceptable, but it would be important to retain existing trees to assist privacy and outlook from existing properties, and equally important to ensure that any subsequent Reserved Matters submission includes landscaping plans to increase vegetation and privacy on site. The potential effect on existing properties is therefore considered acceptable.

D. Access and Movement

It is considered that the proposed development would generate additional traffic onto the main road network which is congested, particularly at peak times. A number of improvements are proposed for this area to ease congestion, improve road safety and also to encourage more walking, cycling and use of public transport. However, there is no guarantee that the schemes at Junction 11, Mereoak roundabout and the Mereoak Park and Ride would all be completed within the timescale of the development envisaged in this planning application.

In addition, insufficient information has been submitted in respect of the proposed access arrangements and extent of off-site works to be carried out as part of the proposed development. Clarification has been sought with regard to the position and type of the proposed western most access to Grazeley Road, visibility splays, bus, pedestrian & cycling facilities, proposed junction improvements and traffic calming.

Due to the above, it is considered that the application should be refused on these grounds.

E. Ecological Issues

The application has been considered by the Councils' Countryside Service, who have expressed concerns and seek clarification in relation to the following aspects.

- Newts: The supporting information accompanying the application included a survey of Great Crested Newts, which is not deemed sufficient because of the time of year in which the survey was undertaken. Planning approval cannot be considered prior to an appropriate survey, possible mitigation scheme and agreement with English Nature.
- Hedgerows: No mitigation is suggested for the destruction of a significant hedgerow, which is classified as an important hedgerow under the hedgerow regulations.

Further clarification and surveys of the site are therefore necessary. It is therefore considered that the application should be refused on the basis that the above two issues remain to be resolved.

F. Archaeological Issues

Comments have been received from Babtie, the Councils' archeological consultants, who have advised that the application has potential archaeological implications. The site has the potential to contain prehistoric and medieval

remains and consequently requires an archaeological evaluation to be undertaken in order to establish the potential impact of the development on any remains present. The evaluation should be undertaken and reported by a registered archaeological contractor *before* determination of the application as per PPG16.

Further information is consequently required. It is therefore considered that the application should be refused on the basis that the above issue remains to be resolved.

G. Services, Amenity and Infrastructure

Policy WOS4 of the Wokingham District Local Plan (Deposit Draft) states that proposals will be expected to have regard to existing levels of infrastructure, services and amenities. This is expanded upon in planning guideline A9 which has been adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance. Circular 1/97 requires that planning obligations meet a number of criteria, including being directly related to the development.

With regards to leisure and community services contributions, 3.4 hectares of open space on site are required, in addition to two equipped play areas and sports pitches off site. Provision has been made on-site in three separate areas, including a play area of 400m^2 to the north east of the site, an open play area of 3600m^2 along the northern boundary, and a play area of 400m^2 in the west of the site. A £100,000 contribution towards the improvement of community facilities in the area is also requested. As this has not yet been agreed with the applicants it is considered that the application may be contrary to Policies R5, SR2 and WR7.

Contributions towards library provision would also be expected. This would be in the realm of £14,580.

Contributions towards education provision would be required. The Local Primary school (Lambs Lane) cannot be expanded and has no surplus places available, therefore making it difficult to provide for primary places for the scheme. However, if the proposal should proceed, £785,433.35 is required for primary school places, £371,997.10 for secondary school places, and £34,319.04 for sixth form places. This is a total of £1,191,749.49 for the education contribution.

The applicants have as part of the scheme proposed 25% of affordable housing, which is in line with council's requirements. A mix would be required of 7 x 1 bedroom flats, 37 x two-bedroom flats and houses, 20 x three-bedroom houses, and 4 x four-bedroom houses.

Contributions towards local road safety measures and highways improvements would also be required as part of any S106 agreement to be entered into.

As such, the proposal does not meet the requirements of LD6 and R5 of the Berkshire Structure Plan, Policy LPS1 of the Loddon Area Local Plan and policies WOS4 and WR7 of the Wokingham District Local Plan.

H. Flooding Issues
The application does not contain any land shown on plans supplied by the Environment Agency as being liable to flooding.

I. Comments of the Parish Council and Local Residents
These have been noted and addressed above.

4 CONCLUSION
The proposed development is considered unacceptable in principle as it involves development of a site which could well be unsustainable, particularly in the light of the Urban Capacity Study figures which are to be released shortly. The application is also premature with regards to the significant transport works which are to be undertaken within the area within the next four to six years. Clarification is sought on various ecological, archaeological and open space issues. A reason for refusal on Services and Infrastructure should also be included.

5 RECOMMENDATION - REFUSE planning permission for the following reasons:

1. The site is not allocated for development in the Deposit Draft Local Plan as it primarily lies outside of a defined settlement. Consequently, residential development on the site would be contrary to Berkshire Structure Plan Policies C2, C5 & H5 and Policies WOS2, WCC1 & WCC2 of the Wokingham District Local Plan Deposit Draft.

Reason changed as per members update.

2. Whilst there is a deficit in housing land supply at April 2002, if all the sites recommended for residential development by the Inspector were released, a significant over provision would result, exceeding the requirements of Structure Plan Policy H2. This could lead to the development of greenfield land in advance of previously developed land, contrary to the advice in PPG3. Therefore, the release of this site is premature pending the consideration of the Inspectors report.

3. The proposed development would generate additional traffic onto the main road network which is congested, particularly at peak times. A number of improvements are proposed for this area to ease congestion, improve road safety and also to encourage more walking, cycling and use of public transport. However, there is no guarantee that the schemes at Junction 11, Mereoak roundabout and the Mereoak Park and Ride would all be completed within the timescale of this planning application. Accordingly, it is considered that the proposed development is contrary to Policies OS1, LD5 & LD6 of the Berkshire Structure Plan, WOS1, WOS3 & WOS4 of the Wokingham District Local Plan Deposit Draft.

4. Insufficient information has been submitted in respect of the proposed access arrangements and extent of off-site works to be carried out as part of the proposed development. Clarification has been sought with regard to the position and type of the proposed westernmost access to Grazeley Road, visibility splays, bus, pedestrian & cycling facilities, proposed junction improvements and traffic calming. In the absence of such matters being

satisfactorily addressed, it is considered that the proposal is contrary to Policy LD5, of the BSP and Policies WT2, WT7, & WT11 of the WDLPDD.

