



# WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Meeting of the **PLANNING COMMITTEE** will be held  
David Hicks 1 - Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham RG40  
1BN on **WEDNESDAY 11 SEPTEMBER 2019 AT 7.00 PM**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Susan Parsonage', written in a cursive style.

Susan Parsonage  
Chief Executive  
Published on 3 September 2019

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# **WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **Our Vision**

A great place to live, an even better place to do business

## **Our Priorities**

Improve educational attainment and focus on every child achieving their potential

Invest in regenerating towns and villages, support social and economic prosperity, whilst encouraging business growth

Ensure strong sustainable communities that are vibrant and supported by well designed development

Tackle traffic congestion in specific areas of the Borough

Improve the customer experience when accessing Council services

## **The Underpinning Principles**

Offer excellent value for your Council Tax

Provide affordable homes

Look after the vulnerable

Improve health, wellbeing and quality of life

Maintain and improve the waste collection, recycling and fuel efficiency

Deliver quality in all that we do

## MEMBERSHIP OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

### Councillors

Simon Weeks (Chairman)	Chris Bowring (Vice-Chairman)	Stephen Conway
Gary Cowan	Carl Doran	Pauline Jorgensen
Abdul Loyes	Andrew Mickleburgh	Malcolm Richards
Angus Ross	Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey	

ITEM NO.	WARD	SUBJECT	PAGE NO.
32.		<b>APOLOGIES</b> To receive any apologies for absence.	
33.		<b>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING</b> To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 August 2019	5 - 10
34.		<b>DECLARATION OF INTEREST</b> To receive any declaration of interest	
35.		<b>APPLICATIONS TO BE DEFERRED AND WITHDRAWN ITEMS</b> To consider any recommendations to defer applications from the schedule and to note any applications that may have been withdrawn.	
36.	Norreys	<b>DIVERSION ORDER WOKINGHAM 16</b> <b>Recommendation:</b> That the Diversion Order is made.	11 - 16
37.	Emmbrook	<b>APPLICATION NO. 191972 - 24 MATTHEWSGREEN ROAD, WOKINGHAM, RG41 1JU</b> <b>Recommendation:</b> Conditional approval	17 - 30
38.	Remenham, Wargrave and Ruscombe	<b>APPLICATION NO. 191566 - OLD BIRD HOUSE, MILLEY LANE, HARE HATCH, RG10 9TH</b> <b>Recommendation:</b> Conditional approval and subsequent deferral and delegation of the final decision to the Assistant Director – Place Based Services following the conclusion of the advertising period on 12 September 2019, and subject to the consideration of any further representations received	31 - 54
39.	Finchampstead South	<b>APPLICATION NO. 191112 - MANOR FARM, FINCHAMPSTEAD, RG40 3TL</b> <b>Recommendation:</b> Conditional approval	55 - 80

40. Arborfield;  
Barkham

**TREE PRESERVATION ORDER (TPO) - COOMBES  
WOODS, TPO 1684/2019**

**Recommendation:** That the Committee confirm the making of TPO 1684/2019

**Any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent**

A Supplementary Agenda will be issued by the Chief Executive if there are any other items to consider under this heading.

**GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

The following abbreviations were used in the above Index and in reports.

<b>C/A</b>	Conditional Approval (grant planning permission)
<b>CIL</b>	Community Infrastructure Levy
<b>R</b>	Refuse (planning permission)
<b>LB</b>	(application for) Listed Building Consent
<b>S106</b>	Section 106 legal agreement between Council and applicant in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990
<b>F</b>	(application for) Full Planning Permission
<b>MU</b>	Members' Update circulated at the meeting
<b>RM</b>	Reserved Matters not approved when Outline Permission previously granted
<b>VAR</b>	Variation of a condition/conditions attached to a previous approval
<b>PS</b>	Performance Statistic Code for the Planning Application
<b>Category</b>	

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
PLANNING COMMITTEE  
HELD ON 14 AUGUST 2019 FROM 7.00 PM TO 8.55 PM**

**Committee Members Present**

Councillors: Simon Weeks (Chairman), Chris Bowring (Vice-Chairman), Gary Cowan, Pauline Jorgensen, Abdul Loyes, Andrew Mickleburgh, Malcolm Richards, Angus Ross and Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

**Councillors Present and Speaking**

Councillors: Jim Frewin

**Councillors Present**

Councillors: John Halsall

**Officers Present**

Connor Corrigan, Service Manager – Strategic Development Locations, Planning Delivery  
Judy Kelly, Highways Development Manager  
Mary Severin, Borough Solicitor  
Callum Wernham, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist

**Case Officers Present**

Senjuti Manna  
Kayleigh Mansfield  
Alex Thwaites

**24. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were submitted by Stephen Conway and Carl Doran.

**25. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 10 July 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendments:

Item 23, 30 Hilltop Road, Earley:

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Clarification that agenda pages 129 to 132 were duplicate plans for a different application;
- **Additional condition 2;**
- **Plan to be replaced by drawing no P1909 01A;**
- **Additional drawing P1909 02A.**

RESOLVED ... to 'The development hereby permitted may be liable to pay...', **and additional condition 2 as set out in the Members' Update.**

**MEMBERS' UPDATE**

There are a number of references to the Members' Update within these minutes. The Members' Update was circulated to all present prior to the meeting. A copy is attached.

## **26. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Pauline Jorgensen declared a personal interest in agenda item 28 on the grounds that she was the Executive Member for Highways and Transport. Pauline stated that she would continue to take part in the debate and vote.

## **27. APPLICATIONS TO BE DEFERRED AND WITHDRAWN ITEMS**

There were no applications recommended for deferral, or withdrawn.

## **28. APPLICATION 191010 - LAND AT AND ADJACENT TO ASHRIDGE FARM, NORREYS**

**Proposal:** Full application for a section of the Northern Distributor Road through Ashridge Farm, linking Bell Foundry Lane to the west with Kentwood Farm to the east, incorporating a new priority junction on Bell Foundry Lane and associated works including a shared footway/cycleway.

**Applicant:** Wokingham Borough Council C/O WSP

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 15 to 44. The Committee were advised that there were no Members' Updates.

Clare Williams, WSP, spoke in support of the application. Clare stated that this scheme was approved by Executive decision in 2015, and the scheme before the Committee was the best possible alignment including with regards to trees, natural habitats and the nearby listed building. Clare added that the plans had taken on board comments from Natural England and as a result additional planting would take place along the stretch of road. Clare stated that the entire length of the northern distributor road would include a shared pedestrian and cycle path. Clare commented that the planting and landscaping improvements to the area would result in a net gain in habitat and biodiversity, and concluded that the scheme would provide a safe and functional route for walkers, motorists and cyclists.

Simon Weeks commented that this application was a critical component of the northern distributor road, which was due to be completed in 2021.

Malcolm Richards queried how the modelling had shown a reduction in usage along Warren House Road. Judy Kelly, Highways Development Manager, clarified that the proposed new section of road would move some of the vehicle flow away from Warren House Road.

Angus Ross commented that despite increasing the number of trees within the area, more consideration needed to be made to the carbon offset each tree provided, with a large tree offsetting more carbon than several smaller trees. Simon Weeks commented that smaller trees had a much higher survival rate when moved than a larger and more mature tree. The Biodiversity Officer had previously stated that biodiversity would be increased as a result of this application and the scheme adhered to Natural England's metrics.

**RESOLVED** That application 191010 be approved subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 16 to 24.

## **29. APPLICATION 191640 FOUNDRY COLLEGE, BUDGES GREEN, WOKINGHAM RG40 1PX**

**Proposal:** Full planning application for the change of use of office accommodation (Use Class B1 (a)) to school (Use Class D1) to form an enlarged school, along with change of use of amenity land to school playing field, erection of single storey extensions, relocation of existing temporary classrooms and associated hard and soft landscape works.

**Applicant:** Wokingham Borough Council

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 45 to 72. The Committee were advised that the members' Update included reference to 3 additional comments received regarding this application.

Jim Leivers, WBC Assistant Director – Learning, Achievements and Partnerships, spoke in support of the application. Jim stated that the current building provided a poor level of facilities for pupils, and this application intended to improve these facilities by expanding the size of the school whilst reducing the number of people travelling to the school. Jim added that this application would improve the overall site so that the site was more secure for neighbours, pupils and staff. Jim stated that a number of meetings and dialogs had taken place with local residents, and the application would provide a safe environment for its pupils with better facilities to enable them to reach their full potential.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried whether an annual car parking management strategy could be implemented as part of this application, and sought clarification as to whether Highways had checked the visibility splays at the corner of Budes Gardens Road and whether as a result the site boundary needed to be moved a short (0.5m-1m) distance away from this corner. Judy Kelly, Highways Development Manager, clarified that the travel plan mechanism would be used to monitor various aspects including car park usage and school drop offs. Judy added that the travel plan would routinely be updated annually. Judy stated that the visibility from the corner of Budes Gardens Road was measured from 2.4m back from the junction and was considered acceptable in accordance with standards.

Gary Cowan raised concerns regarding the proposed increase in the site boundary towards Budes Gardens Road. Gary was of the opinion that this was not beneficial to the scheme, and several residents were not happy with this proposal. Jim Leivers clarified that there had been consultations and conversations with residents and local groups with regards to this application. Jim added that both sides of the proposed boundary were already owned by Wokingham Borough Council.

Pauline Jorgensen sought assurances that should the fence be moved at the boundary that it would be properly landscaped. Senjuti Manna, Case Officer, confirmed that landscaping would take place at the site boundary.

Abdul Loyes queried whether double yellow lines should be implemented outside of the entrance to the site to allow for emergency vehicle access. Simon Weeks suggested that double yellow lines were not implemented at this time and they do not always have the desired effect of stopping people parking.

Gary Cowan proposed an amendment to the recommendation, whereby the fence boundaries be retained in their current positions. This proposal was not seconded and subsequently fell.

**RESOLVED** That application number 19164 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 46 to 48.

**30. APPLICATION 191024 LAND AT MATTHEWSGREEN FARM, WOKINGHAM**

**Proposal:** Application for approval of reserved matters pursuant to outline planning permission (O/2014/2242). The reserved matters comprise details of the local centre incorporating retail use on ground floor and 16 dwellings on the upper floors, with associated parking and landscaping. Details of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale to be determined.

**Applicant:** Bovis Homes

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, as set out in agenda pages 73 to 108.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- An additional neighbour consultation received on 3 August 2019 and associated Officer comment;
- Altered recommendation due to receipt of further clarity regarding the proposed Deed of Variation;
- Altered Condition 2.

Peter Warren, Agent representing Bovis Homes, spoke in support of the application. Peter stated that the application would provide a viable amenity space for the community, with the overall layout if the proposed site being complimentary to the neighbouring school. Peter added that the retail units and parking availability would be an asset to the community, and the scheme would deliver the next phase of the Matthewsgreen Farm development, which sat within the North Wokingham SDL.

Pauline Jorgensen queried how this application conformed to Wokingham Borough Council's (WBC's) parking standards, and sought clarification as to the public transport provision. Judy Kelly, Highways Development manager, stated that there was a bus stop nearby. Judy added that the scheme complied with WBC's parking standards including the provision of disabled spaces.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey queried whether residents of the proposed flats would be allowed to park in the retail spaces. Connor Corrigan, Service Manager – Strategic Development Locations and Planning Delivery, stated that it was unlikely that residents would be able to park at the retail units as it would be up to the retailers to manage their own allocated parking provision for their customers.

Angus Ross queried how the proposed garden area would be maintained in future. Connor Corrigan stated that the applicant would either be responsible for the maintenance of the garden or they could hand the garden over to WBC, which would allow the Council to maintain the garden going forwards.

A number of Members queried how electric vehicle charging would be implemented at the proposed development. Connor Corrigan stated that it was up to the applicant to suggest where the charging points be located, and Officers would then agree or disagree. Connor added that the policy around electric vehicle charging was new and emerging.



Andrew Mickleburgh queried whether the affordable housing provision would remain in perpetuity. Connor Corrigan clarified that the affordable rent properties would be handed over to a social landlord and would have to be retained as per the S106 agreement.

**RESOLVED** That application number 191024 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 74 to 78, amended recommendation due to receipt of further clarity on the Deed of Variation as set out in the Members' Update, and altered condition 2 as set out in the Members' Update.

**31. APPLICATION 191651 SILVER MEADOW PRIMARY SCHOOL, ALDER GROVE, SHINFIELD RG2 9RA**

**Proposal:** Full planning application for the proposed temporary use of the upper floor of school (D1) building to provide office accommodation (B1) for a 5 year period until the school is fully occupied.

**Applicant:** Wokingham Borough Council

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 109 to 120.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- An additional neighbour comment and associated Officer response;
- Additional Travel Plan condition;
- Additional Car Parking Management Condition;
- Additional Travel Plan informative.

Jim Leivers, Assistant Director – Learning, Achievements and Partnerships, spoke in support of the application. Jim stated that the application before the Committee would allow Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) to make efficient use of existing resources by placing various WBC education staff at the site for up to 5 years. Jim added that this application formed a part of the Council's overall staff accommodation strategy.

Jim Frewin, Ward Member, commented on the application. Jim stated that he was very supportive of the concept of the application making efficient use of WBC property whilst it was surplus to requirements. Jim raised concerns over the safeguarding aspects at the school including external visitors meeting staff, and sought reassurances that these had been considered. Jim queried what the process would be to review whether the upstairs space needed to be used by the school before the five year period concluded.

Connor Corrigan, Service Manager – Strategic Development Locations and Planning Delivery, clarified that staff could not access the school teaching area as this access would be controlled centrally through the school reception. Connor added that, for example, a film could be placed on the windows of the staff section of the building to prevent overlooking of the play areas, however this was an operational matter which could be addressed quickly with any other issues that might arise. Connor stated that as the school was to be under WBC control, should the school need to use the space before the five year time period was up WBC staff would move, this was to be reviewed annually.

Jim Leivers clarified that all staff housed on site would be education staff whom would all be DBS checked.

Gary Cowan raised concerns that the neighbour comment had not been fully considered within the officer report. Gary questioned the conclusion that there was a good bus service at the site, stating that the nearest stop was 0.5 Miles Reading bound, and 0.6 miles Arborfield bound. Simon Weeks stated that as many of the staff were likely to visit pupils within the Borough, they would likely rely on a private vehicle and not public transport.

Simon Weeks proposed that an additional informative be added, stating that the upstairs was to be used either solely by WBC staff or solely as part of the school, and in no circumstances as a mixture of the two. This proposal was seconded and subsequently approved and added to the list of informatives as part of the recommendation.

**RESOLVED** That application number 191651 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 109 to 110, additional travel plan and car parking management conditions as set out in the Members' Update, additional travel plan informative as set out in the Members' Update, and additional informative regarding usage of the upstairs by either WBC staff or as a part of the school as agreed by the Committee.

