

TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

BLUEKING HOLDINGS LIMITED

PLANNING STATEMENT

**58 FINCHAMPSTEAD ROAD
WOKINGHAM
RG40 2NS**

**Full planning application for the erection of 4no. detached dwellings
following the demolition of existing dwelling and associated outbuildings**

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This town planning statement is submitted in support of a full planning application by Blueking Holdings Limited for the following:

'Erection of 4no. detached dwellings following the demolition of an existing dwellings and associated outbuildings'

- 1.2 The statement is divided into the following chapters:

- Introduction
- Site and Surrounding Area
- Planning History and Pre-Application Discussions
- Planning Policy Context
- The Planning Application
- Summary and Conclusions

- 1.3 The application is accompanied by the following consultant reports:

- Design and Access Statement (Paul Edwards Architecture)
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment (Mark Welby Consulting Arborists)
- Ecological Assessment (Plan Ecology Ltd)
- Heritage Assessment (Asset Heritage Consulting)
- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy (Lanmor)
- Transport Statement (Highway Planning Ltd)

- Phase 1 contamination report (STM Environmental)
 - Noise Assessment (Clarke Saunders)
- 1.4 This statement will examine all relevant planning policies both local and national and will demonstrate that the application proposal is both sustainable and in full compliance with policy guidance.
- 1.5 Reference will also be made in particular to the fact that the Council does not have a 5 year supply of housing. The most recent published figure contained within the Wokingham Borough Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement of 31 March 2023 (published 26 January 2024) is that on 31 March 2023, the Council could only demonstrate a 3.2 year housing land supply.

2 THE APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1 The site comprises a detached two storey dwelling with an attached single storey garage and two large outbuildings within its curtilage. The dwelling is sited in an extensive plot which amounts to approximately 0.5ha. The site is accessed from Finchampstead Road via a long, private drive which also serves Eyre Court and no.58A Finchampstead Road. The site is very well screened by mature trees and other vegetation along or adjacent to the boundaries of the site. As set out within chapter 5 of this statement, the building has been assessed by a qualified Heritage Consultant who has confirmed that the non-designated heritage asset is of a 'very low' significance.
- 2.2 To the north of the site, beyond the dense belt of mature trees, is the railway line. To the west of the site is a detached dwelling, no.58A Finchampstead Road which similarly sits within a well screened plot. Further to the west is Eyre Court, a large three storey apartment building (two full storeys with a series of dormer windows) sited on the southern side of the access.
- 2.3 The site is located within the major development location (i.e. those settlements with the greatest range of facilities and services) of Wokingham as defined on the Council's Policies Map. Within these locations, Policy CP9 of the Core Strategy confirms that major development would be acceptable. The site is sustainably located, being within walking distance of Wokingham Railway Station and bus stops within the town centre and along Finchampstead Road. It is also close to the wide range of shops and other facilities and amenities in Wokingham Town Centre, including various supermarkets as well as Wokingham Leisure Centre and Carnival Hub.

3 PLANNING HISTORY AND PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSIONS

3.1 There are no relevant planning applications relating to the application site.

3.2 In terms of pre-application advice, an application was lodged in January 2024 to obtain the views of officers:

232914 – Erection of 4no. detached dwellings following the demolition of the existing dwelling and outbuildings. Response letter issued 16 January 2024.

3.3 The main conclusions were as follows:

- The site is within the settlement limits of the major development location of Wokingham and the development is acceptable in principle providing it complies with the Local Development Plan and other material considerations.
- The Council cannot demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply;
- Any future application should demonstrate that the proposed development will make a positive contribution to the character of the area as set out in Policy TB06 of the MDD;
- The property is of an age and form that it is considered as being a non-designated heritage asset, albeit one of limited significance. A heritage assessment would therefore be required to support its demolition should a formal application be submitted.
- Whilst a mix of dwelling sizes are not proposed, the proposal would contribute to the provision of family housing in the Borough. Some variation in the size of the dwellings would be encouraged.

