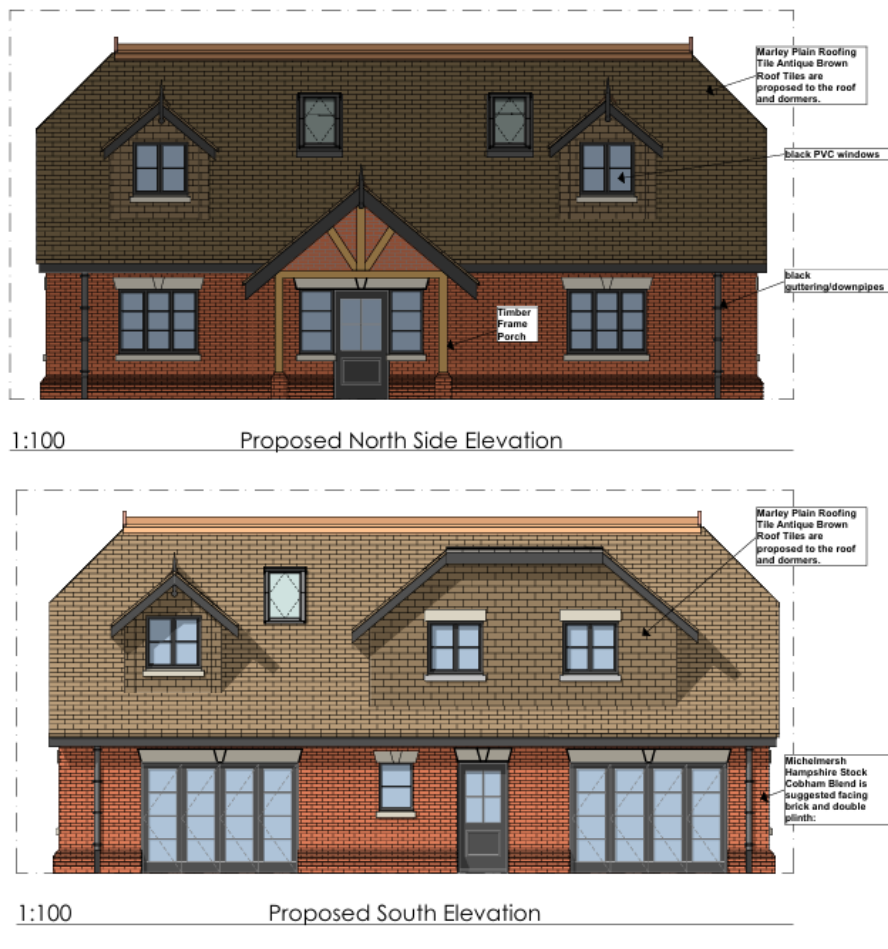


Old School House at Dukes Field Cottage, Norton Road, Riseley, RG7 1SH

Planning Statement

August 2024





Contents

Section 1 Introduction.....	1
Section 2 Site and Surrounding Area.....	3
Section 3 Proposed Development.....	14
Section 4 Planning Policy Context	17
Section 5 Planning Considerations.....	22
Section 6 Conclusions.....	32



Section 1

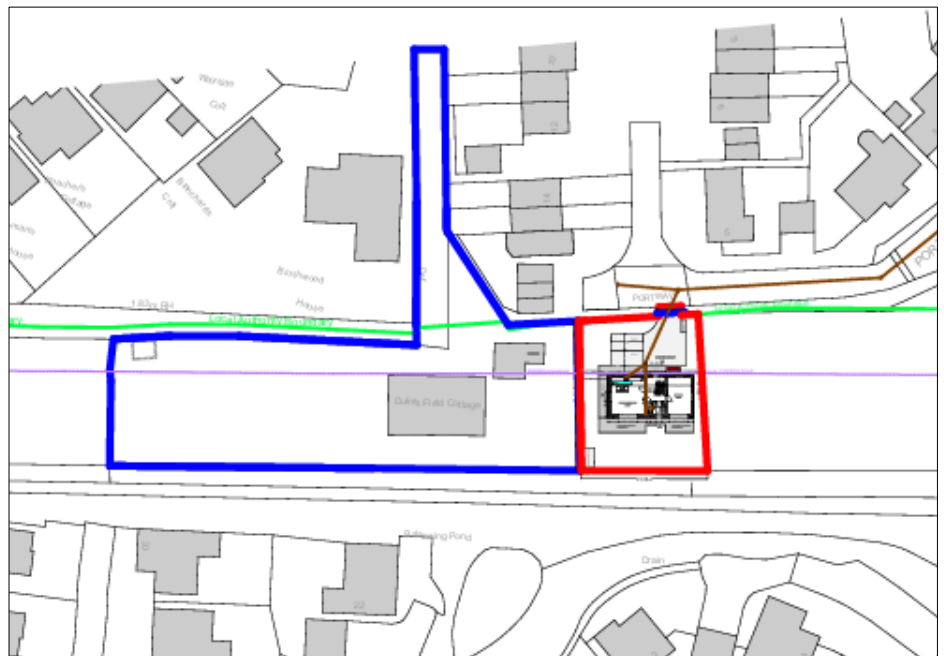
Introduction

- 1.1. This Planning Statement is submitted in support of an application for full planning permission on behalf of Mr Justin Rogers for the following development at the Old School House to the east of Dukes Field Cottage, Norton Road, Riseley, RG7 1SH.

Construction of a dwellinghouse with associated car and cycle parking, access, refuse storage and landscaping following demolition of the existing Old School House

- 1.2. The extent of the site is shown on the Site Location Plan at Figure 1.

Figure 1: Site Location



- 1.3. The proposal involves the subdivision of the existing plot of Dukes Field Cottage to the west of the application site to create a new plot for the proposed development. The new plot contains an existing building known as 'Old School House', which is proposed to be demolished as part of the proposals. As explained in the applicant's Design and Access Statement, the Old School House building is dilapidated and fails to meet modern living standards or functional requirements which necessitates its replacement. In contrast, the proposed dwellinghouse will deliver a high standard of family sized accommodation (3 bedrooms) for prospective occupiers by providing a spacious layout and high levels of energy efficiency and sustainability. It will adopt a design reflective of the local vernacular and will be modern in construction.

- 1.4. The application site falls within the jurisdiction of Hart District Council but lies on the Hart District Council and Wokingham Borough Council boundary.
- 1.5. This Planning Statement presents the proposals in the context of the key relevant planning policy considerations and is set out under the following headings:
-  Existing Site and Planning History
 -  Proposed Development
 -  Planning Policy Context
 -  Planning Considerations
 -  Conclusion
- 1.6. This report should be read in conjunction with submitted planning drawings and the following reports that also accompany the planning application:
-  Design and Access Statement by The Keen Partnership
 -  Arboricultural Impact Assessment by Land Arb Solutions
 -  Transport Assessment by Motion
 -  Ecology Impact Assessment by Ecology By Design
 -  Renewable Energy Assessment by The Keen Partnership
 -  Landscape Proposals by LandArb Solutions



Section 2

Site and Surrounding Area

- 2.1. The site sits within an approximately 0.05ha rectangular shaped plot located on the south side of Portway in the village of Riseley, Berkshire. It comprises a single storey detached building known as 'Old School House', a ditch and a small section of woodland. The existing building is a permanent building of basic construction but is in a dilapidated condition and fails to meet modern living standards. It has most recently been used for storage. An aerial photograph of the site and its surroundings is shown at Figures 2, 3, 4 and 5.
- 2.2. The site currently does not benefit from any access and as such, a new access is proposed from Portway to the north as part of this application. Portway lies within Wokingham Borough Council and therefore this application is to both Hart District Council and Wokingham Borough Council.
- 2.3. The site is surrounded by woodland, the eastern part of which is protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). The woodland provides enclosure to the site and a natural privacy screen. The site itself does not contain any TPO trees.
- 2.4. In terms of topography, the site is relatively flat and level.
- 2.5. The site is in a suburban residential area which includes a mix of terraced, semi-detached and detached dwellinghouses on Portway to the north, and a recently constructed residential development of 83 new houses to the south approved by Hart District Council in 2017 (Outline planning application reference 16/02989/OUT approved on 15 November 2017 and subsequent reserved matters application 18/00242/REM approved on 2 November 2018).
- 2.6. The surrounding area contains a variety of architectural styles and designs. There is no uniform building line, and the orientation of buildings also varies.