5. In the absence of the provision of a newt survey it is not possible for the local planning authority to determine whether the proposal will have an adverse impact upon the newts within the area. As such it considered that the proposal is contrary to policy EN8 of the Berkshire Structure Plan, and policy WNC3 of the Wokingham District Local Plan (Deposit Draft).

6. In the absence of an archaeological survey the planning authority is unable to determine the possible effect of the development upon any potential archaeological remnants. As such the proposal is considered contrary to policy EN6 of the Berkshire Structure Plan and policy LBE22 of the Loddon Area Local Plan.

7. The proposal is likely to involve the loss of a significant hedgerow on the site. No mitigation has been suggested for the loss of this hedgerow. As such the proposal is considered contrary to policy EN8 of the Berkshire Structure Plan, Policy LC10 of the Loddon Area Local Plan and policy WNC5 of the Wokingham District Local Plan (Deposit Draft).

8. In the absence of the satisfactory provision of adequate services, amenities and infrastructure needs, the proposal would have an unacceptable adverse impact upon the amenities of the area. The proposal is therefore considered contrary to policies LD6 and R5 of the Berkshire Structure Plan, Policy LPS1 of the Loddon Area Local Plan and policies WOS4 and WR7 of the Wokingham District Local Plan.

Condition 9 added. !

Informative.

1. You are advised, in compliance with the Town and Country Planning (General Development procedure)(England) (Amendment) Order 2000, that the following policies and/or proposals in the development plan are relevant to this decision:
Berkshire Structure Plan: C2, C5, H5, H9, LD5, LD6, OS1, EN8, EN6, R5
Loddon Area Local Plan: LH8, LBE2, LBE22, LPS1, LR2, LC10
Wokingham District Local Plan: WH6, WOS1, WOS2, WOS3, WOS4, WT2, WT7, WT11, WCC1, WCC2, WBE1, WNC3, WNC5 WR7

2. In the event of a s106 agreement or unilateral agreement being signed to secure the contributions requested, the reason for refusal relating to this shall be withdrawn.

Town and Country Planning Acts

Land North of Grazeley Road, Three Mile Cross

Outline Planning Application for Residential Development

Supporting Written Statement – Amended (October 2002)

on behalf of
Bewley Homes Plc

prepared by:

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Ref: HE/B/013/8/01
October 2002

Land North of Grazeley Road, Three Mile Cross

Outline Planning Application for Residential Development

Supporting Written Statement

on behalf of

Bewley Homes Plc

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Appendix 6	Landscape Strategy
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Appendix 8	Flood Risk Assessment
Appendix 9	Road Traffic Noise Impact Assessment
Appendix 10	Project Team Index

1.0
INSTRUCTIONS & INTRODUCTION

Instructions:

1.1 Charles Planning Associates (Chartered Town Planners) is Instructed by Bewley Homes Plc to prepare and submit an Outline Planning Application for residential development on land north of Grazeley Road, Three Mile Cross. The location and extent of the site is shown on Plans CPA/1 and CPA/2 (Appendix One). This application seeks Outline planning approval for:

- Residential development of approximately 270 units, the creation of new vehicular accesses, provision of public open space, footpath links and cycleways.

1.2 The application site extends (in total) to an area of 9.24 ha (22.8 acres) and is identified in red on Plan CPA/2 (Appendix One). The site falls within the administrative boundaries of Wokingham District Council.

1.3 In order to prepare the proposals for the development of the site for residential development, Bewley Homes Plc has Instructed a professional Project Team comprising of a planning consultancy, architects, a landscape consultant and a transportation consultancy. Details of the Project Team are set out in the index attached at Appendix Ten.

Introduction:

1.4 This Supporting Written Statement represents an updated version of the previously submitted Statement that accompanied Bewley Homes' earlier planning application submitted to Wokingham District Council (LPA ref: O/2002/7137). In order to provide clarity and a distinction between the previous text and any revised text, it is important to be aware that:

i) Any additional/revised text is identified in italics; and

ii) Any deleted text has been ~~struck through~~.

*1.5 This application is not dissimilar to the earlier planning application submitted on 15 July 2002, which was subsequently appeal against 'non-determination' on 9 September 2002 (Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/A/02/1098902). However, this present application is **not** a direct duplicate of the earlier application in so far as it includes an update of the Council's latest housing land availability figures.*

1.6 However, with regard to all other matters, this application is identical, in so far as it includes all of the same technical analysis, ie Environmental Study, Flood Risk Assessment and Road Traffic Noise Assessment.

1.7 The Supporting Written Statement is submitted pursuant to paragraph 16 and Annex A of PPG1: General Policy and Principles (February 1997). The Statement forms an integral part of the planning application and should be read in conjunction with the application forms, Certificates, Notices and submitted plans. It should be noted that this Statement contains contributions from all members of the Project Team, and their assistance in the preparation of this Statement and the planning application is acknowledged.

1.8 This Outline Planning Application seeks consent for the principle of residential development on the application site and means of access. It will be followed in due course by a detailed Reserved Matters application which will deal with siting, design, layout, landscaping, external appearance and materials. Vehicular access into the proposed housing development, together with the means of pedestrian and cycle access are also proposed and incorporated within this application for determination.

1.9 Section 2 sets out a brief background to the present application, Section 3 provides a short description of the site and surrounding area, and Section 4 examines the relevant planning policy framework at the National, strategic and local level. Section 5 provides a summary of the site appraisal work undertaken by members of the Project Team, and demonstrates how the findings of such work have resulted in the presently proposed land-use distribution.

1.10 Section 6 considers the issue of Planning Conditions and the use of Legal Agreements. Section 7 provides a short summary and conclusion.

2.0
BACKGROUND TO APPLICATION

i) Local Plan History

2.1 The site was promoted at the Wokingham District Local Plan Inquiry as a non-allocated housing site. The LPI commenced in October 1998 (Part I) in respect of the three major development proposals south of Junction 11 of the M4 Motorway (ie Grazeley, Spencers Wood/Three Mile Cross, Shinfield). The application site did **not** form part of any of the Consortium's major development proposals and was promoted independently at Part II of the LPI, which commenced in February 2000. The Part II LPI Inspector's Report was issued to the District Council in October 2001 and made publicly available towards the end of November 2001. A copy of the relevant extract is attached at Appendix Two.