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- Design and Character: The proposal would not appear to result in a substantial level of harm as a result of scale, massing and layout based on the information provided. The design of the dwellings would appear overall good, details of materials would need to be provided. The development would see the creation of its own cul-de-sac which in design terms would likely be acceptable.
 - The proposal would provide a good standard of amenity for future occupiers and should not have an adverse impact on neighbouring properties.
 - Developments will be expected to provide public open space or in the case a smaller sites (such as this site) a financial contribution to fund off-site provision may be required.
 - Any formal application should be accompanied by a Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment and a comprehensive landscape scheme.
 - An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey (and additional surveys if necessary) would be required. Ecological enhancements should also be provided on site to foster biodiversity and habitats on site.
 - Thames Basin Heaths SPA: A contribution towards SANG and SAMM will be required per dwelling.
 - Highways and Waste Provision: Further detailed information regarding parking provision and layout, cycle parking, waste collection, visibility splays and access width would be required with a formal submission.
 - Environmental Health: A noise assessment will be required to ensure that good acoustic design is provided. A land contamination assessment would also be required.
 - A sustainability statement should be provided.

- A Flood Risk Assessment would need to be provided with a formal submission as the site falls within Flood Zones 1 and 3. A drainage plan would also be required.
- The scheme would not be required to contribute towards affordable housing.

3.4 A copy of the pre-application site layout is reproduced below.

Pre-application site layout



4 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 4.1 Relevant planning policy guidance falls within the National Planning Policy Framework (2023) and the Development Plan which comprises of the Wokingham Core Strategy and the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan.

i) **National Planning Policy Framework (2023)**

- 4.2 The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies and how these should be applied. It confirms that applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise (paragraph 2). The NPPF must be taken into account in the preparation of the development plan and is a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 4.3 Paragraph 7 of the NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to achieve sustainable development. There are three overarching objectives to sustainable development which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways: economic, social and environmental objectives. The environmental objective includes the need to make efficient use of land and to improve biodiversity. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 10).
- 4.4 Paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF states that "where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
- i) The application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed, or

- ii) Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.”

4.5 Paragraph 38 states that Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way and that decision makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

4.6 Chapter 11 is concerned with making effective use of land. Paragraph 123 states that planning policies and decision should 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. Indent (d) of para.124 states that planning decisions should:

‘Promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively...’

4.7 Paragraph 128 states that planning policies and 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, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it;
- Local market conditions and viability;
- The availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use;
- The desirability of maintaining an area’s prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), or of promoting regeneration and change; and
- The importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.

4.8 Paragraphs 131 - 141 are concerned with design. It states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. Paragraph 135 states that planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- 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;
- Establish a strong sense of place;
- Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development;
- Sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting;
- Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture layout and appropriate and effective landscaping.
- Create safe and accessible environments which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

4.9 Chapter 12 relates to conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Paragraph 209 states that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing up applications that directly or indirectly affect non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the asset.

ii) **The Development Plan**

a) **Wokingham Core Strategy (2010)**

4.10 Relevant policies include:

- **Policy CP1:** Requires that a number of criteria are met. These include: maintaining or enhancing the high quality of the environment; providing

attractive, functional, accessible, safe, secure and adaptable schemes; demonstrate how they support opportunities for reducing the need to travel particularly by the car; and contribute towards reaching zero – carbon development as soon as possible.

- **Policy CP3:** Requires, amongst other matters, that new development is of an appropriate scale, mass, activity, built form, height, materials, character and design quality. Proposals should not adversely affect the amenities of neighbouring land uses. Paragraph c) requires that sites are used to their full potential.
- **Policy CP6:** The policy is concerned with managing travel demand. It states that proposals will be granted for schemes that:
 - Provide for sustainable forms of transport to allow choice;
 - Are located where there is a choice of transport modes available;
 - Improve existing infrastructure;
 - Provide appropriate parking;
 - Mitigate any adverse effects upon the highway network;
 - Enhance road safety;
 - Do not cause highway problems.
- **Policy CP7:** Policy CP7 (Biodiversity) - seeks to protect habitats or species of principle importance in England for nature conservation, veteran trees or features of the landscape that are of major importance for wild flora and fauna (including wildlife and river corridors).

b) Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014)

4.11 Relevant policies include:

- **Policy CC01:** Policy CC01 states that there will be a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Planning applications that accord with policies in the

Development Plan will be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

- **Policy CC02:** Policy CC02 confirms that the development limits are defined on the Policies Map.
- **Policy CC03:** Policy CC03 is concerned with Green Infrastructure, trees and landscaping. It states that development proposals should protect and retain existing trees, hedges and other landscape features.
- **Policy TB06:** Policy TB06 deals with development of private residential gardens. It states that proposals should make a positive contribution to the character of the area in terms of:
 - Relationship to built form and spaces;
 - A layout that integrates with the surrounding area;
 - Existing pattern of openings and boundary treatments;
 - Compatibility with general building heights.