Figure 2: Aerial photograph of the site



Source: Google maps

Figure 3: Front of application site as viewed from Portway



Source: Google maps

Figure 4: View of proposed site entrance from Portway



Figure 5: Existing dilapidated building on the site



2.7. In terms of immediate surroundings, the site is located adjacent to:

- ☐ To the north (front), the site faces Portway which comprises a residential cul-de-sac containing a mix of terraced, semi-detached and detached two-storey dwellinghouses constructed in the 1980s.
- ☐ To the south (rear), the site backs onto a recently constructed new residential development of 83 dwellings. The dwellings are a mix of detached, semi-detached and terraced two-storey units. A dense belt of trees and planting on the site boundary separates the site from these dwellings to the south. A Public Footpath also runs along the south boundary of the site.
- ☐ To the east, the site is located adjacent to dense trees and vegetation covered by a TPO (reference ORD/17/00015).

☐ To the west, the site lies next to a detached dwellinghouse known as Dukes Field Cottage.

- 2.8. The site is within the village of Riseley, which is approximately 8 miles south of Reading. The village contains a pub, a village hall, a tennis club and other amenities. The site is well connected to facilities and amenities in both Hart District and Wokingham Borough. It is also close to the larger settlements of Basingstoke, Reading and Farnborough which provide a greater range of services and amenities.
- 2.9. Regarding transport connections, Mortimer train station lies 4.2 miles (a 21-minute cycle or 9-minute drive) to the west of the site, and Bramley train station lies approximately 7 miles (a 32-minute cycle or 15-minute drive) to the south-west. Further details of the transport connectivity of the site is provided in the accompanying Transport Statement.

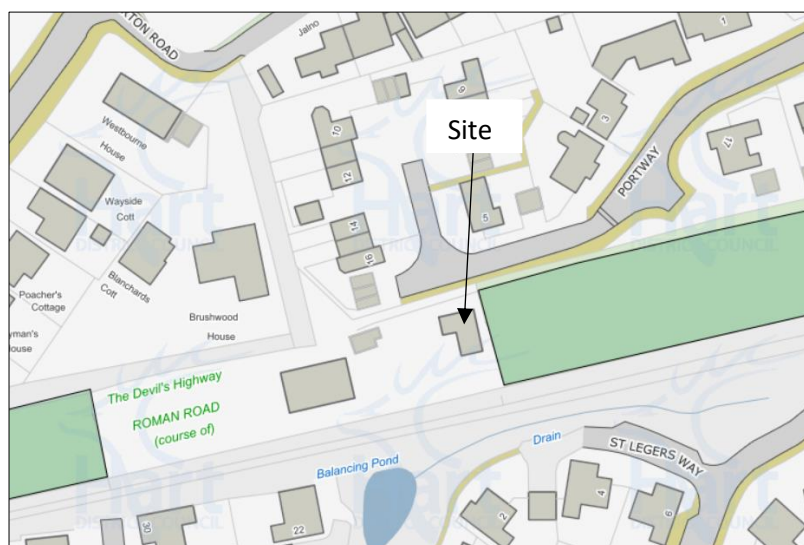
Designations

- 2.10. The following designations apply to the site according to Hart District Council's adopted Policies Map (an extract of the adopted Policies Map is included at Figure 7). The site falls within:

- ☐ the '**Settlement Policy Boundary**' of Riseley
- ☐ the '**Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) 5km Buffer**'
- ☐ an '**Area of Significant Archaeological Features**'

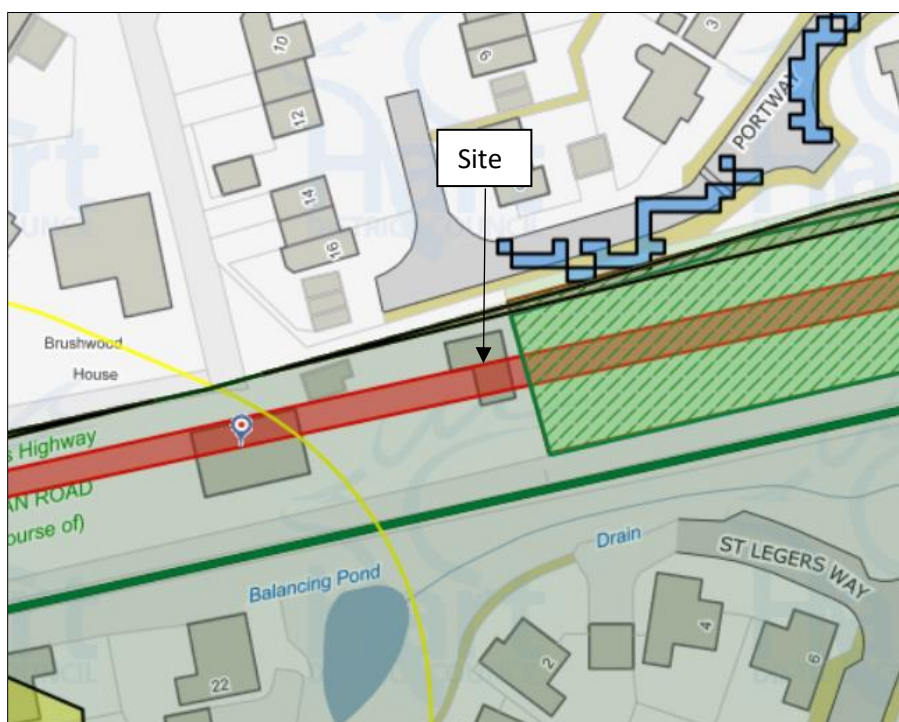
- 2.11. With regard to adjacent designations, a '**Green Infrastructure Network**' lies to the east.
- 2.12. The site is not in an area covered by a Neighbourhood Plan and nor is it covered by an Article 4 Direction.
- 2.13. The woodland to the east of the site is covered by an area Tree Preservation Order (TPO reference ORD/17/00015), as indicated in the Council's TPO map extract below. The site itself does not contain any trees covered by a TPO.

Figure 6: TPO map extract



- 2.14. With regard to flood risk, the site lies within Flood Zone 1 (low risk of flooding).
- 2.15. The site and its immediately surroundings do not contain any locally or statutorily listed buildings. It is also not in a Conservation Area. The site is however located on the line of the Roman road (known as Devil's Road) from Silchester towards London.

Figure 7: Adopted Policies Map (Extract)



Planning history

- 2.16. The relevant planning history for the property available on the Council's website is included below:
- 2.17. **22/01752/FUL** - Erection of three 4-bedroom dwellings with associated access, landscaping and hardstanding – Decision: Decline to Entertain 24 October 2022, as stated on the decision notice:

The Planning Authority has exercised its power under the provisions of Town and Country Planning Act 1990, The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990 and The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 and declines to entertain the application for the following reason: 1. The provisions of Sections 65 and 327A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Regulation 6 of The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990 and Articles 13 and 14 of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 have not been met, by virtue of the incorrect serving of the Certificate A and inadequate notification of the application to the relevant individuals with a vested interest in the land at the point of submission. As such, the Local Planning Authority has not entertained the application and a decline to entertain recommendation is made on that basis

- 2.18. This application included the application site and a large area of land to the east, as set out below in the Site Location Plan and Block Plan submitted in support of this application.