# Agenda Item 36.

Application Number	Expiry Date	Parish	Ward
N/A		Wokingham	Norreys;

<b>Applicant</b>	Bellway Homes Ltd
<b>Site Address</b>	London Road, Wokingham
<b>Proposal</b>	Diversion Order FP Wokingham 16
<b>Type</b>	N/A
<b>PS Category</b>	N/A
<b>Officer</b>	Andrew Fletcher
<b>Reason for determination by committee</b>	Scheme of delegation

<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Planning Committee on 11 <sup>th</sup> September 2019
<b>REPORT PREPARED BY</b>	Assistant Director – Delivery & Infrastructure

<b>SUMMARY</b>
<p>The Council has received an application to divert part of Wokingham Footpath No.16 under section 119 Highways Act (1980).</p> <p>The grounds for the making of the diversion order are part of the line of the path should be diverted in the interests of the owner of land crossed by the path and of the public.</p> <p>It is recommended that the order is made.</p>

<b>PLANNING STATUS</b>
<p>Major Development Location</p> <p><b>Legal Framework for the Decision:</b> Orders for the stopping up or diversion of footpaths, bridleways or restricted byways may be made under section 119 of the Highways Act (1980), if the highways authority is satisfied that it is necessary to do so in the interests of the owner of the land owner and the public.</p> <p>Defra Rights of way Circular 01/09 is also relevant</p>

<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>
<p><b>That the committee authorise the DIVERSION ORDER:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That authorisation is given to the making of an order under s.119 Highways Act 1980 Act to divert part of Footpath Wokingham 16 as shown on the plan no. 1, in the interests of the public and of the landowner;</li> <li>2. If no objections to the order are received or any such objections are withdrawn, that the order may be confirmed;</li> <li>3. If objections are received and sustained, the order may be sent to the Secretary of State for confirmation.</li> </ol>

### **PLANNING HISTORY**

Outline planning permission with reference number O/2014/2435 for the development of the land over which the footpath crosses was granted on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2015.

A Reserved Matters application number 153247 pursuant to the Outline permission was approved on 25/07/2016. This established details for matters of access, landscaping, scale and appearance for 300 residential dwellings, up to 800 square metres of restaurant /public house (use class A3 and A4), public open space and landscaping, allotments, acoustic mitigation, surface water drainage, foul water pumping stations, land reserved for park and ride and a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs). A second Reserved Matters application (173082), which made a number of minor changes to the approved plans (substituting house types on 26 plots) was approved on 19/01/2018.

### **CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

Ramblers' Association – no objection  
Open Spaces Society – no comments  
Wokingham Town Council – no comments  
Local Access Forum – no objection  
Local Members – no comments

### **APPLICANTS POINTS**

Small sections of footpath Wokingham 16 need to be diverted to allow development (car parking spaces) to take place in accordance with the approved Reserved Matters layout. At the south east boundary of the site, the footpath is to be diverted away from a constructed noise bund, on to a route which will also be used by cyclists. As such it is considered that the test embedded in requirements of s.119 is met (that the new route is as substantially convenient to the public and in the interests of the landowner and/ or the public.)

### **BACKGROUND**

1. Footpath Wokingham 16 commences at the end of Wainwright Close and runs in a north easterly direction for 250m then in a south easterly direction for 180m ending adjacent to the Coppid Beech roundabout on the A329 at Amen Corner.
2. The section of the path affected by the proposed development and which is required to be diverted is shown by a solid black line between the points A-E on the plan no.1.
3. The path between A-C was originally a grassed unsealed path over a field, however with the new development underway there are a number of estate roads and dwellings under construction as well as the Northern Distributor Road. The path C-D-E runs along the top of a bund adjacent to the A329. However, the Definitive Line is a parallel path at the base of the bund a few metres south west of the used line. The line of the path from Wainwright Close to point E is currently subject to a Traffic Regulation Order during development and therefore this section is closed to the public. There is no defined width on the ground (or the Definitive Statement) of section A-C. However C-D-E has tarmacadam path. There are no barriers along the route.

4. Reserved Matters applications 153247 (25/07/2016) and 173082 (19/01/2018) (both pursuant to Outline planning permission O/2014/2435) have established an approved layout for the site – detail of access, landscaping, scale and appearance.
5. The approved development allows for the construction of a number of car parking spaces across the line of the footpath. An estate road will also cross the line of the path and the diversion order would allow for realignment for a pedestrian crossing point. Development across the route of the existing public footpath would constitute an unlawful obstruction of the public right of way. Accordingly, a diversion of the footpath as shown on the appended plan no.1 will be necessary for the development and therefore in the interest of the landowner.
6. The constructed sound bund would interfere with the line of the used path. However, this is not the definitive line but could potentially carry public rights. It makes sense to divert the definitive line to the base of the bund where a cycleway is to be constructed to create one single highway. This would mean that the public would not be walking adjacent to the noise bund but several metres away making it more convenient for users.
7. The length of Wokingham 16 to be diverted is approximately 360m between points A-E. The A-B section of the route to be diverted has no dog legs; the proposed diverted section A-F-G-H-B has two dog legs along the route and is approximately 18m longer than the current route. The B-C-D-E section of the route to be diverted has one dog leg; the proposed diverted section B-J-K-E-L has no dog legs and is approximately 5m longer. The new route will therefore be substantially as convenient to the public, meeting the test in s.119.
8. The diverted path will be approximately 2m wide throughout the site with standard hard surfacing. It is a mixture of materials including block paving in part but predominantly tarmac. The path will remain publicly maintainable. The specification for the surface of the proposed urban path will be to a higher standard than would ordinarily be expected. Maintenance of the footpath will be the responsibility of the Authority as the route will be publicly maintainable.
9. Wokingham Town Council, the Ramblers and the Open Spaces Society have been consulted and have made no objections to the proposed diversion. The Local Access Forum has also been consulted and has no objection to the diversion. Local Members have been consulted and have no objections to the diversion.
10. Schedule 14 of the 1990 Act requires the Council to give notice if it intends to confirm the diversion order. If there are no subsisting objections the Council may proceed to confirm the order. Otherwise the order can only be confirmed by the Secretary of State who may decide to hold a Public Inquiry.
11. The following policy is relevant to this application: *Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2009* (Statement of Action Policy SOA3) Improve accessibility and quality of life: 'to identify ways to improve access on public rights of way for those with visual or mobility impairments'. The length of the footpath within the application site will be accessible for pushchair and wheelchair users.
12. The purpose of the diversion is to alter the definitive line of the path to provide an improved path for users and to enable the development to go ahead and to be more

convenient to users. The test under s.119 of the Highways Act (1980) is whether the new route is as substantially convenient to the public and in the interests of the landowner and/ or the public. The current route crosses an open field, the ground is uneven underfoot. Within the new development the path will have the usual features of an urban path. However, it will be more accessible to users due to the higher specification surfacing. Also, part of the route will be accessible to cyclists. Therefore the route will be more convenient to the public.

13. The difference in length between the length of path to be diverted and the proposed alternative is approximately 23 metres. However, it is considered that any perceived disadvantage as a consequence of the additional length will be outweighed by the improved surface and accessibility, overall the right of way is improved by the development and subsequent diversion.

14. Guidance under s.7.8 of Rights of Way circular 01/09 states that where possible routes should not be diverted on to estate roads. Part of the diverted route, A-F-G-H-B will be alongside and crossing an estate road but this would be inevitable given the proximity of the new development to the existing footpath. However, the diverted route will have improved surfacing making it more convenient for walkers.

15. The merits of the planning permission are not under consideration in this process.

## **CONCLUSION**

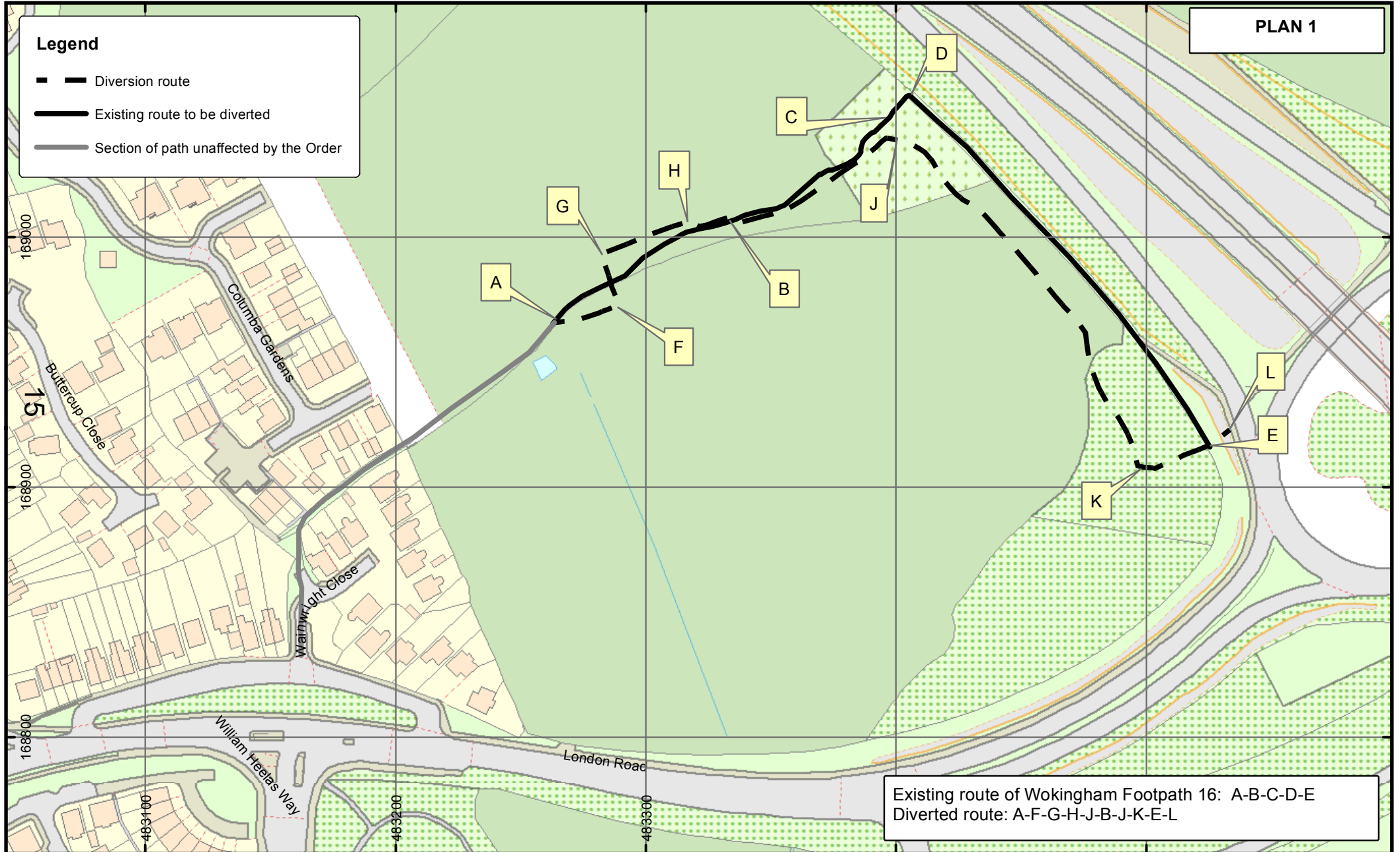
Officers are of the opinion that the proposed diversion satisfies the criteria required under section 119 of the Highways Act (1980) and that it is expedient for the Council to make the order in that:

- 1) It is in the interests of the owner of the land and of the public;
- 2) In general the proposed routes will be substantially as convenient to the public.

It is recommended that the order is made.

# WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL FOOTPATH WOKINGHAM 16 (PART) DIVERSION ORDER

PLAN 1



Scale 1:2,000

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# Agenda Item 37.

Application Number	Expiry Date	Parish	Ward
191972	16/09/2019	Wokingham	Emmbrook;

<b>Applicant</b>	Mr Graham Ebers
<b>Site Address</b>	24 Matthewsgreen Road, Wokingham RG41 1JU
<b>Proposal</b>	Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey extension to existing detached garage, plus conversion of the garage into habitable accommodation.
<b>Type</b>	Householder
<b>PS Category</b>	21
<b>Officer</b>	Adriana Gonzalez
<b>Reason for determination by committee</b>	The applicant is a member of staff of Wokingham Borough Council

<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Planning Committee on Wednesday, 11 September 2019
<b>REPORT PREPARED BY</b>	Assistant Director – Place

SUMMARY
The proposal involves the conversion of the garage for habitable purposes, with fenestration changes to the front, side and rear elevations, as well as a single storey extension to the rear of the garage. The proposed extension is modest in terms of its size and scale, with no significant changes to the overall built form of the structure, and the conversion is acceptable on streetscape, neighbour amenity and parking availability grounds. As such, conditional approval is recommended.

PLANNING STATUS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major Development Location – Wokingham</li> <li>• Bat Roost Habitat Suitability</li> </ul>

RECOMMENDATION
<p><b>That the committee authorise the GRANT OF PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the following Conditions and Informatives:</b></p> <p><b>Conditions:</b></p> <p><b>1. Timescale</b> The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.</p> <p><b>Reason:</b> In pursuance of s.91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by s.51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).</p> <p><b>2. Approved Plans</b> This permission is in respect of the submitted application plans and drawings titled Site Location Plan (Esc. 1:1250) received by the local planning authority on 22/07/2019, and revised plans and drawings titled Existing Side Elevation; Existing Front and Rear Elevation; Existing Plan View Roof; Existing Plan View (Internal); Proposed Side Elevation; Proposed Rear and Front Elevation; Proposed Plan View Roof and Proposed Plan View (Internal) received by the local planning authority on 31/08/2019. The</p>

development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

**Reason:** For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the application form and associated details hereby approved.

**3. External Materials**

Except where stated otherwise on the approved drawings, the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces hereby permitted shall be of a similar appearance to those used in the existing building unless other minor variations are agreed in writing after the date of this permission and before implementation with the Local Planning Authority.

**Reason:** To ensure that the external appearance of the building is satisfactory. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3.

**4. Ancillary accommodation**

The habitable accommodation hereby approved shall be used as ancillary accommodation to the main dwellinghouse and the dwelling shall remain in use as a single dwellinghouse and not be used, sold or sub-let as separate dwellings.

**Reason:** A separate unit of accommodation of this nature may not be acceptable in this location in the interests of the amenities, character of the area and highway safety in accordance with Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP3, CP4, and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policies CC01, CC07, TB07, TB08.