The site should be of a size to accommodate the development in terms of setting, spacing, amenity space, landscape and parking and should meet highway standards. Unacceptable forms of 'tandem development' should be avoided and the layout should minimize the exposure of private rear gardens to public areas

- **Policy TB21:** Policy TB21 concerns Landscape Character. It states that proposals must demonstrate how they have addressed the requirements of the Council's Landscape Character Assessment including the landscape quality; landscape strategy; landscape sensitivity and key issues. Proposals

should retain or enhance the condition, character and features that contribute to the landscape.

- **Policy TB23:** Policy TB23 relates to Biodiversity and Development. It states that planning permission for development proposals will only be granted where they comply with policy CP7 – Biodiversity of the Core Strategy and also demonstrate how they:
 - a) Provide opportunities, including through design, layout and landscaping to incorporate new biodiversity features or enhance existing
 - b) Provide appropriate buffer zones between development proposals and designated sites as well as habitats and species of principle importance for nature conservation
 - c) Ensure that all existing and new developments are ecologically permeable through the protection of existing and the provision of new continuous wildlife corridors, which shall be integrated and linked to the wider green infrastructure network.

iii) Supplementary Planning Documents

Borough Design Guide SPD (BDG)

- 4.12 The purpose of the guide is to provide general design guidance for all development sites and detailed design guidance for certain topics, these being, residential, streets and spaces, car parking and non-residential development issues. The revised guidance has now been adopted by the Council.
- 4.13 The guidance sets out a number of key urban design objectives, as follows:
- Context and character;
 - Connection and accessibility;
 - Sustainable communities;

- Sustainable development;
- Inclusive design process.

- 4.14 In terms of Character and context, it is stated that new development should relate well to its surroundings, including topography and orientation of the site; existing natural and landscape features of value; heritage assets and their setting; the local settlement pattern and network of routes and neighbouring properties.
- 4.15 Section 4 concerns residential development. Garden size should relate to the house type and to the proposed number of occupants. The guidance states that the Council's minimum garden length of 11m is a generally accepted guideline for private garden space, provided that space is useable. Useable gardens should be roughly rectangular in shape; receive direct sunlight for some of the day; be capable of accommodating activities such as sitting, play, clothes drying and outside storage space; and should provide a secure external access to the rear garden for cycle storage. The application proposal meets these requirements in full.
- 4.16 The guidance sets out the minimum privacy and amenity distances as follows:
- Front to front across a street: 10m
 - Rear to rear of dwellings: 22m
 - Flank to boundary: 1m
 - Flank wall to rear of dwelling: 12m
- 4.17 The proposed development meets all of the above standards.
- 4.18 The guidance also states that all dwellings must provide adequate internal space in an appropriate layout to accommodate a range of lifestyles. Living areas and bedrooms should be large enough to accommodate a range of private and communal activities. The standard for minimum combined floor area of living, dining and kitchen space is 31sq.m (based on 6 bed spaces). Double bedrooms should be a minimum of 12sq.m and single bedrooms a minimum of 8sq.m. Guidance is also

given regarding storage space and room configurations. The proposal comfortably meets all of the above standards.

- 4.19 The guidance states that dwellings must be designed to provide appropriate levels of daylight and sunlight to new and existing properties. New housing should be designed to provide a reasonable outlook for each dwelling; be dual aspect where possible; avoid north facing, single aspect flats; and to have no material impact on levels of daylight in the habitable rooms of adjoining properties. This can be assessed using the methodology set out in report BRE 209 'Site layout planning for daylight and sunlight'.

5 THE PLANNING APPLICATION

5.1 The application proposal is for the erection of 4no. detached dwellings, following the demolition of the existing dwelling and outbuildings.