Figure 8: Site Location Plan accompanying application 22/01752/FUL which the Council declined to entertain



Figure 9: Block Plan accompanying application 22/01752/FUL which the Council declined to entertain



- 2.19. The following application at the adjacent site (immediately to the east of the application site) is also considered relevant. The application site is located immediately to the west of 'Plot 2' shown in the Block Plan extract (see Figure 10) for refused application reference 23/01070/FUL.
- 2.20. **23/01070/FUL** - Erection of one 3 bedroom and one 4-bedroom dwelling with associated access, parking and landscaping. Refused 11 April 2024 for the following reasons:

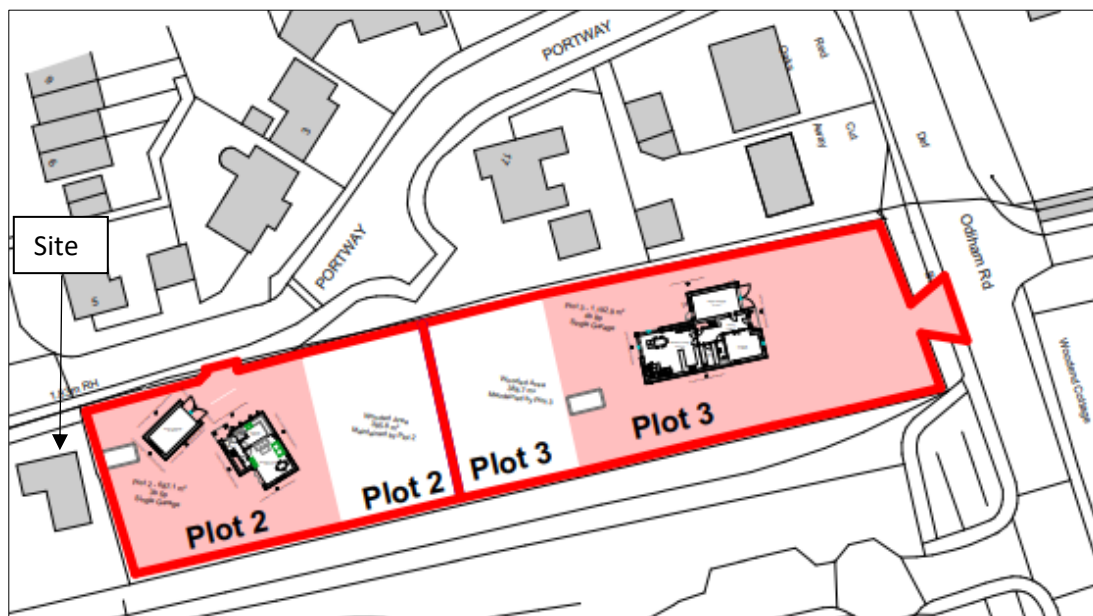
1. The proposal, by reason of location of the site within a designated woodland which is part of the Green Infrastructure of the District would result in its fragmentation significantly affecting its function within the wider infrastructure. It would result in a significant loss of trees protected by a Tree Protection Order (TPO). The supporting information does not identify the trees to be removed, does not satisfactorily identify the root protection areas and crown spreads of the trees to be retained and does not provide adequate mitigation measures to ensure protection of TPO trees during construction and protection of trees in close proximity to the proposed dwellings from conflicts with safety and amenity of future occupiers of the proposal. This is contrary to Policy INF2 and Policy NBE2 of the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2032, Policy CON8 of the Hart District Council Local Plan (Replacement) 1996 - 2006 together with NPPF December 2023 paragraph 136.

2. The proposal by reason of loss of TPO trees would erode the landscape character existing in the form of a woodland resulting in coalescence of adjoining residential developments and adversely affecting the views from the adjoining Public Right of Way and from curtilage spaces of dwellings in close vicinity in Portway and St Leggers Way contrary to Policy INF2, Policy NBE2 and Policy NBE9 of the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2032.

3. The proposal fails to quantify and mitigate the impact of the trees to be retained on sunlight in the external amenity space for the proposed dwellings and conflict of existence of trees in close proximity of the proposed dwellings. The proposed dwelling on Plot 2 would not accord with the Nationally Described Space Standard. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies H6 and NBE9 of the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2032, Policy GEN 1 of the Hart Local Plan (Replacement) 1996- 2006 Saved Policies and paragraph 135 of the NPPF.

4. The site is located within 5km of Bramshill, a Site of Special Scientific Interest which is part of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA), and in the absence of any evidence that the test of no alternatives under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 can be satisfied, or evidence that there are grounds of overriding public interest, the proposed development, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, would be likely to have a significant adverse effect on the SPA. As such the proposal is contrary to objectives of the adopted policies NBE3 of the Hart Local Plan - Strategy and Sites 2016-2032, saved policy NRM6 of the South East Plan, and paragraph 185-187 of the NPPF

Figure 10: Proposed block plan accompanying refused application 23/01070/FUL



- 2.21. The officer's report for refused application reference 23/01070/FUL raised the following concerns over the proposed development:

Layout, Design and Appearance concerns

- The amount of existing trees that would be affected and the woodland removed in order to enable building of the proposed dwellings would erode the depth of the existing woodland.
- The proposed two dwellings would occupy the separation space (which exists in the form of the woodland) merging the residential developments within Riseley and Wokingham Borough. This would result in adverse impact on the distinctive quality of the residential developments which have been developed on either side of the woodland.
- The proposed landscaping including boundary treatment would change the view from the PRoW from that of a woodland to that of a boundary treatment for any development. This would adversely affect the view as is currently enjoyed by users of the PRoW which would adversely impact the character of the surrounding area.

Residential amenity / standard of accommodation concerns

- Concerns raised over the compliance of the proposed dwelling on Plot 2 with Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS).
- Concern over there being no explanation in the sunlight/daylight assessment as to how sunlight to the residential garden area has been calculated, and without this, the statement that both garden areas would receive adequate sunlight cannot be confirmed.

Impact on landscape and woodland area concerns

-  The Tree Officer objected to the submitted arboriculture report stating that it is not accordance with BS5837:2012. Concern was also raised over the lack of identification of trees to be removed. For those to be retained, concern was raised over the lack of information of root protection areas and how tree crowns in close proximity to the proposed dwellings would be affected.
-  The proposal would change the view from the PRoW despite the proposed landscaping because the landscaping would result in an intrusion into the existing natural green corridor/woodland appearance.
-  In terms of site layout, the proposed dwellings would be in close proximity to TPO trees on all sides. Trees in close proximity to dwellings come under pressure of pruning, lopping, topping or felling in the course of time cannot be ignored.

Impact on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (TBHSPA) concerns

-  The application site falls within the 5km Zone of Influence of the SPA, as such mitigation measures are required. The applicant has not demonstrated or provided information to enable the Council to undertake an Appropriate Assessment that would demonstrate that without the SANGs mitigation and a contribution towards SAMM the proposal would not have a significant effect on the SPA.

Impact on Highway safety and parking

-  The proposed access for the dwelling on Plot 2 would require planning permission from Wokingham Borough Council (WBC). An application registered under ref: 231177 on the WBC website remained undermined and therefore for the purpose of this assessment there was no proposed/established access to Plot 2. We note that application reference 231177 was subsequently refused planning permission by Wokingham Borough Council on 19 April 2024 for the following reason: *1. The proposal, owing to the scale and nature of the proposed access for Plot 2 (as sought approval for under application 23/01070/FUL to be determined by Hart District Council), would result in the adverse loss of mature trees, with insufficient replacement planting to mitigate this loss, and would adversely harm the visual amenity and character of Portway through the partial loss of the woodland buffer contrary to policies CP1 & CP3 of the Core Strategy, policies CC03 and TB21 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan and Section 12 of the NPPF*

- 2.22. The current proposal has been mindful of the Council's reasons for refusing application reference 23/01070/FUL on the site immediately to the east, and as such, the proposal positively responds to the Council's reasons for refusal and concerns raised as follows:

- The woodland within and adjacent to the site is left untouched and the proposal does not encroach into the neighbouring '*Green Infrastructure Network*' immediately to the east. The accompanying Arboricultural Assessment confirms the extent of tree removal in connection with the proposal, and provides full details of RPAs and how tree crowns close to the proposed dwellinghouse will be affected.
- The proposed dwelling takes its cue from the footprint of the existing Old School House to be demolished, and will therefore not occupy the separation space (which exists in the form of the woodland) and not result in merging of residential developments within Riseley and Wokingham Borough.
- The proposal would not change the view from the PRoW from that of a woodland to that of a boundary treatment for any development which is being retained in its current state.
- The proposed dwellinghouse would comply with NDSS and would achieve a high standard of sunlight and daylight.
- The proposal provides full details of the potential effects of the development on the TBHSPA.
- The proposal provides full details of the proposed vehicular and pedestrian access arrangements to the site from Portway (together with any necessary permissions required from Wokingham Borough Council) to ensure that sufficient access to the development is provided.