2.2 The LPI Inspector (Part II) recommended that:

> **'... the application site is allocated for housing development under Policy WH2 and the settlement boundary amended accordingly under Policy WOS2.'**
> *(Paragraph 5.496)*

> **'... the site is excluded from the gap/green wedge designation under Policy WCC2.'**
> *(Paragraph 5.497)*

2.3 After ~~nine~~ *eleven* months consideration of the LPI Inspector's Report (Part II), the District Council's response to the report remains outstanding and it has yet to publish Proposed Modifications to the Deposit Draft District-wide Local Plan *(anticipated in early 2003)*.

2.4 In the light of the above, this planning application has been submitted against:

- the Wokingham District Local Plan
  Deposit Draft (incorporating Proposed Amendments), February 2000;

and

- Wokingham District Local Plan
  Inspector's Report, Part II
  Mr D Hollis, October 2001

2.5 The relevant planning policy framework is examined comprehensively in Section 4 of this Written Statement.

ii) Development Control History

2.6 The application site has been the subject of two previous planning applications, the details of which are summarised below:

a) Outline Application – LPA Ref: 98/67547/O

Proposal for approximately 100 residential units

- *submitted April 1998*
- *appealed against non-determination, July 1999*
- *appeal withdrawn, November 1999*

b) Outline Application – LPA Ref: O/2002/7137

Residential development for approximately 270 units

- *submitted 15 July 2002*
- *appealed against non-determination, 9 September 2002*
- *awaiting date of S.78 Inquiry*
- *Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/A/02/1098902*

3.0
SITE LOCATION & DESCRIPTION

i) The Surrounding Area

3.1 The application site immediately abuts the western and northern edge of Three Mile Cross, which has evolved as a linear development along the old Reading/Basingstoke Road and Grazeley Road. Three Mile Cross is less than 1 km north of Spencers Wood, which is a larger sized settlement. Whilst Three Mile Cross is a separate settlement, it is recognised that it is part of an urban area that extends south along Basingstoke Road into Spencers Wood.

3.2 Three Mile Cross, Spencers Wood, Swallowfield and Riseley further to the south, are each served by the former Reading/Basingstoke Road (now the B3349) and are all situated to the east of the present A33 by-pass. The A33 represents the main north/south arterial route away from these settlements, which all relate well to the wider transport network (strategic and local). Junction 11 of the M4 Motorway is 0.5 km north of Three Mile Cross and the southern extent of the Reading conurbation is immediately further to the north. Transportation modes of choice are shortly to be expanded further, following the approval of planning permission for the Mereoak Park and Ride facility to the west of the A33. Three Mile Cross therefore has considerable access to a variety of forms of transportation and is well served by alternative forms of transport to the private motor car.

3.3 Three Mile Cross, Spencers Wood and Ryeish Green form a network of interconnected settlements occupying a low river terrace, (rising to a maximum elevation of 65 m), lying to the west of the River Loddon floodplain. Outside the settlement boundaries, there is sporadic development throughout this area and a network of mainly small fields, copses, occasional woodland blocks or parkland (as at Stanbury Park). The landscape character is generally semi-enclosed.

3.4 To the west of the Swallowfield bypass there is further low-lying land at Grazeley, which drains in a northerly direction to the River Kennet. The landscape here is different in character, comprising open agricultural land, with scattered small settlements only and very little dispersed development or ribbon development. The landscape character is essentially open.

3.5 The urban expansion of Reading has extended up to the M4 corridor, but the motorway itself, and particularly the elevated junction 11, forms a strong defining feature in the landscape. To the north-east of the junction, Whitley Wood is an established residential suburb of Reading. To the north-west major development are continuing, with the recent construction of the Madjeski football stadium adding to existing large-scale developments such as the Courage Brewery.

3.6 There is presently an extensive range of services and facilities within Three Mile Cross/Spencers Wood, including primary and secondary education facilities, library, convenience stores, petrol filling stations, small scale shops and local employment opportunities. It is recognised that these services and facilities cater for the day-to-day needs of the local community. Higher order services/facilities are readily accessible 1-3 km north of the application site within South Reading.

3.7 Three Mile Cross is a mainly residential settlement, located around the crossroads formed by Basingstoke Road, Grazeley Road and Church Lane. Ribbon development of older housing extends along Grazeley Road, and also along Basingstoke Road, both north and south of the crossroads. The northern and western 'arms' of ribbon development are noticeably longer than the eastern and southern arms. This is significant in terms of the geography of the settlement patter, as the longer 'arms' extend built development along the full length of the application site's eastern and southern boundaries. Together with the A33 Swallowfield bypass, these roads completely enclose the application site and define its setting.

3.8 In the centre of the settlement there are some older properties that help to provide some local feeling of identity, but the settlement as a whole does not enjoy any strong sense of historic or architectural character.

3.9 The surrounding area, immediately to the west of the A33 Swallowfield bypass, comprises essentially flat open agricultural land, with mainly low tree cover, but a reasonable network of field boundary hedgerows. There are no significant woodland blocks. There is very little settlement here other than isolated hamlets at Great Lea Dairy farm and at the northern end of Mereoak Lane. This latter road runs parallel to the A33 and the field lying between the two roads has been allocated as a 'Park and Ride' site in the draft WDLP, and is the subject of a recent planning approval for this facility.

3.10 Land to the north-east of Three Mile Cross, lying between Church Lane and the M4 is also low-lying agricultural land, mostly under pasture. However, the field pattern here is more intimate in character with smaller fields and numerous hedgerows, some incorporating mature hedgerow trees. The M4 corridor to the north of this area provides strong visual enclosure.

3.11 In the context of the above, it is considered that the application site and its surrounding environs, have a greater relationship to this wider area and the extensive opportunities that exist within Reading, as opposed to other settlements within Wokingham District or the urban area of Wokingham itself.

ii) Site Survey

3.12 A detailed topographical survey has been commissioned by the applicant and was undertaken by a specialist land survey company, Siteline. The survey has been plotted at a scale of 1:1,000 and a copy of the plan (Drawing No: 03MC001B) is attached at Appendix Three.

3.13 The plotted survey details of, *inter alia*, boundaries, roads, levels, hedges, trees, footpaths and boundaries of neighbouring properties.

iii) The Application Site

3.14 The site comprises three fields that form a triangular-shaped area of land lying between the A33 Swallowfield bypass and the built-up area of Three Mile Cross. In terms of *landform*, there are no distinguishing features. The site slopes very slightly to the north from a general elevation of about 45 m AOD on Grazeley Road. However, in visual terms, the slope is scarcely discernible.