5.2 This chapter of the statement assesses the proposal against relevant national and local planning policies and specifically against the following considerations which are set out below:

- The principle of development;
- Demolition of a non-designated heritage asset;
- Impact on the character and appearance of the area;
- Living conditions of existing and future occupiers;
- Transport and highways;
- Trees and biodiversity;
- Flood risk and drainage;
- Noise/vibration and contamination
- Planning Balance and conclusions

i) The Principle of development

5.3 The application site is located within the defined major development location of Wokingham in the Proposals Map which is the highest category of settlement in the borough. The application proposal will make efficient use of land within a sustainable location close to shops, schools, employment opportunities and a range of other local services and facilities. The proposal therefore receives strong support

from central Government (NPPF) as well as adopted CS policies CP1, CP3, CP9 and Policy CC01 of the MDD. The principle of development is therefore acceptable subject to compliance with other policies set out in the development plan and the NPPF. This accords with the pre-application response letter.

- 5.4 In addition, and as stated above, the Council cannot demonstrate a 5 year housing and supply (3.2 years supply) and therefore this proposal will make an important contribution towards this deficit. The tilted balance is therefore engaged, and this is an important material consideration to be weighed in the consideration process.

ii) Demolition of a non-designated heritage asset

- 5.5 The existing dwelling is not covered by any statutory heritage designations. It does not appear on the statutory list and is not located within a conservation area. The Council's pre-application response states that the existing dwelling was identified as a non-designated heritage asset and accordingly, this application is accompanied by a Heritage Statement which provides a reasoned assessment of the heritage significance of the building (Asset Heritage Consulting).
- 5.6 The Heritage Assessment provides a thorough assessment of the building and its historical background and an assessment of its significance. It concludes that the building is of very limited interest in heritage terms and is not considered to fall within the '*minority*' of buildings that possess sufficient '*heritage significance to merit identification as non-designated heritage assets*' (PPG paragraph 039 reference ID: 18a-039-20190723).
- 5.7 The test at paragraph 209 of the NPPF requires that, in the case of non-heritage designated heritage assets, '*a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.*' In this case the significance of the asset is 'very low' whilst the scale of the harm is a total loss of significance. This will need to form part of a balanced judgement as part of the determination of the application.

- 5.8 In the case of non-designated heritage assets, the NPPF does not require any justification in excess of this non-statutory test; if the test is met, justification for the harm to the building or loss of significance has been demonstrated. The loss of the non-designated heritage asset therefore forms part of the overall planning balance in this statement.

iii) Character and appearance

- 5.9 The proposed dwellings would be served by a continuation of the existing access road, creating its own cul-de-sac. The proposed development would be relatively self-contained however the linear siting and layout of the dwellings would respect the siting of the only adjacent dwelling, no.58A Finchampstead Road.
- 5.10 The dwellings would be set generously in from the external boundaries of the site allowing for the mature trees and other planting to be retained and to provide a landscaped setting for the development.
- 5.11 The dwellings would be two storeys in height, with additional accommodation in the roof space, served by dormer windows and roof lights. Whilst of a greater size and scale than no.58A, the scale of the development would be compatible with that of nearby Eyre Court. Due to the siting of the dwellings and their generous spacing, the proposed dwellings would not visually overwhelm no.58A or appear incompatible with its overall scale and appearance. The proposal would reflect the existing pattern of development and overall, make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
- 5.12 In terms of compliance with MDD Policy TB06 (development of private gardens), the proposal is compliant in the following way:
- The development would be accessed by the continuation of the existing access and the proposal would respect the siting of the adjoining dwelling, no.58A Finchampstead Road. The dwellings would be spaciouly located within large plots, reflecting existing character;

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- Acknowledging that the development would be largely self-contained, it would, nonetheless, integrate with the surrounding area and in particular, would ensure that the landscaped character of the site would continue to predominate;
 - The site is already very well screened. Existing mature trees and other landscaped features would be retained, with additional planting provided as necessary. The balance of hard and soft landscaping is appropriate and reflects existing character.
 - The dwellings would not sit within a conventional street scene. However, the height of the dwellings would be compatible with building heights in the local area, such as at nearby Eyre Court;
 - Elevational details are of a high quality and materials will reflect those displayed in the locality;
 - The proposed access arrangement meets appropriate highway standards, as confirmed in the Transport Statement;
 - The proposed dwellings would be located in large plots with generous space provided around the buildings, large areas of amenity space and other open space and landscaping. There is also ample space within the layout for access and parking.
 - The proposal does not result in tandem development.
 - There would be no additional exposure of private boundaries to public areas.