**Informatives:**

**1. Within curtilage**

Whilst it would appear from the application that the proposed development is to be entirely within the curtilage of the application site, the granting of planning permission does not authorise you to gain access or carry out any works on, over or under your neighbour's land or property without first obtaining their consent, and does not obviate the need for compliance with the requirements of the Party Wall etc. Act 1996.

**2. Changes to the approved plans**

The applicant is reminded that should there be any change from the approved drawings during the build of the development this may require a fresh planning application if the changes differ materially from the approved details. Non-material changes may be formalised by way of an application under s.96A Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

**3. Positive and proactive discussion**

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF.

PLANNING HISTORY		
Application Number	Proposal	Decision
002633	Proposed single storey rear extension to dwelling and loft conversion with raised roof.	Approved – 21/12/2000

	Demolition of existing garage and erection of new garage.	
10112	Single storey extension for enlargement of kitchen area	Approved – 04/05/1979

<b>SUMMARY INFORMATION</b>		
<b>For Residential</b>		
Site Area	953sqm approximately	
Existing parking spaces	3+	
Proposed parking spaces	3 (on site)	

<b>CONSULTATION RESPONSES</b>	
WBC Highways	No objections.

<b>REPRESENTATIONS</b>	
Wokingham Town Council	No comments received
Local Members	No comments received
Neighbours	No comments received

<b>APPLICANTS POINTS</b>	
The materials and finishes consist of white render, slate tile and windows to match the existing property.	

<b>PLANNING POLICY</b>		
National Policy	<b>NPPF</b>	National Planning Policy Framework
Adopted Core Strategy DPD 2010	<b>CP1</b>	Sustainable Development
	<b>CP3</b>	General Principles for Development
	<b>CP6</b>	Managing Travel Demand
	<b>CP9</b>	Scale and Location of Development Proposals
Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014	<b>CC01</b>	Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
	<b>CC04</b>	Sustainable Design and Construction
	<b>CC07</b>	Parking
Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)	<b>BDG</b>	Borough Design Guide – Section 4

<b>PLANNING ISSUES</b>	
<b>Description of Development:</b>	
<p>1. The application site is located on the south-western side of Matthewsgreen Road and is bounded by open land part of North Wokingham Strategic Development Location to the north. It is a fairly deep plot with a depth of 61.5 metres, a frontage of 15.5 metres and a total site area of 953sqm (all measurements approximate). On the site is a detached chalet-style bungalow with converted loft space, and with a mixture of detached and semi-detached dwellings within deep plots and cul-de-sac backland development predominating the surrounding area.</p>	

2. The proposal involves the conversion of the existing detached single car garage into habitable accommodation, as well as a single storey extension to the rear of the garage. The proposed extension would be built over an existing concrete pad, continuing with same width and height of the existing garage, and projecting approximately 3.6 metres from the rear wall of the garage structure.
3. The garage conversion would include replacement of the existing garage doors to the front and rear elevations with brickwork finished in white render and a window on each elevation.

**Principle of Development:**

4. The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the local Development Plan. The Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy CC01 states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for Wokingham Borough will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
5. The site is located within major settlement limits and as such, the development should be acceptable providing that it complies with the principles stated in the Core Strategy. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area in which it is located and must be of high quality design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land uses and occupiers.

**Character of the Area:**

6. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale, mass, layout, built form, height and character of the area and must be of high quality design. R1 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires that development contribute positively towards and be compatible with the historic or underlying character and quality of the local area and P2 seeks to ensure that parking is provided in a manner that is compatible with the local character.
7. The existing garage structure is proposed to be extended to the rear by approximately 3.6 metres, and maintaining same width and height of the original garage; these modifications would not be visible from the public realm. The existing garage door to the front elevation will be removed and replaced with a new window that is consistent with the existing fenestration of the main dwellinghouse. This results in an improvement in the general character of the property and no objections are raised on street scene grounds.
8. Vehicles will be parked within the existing paved parking area forward of the dwelling. This is not inconsistent with the existing parking arrangement on the site, which evidence at least three parking spaces. It is also not out of character with the street scene, which is predominated by properties with detached or attached garages and with ample paved parking area in front of the dwellings.
9. Condition 3 specifies that materials are to be consistent with the existing dwelling.

### **Neighbouring Amenity**

10. R15 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires the retention of reasonable levels of visual privacy to habitable rooms, with separation of 10m to the street and 22m to the rear. The proposed windows to the front and rear of the dwelling will satisfy the above requirements and there are no proposed windows to the side elevation facing the adjoining neighbouring property no. 26. Therefore there are no foreseeable privacy concerns.
11. Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposed extension to enlarge the existing garage would be siting close to the side boundary line shared with neighbouring property no. 26, it is unlikely these would lead to any overbearing or overshadowing impact upon the latter, due to the single storey nature of the proposed development, and its siting considerably back from the main property at no. 26.

### **Highway Access and Parking Provision**

12. Policy CC07 and Appendix 2 of the MDD Local Plan stipulates minimum off street parking standards and R23 of the Borough Design Guide SPD states that where a garage is to be converted, the parking space is to be replaced.
13. The submitted plans and site visit confirmed that there is sufficient room and turning space for the parking of three vehicles, as well as forward movement from the site. The Council's Highways Officer raises no objection and the proposal is acceptable on access and parking grounds.

### **Amenity Space for Future Occupiers**

14. The proposal would increase the footprint of the existing garage to the rear. However, the remaining amenity space would be of a size that would accord with the minimum 11 metres recommended in the Borough Design Guide and would be able to accommodate typical garden activities. Therefore, no harmful impact would occur in this respect.

### **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)**

15. The proposal would result in a residential development of under 100sqm and as such would not be CIL liable.

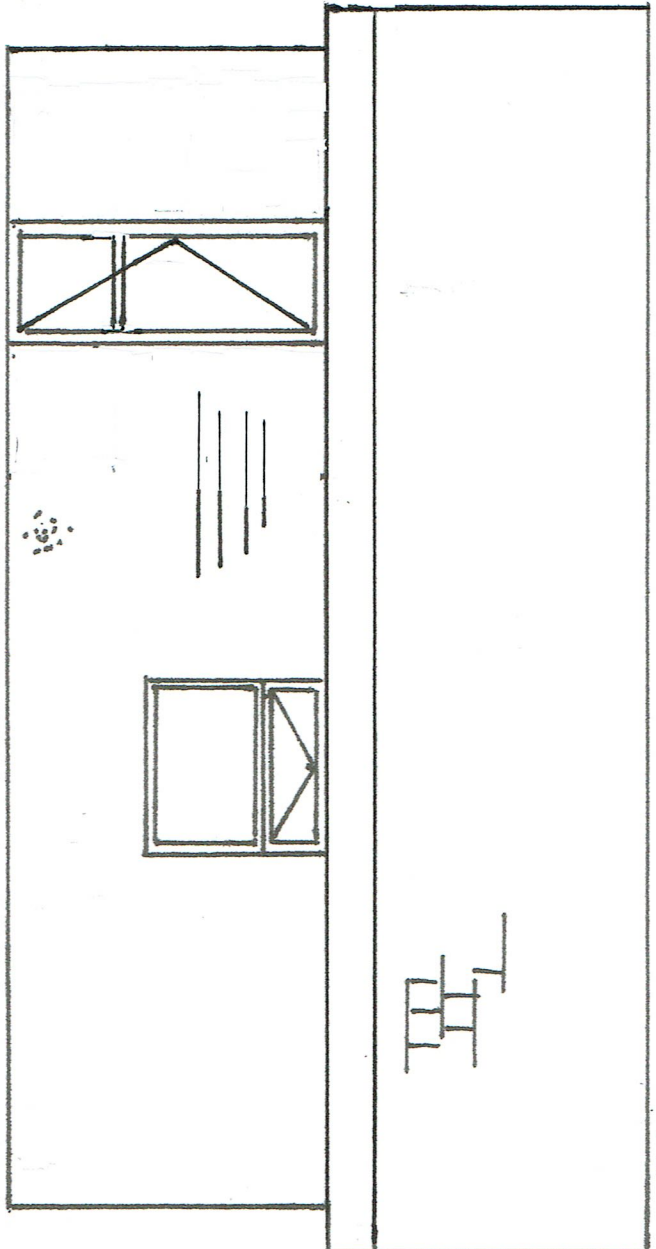
### **The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010)**

*In determining this application the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts upon protected groups as a result of the development.*

**CONCLUSION**

16. The proposal does not involve significant changes to the overall built form of the existing building, and the garage conversion is acceptable on streetscape, neighbour amenity, as well as highways safety and parking provision. It is therefore recommended that this application is approved subject to the above conditions, as it would accord with the NPPF and development plan policies for Wokingham Borough.

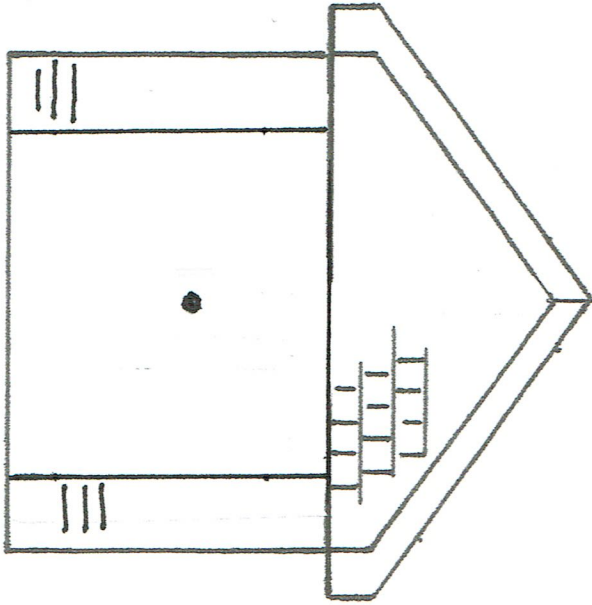
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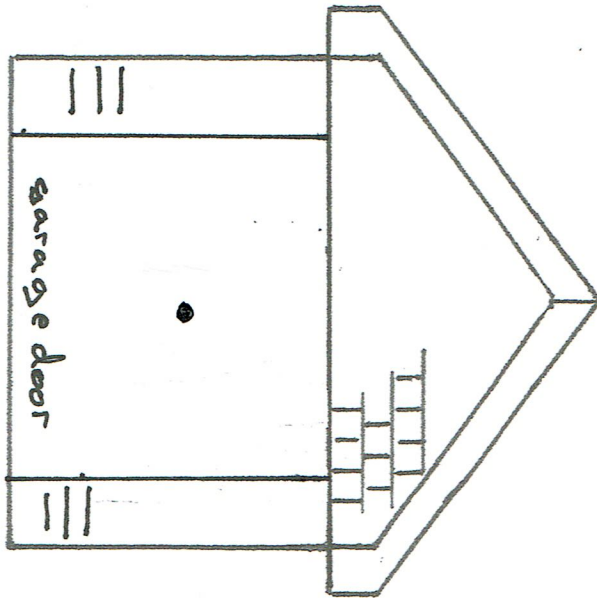
EXISTING SIDE ELEVATION.



EXISTING.