- 2.23. The following approved residential development of 83 new housing units to the south of the site is also considered relevant. We understand that that development is now complete and occupied.
- 2.24. **16/02989/OUT** - Outline application for the development of up to 83 residential dwellings, vehicular access from Odiham Road, public open space, ancillary works and associated infrastructure on land off Odiham Road, Riseley. All matters reserved except for access. Approved 15 November 2017.
- 2.25. **18/00242/REM** - Details of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale (Reserved Matters) pursuant to outline planning permission ref: 16/02989/OUT for the development of up to 83 residential dwellings, vehicular access from Odiham Road, public open space, ancillary works and associated infrastructure. Approved 2 November 2018

**Figure 11: Site layout plan accompanying
outline application 16/02989/OUT**





Section 3

Proposed Development

- 3.1. This application seeks full planning permission for the following proposed development:

Construction of a dwellinghouse with associated car and cycle parking, access, refuse storage and landscaping following demolition of the existing Old School House

- 3.2. This will involve the following:

-  Demolition of the existing Old School House.
-  Construction of a two-storey dwellinghouse that includes a half-hipped roof, two dormer windows and a design that reflects the local vernacular.
-  The proposal will deliver a family sized unit with 3 bedrooms and private amenity space to the front and rear. It incorporates an internal layout that is generous in size, meets modern family living requirements and exceeds Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS).
-  The ground floor will accommodate a kitchen/living space, utility, toilet, and lounge, while the first floor will feature three double bedrooms, ensuite and a family bathroom.
-  Two car parking spaces and one EV charge point will be provided. A secure shed is provided for cycle parking storage.
-  Refuse storage will be located in a dedicated store in the northeast corner of the site and is designed to accord with the Council's refuse and recycling storage standards.
-  Vehicular and pedestrian access to the site will be provided from Portway to the north. The access involves installing a concrete culvert in the ditch adjacent to the site's northern boundary to allow drive-over access. The ditch is currently dry and only carries water during heavy rain conditions. The Design and Access Statement contains further details on the proposed culvert.
-  Regarding proposed external materials, the building will feature red brick with a double plinth, a clay tile roof, black PVC windows, and clay tile-hung dormers.
-  Provision of new landscaping, tree planting and hardscape. For the front paving, Marshalls Drivesett Tegula Priora permeable paving is proposed.

The dwelling will incorporate various water-saving features to enhance its environmental sustainability. Low-flow taps and showers will be installed to significantly reduce water consumption

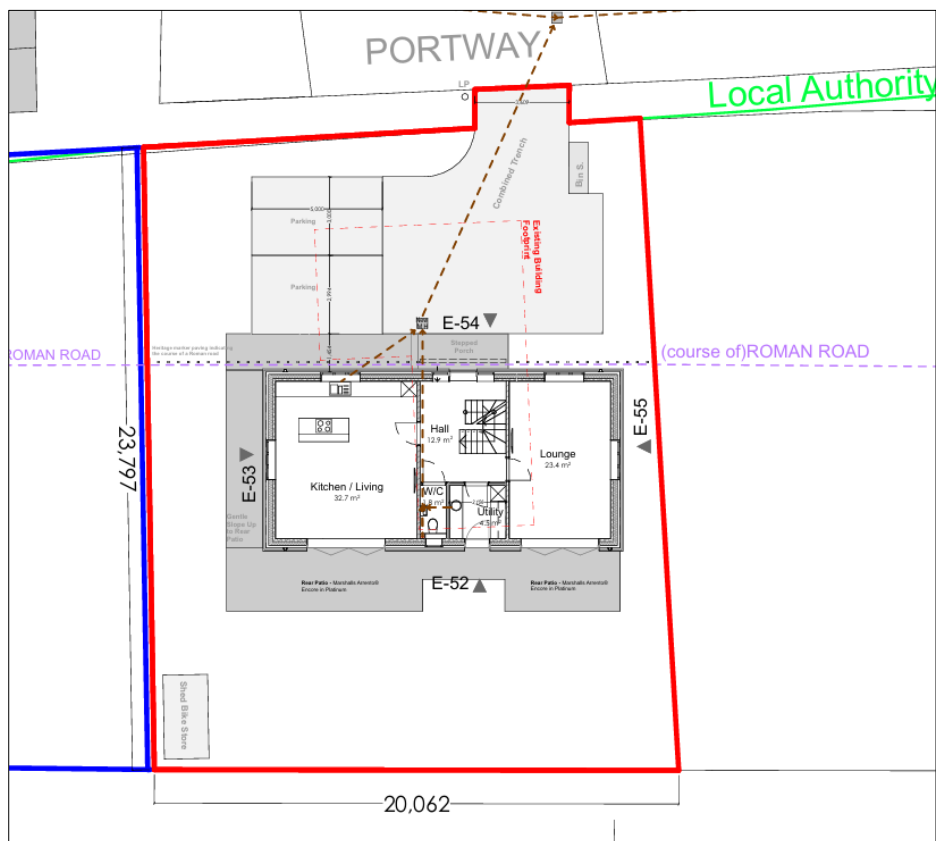
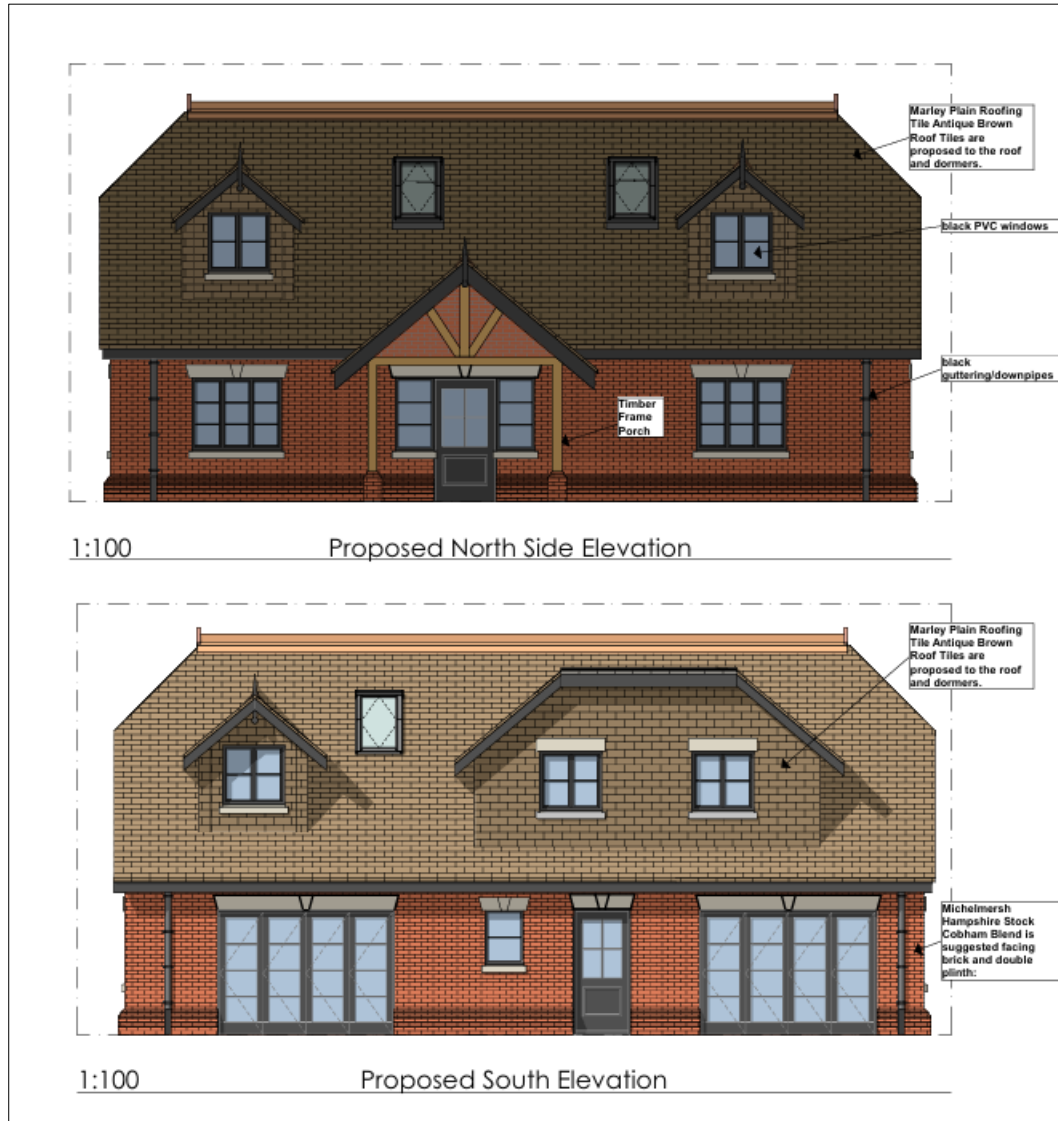