5.13 The pre-application response confirmed that the proposal was likely to be considered acceptable in terms of its scale, layout and massing and in terms of the detailed design of the dwellings. Materials will be of a high quality and will be secured through a planning condition.

- 5.14 In conclusion on this issue, the proposed new dwellings would be of a high-quality design that reflects local context and would make a positive contribution to the existing character and appearance of the area. The proposal therefore complies with Policy CS1 and CS3 of the CS, Policy TB06 of the MDD as well as meeting the design objectives set out in paragraphs 131 - 141 of the NPPF.

iv) Living conditions of existing and future occupiers (see below for noise and vibration)

- 5.15 The proposed dwellings would exceed the Council's minimum internal space standards set out in Policy TB07 of the MDD although the guidance in respect of minimum gross internal area only applies to houses with a maximum of 4 bedrooms. However, the proposal would also comfortably exceed the Nationally Prescribed Space Standards and accordingly, the proposal would provide for a high standard of internal space for future occupiers. All of the dwellings would be provided with a rear garden which would be in excess of the Council's standards and would provide for high quality external space.
- 5.16 The proposed development is relatively self-contained with the only residential dwelling in the immediate vicinity being no.58A Finchampstead Road to the west of the dwelling on Plot 1. The closest part of the dwelling on Plot 1 to no.58A would be a garage with a room in the roof space above. The roof above the garage would slope away from the side boundary of the site with no.58A such that it would not appear overbearing or visually intrusive. The dwelling would not extend beyond the rear elevation of no.85A and would not result in any material loss of light or overlooking of that dwelling. Spatial separation distances exceed those set out in the BDG.
- 5.17 The pre-application response letter did not indicate that the proposals would result in any loss of amenity to the neighbouring property by way of overlooking, loss of light or overbearingness.
- 5.18 The proposal would therefore create a high-quality living environment for the new homes and existing surrounding properties in accordance with Policy CP3 of the CS,

TB07 of the MDD as well as paragraph 135 of the NPPF (i.e. a high standard of amenity will be provided for existing and future users).

v) Transport and highways

5.19 Each dwelling would provide for at least 3no. parking spaces and would comply with the Council's parking standards. Each dwelling would have an EV charging point and secure cycle parking.

5.20 The application is accompanied by a Transport Statement which confirms as follows:

- Parking meets adopted standards;
- The site layout would accommodate turning for a fire appliance and delivery vehicle (see swept paths);
- Refuse collection will remain as existing;
- The next increase of 3 dwellings will not adversely affect highway safety;
- The private drive from Eyre Court to the application site will be improved in line with the Highway Design Guide.

5.21 There are therefore no overriding highway reasons why the proposals should not be granted permission. Given the fact that the development can be accommodated without raising any transportation or highway issues, the proposal is considered to be compliant with CS Policy CP6.

vi) Trees and biodiversity

5.22 The application is accompanied by a BS5837:2012 compliant tree survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA), and tree protection strategy that includes a method statement and tree protection plan.

5.23 The AIA concludes that one tree (cherry tree) and two groups (shrubby plants) are to be removed to facilitate the proposals. All are of low quality and value. It confirms that the new dwellings are situated outside the root protection areas of retained trees and that there are no plans for any tree surgery at this stage. The assessment concludes that provided the protection strategy is implemented as outlined, the application is of low arboricultural impact, and thus acceptable.

5.24 In terms of biodiversity the Preliminary Roost Assessment confirms that no bats were found during the internal inspection. All of the buildings were inspected, and these were found to have negligible bat roosting potential. No further survey work was recommended as a result.

vii) Flood risk and drainage

5.25 The application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment which confirms that most of the site falls within Flood Zone 1 with only a minor part of the application site encroaching into Flood Zone 3. The FRA confirms that none of the flood water events will subsequently reach the proposed houses which are all sited within Flood Zone 1.

5.26 Chapter 6 of the FRA confirms that a sequential approach has been used when designing the layout and that this has resulted in all of the dwellings being located in an area at less risk of flooding (Flood Zone 1). As the proposed dwellings will be sited above the estimated flood level for 1 in 1000 year 0.1% (Flood Zone 1) the Sequential Test is considered to be satisfied. The Exceptions Test is also not required. Only the rear gardens will fall within Flood Zones 2 and 3.