REAR ELEVATION



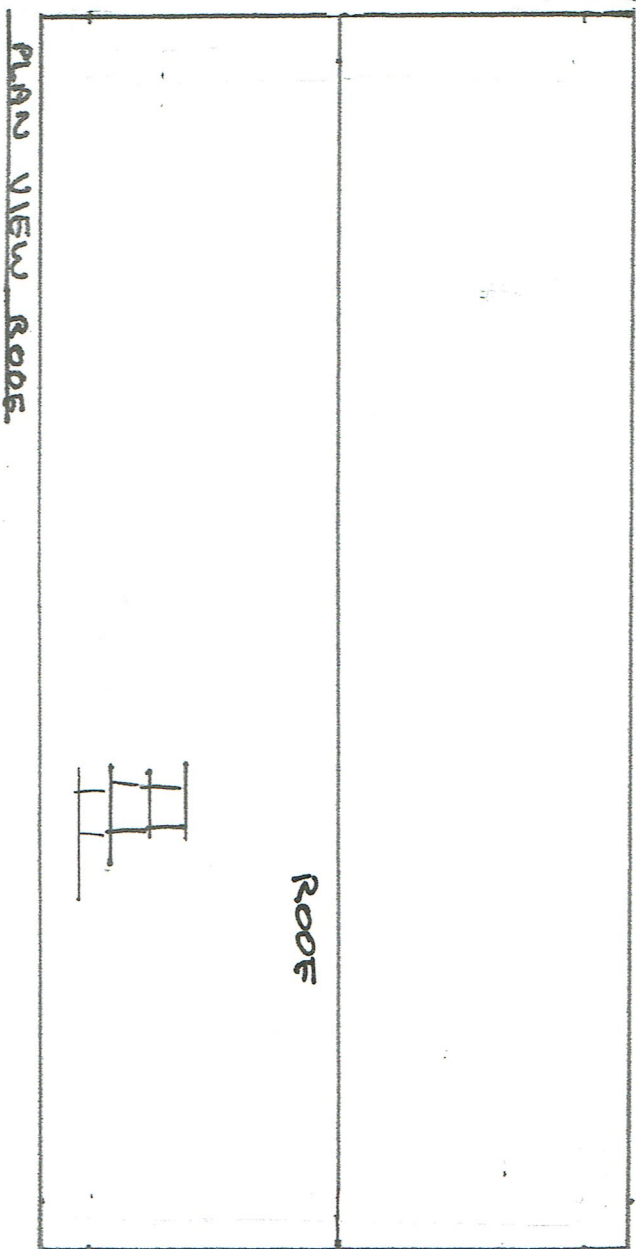
FRONT ELEVATION



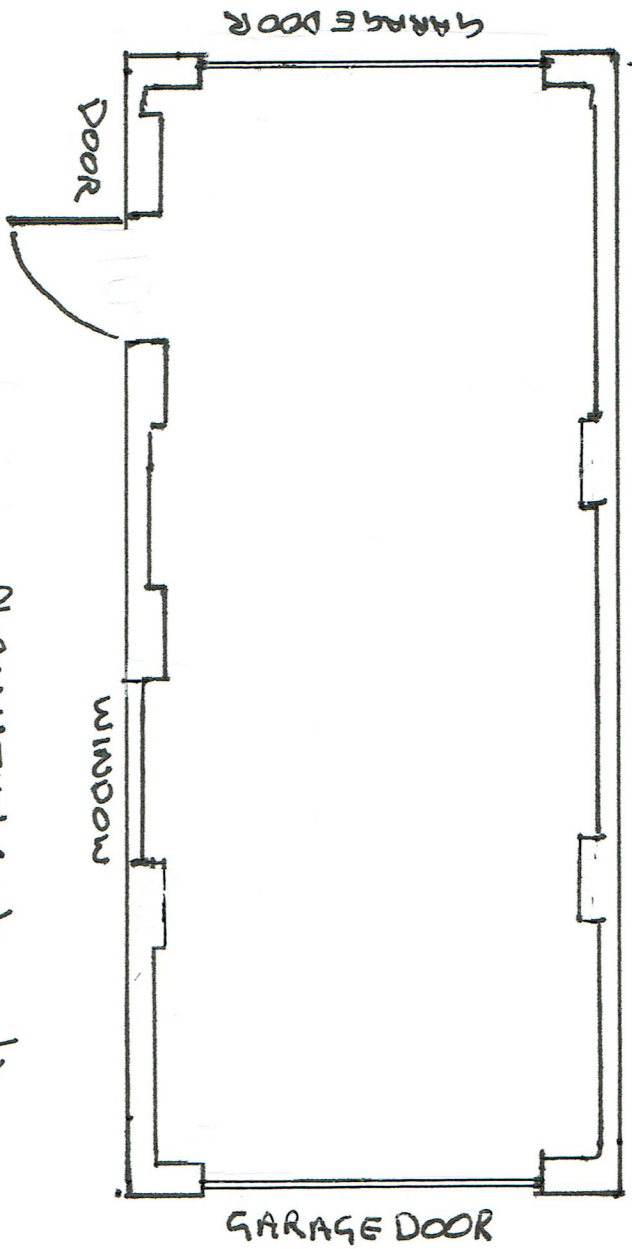
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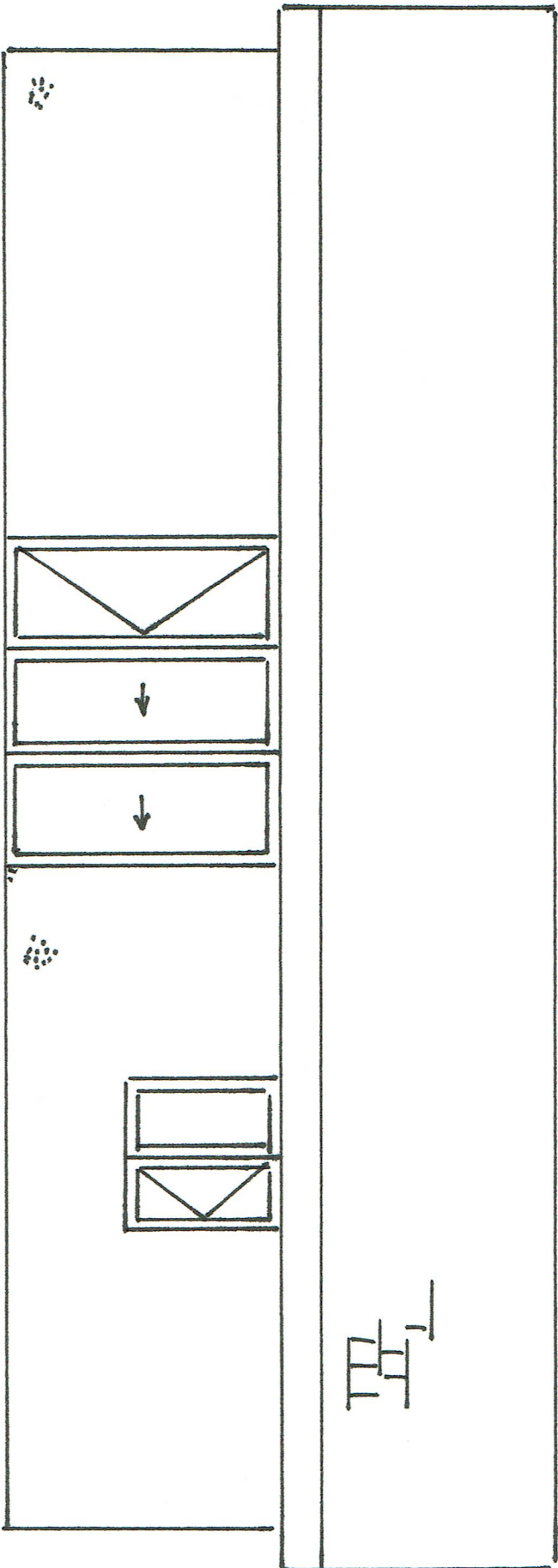


EXISTING



PLAN VIEW (internal)

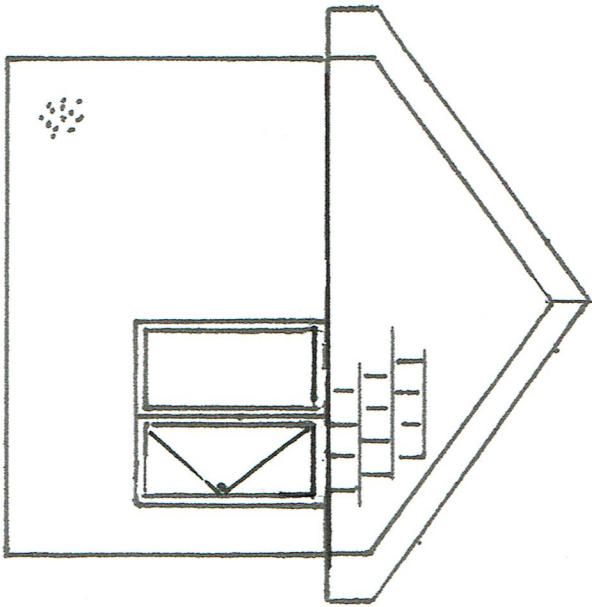
PROPOSED



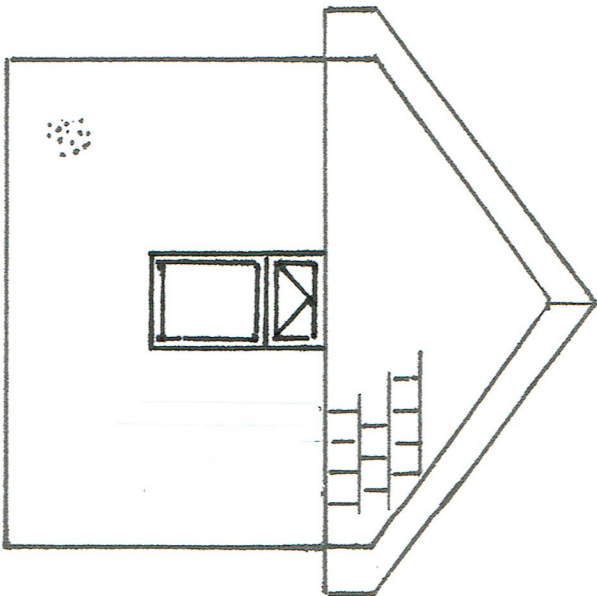
SIDE ELEVATION

0 0.5 1 1.5 2 2.5 3 3.5 4 4.5 5 5.5 6 metres  
Scale bar

PROPOSED



REAR ELEVATION

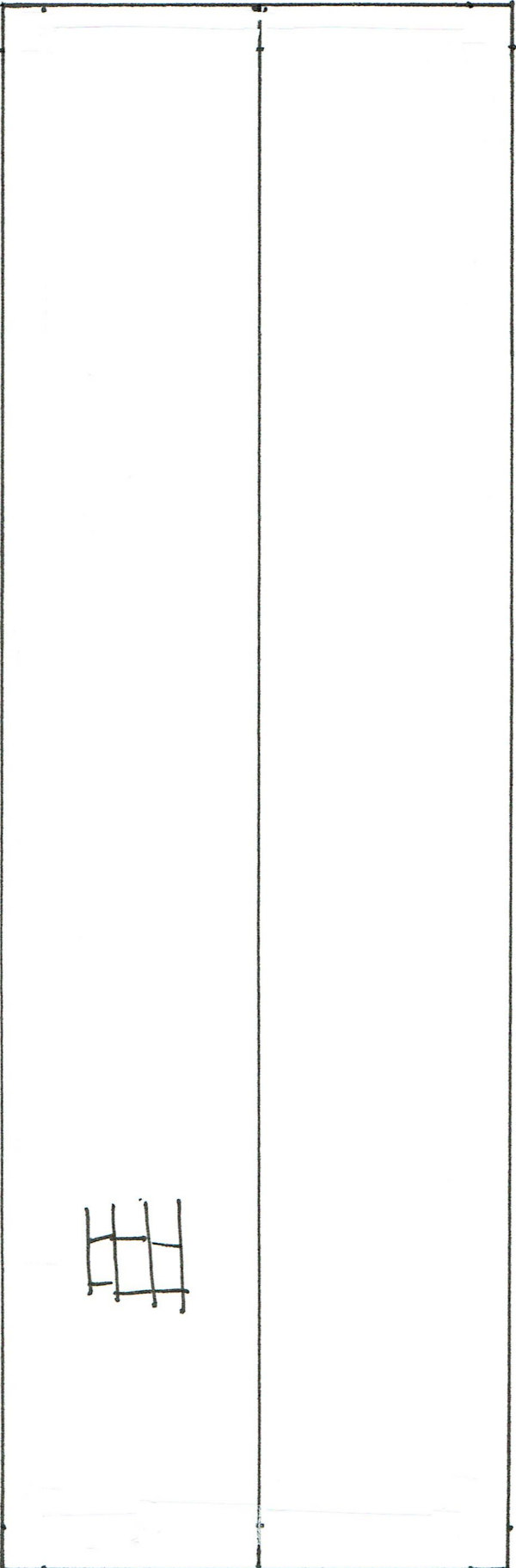


FRONT ELEVATION

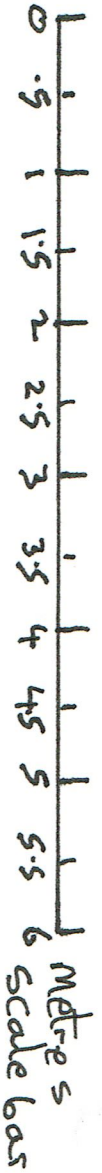


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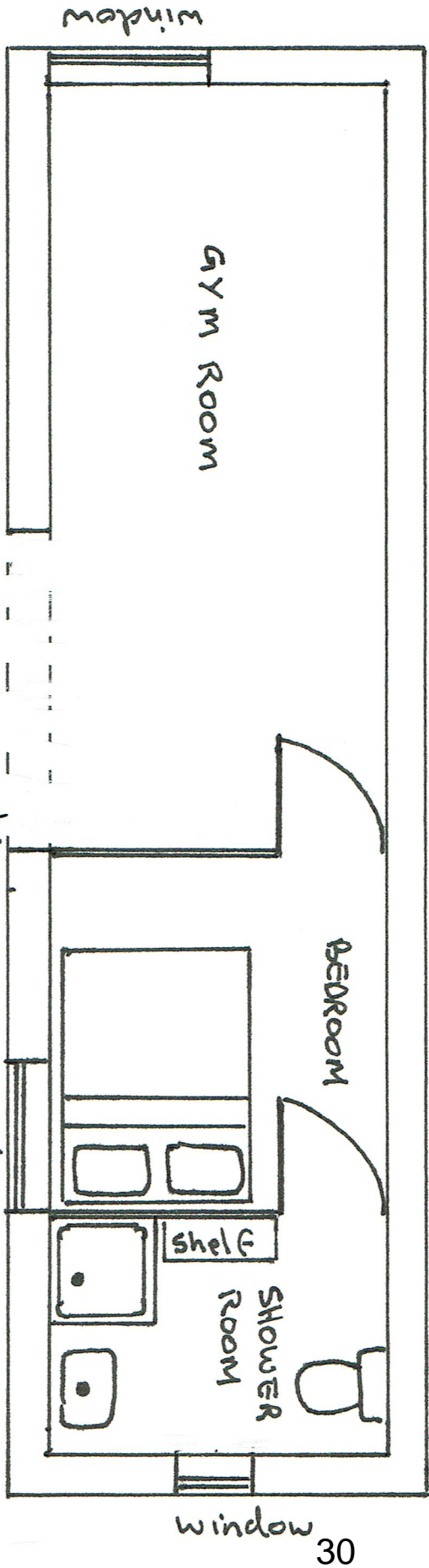
PROPOSED



PLAN VIEW



PROPOSED



PLAN VIEW (internals)



# Agenda Item 38.

Application Number	Expiry Date	Parish	Ward
191566	3 October 2019	Wargrave	Remenham, Wargrave and Ruscombe

<b>Applicant</b>	Mrs D Klat
<b>Site Address</b>	The Bird Gardens at the Old House, Milley Lane, Hare Hatch RG10 9TH
<b>Proposal</b>	Full planning application comprising a new vehicular access, improved vision splays to Milley Lane for the existing and new access and associated fencing and gates
<b>Type</b>	Full
<b>Officer</b>	Simon Taylor
<b>Reason for determination by committee</b>	Listed by Councillor Halsall Major application (>1 hectare)

<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Planning Committee on Wednesday 11 September 2019
<b>REPORT PREPARED BY</b>	Assistant Director – Place

<b>SUMMARY</b>
<p>The Old House is a Grade II listed building built within spacious gardens on the southern side of Bath Road in Hare Hatch. The site was expanded in the C20th to include land to the east, which was previously a nursery but is now known as The Bird Gardens and is the subject of this application. The Bird Gardens comprises 1.5 hectares of heavily wooded land with an overgrown and disused walled bird cage building around the perimeter which has historically been used to house and breed exotic pheasants.</p> <p>The original entrance to The Old House was via Bath Road but this was disused and a new entrance on Milley Lane (the existing access) was approved in 1962. The subject application seeks to improve visibility splays to the existing entrance and to create a new entrance 70m to the east of the existing entrance. It will also include the removal of landscaping and new fencing and gates, including along the common boundary between The Old House and The Bird Gardens.</p> <p>The Old House has recently been sold but the sale does not include The Bird Gardens. The Bird Gardens will therefore revert back to a separate title and thus the proposal allows for separate access to The Bird Gardens. The application is for access onto Milley Lane only and does not include a driveway into the site as there is no dwelling within The Bird Gardens (although it should be acknowledged that the site has been promoted by the owners for inclusion on the Local Plan update as residential housing).</p> <p>The application has been the subject of eleven neighbour submissions – four against and seven for – and Wargrave Parish Council oppose the development. It is for consideration by the Planning Committee because it has been listed by Councillor Halsall. The primary concerns are that the location of the new access is unsafe and that it is inappropriate development that causes harm to the area.</p> <p>There are no objections to the application on the grounds of any harm to the character of the area, including the Green Belt, Area of Special Character or surrounding listed buildings. Subject to additional landscaping details (Condition 3) and the maintenance of vegetation within the splays (Condition 6), there are also no objections on landscape character and highway safety grounds.</p>

## PLANNING STATUS

- Countryside
- Green Belt
- Site nominated for inclusion as residential development in the Local Plan update
- Green Route (Bath Road)
- Grade II listed building (The Old House)
- Adjacent to Grade II listed buildings (shed and barn 65m west of Hill House, barn 50m south west of Hill House and Hill House)
- Flood zone 1
- Veteran trees on the site
- Bat roost consultation zone
- Great crested newt consultation zone
- Hare Hatch Area of Special Character
- Non-classified road (Milley Lane)
- Classified road (Bath Road)
- Wind turbine safeguarding zone
- Radon affected area
- Groundwater consultation zone

## RECOMMENDATION

**That the committee authorise the GRANT OF PLANNING PERMISSION subject to:**

- A) The deferral and delegation of the final decision to the Assistant Director – Place Based Services following the conclusion of the advertising period on 12 September 2019, and subject to the consideration of any further representations received**
- B) The following conditions and informatives:**

### Conditions

1) Timescale

The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

*Reason: In pursuance of s.91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by s.51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).*

2) Approved details

This permission is in respect of the plans numbered PL-02 and PL-03A (dated 8 August 2019) and plans numbered PL-01C, PL-04B and PL-05C, dated 12 August 2019. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details unless other minor variations are agreed in writing after the date of this permission and before implementation with the Local Planning Authority. For the avoidance of doubt, the rail and post fencing on plan PL-02 shall be of timber construction.



*Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the application form and associated details hereby approved.*

3) Landscaping details

Prior to the commencement of the development, details of both hard and soft landscape proposals shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The details shall include, as appropriate, proposed contours, vehicle and pedestrian access points, hard surfacing materials, minor artefacts and structures (signs, lighting, external services, etc), planting plan, specifications, schedules of plants including species, planting sizes and proposed numbers and densities and implementation timetable.

The landscaping scheme shall include the following specifics:

- a) The establishment of grass verge forward of the relocated fence
- b) Native hedge on the northern side of the fence with a minimum of three rows of native hedge planted at 45cm centres with three offset rows 45cm apart
- c) Replacement hedge planting including a palette of native species such as Hawthorn, Hazel, Maple, Bullace, Ivy. Alternative/additional species can include Blackthorn, Holly, Guelder rose and include Oak standards 10-12cm girth planted at 10m centres along the hedge
- d) Replacement planting on the western side of the existing entrance comprising of Lawsons cypress to match the existing arrangement, as necessary

All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the use of the new access or in accordance with a timetable approved in writing by the local planning authority. Any trees or plants which, within a period of five years after planting, are removed, die or become seriously damaged or defective, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of species, size and number as originally approved and permanently retained.

*Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.*

*Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21.*

4) Clearing of vegetation

All areas of hedges, scrub or similar vegetation or built structures where birds may nest which are to be removed as part of the development, are to be cleared or removed outside the bird-nesting season (March - August inclusive) or if clearance during the bird-nesting season cannot reasonably be avoided, a suitably qualified ecologist will check the areas to be removed immediately prior to clearance and advise whether nesting birds are present. If active nests are recorded, no vegetation clearance or other works that may disturb active nests shall proceed until all young have fledged the nest.

*Reason: To ensure that wildlife is not adversely affected by the proposed development.*

*Relevant policy: Core Strategy Policy CP7 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy TB23.*

5) Access surfacing

The new access hereby permitted shall be constructed from porous materials or provision shall be made to direct water run-off from the hard surface to a permeable or porous area within the curtilage of the development, and the surfacing shall thereafter be so-maintained.

*Reason: To avoid spillage of loose material onto the highway, in the interests of road safety and to prevent increased flood risk from surface water run-off. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 14, Core Strategy policy CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC09 and CC10.*

6) Visibility splays

The new access hereby permitted shall not be used until it has been formed and both existing and proposed accesses are provided with visibility splays as shown on approved plan PL-01C. The land within the specified visibility splays shall be cleared of any obstruction exceeding 600mm in height and maintained clear of any obstruction exceeding 600mm in height at all times.

*Reason: In the interests of highway safety and convenience.  
Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 and CP6.*

7) Gates

Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no gates or barriers shall be erected unless set back a distance of at least 5.0m from the highway boundary and so as to open away from the highway

*Reason: To ensure that vehicles do not obstruct the highway whilst waiting for gates or barriers to be opened or closed, in the interests of road safety.  
Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 and CP6.*

### **Informatives**

1) Listed building consent

This permission does not convey or imply any approval or consent in respect of Listed Building Consent that may be required for external or internal alterations to the listed building(s). The applicant is advised to contact the Conservation Architect to establish if consent is required for any works proposed.

2) Pre commencement conditions

The applicant is reminded that this approval is granted subject to conditions which must be complied with prior to the development starting on site. Commencement of the development without complying with the pre-commencement requirements may

be outside the terms of this permission and liable to enforcement action. The information required should be formally submitted to the Council for consideration with the relevant fee. Once the details have been approved in writing the development should be carried out only in accordance with those details. If this is not clear please contact the case officer to discuss.

3) Protected species

This permission does not convey or imply any approval or consent required under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 for protected species. The applicant is advised to contact Natural England with regard to any protected species that may be found on the site.

Should any Great Crested Newts or evidence of Great Crested Newts be found prior to or during the development, all works must stop immediately and an ecological consultant or the Council's ecologist contacted for further advice before works can proceed. All contractors working on site should be made aware of the advice and provided with the contact details of a relevant ecological consultant.

4) Construction of access

The Head of Highways at the Council Offices, Shute End, Wokingham [0118 9746000] should be contacted for the approval of the access construction details before any work is carried out within the highway (including verges and footways). This planning permission does NOT authorise the construction of such an access or works.

5) Changes to the approved plans

The applicant is reminded that should there be any change from the approved drawings during the build of the development this may require a fresh planning application if the changes differ materially from the approved details. Non-material changes may be formalised by way of an application under s.96A Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

6) Discussion

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received. This planning application has been the subject of positive and proactive discussions with the applicant in terms of a full pre-application process being undertaken by the applicant and amended plans being submitted.

The decision to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF is considered to be a positive outcome of these discussions.

<b>PLANNING HISTORY (THE OLD HOUSE AND THE BIRD GARDENS)</b>		
<b>App No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Decision/Date</b>
R/226/1962	New access to Milley Lane	Approved 7 November 1962
PD/692/1967	Garage	Approved 21 December 1967

09784/09785	Alterations and additions to building	Approved 15 February 1979
19188	New wall, store and two bedrooms	Approved 1 May 1982
19199	Demolition and extension to building	Approved 6 May 1982
20331/20332	Hallway link to old cottage and conservatory and extension to building	Approved 17 November 1983
35387/35492	Bay window and removal of chimney breast	Approved 9 May 1990
35388	Noise fence	Refused 13 June 1990
36374	Garden wall and greenhouse	Approved 17 November 1990
39152	CoU from agricultural land (including within The Bird Gardens) to domestic recreational with associated pens and aviaries, tennis court and pool	Approved 22 July 1992
40595	Extensions to aviary to form keepers accommodation	Refused 22 July 1992
F/2009/1392	Roof canopy to pergola	Refused 9 September 2009
F/2012/1098	CoU of outbuilding to staff accommodation	Refused 20 July 2012

#### SUMMARY INFORMATION

Site Area	1.5 hectares (The Bird House only)
Previous land use	Residential (as previously part of The Old House)
Proposed land use	No change
Existing units	None (disused bird cages and ancillary sheds)
Proposed units	No change

#### CONSULTATION RESPONSES

WBC Trees and Landscaping	No objection, subject to a landscaping scheme prior to the commencement of development (Condition 3).
WBC Conservation	
WBC Highways	The splays accord with the minimum requirements and no objection is raised, subject to their retention. Refer to Condition 6.
WBC Ecology	No objection, subject to vegetation clearing being outside of bird nesting season. Refer to Condition 5.

#### REPRESENTATIONS

Wargrave Parish Council	<p>Objections are raised on the grounds of impacts upon highway safety on Milley Lane and upon the Area of Special Character. If approved, the splay within the new access should be free of obstruction.</p> <p><u>Officer comment:</u> No objections are raised on the grounds of highway safety (see 'Highway Access') and there is no unreasonable harm to the character of the area, as noted in 'Character of the Area'.</p>
Local Members	<p>Councillor John Halsall has listed the application for Planning Committee '<i>on the grounds of inappropriate access into a busy narrow lane and also inappropriate development in the Green Belt</i>'.</p> <p><u>Officer comment:</u> No objections are raised on the grounds of highway safety (see 'Highway Access') and the development is not classed as</p>

	inappropriate development in the Green Belt, as noted in 'Principle of Development'.
Neighbours	<p>The application was consulted to neighbours from 11 July to 1 August 2019 and due to a validation error, consulted again from 16 August to 7 September 2019 with a site notice.</p> <p>Submissions <b>against</b> the proposal were received from the following properties:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Hill House, Milley Lane, Hare Hatch RG10 9TH (x2)</li> <li>2) Oaktree Cottage, Milley Lane, Hare Hatch RG10 9TL</li> <li>3) 3 Hill Cottages, Milley Lane, Hare Hatch RG10 9TJ</li> <li>4) 5 Waltham Court, Milley Lane, Hare Hatch RG10 9AA</li> <li>5) Jessamine Cottage, Tag Lane, Hare Hatch RG10 9ST</li> <li>6) 45A King Street Lane, Winnersh RG41 5BA</li> <li>7) Warren House, Scarletts Lane, Kiln Green RG10 9XD</li> <li>8) Honey Copse, Scarletts Lane, Kiln Green RG10 9SD</li> <li>9) 3 Castle End Cottages, Castle End Road, Ruscombe RG10 9XL</li> <li>10) Holme Cottage, Church Lane, Ruscombe RG10 9UA</li> <li>11) Harwood, Kiln Lane, Binfield Heath RG9 4EH</li> <li>12) 4 River Court, Charvil RG10 9QB</li> <li>13) 11 Wheatfield Close, Maidenhead SL6 3PS</li> <li>14) Cranford, Grassy Lane, Maidenhead SL6 6AU</li> <li>15) High Street, Marlow SL7 1AQ (no number specified)</li> </ol> <p>The submissions raised the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speeds on Castle End Road and Scarlett Lane have not been considered (in accordance with the Manual for Streets)</li> <li>• Dangerous location for another access point</li> <li>• Straightening of Milley Lane will increase vehicle speeds</li> <li>• Pedestrian safety will be compromised by increased speeds</li> <li>• Access via Scarletts Lane is more appropriate</li> <li>• Will lead to increased traffic</li> <li>• Does not satisfy the requirements of the NPPF</li> </ul> <p><u>Officer comment:</u> A speed survey was submitted with the planning application and this has been used to establish the minimum visibility splays for both accesses. The Council's Highways Officer has reviewed the proposal and raises no objection to the siting of the access on highway safety grounds, subject to Condition 6. Speed surveys of adjacent streets would not be necessary given vehicles would need to slow at the intersection with Milley Lane.</p> <p>In addition, it is unlikely that the splays would result in any significant increase in speed along Milley Lane such that no concerns are raised. This is particularly the case given the proposal aims to improve sightlines to and from the existing and proposed access (and not within Milley Lane itself) and there is no alteration to the roadway width. If speeds are to increase by any minor amount, it is offset by the increased ability of a vehicle approaching a vehicle exiting the</p>

site to take evasive action if necessary. Further commentary is provided in 'Highway Access'.

- Inappropriate development in the Green Belt
- Does not satisfy the requirements of the NPPF
- The applicant has not considered that harm to the Green Belt

Officer comment: The development is not classed as inappropriate development in the Green Belt, as noted in 'Principle of Development'.

- Removal of vegetation will impact upon the Green Belt
- Harm to the character of the area
- Harm to the Area of Special Character
- The loss of the aviary building and hedgerow will open up visibility of the incongruous built form within and pose harm to the significance of the listed Hill House

Officer comment: Whilst the removal of landscaping poses a degree of harm to the character of the immediate area, it is minor in nature and not unreasonable, as noted in 'Character of the Area'. Given it opens up the site, there is also no perceived adverse impact upon Hill House or the appearance of the subject property.

- Land has been promoted as residential in the Local Plan update
- Will lead to the construction of a new dwelling
- Improved visibility is being used as justification for a new dwelling

Officer comment: The application seeks to provide separate access to the plot. It could, in theory, be used as access to a new dwelling in the future and it is acknowledged that the land has been promoted by the owners for inclusion in the Local Plan update as residential land but it does not form part of this application.

- Birds have not been considered

Officer comment: At the time of inspection, no birds were housed in any of the dilapidated aviary buildings along the western or southern boundary of the Bird Gardens.

- Loss of value of neighbouring properties

Officer comment: This is not a relevant planning consideration.

- Headlight glare from vehicles on the driveway

Officer comment: There are no objections on neighbour amenity grounds, as noted in 'Neighbour Amenity'.

- No purpose has been specified

Officer comment: The new entrance is required to obtain access onto the property because of the annexation of the Bird Gardens from The Old House.

- No site notice has been displayed

Officer comment: A site notice was displayed from 17 August to 7 September 2019 at the existing entrance.

- The newspaper advertisement requests comments by 12 September, which is after the Planning Committee

Refer to the recommendation.

Submissions **in support** of the proposal were received from the following properties:

- 16) The Old House, Milley Lane, Hare Hatch RG10 9TH
- 17) Bath Road Cottages, 3 Bath Road, Hare Hatch RG10 9SL (x2)
- 18) Seaforth Cottage, 5 Upper Culham Lane, Cockpole Green RG10 8NR
- 19) Quince Cottage, Backsideans, Wargrave RG10 8JP
- 20) 5 Segrave Close, Sonning RG4 6BB
- 21) 3 Remenham Hill, Remenham Hill RG9 3EE
- 22) The Wall, West Drive, Hurst RG10 0ST
- 23) 80 Moordale Avenue, Bracknell RG42 1SY
- 24) Heather Cottage, Warfield Street, Bracknell RG42 6AU

The submissions raised the following issues:

- Will allow for an improvement in visibility
- Will allow better access for tree maintenance
- The design and materials are sympathetic to the character of the area
- The fencing is achievable as permitted development
- The remaining works do not constitute inappropriate development within the Green Belt

Officer comment: The above comments are noted and discussed in 'Principle of Development', 'Character of the Area' and 'Highway Access'.