Figure 13: Proposed front and rear elevations





Section 4

Planning Policy Context

- 4.1. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:

If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination under the planning acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

- 4.2. The development plan for the purpose of the application proposal comprises the following:

-  The Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2032 (adopted April 2020)
-  Saved Policies from the Hart Local Plan (Replacement) 1996-2006 Saved Policies (updated May 2020)
-  Saved policy of the South East Plan (2009) Policy NRM6 - Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area
-  Hart adopted Policies Map
-  The Wokingham Core Strategy (adopted January 2010)
-  The Wokingham Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (adopted February 2014)

- 4.3. The following national policy and guidance are material planning considerations:

-  National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023)
-  MHCLG Planning Practice Guidance
-  MHCLG National Design Guide

- 4.4. The following supplementary planning guidance is also relevant:

-  Car and Cycle Parking in New Development Supplementary Planning Document December 2023
-  Hart District Council Biodiversity TAN (2022)

Emerging Local Plan

- 4.5. The Council will review its local plan policies by no later than 30 April 2025, five years after adoption of the Hart Local Plan 2032. If a full or partial update to local plan policies is needed a timetable will be prepared for an update to

the plan. The Council has yet to issue a timetable for an update to the Local Plan.

The National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

- 4.6. The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in December 2023. The NPPF in Section 2 (Achieving Sustainable Development) establishes that while planning decisions should be taken in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, they should also be made in the context of a presumption in favour of sustainable development which is at the heart of the Framework (paragraph 10). This means, for decision-making, approving development proposals that accord with up-to-date development plans, and where there are no relevant policies, or the relevant policies are out-of-date, planning permission should be granted unless the policies in the NPPF provide a clear reason for refusing the application or adverse impacts of the proposal would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole. Where an application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan then permission should not normally be granted.
- 4.7. Section 8 (Promoting healthy and safe communities) states decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which promote social interaction through street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods (paragraph 96).
- 4.8. Section 9 (Promoting Sustainable Transport) states that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages so that the potential impact of development on transport networks can be addressed alongside providing for improved transport infrastructure, promoting cycling, walking and public transport use and integrating patterns of movement into development proposals at a fundamental level (paragraph 108).
- 4.9. Section 11 (Making efficient use of land) seeks to promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions (paragraph 123).
- 4.10. Paragraph 128 states that planning decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land taking into account:
-  The identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development
 -  Local market conditions and viability
 -  The availability and capacity of infrastructure and services, potential for future improvement and limiting future car use.
 -  The desirability of maintaining and areas prevailing character and setting or of promoting regeneration and change
 -  The importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.

- 4.11. Paragraph 131 states that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve.
- 4.12. Paragraph 135 states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:
- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
 - b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
 - c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
 - d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
 - e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
 - f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience*
- 4.13. Section 14 (Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change), paragraph 158 requires plans to take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change. New development should avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change and should help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2032 (adopted April 2020)

- 4.14. The following Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2032 policies are relevant to the proposed development.

 **Policy SD1 - Sustainable Development** – The policy states that the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in NPPF, whilst having regard to the need to assess, and where appropriate, mitigate against, the likelihood of a significant effect on the TBHSPA.

 **Policy SS1 - Spatial Strategy and Distribution of Growth** – The policy requires development to be focused within defined settlements, on

previously developed land in sustainable locations, and on allocated sites as shown on the Policies map. The supply of new homes will come from sources including permitting further development and redevelopment within the defined Settlement Policy Boundaries

-  **Policy H1 - Housing mix** - Proposals for new homes will be supported where they provide an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes having regard to the most up to date evidence on housing need, and the size, location and characteristics of the site and its surroundings
-  **Policy H6 - Internal Space Standards for New Homes** - where planning permission is required development proposals for new homes must meet the nationally described space standard.
-  **Policy NBE2 - Landscape** – requires proposals to respect and wherever possible enhance the special characteristics, value or visual amenity of the District’s landscapes. It resists proposals which would lead to the physical or visual coalescence of settlements, or damage their separate identity, either individually or cumulatively with other existing or proposed development.
-  **Policy NBE3 - Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (TBHSPA)**– requires new development likely to have a significant effect on the ecological integrity of the TBHSPA to demonstrate that adequate measures will be put in place to avoid or mitigate any potential adverse effects.
-  **Policy NBE4 - Biodiversity** – states that new development should not have an adverse effect on the integrity of an international, national or locally designated site including the Thames basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA), Sites of Special Scientific interest (SSSIs), Sites of importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) and National and Local Nature reserves (NNRs and LNRs). Opportunities to protect and enhance biodiversity and contribute to wildlife and habitat connectivity should be taken where possible.
-  **Policy NBE7 Sustainable Water Use** – requires all new homes to meet the water efficiency standard of 110 litres/person/day.
-  **Policy NBE8 - Historic Environment** – requires development to conserve or enhance heritage assets and their settings, taking account of their significance. Proposals which would lead to the loss of, or harm to, the significance of a heritage asset and/or its setting, will not be permitted unless they meet the relevant tests and assessment factors specified in the National Planning Policy Framework.
-  **Policy NBE9 - Design** – requires development to achieve a high-quality design and positively contribute to the overall appearance of the local area. Development should reflect the distinctive qualities of its surroundings in terms of the proposed scale, density, mass and height of development and choice of building materials. It should also respect local landscape character and sympathetically incorporate any on-site or adjoining landscape features such as trees and hedgerows.
-  **Policy INF2 - Green Infrastructure** - Development will be supported provided that it protects the green infrastructure network as shown on the Policies map, avoiding any loss, fragmentation or significant impact on the function of the network. In addition, where possible it should enhance green infrastructure, through provision within the site, or

where appropriate provision for off-site improvements in line with the green infrastructure strategy. The policy requires any adverse impacts on the green infrastructure network to be fully mitigated through the provision of green infrastructure on site or, where this is not possible, through appropriate off-site compensatory measures.