5.27 Rainwater will be stored within permeable paving which will cascade into an attenuation tank along with run off from the roofs, with a final discharge into the ditch along the southern boundary. This will result in a reduction in peak flow rates of between 25% and 65% when compared to the existing site.

viii) Noise/vibration and contamination

- 5.28 As requested by officers under the pre-application submission, the applicant commissioned a noise report produced by Clarke Saunders. The report recommends sound reduction performances for glazing and passive background ventilators. It confirms that desirable ambient noise levels are expected to be achieved within the dwellings where the acoustic performance specification is met. In respect to vibration, the report confirms that this would be sufficiently low that it would represent only a low probability of adverse comment for the proposed dwellings.

ix) Planning balance and conclusions

- 5.29 The proposal would result in the loss of a non-designated heritage asset which is described in the Heritage Statement as being of the 'very lowest' significance. Applying the '*balanced judgement*' approach advocated in the NPPF, the positive benefits of the scheme should be afforded significant weight which would comfortably outweigh any limited harm caused through its loss. Factors to be weighed in the 'balanced' judgment assessment strongly support its removal and the sites redevelopment for 4no. dwellings. Firstly, the Council do not currently have a 5 year housing land supply (3.2 years) and the proposal would make a contribution to the existing housing stock by providing 4no. (net increase of 3no.) family sized dwellings. The proposed development would make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area whilst providing family housing which would provide a high standard of amenity for future residents. The living conditions of nearby occupiers would also be protected. It has been demonstrated that the proposal is acceptable in terms of its effect on trees and biodiversity, highways and flood risk.

6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The application should be supported for the following reasons:

- i) The site is within the defined major development location of Wokingham. The proposal will make the efficient use of land within a highly sustainable location close to shops, schools, employment opportunities and a range of other local services and facilities. The proposal therefore receives strong support from central Government (NPPF) as well as adopted CS policies CP1, CP3, CP9 and Policy CC01 of the MDD. The principle of development is therefore acceptable subject to compliance with other policies set out in the development plan and the NPPF. In addition, and as stated above, the Council cannot demonstrate a 5 year housing and supply (3.2 years) and therefore this proposal will make a contribution towards this deficit.
- ii) The application has been the subject of pre-application discussions in accordance with national advice (NPPF). The comments and advice provided by the Council have all been acknowledged and acted upon positively, including providing an appropriate design and layout and additional consultant reports where requested.
- iii) The Heritage Assessment concludes that the building is of very limited interest in heritage terms and is not considered to fall within the '*minority*' of buildings that possess sufficient '*heritage significance to merit identification as non-designated heritage assets*'. Taking into account the 'balanced judgement' advocated in the NPPF, its removal and replacement with 4no. dwellings can be justified and supported.
- iv) The proposed dwellings would make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the surrounding area and the proposal is consistent with the aims of MDD Policy TB06. The proposal is for a low-density, high-quality

development that will provide generous new space for landscaping as well as retaining and enhancing existing landscape buffers to the external boundaries. The proposals meet the design requirements set down with CS Policies CP1 and CP3, the Borough Design Guide and paragraphs 131-141 of the NPPF.

- v) All significant trees can be adequately retained and protected, and new planting is recommended in addition to be dealt with through a planning condition. There are no substantive reasons to oppose the proposals on arboricultural grounds and the proposals meet the requirements of MDDL Policy CC03. The buildings have been inspected for bats and have not identified any evidence of roosts. All of the buildings were found to be of negligible potential.
- vi) The proposals will provide for a high-quality internal and external living environment for future residents. The proposed development would not harm the living conditions of occupiers of the adjoining dwelling. The proposal meets CS Policy CP3 and paragraph 135 of the NPPF as a high standard of amenity for existing and future users will be provided.
- vii) Parking and access are provided in accordance with adopted standards. The site is accessible to local schools and shops and is close to existing bus links. The proposals are consistent with the requirements of CS Policy CP6.
- viii) The dwellings are located within Flood Zone 1 with only the gardens being within Flood Zones 2 and 3. Sequential and Exceptions Tests are not considered to be required. Records indicate that no previous flood events have reached the proposed dwellings locations.
- ix) Noise and vibration have been assessed and these have both been found to be within acceptable limits subject to glazing performance and [passive background ventilators.