#### **APPLICANTS POINTS**

- The proposed development of simple estate type railings would not harm the setting or significance of The Old House or Hill House and would preserve the character of Hare Hatch Area of Special Character
- The proposed development would not result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety and the cumulative transport impacts cannot be regarded as severe
- The trees are of limited merit as lower down the open trunks there is very limited screening or cover. Their removal and replacement by an indigenous species

hedgerow will be a welcome improvement to the Milley Lane street scene, and will also bring a new biodiversity feature to the site

<b>PLANNING POLICY</b>		
National Policy	NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
Core Strategy DPD 2010	CP1	Sustainable Development
	CP3	General Principles for Development
	CP6	Managing Travel Demand
	CP7	Biodiversity
	CP9	Scale and Location of Development Proposals
	CP11	Proposals Outside Development Limits
	CP12	Green Belt
Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014 (MDD Local Plan)	CC01	Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
	CC03	Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping
	CC06	Noise
	CC09	Development and Flood Risk
	CC10	Sustainable Drainage
	TB01	Development within the Green Belt
	TB21	Landscape Character
	TB23	Biodiversity and Development
	TB24	Designated Heritage Assets
TB26	Buildings of Traditional Local Character and Areas of Special Character	
Other	BDG SPD	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document

<b>PLANNING ISSUES</b>
<p><b>Site Description</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The entire Old House site measures approximately 3.52 hectares and is located between Bath Road in the north and Milley Lane in the south. On the site is a Grade II listed building known as The Old House, which is concentrated towards the south western corner on Milley Lane, with the grounds immediately to the east set out as historical ornamental gardens/parkland.</li> <li>2. A C20th change involved the inclusion of The Bird Gardens (subject site) within the site, the stopping up of the access from Bath Road and the introduction of the existing access on Milley Lane. The Bird Gardens comprises 1.5 hectares to the east of The Old House (and the new access). The site is wooded, with overgrown and disused bird cages (in the form of a walled garden concentrated in the south eastern corner near the intersection with Scarlett Lane. Planning application 39152 indicates that the site has a residential use although it would most likely fall outside of the curtilage of The Old House.</li> <li>3. The surrounding area is Green Belt and comprises a mix of residential, office, retail and industrial uses interspersed amongst the mostly low density settlement of Hare Hatch.</li> </ol>



## **Description of Proposal**

4. The application involves the following works:
  - Improved visibility splays to the existing main entrance to The Old House, necessitating the relocation and/or replacement of some retaining wall, fencing and landscaping
  - Partial demolition of the bird cages to allow for the creation of a new vehicular entrance from Milley Lane to The Bird Gardens, 70m east of existing Old House entrance, including new entrance gates
  - Replacement hedgerow planting and fencing along Milley Lane, with close boarded fencing to The Old House frontage and metal estate fencing to The Bird Gardens frontage
  - New timber post and rail fencing along the common boundary between The Old House and The Bird Gardens
5. The application is for separate access onto Milley Lane for the exclusive use of The Bird Gardens only and does not include a driveway into the property. There is also no suggestion that a dwelling house is part of the proposal and any future proposal for a new dwelling is not for consideration in this application.

## **Principle of Development**

6. The NPPF has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the local Development Plan. Policy CC01 of the MDD Local Plan states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
7. The site is outside of the settlement limits and is located in the Green Belt and Countryside. As such, any development is ordinarily resisted, as outlined in paragraphs 143-146 of the NPPF, Policies CP11 and CP12 of the Core Strategy and Policy TB01 of the MDD Local Plan.
8. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
9. The proposed works do not constitute the construction of a new building and accordingly, paragraph 145 of the NPPF is of no relevance to the application. However, paragraph 146(b) allows for engineering operations as an exception for development that is also not inappropriate development in the Green Belt and the construction of a new access is an example of an engineering operation.
10. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open and that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. This is reinforced in Policy CP12 of the Core Strategy and Policy TB01 of the MDD Local Plan, which state that development must maintain the openness of and not conflict with or harm the purposes of the Green Belt.

11. Works to The Bird Gardens include the partial removal of the existing bird cages, equivalent to 31m<sup>2</sup> or 99m<sup>3</sup> and the removal of some landscaping to accommodate necessary splays. A 1.2m high fence and gate and replacement planting is also proposed. The cumulative effect is that it allows for improved openness along Milley Lane that is supportive of the intent and guidelines of the above national and local policy.
12. Works to the existing access point to The Old House comprise a widening of the fence and wall either side of the entrance, removal of some landscaping (for visibility splays) and provision of replacement landscaping and the like for like replacement and relocation of the close boarded fencing to the west of the entrance. Similarly, when considering the cumulative outcome, the proposal represents a net improvement in the openness of the Green Belt and no objection is raised.
13. A 1.2m boundary fence is proposed, in parts, along the common boundary between the two properties. Whilst it partially reduces the openness of the site, it is set behind the landscaping along the frontages to Milley Lane and Bath Road, is low in height and open in appearance and will not be interpreted and views from Milley Lane or Bath Road and does not pose any significant harm to the Green Belt.
14. On the basis of the above observations, the land remains open and there is no adverse harm to the openness and character of the Green Belt. The principle of the development is therefore acceptable.

#### **Character of the Area/Heritage and Conservation**

15. The Bird Gardens is immediately to the east of (and is currently part of) the grounds surrounding The Old House, which is a late C18th, Grade II listed, red brick house with tiled hipped roof. There are several other Grade II listed buildings along the southern side of Milley Lane, including Hill House, which sits between the existing and proposed entrances, an implement shed and small barn 65m west of Hill House and a large barn 50m west of Hill House. It also sits within and forms the eastern boundary of the Hare Hatch Area of Special Character, identified as a landscape area of historic merit. The grounds of The Old House, which includes the Bird Gardens represents the core of the Area of Special Character
16. Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that development must ensure the preservation of any nearby listed building, including its setting, Paragraph 193-196 of the NPPF requires consideration of the harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset and Policy TB24 of the MDD requires the conservation and enhancement of Listed Buildings, including their views and setting.
17. Policy TB26 of the MDD Local Plan allows development to Areas of Special Character where it will retain and enhance the traditional, historical, local and special character of the building or area and its setting.
18. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of the character of the area and of high quality design. P2 of the BDG SPD

ensures that access is provided in a manner that is compatible with the local character, R12 states that boundary treatments contribute positively to the character of the area and RD1-RD3 require that development enhance the setting and features of the village.

19. Presently, Milley Lane has a predominately verdant characteristic to its northern side in part due to there being just a single vehicle access and a roadside verge consisting of out grown hedgerows interspersed with fairly mature trees.
20. The proposal comprises three main elements – (1) a widening of the existing access and creation of a new access, (2) new or replacement boundary fencing and (3) the removal and replacement of landscaping. The character of the lane will be altered by replacing the overgrown verdant vegetation that dominates the lane with a new opening and a more formal and domestic looking boundary of metal rail fencing.
21. The works to the existing vehicular access are minor or incidental changes and will not pose any harm. The new access, whilst having a more measurable impact in the streetscene, is nonetheless acceptable in the context of other accesses in the wider area and because it represents increased openness of the site in the Green Belt.
22. The metal fencing to the Bird Gardens will be visible in the streetscene as it will be set forward of the existing and proposed landscaping behind. However, it is open in style to a height of 1.2m for a total length of 110m and it remains appropriate (and typical of) the residential setting of the site. It has a traditional form that is appropriate for and with respect to the nearby historic buildings. The close boarded fencing is like for like to a height of 1.4m for a length of 25m and does not represent any significant change in appearance or setting in the lane. The timber post and rail fence is of modest height, is open in appearance and typical of its Green Belt location. On the basis of the above, no objections are raised in relation to the proposed fencing.
23. Condition 3 requires replacement landscaping that will aim to minimise any harm to the existing landscape setting and this is discussed further in 'Landscaping and Trees'.
24. The partial demolition of the bird cages is not opposed. Whilst providing a unique built form and use in the Hare Hatch area, the buildings have no heritage significance and are run down and in need of significant repair in parts.
25. The Council's Conservation Officer raises no in-principle objection on conservation and heritage grounds. The proposed works are considered to not harm the setting of the surrounding listed buildings, including The Old House and Hill House and the overall appearance of the Area of Special Character would not be detrimentally altered.
26. The Bird Gardens does not form part of the immediate historic setting of The Old House at the time of its listing. However, the works to the existing entrance are within the curtilage and will necessitate the submission of a Listed Building Consent and this is outlined in Informative 1.

## **Landscaping and Trees**

27. Policy CC03 of the MDD aims to protect green infrastructure networks, retain existing trees and establish appropriate landscaping and Policy TB21 requires consideration of the landscape character. R14 of the BDG SPD requires well-designed hard and soft landscaping that complements housing.
28. The site is located in Area G1 (Hare Hatch Farmed Chalk Slope) of the Council's Landscape Character Assessment, which is a landscape of moderate quality and sensitivity with a moderate capacity for change. The landscape strategy is to enhance the existing character. The loss of native hedgerows is a key issue, with recommendations to conserve hedgerows as important wildlife habitats and for Oak standards to form future timber trees.
29. The visibility splays will involve the removal of a significant part of the native hedge screen adjacent to Milley Lane and within the verge. There is no objection to the loss of this landscaping, subject to high quality replacement that would support its Green Belt and Area of Special Character Location. Condition 3 specifies a requirement for a landscaping scheme prior to the commencement of development.

## **Highway Access**

30. Paragraph 108 of the NPPF requires safe and suitable access to a site, paragraph 109 states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe and paragraph 110 also seeks to create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles. Policy CP6 of the Core Strategy requires the enhancement of road safety.
31. The application was supported by an Access Report prepared by Glanville. It indicates a westbound 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed of 34.7m/hr and an eastbound 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed of 37.8m/hr. Milley Lane is a 60m/hr road. These speeds have been used in establishing the anticipated stopping distances and required visibility splays, which are 53m to the east and 95m to the west. These splays can be accommodated within the roadway or within the property itself and the vegetation and fencing has been modified to account for this.
32. The Council's Highways Officer has reviewed the relevant documentation and raises no objection to the proposed changes to the existing access and the new access, subject to the continued maintenance and retention of the splays in Condition 6. Based on the documented speeds of vehicles along Milley Lane in the report and the distances to the nearest intersection at Scarletts Lane, there is no reason to suggest that the location of the new access is unsafe.

## **Neighbour Amenity**

33. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy aims to protect neighbouring amenity and the proposed works involve changes to existing boundary treatments and fencing and the introduction of a new access point onto Milley Lane. The modified fencing and removal of some vegetation which will have a net effect of opening up the site and

it would not result in any additional harm to the amenity of Hill House to the south. Furthermore, the access point is located sufficiently away from Hill House to ensure that there will be no adverse headlight glare from vehicles using the access.

### **Ecology**

34. Policy TB23 of the MDD Local Plan requires the incorporation of new biodiversity features, buffers between habitats and species of importance and integration with the wider green infrastructure network.
35. The site is within habitat where bat roosts have previously been found and within the consultation zone for great crested newts (GCNs), with the closest pond approximately 70m from the site. However, the buildings to be removed are unlikely to host a bat roost and given the extent of the works and the habitats to be affected which are of low ecological value, it is unlikely that the proposals would affect great crested newts. The conifer hedge to be removed could be suitable for use by nesting birds, and Condition 5 is intended to safeguard nesting birds from disturbance or harm during works. Informative 3 also states that should GCNs or evidence of GCNs be found prior to or during the development, all works must stop immediately and an ecological consultant or the Council's ecologist must be contacted for further advice before works can proceed.

### **Flooding**

36. Policy CC09 of the MDD Local Plan requires consideration of flood risk from historic flooding. The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and the proposal poses no flood risk whilst the proposed works are acceptable in terms of Policy CC09.

### **Drainage**

37. Policy CC10 of the MDD Local Plan aims to minimise surface water flow and R23 of the BDG SPD notes that parking should be paved with permeable surfaces to avoid any increase in surface water run-off. The submitted plans show bitumen surfacing and permeable measures are required by Condition 4. In doing so, there are no drainage related concerns.

### **Contamination**

38. There is no known contamination.

### **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), Special Protection Area (SPA) and Affordable Housing**

39. None of the above are applicable.

### **The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010)**

40. In determining this application, the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the

protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts upon protected groups as a result of the development.

## **CONCLUSION**

41. The proposal involves sympathetic changes to the boundary fencing, landscaping and access points onto The Old House and The Bird Gardens. There are no detrimental conservation and character issues, the proposed landscaping is acceptable (subject to Condition 3) and visibility from the two access points is satisfactory (subject to Condition 6). The application is therefore recommended for conditional approval.

Our Ref: 1202/JCE

Project: The Bird Garden at The Old House, Milley Lane, Hare Hatch

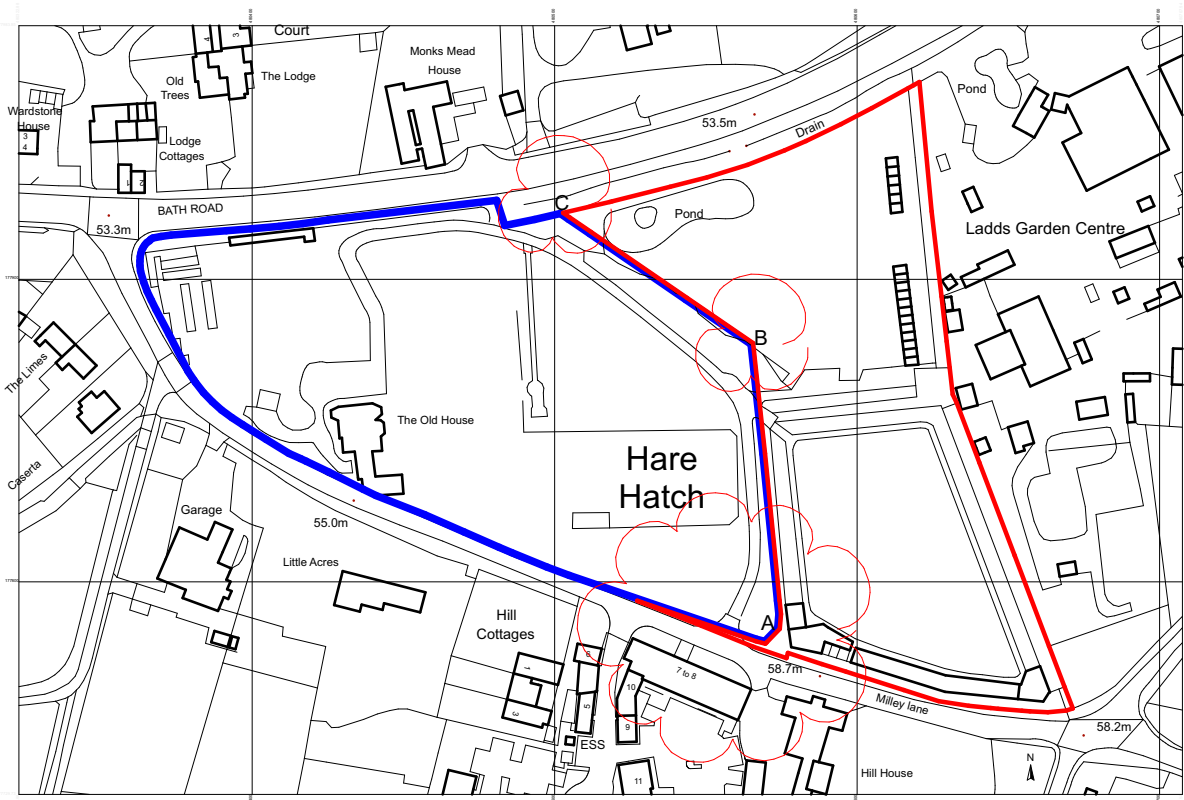
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	Wokingham Borough Council	Email	Email	Email	Email	✓	Email				
Client	Email	Email	Email	Email	✓	Email					
File	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					