-  **Policy INF3 – Transport** - Development should promote the use of sustainable transport modes prioritising walking and cycling, improve accessibility to services and support the transition to a low carbon future

Saved Policies from the Hart Local Plan (Replacement) 1996-2006 (updated 2020)

- 4.15. The following Saved Policies from the Hart Local Plan (Replacement) 1996-2006 (updated 2020) are relevant to the proposals

-  **Policy GEN1 General Policy for Development** – The policy requires proposals to meet several criteria, including be in keeping with the local character by virtue of their scale, design, massing, height, prominence, materials, layout, landscaping, siting and density; Avoid any material loss of amenity to existing and adjoining residential, commercial, recreational, agricultural or forestry uses, by virtue of noise, disturbance, noxious fumes, dust, pollution or traffic generation; Cause no material loss of amenity to adjoining residential uses, through loss of privacy, overlooking or the creation of shared facilities.
-  **Policy CON8 Trees, Woodland & Hedgerows: Amenity Value** – the policy states that where development is proposed which would affect trees, woodlands or hedgerows of significant landscape or amenity value, planning permission will only be granted if these features are shown to be capable of being retained in the longer term or if removal is necessary new planting is undertaken to maintain the value of these features.
-  **Policy CON 23 Development affecting Public Rights of Way** - Development will not be permitted which would seriously detract from the amenity and consequent recreational value of well-used footpaths and other public rights of way in the countryside close to main settlements by reducing their rural character or detracting from significant views.



Section 5

Planning Considerations

- 5.1. This section considers the planning aspects of the proposals. The preceding sections have provided the context for this assessment of the planning merits of the proposed development. The proposals have been assessed in relation to the key planning policies set out in the previous sections and are considered in turn below.

Principle of Development

- 5.2. Due to the existing Old School House being of no architectural merit and not being in a Conservation Area, the principle of demolishing it is acceptable. The building is in a dilapidated state and does not meet modern living standards. Due to its poor state of repair, it has a negative visual impact on the site and surroundings. The dwellinghouse will be of higher architectural quality and more sustainable in its design and construction than the existing building.
- 5.3. The existing building on the site has most recently been in use for storage. Whilst currently in a dilapidated state, the existing building on the site is nonetheless of permanent construction and is relevant as built form.
- 5.4. Policy SD1 of the Hart Local Plan (2020) states that for all development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF, which having regard to the need to assess, and where appropriate, mitigate against, the likelihood of a significant effect on the TBHSPA. Similarly, Policy SS1 requires development to be focused within defined settlements, on previously developed land in sustainable locations, and on allocated sites as shown on the Policies map. The policy states that the supply of new homes will come from sources including permitting further development and redevelopment within the defined Settlement Policy Boundaries.
- 5.5. As the proposal seeks to demolish the existing building and construct a dwellinghouse on a previously developed site within the settlement boundary of the Riseley, the principle of development accords with policies SD1 and SS1 of the Local Plan (2020) and paragraph 124 (c) of the NPPF which gives substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes.

Design Considerations

- 5.6. Policy NBE9 requires development to achieve a high-quality design and to positively contribute to the overall appearance of the local area. The policy goes on to state that development should reflect the distinctive qualities of its surroundings in terms of the proposed scale, density, mass and height of

development and choice of building materials. It should also respect local landscape character. Similarly, policy GEN1 requires proposals to be in keeping with the local character by virtue of their scale, design, massing, height, prominence, materials, layout, landscaping, siting and density. Within the NPPF, paragraph 126 states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

5.7. The design of the proposed dwellinghouse positively responds to the requirements of policies NBE9, GEN1 and the NPPF for the following reasons:

- The proposal will deliver a high standard of design and architecture. The dwelling adopts a design which is locally appropriate and reflects the local vernacular, as explained in the applicant's Design and Access Statement. It responds to the site context, local distinctiveness, and creates sense of place by adopting external finishes and designs reflective of the site context. The scale, massing and ridge height of the dwellinghouse is sympathetic to surrounding dwellinghouses, which are also predominantly two storeys. In doing so, the visual integrity of the site context will be maintained.
- The proposal will improve the design quality and visual amenity of the site by removing the existing dilapidated Old School House building and replacing it with a building of greater design and architectural quality. The dwelling will be consistent with both the local vernacular and the architectural quality of dwellinghouses in the area.
- The internal layout of the dwellinghouse will deliver a high quality, accessible space benefiting from high levels of natural light and ventilation. Natural light is maximised through provision of generous sized windows and doors, and by sufficiently distancing the dwellinghouse away from nearby trees and woodland to avoid undue overshadowing and loss of light.
- The design of the dwelling proposes a palette of high-quality external materials which are sympathetic to materials found within the surrounding area. The dwellinghouse incorporates red brick with a double plinth, a clay tile roof, black PVC windows, and clay tile-hung dormers. The applicant would be willing to accept a planning condition requiring samples of external materials to be submitted to the Council for approval prior to the commencement of development.
- The proposal will deliver a two storey dwellinghouse that is responsive to the site context and respects adjacent dwellinghouses by having an appropriate height relationship and maintaining generous separation distances. The proposal will not be significantly higher than the existing building, with a height difference of only a single storey. The height difference between the proposal and the existing building is therefore not considered to have a material impact, and the proposal will also be sited a sufficient distance away from neighbouring dwellinghouses so as not to have a significant impact or appear overly dominant. Its height will also be more comparable to that of nearby dwellinghouses than the existing single storey building on the site.

- ▣ The dwelling will be sited in a similar position to the existing building and would retain a good separation distance to neighbouring boundaries. The suitable spacing around the development and provision of amenity space to the front and rear ensures that the new house does not appear cramped within the plot.
 - ▣ As the proposed footprint of the dwellinghouse is comparable to that of the existing building, and due to it not encroaching into the adjoining woodland, it will not result in the erosion of the green space between the two adjoining residential developments (to the north and south of the site). It therefore would not occupy the separation space (specifically the woodland) and would not result in merging of the residential developments within Riseley and Wokingham Borough. As such, in contrast to the refused scheme (reference 23/01070/FUL), it retains the woodland as a distinctive landscape character which gives both residential developments their identity, and complies with policies NBE2, NB9 and GEN1. It is also important to note that unlike the refused scheme, the proposal does not encroach into the 'Green Infrastructure Network' located immediately to the east of the site. There is no conflict with policy INF2 in this regard which seeks to protect the Council's Green Infrastructure.
 - ▣ The proposal will make more efficient use of a previously developed site in the settlement boundary, in accordance with the objectives of the NPPF. This is reflected in the proposal increasing the amount of residential floorspace on the site compared to existing, which will thus deliver more spacious family accommodation. The floorspace increase is achieved in a sensitive way, so as not to detrimentally affect visual or residential amenity due to the appropriate scale, height and siting of the new dwellinghouse.
 - ▣ By introducing a single dwellinghouse on the site, the proposal will not result in an overly dense form of development and will therefore reinforce the character of the surrounding area which comprises family dwellinghouses.
 - ▣ The proposal incorporates waste and recycling storage facilities on site in accordance with the Council's standards.
 - ▣ The proposal will reduce opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour by increasing active frontages on the site, which in turn will increase natural surveillance.
 - ▣ Two off-street car parking spaces are proposed in the front drive. Proposed new landscaping will provide a screen to the parking area and the development more generally to reduce its visual impact. The proposal will not be dominated by parking or hardstanding.
- 5.8. As a result, the proposal would have an acceptable impact on the design and appearance of the existing building and the character of the area.