3.15 The land is currently used for arable crops to provide animal fodder.

3.16 The entire north-west boundary follows the line of the A33 but is separated from the road by a wide belt of established vegetation, (which is described below) and incorporating a gravel-surfaced bridleway known as Woodcock Lane. On its south side, the site abuts an undeveloped section of road frontage along the central and western sections of Grazeley Road, and the rear gardens of existing frontage housing at its eastern end. Similarly, on its eastern side, the site abuts the rear boundaries of mixed-use properties on Basingstoke Road but, at its northern end, the site meets the road frontage as it curves around to meet the roundabout junction with the A33. There is not significant screening by vegetation along the property boundaries adjoining the application site.

3.17 In terms of *landcover*, the main features are the broad belt of boundary vegetation on the A33 frontage and the hedgerows and tree lines that follow the internal site boundaries and part of the Grazeley Road frontage. The field layer comprises mainly agricultural grass and is poorly draining.

3.18 In visual and landscape terms, the boundary vegetation along the A33 is the most significant. This comprises several 'layers' of vegetation extending to a depth of about 20 m. It comprises mostly young trees and shrubs, which have regenerated naturally. A full species list is included in the accompanying ecological report. This vegetation belt has a typical height of about 8-10 m. There is also some elm scrub and, at the southern end, developing plantings associated with the construction of the bypass. The bridleway known as Woodcock Lane follows the inside edge of this belt of vegetation for the full length of the site frontage.

3.19 Two hedgerows cross the site from north to south, and a public footpath that links Woodcock Lane to Grazeley Road follows the eastern hedgerow. Both hedgerows comprise a mix of native shrubs, with scattered trees, and these are described in the ecological survey. The hedges have generally been allowed to grow out to form tall, unmanaged features. There is a more significant group of trees around a small dried-out field pond that abuts the western hedgerow crossing the site. With the exception of this pond, there is no significant surface water features.

4.0
PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

4.1 The planning policy framework relevant to this planning application is set out in DETR Circulars, Planning Policy Guidance notes and the appropriate Development Plan. The following are considered to be of particular relevance to this planning application:

i) <u>National</u>

4.2 **PPG1: General Policy and Principles (February 1997)** emphasises the contribution of the planning system in achieving the objectives of sustainable development and reaffirms the role of the planning system in meeting the needs of a growing and competitive economy in providing for new development, such as housing, and in protecting the natural and built environment. Subsequent Government guidance and Ministerial Statements reflect the aims of PPG1 in placing increasing emphasis upon achieving sustainable patterns of development.

4.3 The most recent Government guidance in relation to sites for new housing is set out in the **Revised PPG3: Housing (March 2000)** and **Revised PPG13: Transport (March 2001)**. The main aspects of this guidance are:

- provide wider housing opportunity and choice and a better mix in the size, type and location of housing than is currently available, and seek to create mixed communities;
- create more sustainable patterns of development by building in locations with good accessibility by public transport to jobs, education and health facilities, shopping, leisure and local services;
- the introduction of the 'sequential approach' in identifying new sites for housing, ie within the existing built-up area, urban extensions, around nodes in good public transport corridors and the possibility of new or expanded settlements;
- make more efficient use of land by reviewing planning policies and standards in the light of increased importance on sustainability matters;
- suggested minimum densities (ie >30 dwellings per hectare);
- the suggestion of introducing phasing in all Development Plans, to assist LPAs 'plan, monitor and manage' their housing provision;
- the operation of the development plan process should not be prejudiced by unreal expectations nor by Local Planning Authorities seeking to prioritise sites in an arbitrary manner;

- accommodate housing principally within existing urban areas, with increased densities for housing at locations which are highly accessible by public transport, walking and cycling;

- promote sustainable transport choices, encourage alternative means of travel and reduce reliance upon the private motor car for work and other journeys; and

- in rural areas, locate new housing development in areas supported by other local services (jobs, shopping and leisure).

4.4 **PPG7: The Countryside (February 1997, As Amended March 2000)** places the objectives of sustainable development at the cornerstone of both the Government's rural policies and its planning policies. It seeks to maintain the character of the countryside and conserve its natural resources, in addition to enhancing the overall amenity of the land through the creation of additional areas of woodland. In relation to the location of new housing development, paragraph 3.20 states that:

> 'The pattern of new development should be determined through the development plan process, and should be well-related in scale and location to existing development.'

4.5 National guidance in respect of conserving the diversity of the natural environment is contained within **PPG9: Nature Conservation (October 1994)**. This sets out the Government's objectives for the conservation and enhancement of wildlife habitats and species, and advises on the development control issues regarding the protection of natural habitats.

4.6 **PPG12: Development Plans (December 1999)** emphasises the Government's commitment to the plan-led planning system, which is given statutory force by Section 54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (As Amended). It indicates that development plan policies should implement the land-use planning aspects of sustainable development, and should also consider the interaction of the environmental and social implications of such policies. It also states that progress towards achieving sustainable development can only be achieved if the various objectives are considered in a holistic manner.

4.7 Government advice relating to the provision of affordable housing is found in **Circular 06/98: Planning and Affordable Housing**, which states that a community's need for affordable housing is a material planning consideration and that local planning authorities should encourage its supply in appropriate circumstances through negotiations with developers. Recently Revised PPG3: Housing (March 2000) indicates that Circular 06/98 remains the Government's most detailed policy document in respect of the provision of affordable housing.

ii) Strategic

4.8 The relevant structure plan is the **Berkshire Structure Plan 1991-2006**, which was Adopted in August 1997 and provides for strategic development and growth within Berkshire up to 2006. In the interests of brevity, it is not considered necessary to include full extracts of the relevant policies to this application, but the following list identifies those policies that are particularly relevant:

Policy LD1	-	Sustainable Development
Policy C6	-	Green Wedges and Gaps
Policy EN5	-	Areas of Special Character
Policy H1	-	Overall Level of Housing Provision
Policy H2	-	Distribution and Phasing of Housing
Policy H3	-	Development South of the M4
Policy H4	-	Assessment of Development Proposals

4.9 The above list of policies are not site-specific to this planning application, but provide the strategic basis for the more detailed policies formulated in local plans. **Policy H3** is of significant importance:

> 'Within the provisions of Policy H2, between 2,000 and 2,500 of the total dwellings in Wokingham District for the period 1991-2006 should be in the area to the south of the M4 motorway at Reading.'