DRAWING TITLE:	DRAWING NO	SCALE	PAPER SIZE								
Existing and proposed entrance	1202 PL-01	1:250	A1	✓	A		B	C			
Proposed gates	1202 PL-02	1:50	A4	✓			A				
Site location	1202 PL-03	1:2500	A4	✓			A				
Survey extract with vision splay	1203 PL-04	1:100	A1	✓			A	B			
Enlargement of Site Plans to Planning Officer	1204 PL-05	1:250	A1			✓	A	B	C		


PURPOSE OF ISSUE:	P	P	P	P	P	P				

Purpose of Issue key: P = Planning; B = Building Control; T = Tender; A = Client Approval; C = Construction Issue

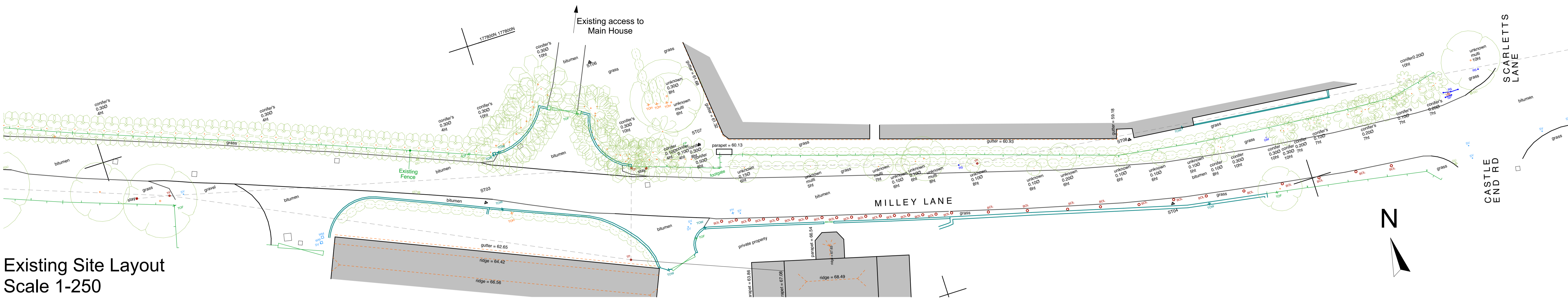
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scale 1-2500

Notes	no date revision A 08/08/19 Revision following Planning Officer's comments	 <b>PLANNING &amp; ARCHITECTURAL CONSULTANCY</b> Chetwood House • Chilton • HP18 9LS 01844 267990 • admin@jcemmett.co.uk	project Proposed access to Old House Bird Gardens, Miley Lane, Hare Hatch Reading, RG10 9TH
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		drawn <b>AK</b>	Project number <b>1202</b>
		date <b>08/08/2019</b>	Drawing no <b>PL-03A</b>
			scale <b>1:2500 @ A4</b>
		THIS DRAWING REMAINS THE SOLE COPYRIGHT OF <b>48</b> JEFFREY CHARLES EMMETT ASSOC. R.I.C.S All dimensional discrepancies to be referred to JCE Planning & Architectural Consultancy	

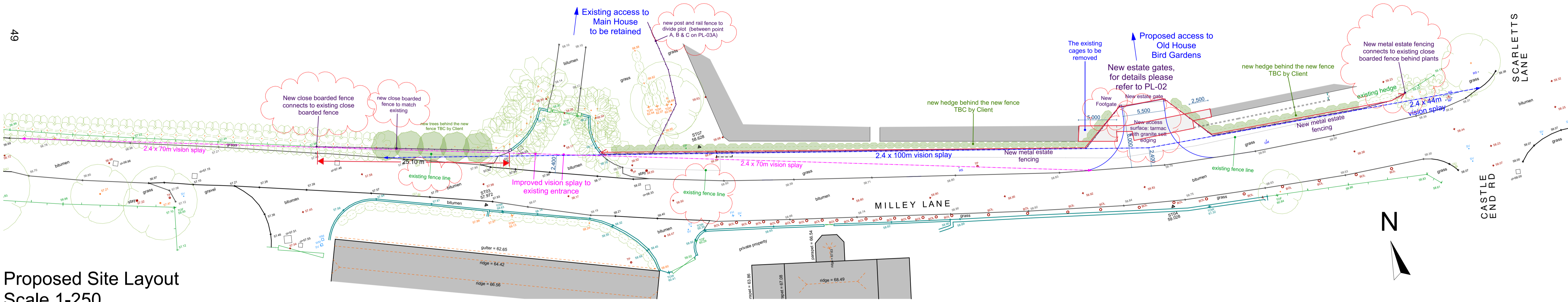




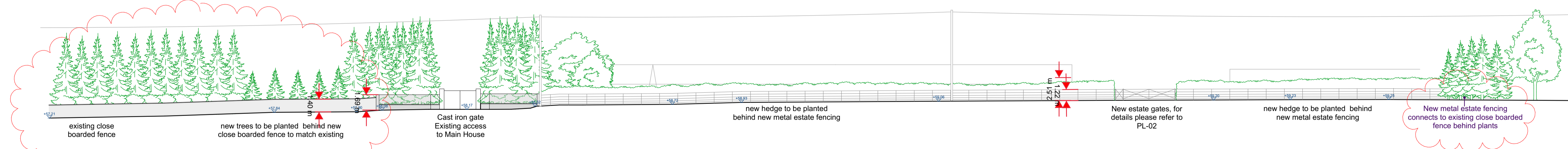
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Scale 1-250



Existing street view  
Scale 1-250



Proposed Site Layout  
Scale 1-250



Proposed street view  
Scale 1-250

Notes

no	date	revision
A	11/06/19	Proposed Street view update to match proposed site layout
B	08/08/19	Revision following Planning Officer's comment. Please see
C	12/08/19	Revision following Client's comment.

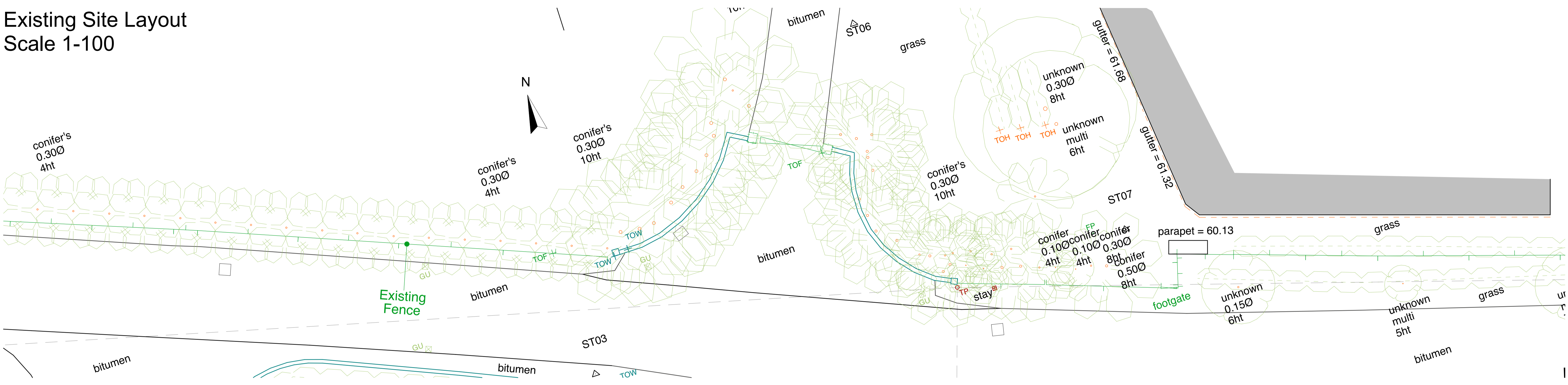
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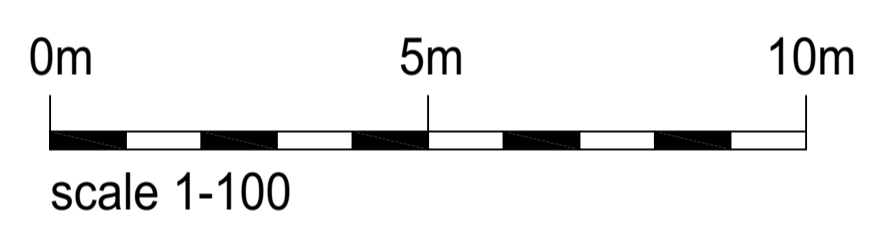
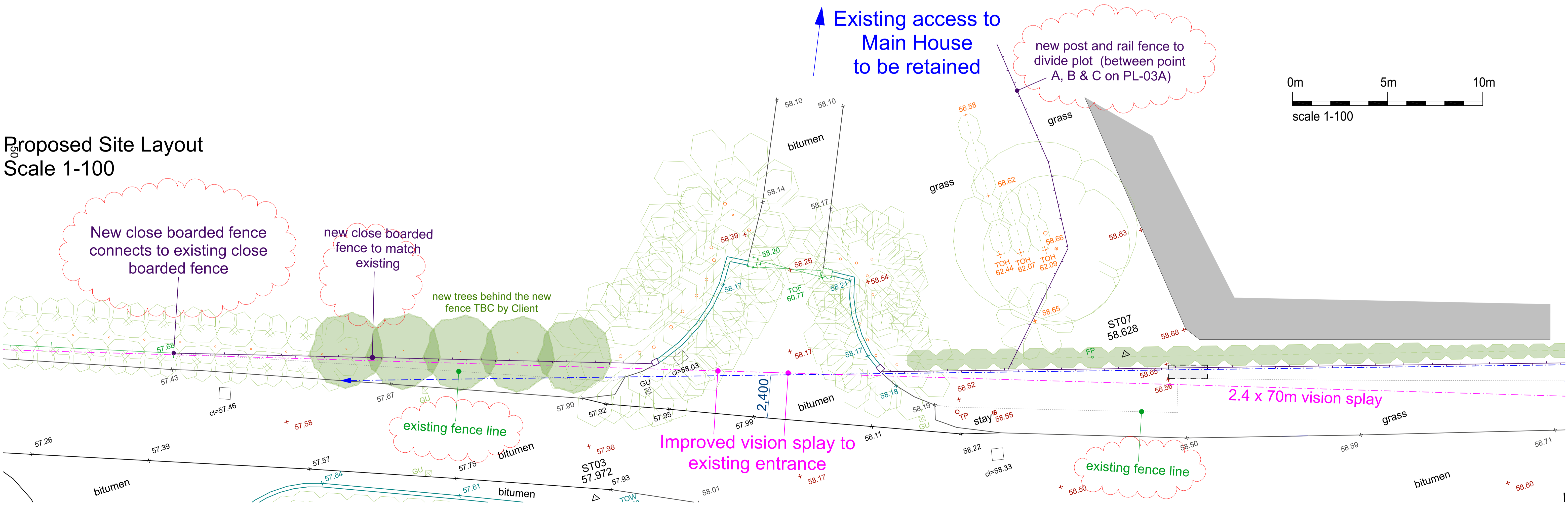
All dimensional discrepancies to be referred to JCE Planning & Architectural Consultancy

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title	Existing and Proposed Entrance		
drawn	AK	Project number	1202
date	12/08/2019	Drawing no	PL-01C
scale	1:250 @ A1		

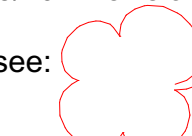
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Scale 1-100



Proposed Site Layout  
Scale 1-100



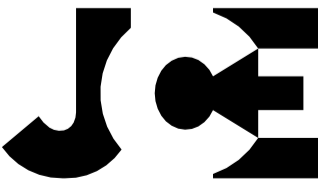
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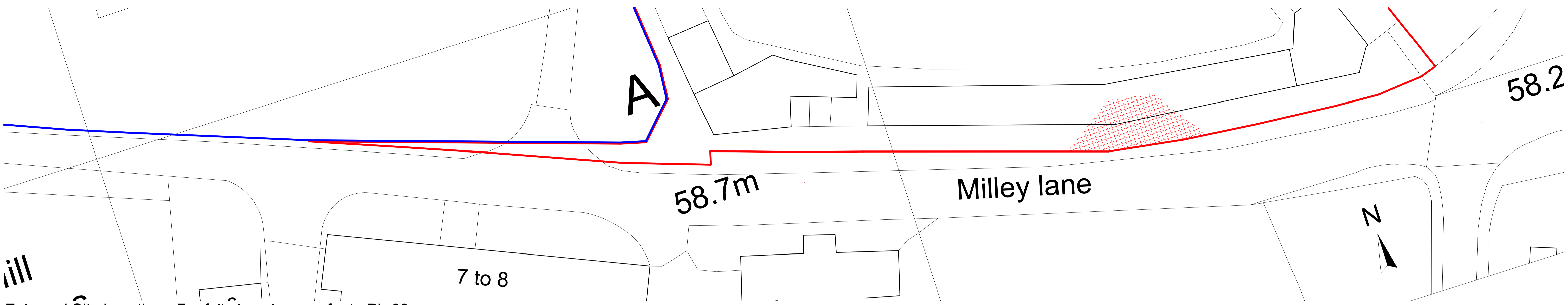
no date revision  
 A 08/08/19 Revision following Planning Officer's comments, paper size and scale had been amended  
 B 12/08/19 Revision following Client's comment  
 Please see: 

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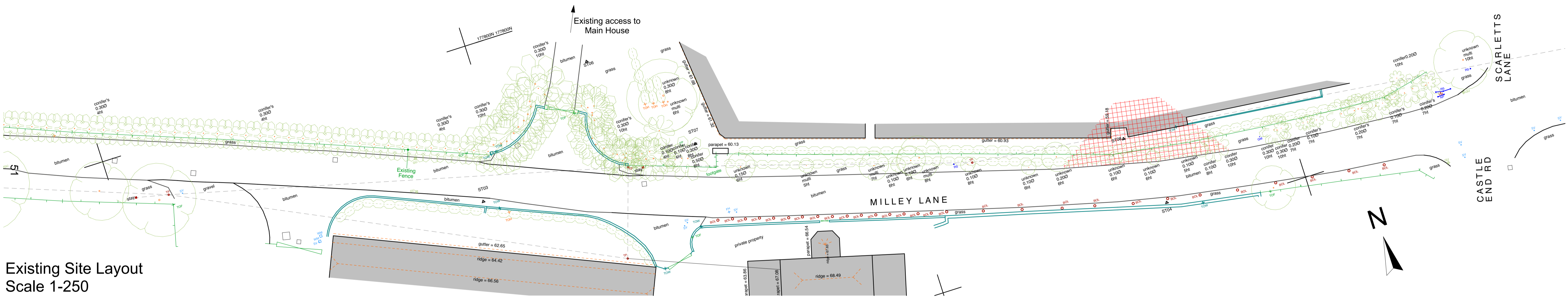
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 JCE Planning & Architectural Consultancy