Quality of Proposed Residential Development

- 5.9. Policy H6 requires proposals for new homes to meet the nationally described space standards. Paragraph 135 of the NPPF advises that planning decisions should ensure that developments achieve a high standard of amenity for existing and future users and do not undermine quality of life for communities.
- 5.10. The proposed dwellinghouse will comply with housing standards in the NDSS in terms of overall size, room sizes, floor to ceiling heights and storage requirements.
- 5.11. Occupants of the dwellinghouse will benefit from high quality outlook onto the front and rear gardens. The dwelling will achieve good levels of natural light due to it being situated adequate distances away from adjacent woodland and other potential obstructions to light. Due to the distance of the proposed building from any neighbouring dwellinghouses, occupants will not experience undue noise, disturbance, or sense of enclosure impact.
- 5.12. As noted in the Design and Access Statement, considerable privacy is ensured for the proposed dwelling, with mature trees and hedging remaining intact. The site's existing landscaped context and verdant character will therefore provide a natural privacy screen and enclosure to the site.
- 5.13. The dwellinghouse will provide a contemporary family home that will meet current standards in terms of accessibility, inclusivity, sustainability, and energy efficiency to a greater extent than the existing house. The dwellinghouse will also benefit from private amenity space in the form of front and rear gardens.
- 5.14. It is therefore considered that a good standard of accommodation has been provided which makes efficient use of the site.

Neighbouring Amenity

- 5.15. Policy GEN1 requires proposals to avoid any material loss of amenity to existing and adjoining residential uses, by virtue of noise, disturbance, noxious fumes, dust, pollution or traffic generation; and cause no material loss of amenity to adjoining residential uses, through loss of privacy, overlooking or the creation of shared facilities.
- 5.16. Due to the proposed building's distance from neighbouring dwellinghouses and its landscaped context, it will not directly overlook neighbouring properties. Landscaping on the site boundary will assist in protecting the privacy of neighbouring properties.
- 5.17. In terms of noise and disturbance, due to the proposal introducing a single dwellinghouse (rather than multiple dwellinghouses) to the site, it will not result in any material increase in noise and disturbance to neighbouring properties.

- 5.18. The proposal therefore accords with policy GEN which seeks to protect the amenities enjoyed by nearby and adjacent properties. The proposal is also consistent with the advice in the NPPF which seeks to ensure safe and healthy living conditions.

Flooding and Drainage

- 5.19. The site is located within Flood Zone 1 with low risk of flooding from river or sea. It is therefore not situated in an area of flood risk and due to the introduction of more permeable surfaces at the site than existing the proposal is not considered to result in any increase in the flood risk of the site.
- 5.20. The proposal includes the installation of a concrete culvert in the existing ditch adjacent to the site's northern boundary to allow drive-over access. The ditch is currently dry and only carries water during heavy rain conditions. The Design and Access Statement contains further details on the proposed culvert.

Highways Considerations

- 5.21. Policy INF3 requires development to promote the use of sustainable transport modes prioritising walking and cycling, improve accessibility to services and support the transition to a low carbon future. In addition, policy GEN1 requires proposals to avoid any material loss of amenity to existing and adjoining residential by way of traffic generation and permits development which has adequate arrangements on site for access, servicing or the parking of vehicles. NBE9 states that development should provide sufficient well-designed facilities or areas for parking (including bicycle storage) taking account of the need for good access for all. Given that the proposal involves a single dwellinghouse rather than multiple dwellings, it will not affect local highway conditions.
- 5.22. The proposal will provide two car parking spaces located within the curtilage to the front of the dwelling, and will introduce a vehicular and pedestrian access to the site from Portway. The new vehicular access will have visibility splays of 2.4 metres by 25 metres fully in accordance with the requirements of the Manual for Streets for estate road where vehicle speeds are 20 miles per hour. Further details are provided in the accompanying Transport Statement.
- 5.23. With regard to traffic impact, as confirmed in the accompanying Transport Statement, the development is forecast to result in small increases in vehicle movements during the peak periods and across the course of a typical weekday. Increases in trips of the magnitude forecast will have an imperceptible impact on the operation of the local transport network.
- 5.24. The proposal complies with the Council's requirements in terms of on-site car parking spaces, by providing two off-street parking spaces on the front drive.

- 5.25. With regard to cycle parking, the proposal meets the Council's cycle parking standards by providing the required number of cycle parking spaces in a secure and covered shed.
- 5.26. Refuse servicing and deliveries will be provided via Portway.
- 5.27. The proposals are therefore acceptable in terms of highways considerations and comply with the NPPF and Local Plan policies GEN1, INF3 and NBE9.

Sustainability

- 5.28. The proposal will improve the energy efficiency of the site by delivering a new dwellinghouse that incorporates new energy efficient materials, design and construction methods.
- 5.29. The proposed dwelling will use sustainable materials and will deliver a significantly higher level of energy efficiency than the existing dilapidated, energy inefficient Old School Housebuilding. In accordance with the requirements of policy NBE7, the proposal will meet a water efficiency standard of 110 litres/person/day.

Impact on Trees

- 5.30. The proposal is accompanied by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) prepared by Land Arb Solutions which presents the results of a tree survey and includes tree management recommendations.
- 5.31. With regard to tree removal, the AIA confirms that the proposals require:
 -  the removal of a small section of G8 (Cypress, Category C1) to facilitate a parking bay.
 -  T6 and T7 to have their canopy on the south laterally reduced and rounded off to cut back the overextending aspects of the canopies which currently extend over the existing building
 -  Due to T11 and T12 being noted as having major deadwood and abscised branches within the canopies, a general dead wooding operation will be undertaken to remove the deadwood and larger abscised branches and to reduce the canopies back on the northern side. This is something that was to be undertaken regardless of any planning application
- 5.32. The AIA confirms that in order to construct the new house within the RPAs, an above ground cast concrete slab on mini piles will be used to avoid unnecessary excavation and harm to any tree roots. The mini piles must be hand dug to 1m to allow for the careful positioning of the piles to avoid any significant tree roots (roots 25mm diameter or larger). Any roots less than 25mm diameter will also be avoided where possible, however if absolutely necessary, these can be cut back to the edge of the mini pile hole using sharp bypass secateurs.

- 5.33. Installation of the mini piles will be carried out using specialist equipment, such as a small piling rig, whilst working from a surface of ground protection. The ground clearance is sufficient to be able to use the piling rig beneath the canopies of the adjacent trees without damage to the canopies. The above ground cast concrete slab construction will have an air gap of at least 50mm beneath the structure and have rainwater routed underneath the slab to discharge through perforated pipes. This will ensure that access to air and water is maintained within the RPAs of these trees.
- 5.34. The AIA confirms that due to the architectural design and layout of the proposals there are no significant post development pressures anticipated as a result of the proposals. The new house has been positioned in an area free from canopy overhang, with the retained trees surrounding the area having high canopies and allowing sunlight into the space at various times of the day.
- 5.35. The report provides full details of the proposed tree protection measures on site, which include: a demolition protection plan, ground protection and above ground tree protection barriers.
- 5.36. The proposals include new tree planting as well as mixed native hedging planting along the western boundary. The AIA confirms that considering no trees are being removed as part of the proposals, providing 2 new trees is a net gain in tree planting and the new hedge planting is also an improvement.
- 5.37. The AIA confirms that there is adequate space to accommodate storage of materials (as necessary) and contractors parking, without compromising any retained tree or proposed tree protection measures. Provided that tree protection measures are put in place the AIA confirms that there is adequate space to enable the proposals to be constructed without damage to retained trees. In this context, it is considered that proposals are acceptable from an arboricultural perspective.

Impact on Landscaping

- 5.38. Policy NBE2 aims to protect and wherever possible enhance the special characteristics, value or visual amenity of the District's landscapes. It resists proposals which would lead to the physical or visual coalescence of settlements, or damage their separate identity, either individually or cumulatively with other existing or proposed development. Policy NBE9 requires proposals to have regard to distinctive qualities of its surroundings, provide or positively contribute to public spaces and access routes and public rights of way, to respect local landscape character and sympathetically incorporate any on-site or adjoining landscape features such as trees and hedgerows, and respect or enhance views into and out of the site, protect or enhance surrounding heritage assets, including their settings, provide adequate access and parking.
- 5.39. The proposed building will be recessed from the site boundaries and the existing and proposed landscaping will soften its appearance, enhance its setting, and provide a natural privacy screen. The landscaping will also provide

a visual buffer between the site and its surroundings, ensuring that proposed building is discrete and largely hidden from view. The verdant character of the site will be maintained.