4.10 Whilst the existing Berkshire Structure Plan (1991-2006) remains the appropriate structure plan for development control purposes, the Berkshire Unitary Authorities' Joint Strategic Planning Unit (JSPU) has commenced a Review for the period 2001-2016. In October 1999 the JSPU published a series of Consultation Background Papers, which represented the first stage of the production of a Replacement Structure Plan for Berkshire. In March 2002, the Deposit Draft version of the **Berkshire Structure Plan: 2001-2016** was published for public consultation, and the JSPU's response to all representations is anticipated to be considered in October/November 2002.

iii) Local

- **Loddon Area Local Plan**

4.11 As previously indicated, the Wokingham District-wide Local Plan is at an advanced stage of plan preparation following a Local Plan Inquiry between October 1998-November 2000. However, the District Council remains to publish Proposed Modifications following receipt of the LPI Inspector's Report in October 2001, and therefore the LPA may seek to rely upon policies of the extant local plan, namely the Loddon Area Local Plan (LALP).

4.12 The LALP was formulated in 1990 and an LPI was held between November 1990 and May 1991 The Plan was Adopted in May 1995 and had an end date of 1996. It was prepared in accordance with the earlier Replacement Structure Plan for Berkshire (RSPB), which was Adopted in November 1988. Clearly, both the LALP and RSPB were prepared over a decade ago and have subsequently either been superseded or are now out of date. It is therefore considered that LALP policies should be afforded only limited weight in the determination of this application.

- **Wokingham District Local Plan**

4.13 As previously indicated, the Wokingham District Local Plan was placed on Deposit in October 1997 and Part I of the LPI commenced in October 1998. Proposed Amendments to the Deposit Draft WDLP were published in April 1999 and Part II of the LPI commenced in February 2000. The LPI Part II Inspector's Report was issued to the District Council in October 2001 and made publicly available towards the end of November 2001. The District Council is yet to publish its consideration of the LPI Part II Inspector's Report and subsequently has not yet published any Proposed Modifications to the Deposit Draft District-wide Local Plan (As Amended).

4.14 Part I of the LPI closed in October 1999 and the LPI Inspector's Report was published on 21 July 2000. It recommended the deletion of the LPA's preferred major development site south of Junction 11 of the M4 motorway (at Grazeley), and the rejection of both of the alternative schemes (at Spencers Wood/Three Mile Cross and Shinfield) in the light of, *inter alia*, the Government guidance contained within Revised PPG3: Housing (March 2000). Whilst the Part I Inspector did not recommend any of the proposed major development areas, he did recognise that several component parts of the Spencers Wood/Three Mile Cross proposal were more appropriate for development than others. He was of the opinion that the firmest boundary of these proposals lay to the west of the settlements (ie that formed by the A33).

4.15 The Part II LPI Inspector concurred with his earlier colleague and acknowledged the application site's suitability for residential development and recognised its sustainability credentials (Appendix Two). The Inspector subsequently recommended the allocation of the site for housing development under Policy WH2 and the settlement boundary amended accordingly under Policy WOS2 (paragraph 5.496), and the consequential exclusion of the site from the gap/green wedge designation under Policy WCC2 (paragraph 5.497).

4.16 In the light of the above Part II LPI Inspector's recommendations, which provides the justification for the 'principle of development' and the site's suitability for development, it is considered that the following local plan policies are relevant in the consideration of this application:

Policy WOS1	-	Sustainable Development
Policy WOS2	-	General Development Principles
Policy WOS3	-	Development Control Principles
Policy WOS4	-	Infrastructure Requirements for New Development
Policy WOS7	-	Noise

Policy WCC2	-	Green Gap/Wedge [no longer applicable]
Policy WLL7	-	Landscape and New Development
Policy WNC6	-	Wildlife Corridors
Policy WBE1	-	Development in its Local Context
Policy WBE3	-	Character of Large Scale Development
Policy WBE9	-	Accessibility
Policy WBE10	-	Landscape and Planting
Policy WBE11	-	Protection of Trees and Woodland
Policy WHE6	-	Areas of Special Character *[Recommended to be deleted]*
Policy WH2	-	Housing Development Sites
Policy WH6	-	Variety of Housing
Policy WH7	-	Affordable Housing
Policy WH??	-	Housing Density
Policy WSM1	-	Housing Development South of the M4
Policy WR7	-	Provision of Public Open Space
Policy WT1	-	Location of Development
Policy WT2	-	Access to Development
Policy WT3	-	Model Split (Local Transport Plan)
Policy WT4	-	Environmental Aspects of Traffic (Local Transport Plan)
Policy WT6	-	Parking Provision
Policy WT9	-	Pedestrian Routes and Footpaths
Policy WIC16	-	Development in Flood Plains

4.17 The following section of this Supporting Written Statement provides an indication of how the proposed development scheme has evolved and demonstrates that the planning application is in accordance with the relevant planning policies.

5.0
SITE APPRAISAL

5.1 Site appraisal work has been undertaken continually since the preparation of the earlier planning application, throughout the present local plan process and in the preparation of the present application by members of the Project Team. Considerable written evidence was submitted to the LPI Part II Inspector, which led to the Inspector's recommendation to allocate the site for residential development.

5.2 This supporting paper draws upon the earlier appraisal work, evidence submitted to the LPI and the observations and recommendations of the LPI Inspector. It also benefits from several pre-application discussions with Planning and Highway Officers of the District Council.

i) Planning Considerations

5.3 In reaching his recommendation to allocate the application site for residential development, the LPI Inspector did so on the basis of the need for the LPA to meet its strategic housing requirement and the site's sustainability credentials conforming with the principles set out in PPG3: Housing (March 2000). In progressing he presently proposed scheme, further regard has also been given to other planning considerations set out in the Deposit Draft Wokingham District Local Plan (As Amended).

a) Housing Land Supply
b) Revised PPG3: Housing (March 2000)
c) Housing Density/Mix
d) Affordable Housing
e) Area of Special Character
f) Green Gap/Wedge.

a) Housing Land Supply

5.4 The following table identifies the Council's housing land supply between 1999 to 2004*2* (the Council's latest publicly available figures). It identifies that put forward by the Council at the LPI, that recommended by the LPI Inspector, and the latest available figures:

	LPA (1/4/99)	LPI Inspector (1/4/99)	LPA (1/4/01 *2*)	*LPI Inspector's Methodology (1/4/02)*
Structure Plan Requirement	7,750	7,750	7,750	*7,750*
Completions 1991-1999	3,841	3,841	---	---
1991-2001	---	---	~~4,801~~ *5,038*	*5,038*
Outstanding Commitments	536	536	~~779~~ *903*	*238*
Sites identified in WDLP, DD	929	1,044	~~243~~ *195*	*860*
Other Soft Commitments	193	174	~~26~~ *124*	*104*
Windfalls	616	553	~~435~~ *348*	*316*
Major Development South of M4	1,850	---	Nil	*Nil*
Land the Subject of Part I	---	1,850	Nil	*Nil*
Flexibility Allowance	---	---	*Nil*	*-120*
Surplus/Deficit	**+215**	**+248**	~~**-1,466**~~ *-1,142*	*-1,314*

5.5 The present deficit is as a direct result of the Council's over-reliance upon its proposal at Grazeley during the LPI. The Part I LPI Inspector recommended that none of the major development proposals be pursued, although recognised that several component parts of the Three Mile Cross/Spencers Wood and Shinfield Consortiums' proposals were more appropriate for future development than other component parts.