- 5.40. By siting the dwelling away from the existing woodland to the east, and by ensuring that it does not encroach into the 'Green Infrastructure network' to the east, the proposal overcomes the Council's concern raised in application reference 23/01070/FUL regarding the erosion of the green space between the two adjoining residential developments to the north and south of the site. As such, the proposal will not result in the merging of residential developments within Riseley and Wokingham Borough, and is doing so, it will not lead to the physical or visual coalescence of the residential developments on either side of the woodland. The proposal therefore retains the woodland as a distinctive landscape character which gives both residential developments their identity. The development therefore positively addresses the requirements of policy NBE2.
- 5.41. NO new boundary treatment is proposed as part of this application to ensure that the current character of the site and views to and from PROW are maintained as the existing condition to safeguard this character.
- 5.42. The proposal is therefore entirely acceptable in terms of landscape impact and complies with policies NBE2, NB9 and GEN1.

Impact on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (TBHSPA)

- 5.43. Policy NBE3 and saved policy NRM6 of the South-East Plan state that when considering development proposals for residential or similar forms of development, there is a 'zone of influence' set in between 400m- 5km linear distance from the TBHSPA boundary. Thus, mitigation measures are required for all net new dwellings and must be delivered prior to occupation and in perpetuity. Measures must be based on a combination of Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) and access to or provision/maintenance of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG). Suitable mitigation measures will be discussed and agreed with the Council during the application process.
- 5.44. As the proposal is for a dwelling, that therefore does not involve any net gain of dwellings on the site, it does not trigger a requirement for any SPA mitigation measures, and therefore complies with policies NBE2 and NRM6.

Impact on Ecology and Biodiversity

- 5.45. With regard to ecology impact, the application is supported by an Ecological Impact Assessment prepared by Ecology by Design. The report confirms that surveys of the site were conducted between November 2020 and March 2023 including a UKHab survey, habitat suitability index assessment of ponds for great crested newts, daytime building and tree assessments for bats and a bat emergence survey of the building within the site, and presence/likely absence surveys for dormouse.

- 5.46. The survey findings conclude that protected and priority species present or potentially present within the site include: a building which has low potential to support roosting bats; foraging and commuting habitat for bats within the site; historic presence of hazel dormouse within the woodland; opportunities for nesting birds within the woodland on site; invasive plant species three-cornered garlic and cotoneaster were recorded within the site; and negligible opportunities for other protected or priority species.
- 5.47. The report confirms that habitats within the site are of Parish/Neighbourhood value in terms of ecological interest. In the absence of mitigation, development within the site may result in destruction of bat roosts within the building with low potential to support roosting bats, disturbance of foraging and commuting bats through altered/increased levels of lighting, killing and/or injury of dormouse and/or great crested newts which may be present, and spread of invasive plant species into the wild through inappropriate site practices.
- 5.48. The report advises on measures to avoid and/or reduce impacts, which include habitat creation to improve the biodiversity value of the site, implementation of a sensitive lighting scheme to avoid disturbing bats; precautionary habitat measures for (historic) dormouse; vegetation clearance should be undertaken outside of the nesting bird season (March to August inclusive) or be preceded by a check from a suitably experienced ecologist; control of invasive species to prevent their spread; and biodiversity offsetting should be used to compensate for the loss of biodiversity on site by investing in a biodiversity offsetting service with a suitable provider.
- 5.49. In terms of delivering biodiversity enhancements, the report confirms that one bird box, one bat box, one insect nest box and one bee block will be integrated into the development, and that hedgehog friendly gravel boards will be installed in boundary walls/fences within the site.
- 5.50. The proposal is therefore acceptable in terms of its ecological impact subject to the recommended mitigation measures and biodiversity enhancements. It as such complies with policy NBE4 which states that all developments should protect and enhance biodiversity, and paragraph 186 pf the NPPF which states that if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.

Heritage

- 5.51. Policy NBE8 states that all developments should conserve or enhance the settings of heritage assets, considering their significance. Policy GEN1 permits development that includes provision for the conservation or enhancement of heritage assets. Policy NBE9 requires proposals to protect or enhance heritage assets including their setting. The NPPF states that when assessing the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset,

great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be).

- 5.52. Similarly to the recently refused application for two dwellings at the adjacent site (application reference 23/01070/FUL), the site lies on the line of the Roman road (known as Devil's Road) from Silchester towards London (an important feature of the historic landscape character). It is noted that in the case of application reference 23/01070/FUL, the County Archaeologist suggested that details to ensure the line of the Roman road is protected or even enhanced be secured via a planning condition together with an archaeological condition to secure an archaeological watching brief during the relevant stages of the groundwork should permission be granted. The applicant would be willing to accept similarly worded planning conditions to safeguard the Roman road in this instance. Furthermore, as noted in the applicant's Design and Access Statement, landscaping will focus on maintaining and enhancing the site's greenery which includes mature trees and hedging surround its perimeter and a large lawn.
- 5.53. The proposal is considered acceptable in terms of heritage impacts subject to the above-mentioned planning conditions, and to therefore comply with the requirements of policies NBE8, GEN1 and the NPPF.



Section 6

Conclusions

- 6.1. This application seeks planning permission for the following development:
- Construction of a dwellinghouse with associated car and cycle parking, access, refuse storage and landscaping following demolition of the existing Old School House*
- 6.2. The proposals will bring forward a modern, high-quality design and sustainable family sized dwellinghouse on a previously developed site in the settlement boundary of Riseley.
- 6.3. The existing Old School House is not of architectural merit, and is not in a Conservation Area, and as such, its demolition is acceptable. The proposal will replace the existing building with one of significantly higher quality architectural design and greater energy efficiency. It will also deliver a higher standard and more spacious family accommodation for prospective occupants than the existing building. It will deliver a high standard of private amenity space in the form of front and rear gardens which will contain new planting, landscaping and hardscape, and will retain the site's verdant and woodland context.
- 6.4. The proposal will not harm the amenity of adjacent properties due to its sympathetic height and appropriate siting which maintains adequate separation distances to the site boundaries and neighbouring dwellinghouses. The landscaping around the site will also act as a natural privacy screen.
- 6.5. As the siting of the proposed dwelling takes its cue from the footprint of the existing Old School House, and due to it not encroaching into the surrounding woodland or adjacent Green Infrastructure Network, it will therefore not occupy the separation space (which exists in the form of the woodland) between development to the north and south of the site, and will not result in merging of residential developments within Riseley and Wokingham Borough.
- 6.6. Two car parking spaces are proposed to the front of the dwellinghouse in accordance with the Council's standards. Secure cycle is also provided in accordance with the Council's standards.
- 6.7. Refuse storage is proposed in a dedicated store area to the front of the dwellinghouse where it will be easily accessed by residents and refuse collectors.
- 6.8. The site is in Flood Zone 1 (low risk of flooding) and adequate provision for surface water and foul drainage is provided.
- 6.9. The proposal will safeguard existing healthy trees on the site as far as possible and will safeguard the ecology of the site.

- 6.10. The development complies with the policies of the NPPF and will have significant benefits in terms of making more efficient use of a sustainable brownfield site in the settlement area of Riseley.
- 6.11. The proposals align with adopted local and national policies. It is therefore respectfully requested that planning permission is granted in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Solve Planning Ltd
Suite 6
Eastgate House
Dogflud Way
Farnham
Surrey
GU9 7UD
01252 916655
info@solveplanning.co.uk

	Initials	Date
V1 Prepared by	KA	5/8/2024
V1 Checked by	KC	20/08/2024
V2 Prepared by	KA	20/08/2024
V2 Checked by	KC	22/08/2024