5.6 The Part II LPI Inspector recommended that the District Council undertake an Urban Capacity Study to ascertain the potential of brownfield sites within existing urban areas. The Inspector also recommended a total of 19 additional sites to rectify any shortfall of the Council in seeking to meet its strategic housing requirement. The application site is one of those 19 sites.

5.7 It is understood that the District Council has undertaken an Urban Capacity Study and has revised its latest housing land availability figures to 1 April 2002~~. However, it has not made any of this data publicly available, and it is not therefore possible to comment upon these matters in detail within this application, at this time.~~ *However, the Council remains to publish the findings of the Urban Capacity Study and the latest available figures (identified above) highlight the remaining deficiency in housing provision (-1,142 or –1,314 depending upon the methodology chosen). The District Council's response to the LPI Inspector's methodology is still awaited, alongside that of his other recommendations.*

5.8 However, it is evident that the District Council has a significant shortfall in housing land supply, which has led to a chronic shortage of proper and adequate housing accommodation for local people and people wishing to move to the area to take-up employment positions. The Part II LPI Inspector was fully aware of this issue in recommending the additional sites for housing development and was of the opinion that, '*... those dwellings are needed now and not some time in the future*'.

5.9 As previously indicated, it was the Council's over-reliance upon its Grazeley proposal that has led to this present shortfall in housing provision. There has also been a considerable delay in the Council's consideration of the Part II LPI Inspector's Report and subsequent publication of Proposed Modifications. This further delay has exacerbated the existing deficit in the level of genuinely available housing.

b) Revised PPG3: Housing (March 2000)

5.10 Revised PPG3 was published whilst the Part II LPI was sitting, and represents a significant shift in the approach taken in the identification of new sites for residential development. Consequently, the Council's site selection methodology was out of date, as it did not reflect the sequential approach to housing provision with increased emphasis being given to previously-developed land. The Part II LPI Inspector found the Council's methodology too simplistic and that it would not lead to the creation of the most sustainable patterns of development.

5.11 In seeking to identify sites for new housing development, Revised PPG3 states that LPAs should now follow a search sequence, starting with the re-use of previously-developed land within existing urban areas (ie brownfield sites), then urban extensions (primarily greenfield sites), and finally new development around nodes in good public transport corridors. In this context, it is considered that the application site represents an urban extension situated in close proximity to a public transport node/corridor.

5.12 The sustainability merits of the application site were discussed fully during the course of the LPI, and both parties (the LPA and Bewley Homes Plc) agreed that the development of the site for housing purposes would accord with the objectives of achieving sustainable forms of development. The LPI Inspector reached the same conclusion and considered that the site is well located in terms of the advice in PPG3 and PPG13, which aim to reduce the need to travel, especially by private motor car, and thereby promote more sustainable transport choices.

5.13 The application site therefore scores highly in sustainability terms, as well as being well related in scale and location to the established residential area of Three Mile Cross/Spencers Wood, and can be readily integrated with the existing settlement pattern. The location of the site abutting existing residential development (on two sides) and the A33 (on the third), provides physical and visual containment, and represents a logical rounding-off of the existing settlement structure.

5.14 The site is also well related to existing services/facilities and has good access to public transport, employment opportunities, retail provision and leisure services. The accessibility of the site will be enhanced through the provision of new pedestrian and cycle links.

5.15 Following the publication of Revised PPG3 and in the light of the observations of the Part II LPI Inspector, it is understood that the District Council has revised its site selection methodology from that previously pursued at the LPI. However, the Council has not made its latest methodology publicly available and it is not therefore possible to comment upon this matter at this stage.

5.16 However, it is evident that the site is situated in a highly sustainable location, which provides the opportunity to travel by modes other than the private car. It is also well related to a wide range of local services and facilities, and in close proximity to the higher order services situated south of Reading. Given the above, it is clear that the site would score highly in any site evaluation exercise and represents a robust sustainable location for residential development.

c) Housing Density/Mix

5.17 The present planning application is submitted in Outline form only, with only the means of access to be determined at this stage. However, the application is supported by illustrative material (referred to in more detail below, ii, Design Principles), which demonstrates how a scheme of 270 dwellings could be accommodated within the application site. Whilst submitted for 'illustrative purposes only', they provide an indication of a proposed scheme that accords with present planning policy objectives regarding density and mix of dwellings.

5.18 Revised PPG3 requires LPAs to make more efficient use of land, encouraging developments between 30-50 dwellings per hectare. **Policy ??** of the Wokingham District Local Plan (Deposit Draft, As Amended) seeks to reflect this aim of National guidance, and the principle of this policy was supported by the Part II LPI Inspector. Revised PPG3 also requires LPAs to secure an appropriate mix of dwelling size, type and affordability, with greater emphasis towards meeting the needs of smaller households. **Policy WH6** of the Local Plan seeks to encourage a mix of density, type and size on all residential sites.

5.19 Notwithstanding the density, mix and design are all issues to be the subject of a future Reserved Matters application, the present illustrative drawings demonstrate how the following could be achieved:

270 dwellings @ 29.2 dpha (gross)*

Mix of Housing - 45% 1 & 2 bed

- 26% 3 bed
- 29% 4 & 5 bed

** Includes significant area of landscape buffer (see Annex C, PPG3).*

5.20 Whilst the above detail is not for determination with this present planning application, I can confirm that the applicant is agreeable to the use of planning conditions to achieve the above objectives, although clearly this will be the subject of future negotiations as this application proposal is progressed.

d) Affordable Housing

5.21 Similarly to the above, the detail of Affordable Housing will be contained within a future Reserved Matters application. However, the illustrative drawings provide an indication of 25% affordable/social housing. The applicant is willing to enter into negotiations for a S.106 Agreement in this regard.

e) Area of Special Character

5.22 The application site is situated in close proximity to the proposed Area of Special Character covering part of the settlement of Three Mile Cross. **Policy WHE6** proposed the designation of this policy consideration, and the Part II LPI Inspector has recommended the deletion of this policy. In the absence of the Council's consideration of the LPI Inspector's Report, it is not possible to comment in any detail on this subject.

f) Green Gap/Wedge

5.23 Policy WCC2 of the Deposit Draft District Local Plan (As Amended, February 2000) identifies the site as being subject to a Green Gap/Wedge designation. The appropriateness of this designation was explored fully at the LPI and the Part II Inspector agreed with the specialist evidence submitted on behalf of Bewley Homes Plc, that the designation should be deleted. Consequently, this matter is not analysed any further as part of this planning application.

ii) <u>Design Principles</u>

5.24 Appendix Four contains five plans that provide an indication of the design principles that lay behind the presently proposed scheme. Whilst these plans have been submitted for 'illustrative purposes only', they do demonstrate the urban design philosophy that has evolved in assessing the most appropriate scheme.

5.25 Bewley Homes Plc has Instructed services of an architect firm to provide specialist advice in this regard, and Pope Priestley Associates has provided a summary of the design evolution of the presently proposed illustrative scheme:

> 'The proposed development comprises a total of 270 dwellings made up of a mixture of 5, 4, 3 and 2 bed houses and 2 and 1 bed apartments, both private and affordable housing. The scheme has been developed in accordance with the guidelines established under PPG3 for a sustainable site, in a manner to respond to local conditions, with higher density focal areas to its centre and lower density, more open development to the more rural perimeter locations, particularly to the north east of the site.
>
> The varied approach to the design and layout of the development has been driven by the need to retain the strong principle features of the site, the existing woodland and significant hedgerow patterns, the open space along the boundary with the A33, whilst at the same time achieving successful integration with the existing urban fabric. Great care has been taken to ensure that a sustainable development is achieved by creating new, and reinforcing existing links to, local facilities, community infrastructure, the public transport network as well as walking and cycle routes. The existing footpath that runs through the site from Grazeley Road to the open space adjacent the A33 has been combined with a new cyclepath and the sustainable drainage system to create a positive landscape corridor through the site. The housing along the landscape corridor overlooks or are accessed via shared surfaces adjacent to this area offering a sense of inclusion with the rest of the development and added security and we have used the existing open space to the north of the site to define the edge of the built development. The north east corner of the site presents an open, rural face to the development and at the same time a village green has been created on the main pedestrian approach from Basingstoke Road. Great care has been taken with the site layout along the southern boundary to ensure that the new development is not turning its back on the existing homes along Grazeley Road. To avoid presenting a series of rear elevations and back gardens we have designed frontage properties that sit along Grazeley Road served from private drives, creating a sympathetic streetscape and softening the junction between new and existing homes.

The starting point in the design process for this scheme was to create a clearly defined and coherent urban structure, achieving the correct structure of a residential environment is fundamental to the success of any development. We have achieved this by creating a framework of permeable, inter-connecting routes for both vehicle and pedestrian/cycles, which define blocks of housing, open space and community amenity areas. The layout of housing within these blocks take on a variety of forms including streets, squares, courts and mews. The visual quality of these areas comes not only from the two-dimensional layout, but also from the mix of activities and from the quality in the detailing of the buildings, the landscape and the interfaces between those elements. People will be encouraged to move from one part of the site to another as views of key local buildings are glimpsed through vistas created by groups of houses and apartments or open spaces. The three storey apartment blocks within the urban centre of the site creating a strong sense of place contrasted with the two storey housing punctuated with three storey town houses as you move towards the perimeter of the site, reducing the scale of the development.

Throughout the scheme we have tried to create a sense of movement and permeability. Designing routes through and around the site to control vehicle movement and speed, provide the residents with a choice in how they make their journeys, create clear views to aid with orientation and to reinforce the character of the separate areas within the development. Where and how cars are parked is crucial to the quality of a housing development and to the choices people make in how they travel. Instead of the dominance of cars pushed in front of houses we have taken the opportunity to develop a scheme using a combination of attached and detached garage blocks, in-curtilage parking and courtyard parking. We have tried not to create car parks but to design places which have parking in them.

The provision of a mix of housing types has contributed to the creation of a more attractive residential environment by enabling a greater diversity of building forms and scale. The creation of successful residential environments is about much more than visually attractive design. Along with the diversity of form and scale we have provided a range of housing in terms of dwelling size, type and affordability which will provide homes that respond to peoples needs and hopefully create a framework within which a community can become established and grow.

In conclusion, the proposed development will provide 270 new homes in a mixture of thoughtfully designed areas that are sympathetic to the requirements of pedestrians and cyclists as well as the motorist. With a high-density urban core focused around a central pedestrian square with routes spreading out to the less dense, more open green perimeter. The aim was not just to create 270 houses for people to live in but to provide homes and a community where people would develop ties.'

5.26 The above design principles accord fully with the policies of the Deposit Draft version of the Wokingham District Local Plan (As Amended) and latest Government advice (*By Design* and *Better Places To Live*).

iii) <u>Transportation</u>

5.27 Appendix Five contains a 'Transport Statement' prepared and produced by the applicant's highway consultant, Stuart Michael Associates. The Transport Statement represents an integral and formal part of this planning application.

5.28 The information contained within the Transport Statement provides a summary of the information prepared in support of the previous planning application (subsequently withdrawn) and the submissions to the Part II LPI. It identifies the agreed position that was reached between all parties at the LPI as to what constituted the appropriate package of integrated transport measures that are sufficient to meet a sustainable transport objective. The Transport Statement provides a review of the previous position and commentary upon transportation matters on the basis of the present planning application proposals.

5.29 The Transport Statement also identifies the proposed means of access into the site and associated off-site highway works.

iv) <u>Landscape Framework</u>

5.30 The application site comprises 9.24 ha of agricultural land that immediately abuts the existing settlement of Three Mile Cross. The main elements of the landscape framework and site character are contained within the accompanying Landscape Strategy (Appendix Six), which sets out:

- proposals for the retention of the existing landscape framework;
- proposals for the establishment of a new landscape framework;
- the approach to be adopted with regard to layout design; and
- proposals for landscape treatment at key areas.

v) <u>Environmental Study</u>

5.31 An ecological study has been carried out (Phase I Survey) and is contained in Appendix Seven. *In September 1999*, the survey noted that the majority of the site comprised improved grassland of low ecological interest. One area of semi-improved grassland, at the east of the site, had greater species diversity but no plant species were recorded that are rare or scarce in a county context. *It is understood that the site was ploughed in Spring 2000 in an attempt to deter trespass and motorcyclists*. The hedgerows and the belt of vegetation along the A33 boundary have some nature conservation interest, particularly in providing good nesting and foraging opportunities for birds and small mammals. One section of hedgerow was locally more significant because of its species diversity.

5.32 The Environmental Study also provided a summary of the archaeological potential and agricultural land quality classification. This demonstrates that neither of these issues present overriding obstacles to development.

vi) Design Infrastructure

5.33 It is proposed that **Foul Water Drainage** will utilise existing public foul water servers in the vicinity of the site. It is anticipated that **Surface Water Drainage** will make use of the existing network of public surface water sewers in the immediately surrounding area. Both of these services will be upgraded/improved if considered necessary by the utility companies.

5.34 In accordance with good practice, the Environment Agency promotes the use of 'Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems' (SUDS) for the disposal of surface water run-off. It is proposed that such techniques should be incorporated into the surface water drainage system. By using swales, infiltration trenches, infiltration basins, and other source control techniques the quantity of water discharging directly to sewers and watercourses will be significantly reduced. Additionally, the use of passive treatment systems such as wetland features detention basins could be incorporated into the surface water drainage systems. Pollutants in the surface water run-off will be broken down and removed before discharging into the public sewer and watercourses.

5.35 SUDS are beneficial to the environment as ground water levels are replenished, discharges to watercourses become less intensive and subject to peaks, and the quality of run-off is improved. Surface water discharge resulting from SUDS will flow into the local public surface water sewerage system. The rate of run-off will be controlled, if necessary, so that it does not exceed the natural rate of run-off from the undeveloped site and the residual capacity in the existing public surface water sewerage system.

5.36 The accompanying 'Flood Risk Assessment' (May 2001) (Appendix Eight) provides greater detail on the issue of surface water drainage. It also demonstrates that the application site is located wholly outside the indicative 1% fluvial flood plain and is therefore not liable to flood. The development proposals therefore accord with the guidance given in PPG25: Development and Flood Risk (July 2001) and Wokingham District Local Plan (Deposit Draft, As Amended) **Policies WIC15, WIC16 and WIC17**.

vii) Other Land-Use Considerations

- **Road Traffic Noise**

5.37 The application site's north-western boundary is defined by the A33, which clearly generates a certain level of noise. PPG24: Planning and Noise (September 1994) contains advice on noise control measures and introduces the concept of Noise Exposure Categories (NECs). Appendix Nine contains a Road Traffic Noise Impact Assessment (March 2002) prepared by Arup Acoustics.

5.38 The Noise Impact Assessment demonstrates that planning permission should not be refused on noise grounds, and through careful consideration of noise mitigation measures, site design and layout, an acceptable form of development could prevail. The accompanying illustrative layout indicates a proposed scheme that respects the NEC C/B contour.

- **Public Open Space**

5.39 **Policy WR7** of the Deposit Draft Wokingham District Local Plan identifies a requirement for a minimum of 4.3 ha of public open space per thousand population. Whilst this planning application is submitted in Outline form only, the accompanying illustrative masterplan identifies a significant level of on-site POS provision. In accordance with the requirements of Policy WR7, it is anticipated that a proportion of POS will be provided on-site, with the remaining requirement being met in the form of a financial contribution towards the future provision of new, or the enhancement of existing, off-site facilities.

5.40 Clearly the extent of POS and the level of financial contribution will be the subject of detailed negotiations with the LPA at a future date. It is also anticipated that the proposed development would provide for two Local Areas of Play (LAPs) and one Locally Equipped Area of Play (LEAP), but this will also be the subject of future discussions with the LPA.

6.0

PLANNING CONDITIONS & LEGAL AGREEMENTS

i) Planning Conditions

6.1 The applicant is prepared to accept appropriately worded planning Conditions (having regard to the advice in Circular 11/95) following further discussions with both LPAs.

ii) Legal Agreements

6.2 The applicant is prepared in principle to enter into appropriate legal agreements under the provisions of:

S.106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990;
S.278 of the Highways Act 1980; and
S.38 of the Highways Act 1980.

7.0
SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

7.1 The application site immediately abuts the existing settlement of Three Mile Cross and comprises approximately 9.24 ha of a roughly triangular area of agricultural grassland. The site is bounded by existing built development along Grazeley Road (to the south) and Basingstoke Road (to the east). The third side of the 'triangle' is delineated by an existing tree belt and bridleway (Woodcock Lane), which adjoins the A33.

7.2 Three Mile Cross is a settlement with a varying degree of day-to-day services and facilities, with more extensive services readily available at Spencers Wood (less than 0.5 km to the south). Higher order services are available between 1-3 km to the north in south Reading. There is therefore a considerable level of existing facilities within close proximity to the application site.

7.3 The application site was promoted for residential development at the Wokingham District Local Plan Inquiry (Part II). The LPI Part II Inspector's Report was made publicly available in November 2001 and contained the recommendation to allocate the site for housing purposes. The District Council has not yet published its response to the Part IUI LPI Inspector's Report and subsequently any Proposed Modifications remain to be published.

7.4 The site is well located in terms of its proximity to local facilities and public transport opportunities, and scores highly in meeting the objectives of achieving sustainable development. This was a common view shared by the applicant and the LPA at the LPI, and one with which the Part II LPI Inspector found agreement.

7.5 In landscape terms, the site is well suited to accommodate residential development and this can be achieved without any material harm to the landscape character of the surrounding area. The supporting information to this application also demonstrates that the proposed development will not detrimentally affect areas of acknowledged ecological or archaeological importance. It will also not result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.

7.6 The planning application seeks Outline permission for residential development and means of access. It is accompanied by detailed illustrative drawings, which indicate the design philosophy behind the present application. These drawings demonstrate how a proposed scheme of 270 units could be accommodated on the site, whilst providing a variety of mix, type and tenure of housing that accords good urban design principles. The applicant fully supports these principles.

7.7 It is therefore considered that the present Outline application proposes an acceptable form of development that translates the LPI Part II Inspector's Report recommendations, relevant planning policy and site specific considerations into a sustainable form of residential development.