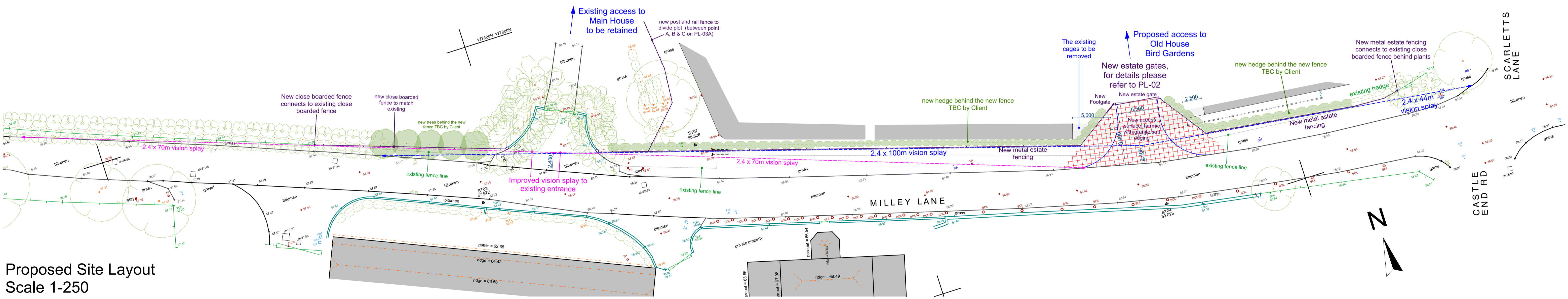
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	title Survey extract with vision splay
	drawn AK
	date 12/08/2019
scale 1:100 @ A1	Project number 1202
Drawing no PL-04B	



Enlarged Site Location - For full plan please refer to PL-03  
Scale 1-250

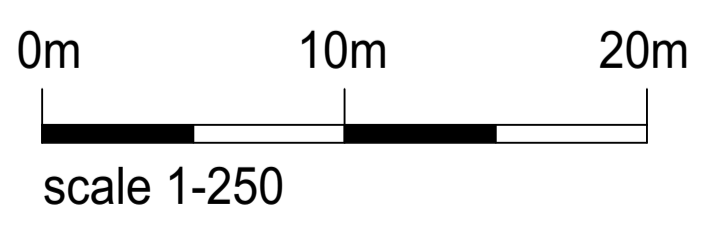


Existing Site Layout  
Scale 1-250



Proposed Site Layout  
Scale 1-250

Notes

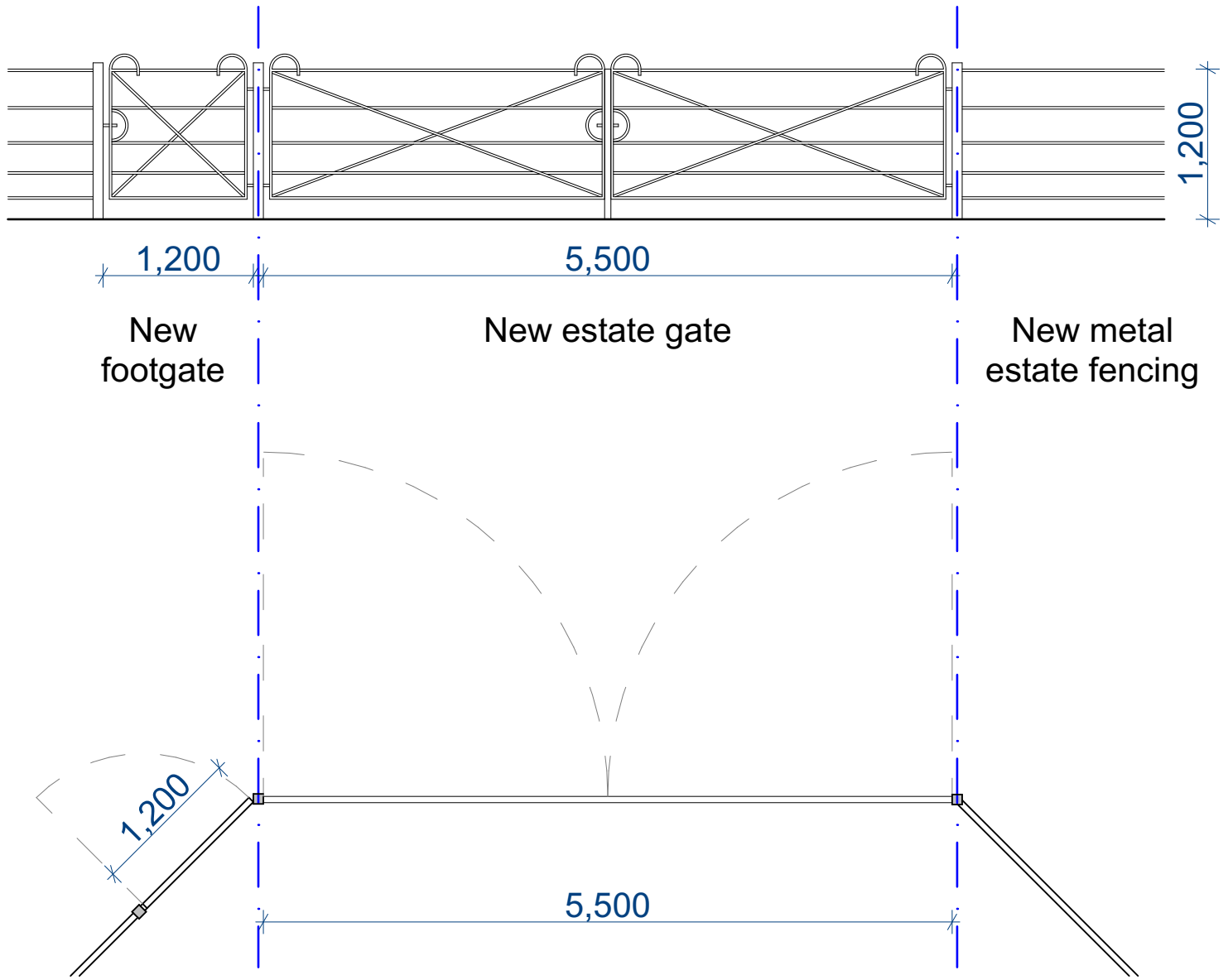


- no date revision
- A 04/07/19 Red gridded areas added following Planning Officer's comment
- B 07/08/19 Revision following Planning Officer's comment
- C 12/08/19 Revision following Client's comment

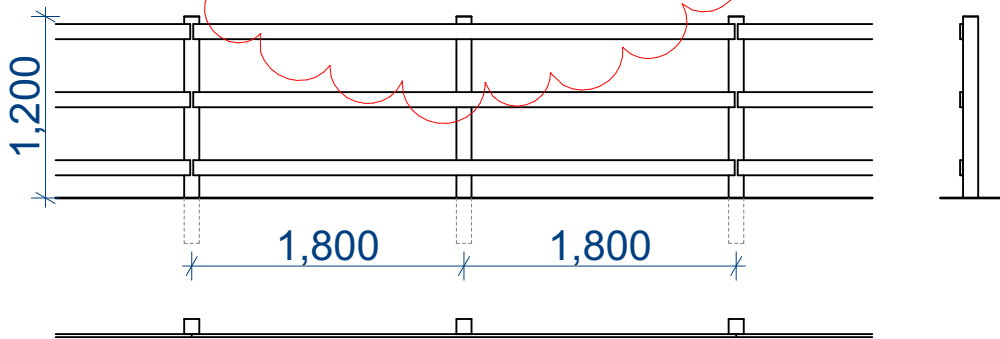
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All dimensional discrepancies to be referred to  
JCE Planning & Architectural Consultancy

project	Proposed access to Old House Bird Gardens, Milley Lane, Hare Hatch Reading, RG10 9TH	
title	Enlargement of Site Plans to Planning Officer	
drawn	AK	Project number
date	12/08/2019	1202
scale	1:250 @ A1	Drawing no
		PL-05C



New post and rail fence to  
 be erected between point  
 A, B and C



Notes	no date revision A 07/08/19 Revision following Planning Officer's comments	<p><b>PLANNING &amp; ARCHITECTURAL CONSULTANCY</b></p> <small>Chetwood House • Chilton • HP18 9LS 01844 267990 • admin@jcemmett.co.uk</small>	project Proposed access to Old House Bird Gardens, Milley Lane, Hare Hatch Reading, RG10 9TH		
	<p><b>52</b></p> <small>THIS DRAWING REMAINS THE SOLE COPYRIGHT OF JEFFREY CHARLES EMMETT ASSOC. R.I.C.S</small> <small>All dimensional discrepancies to be referred to JCE Planning &amp; Architectural Consultancy</small>		title <b>Proposed gate and fences</b>		
			drawn <b>AK</b> date <b>08/08/2019</b> scale <b>1:50 @ A4</b>	Project number <b>1202</b> Drawing no <b>PL-02</b>	
					scale <b>1:50 @ A4</b>

PLANNING REF : 191566  
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Council Office  
: Pavilion, Recreation Road, Wargrave, Wokingham  
: RG10 8BG  
SUBMITTED BY : Wargrave Parish Council  
DATE SUBMITTED : 06/08/2019

COMMENTS:

Wargrave Parish Council objected to this application.

The

introduction of a new vehicular access onto a very busy and narrow thoroughfare may impact upon highway safety in the Hare Hatch Area of Special Character.

Note: if approved a condition is requested requiring the eastwest highway visibility splay to be maintained free of obstruction including hedgeverge growth.

There is no objection to the improvement of the existing entrance.

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# Agenda Item 39.

Application Number	Expiry Date	Parish	Ward
191112	16 September 2019	Finchampstead	Finchampstead South

<b>Applicant</b>	Mr Slavchev
<b>Site Address</b>	Manor Farm, Finchampstead RG40 3TL
<b>Proposal</b>	Full planning application for the erection of 25No polytunnels (retrospective)
<b>Type</b>	Full
<b>Officer</b>	Simon Taylor
<b>Reason for determination by committee</b>	Major application (> 1 hectare in area)

<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Planning Committee on Wednesday 11 September 2019
<b>REPORT PREPARED BY</b>	Assistant Director – Place

<b>SUMMARY</b>
<p>This application seeks retrospective approval for the erection of 25 polytunnels as part of the wider soft fruit production within a 36.3 hectare farm known as Manor Farm. It is operated by EU Plants and is roughly bounded by Jubilee Road, Dell Road, Lower Sandhurst Road and Cricket Hill/Longwater Road.</p> <p>The polytunnels measure 7.7m (width) x 3m (height) and 75m-120m (length) within an area of 2.2 hectares. It complements the existing 4.85 hectares of polytunnels already on the farm, resulting in a total of 7.05 hectares or 19% of the total land holding.</p> <p>The Planning Statement submitted as part of this application acknowledges that retrospective planning application 161194 for 10 polytunnels across one hectare in the south eastern corner of Manor Farm was to be the final phase of polytunnel construction. However, a new contract for an additional 110,000 strawberry plants for late 2019 was agreed to prepare for potential border and tariff issues that are likely to arise with Brexit uncertainties, including a 'No Deal' Brexit.</p> <p>The polytunnels are located on the southern slope of the hillside at the northern end of the farm. They are readily visible in wider views of Blackwater Valley from the Finchampstead War Memorial intersection and along a 190m length of Jubilee Road. A Landscape Visual Appraisal was submitted at the request of the Council and whilst it is readily apparent in views from the public domain and there is a clear and pronounced impact upon the landscape character, the impacts are outweighed by the benefits of increased production of sustainable local produce and no objection is raised, subject to additional low level screening in Condition 2, additional transportation and operational management details in Condition 3, details of glare and noise minimisation in Condition 4 and the removal of the sheeting for six months of the year in Condition 5.</p>

<b>PLANNING STATUS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Countryside</li> <li>• Opposite Listed Building (Finchampstead War Memorial)</li> <li>• Ancient Woodland (along eastern boundary)</li> <li>• Grade 3 agricultural land classification</li> <li>• Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area (5km zone)</li> </ul>

- Flood zone 1
- Classified road
- Farnborough Aerodrome consultation zone
- Heathrow Aerodrome safeguarding zone
- South East Water consultation zone

## RECOMMENDATION

**That the committee authorise the GRANT OF PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the following conditions and informatives:**

### Conditions

1) Approved details

This permission is in respect of the plans numbered RAC/8369/1, dated May 2019 and RAC/8369/2 and RAC/8369/3, dated April 2019. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details unless other minor variations are agreed in writing after the date of this permission and before implementation with the Local Planning Authority.

*Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the application form and associated details hereby approved.*

2) Landscaping details

A scheme of landscaping (which includes species, planting sizes, spacing and numbers of trees/shrubs to be planted shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority within one month of the date of this planning permission. As a minimum, it shall include low level screening along the northern boundary with Jubilee Road and The Ridges and native hedge (including evergreens) between the northern end of the polytunnels and the upper reaches of the slope. The landscaping is to be shown at 3–5 years from planting in a north-south cross section through the site and must demonstrate the angle of view from the war memorial intersection so as to demonstrate the optimum screening of the polytunnels and retention of wider valley views.

Planting shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the building(s).

Any trees or plants which, within a period of five years from the date of the planting (or within a period of 5 years of the date of this planning permission) die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species or otherwise as approved in writing by the local planning authority.

*Reason: To ensure adequate planting in the interests of visual amenity and to protect the character and public views of the countryside.*

*Relevant policy: NPPF Section 15 and Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 and CP11 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21.*



3) Operational details

Operational management details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority within one month of the date of this planning permission. As a minimum, it shall include the following details:

- a) Existing and proposed number of vehicle movements across the season
- b) The types of vehicles accessing the site and their location for parking and on-site manoeuvring
- c) Proposed access routes on local roads and access point onto the farm
- d) Hours of use
- e) Existing and proposed staffing levels across the season
- f) Waste storage and collection
- g) Storage of the polytunnels outside of the months specified by Condition 5.

The farm operations shall operate in full accordance with the approved details, unless otherwise agreed by the local planning authority.

*Reason: To ensure a satisfactory form of development and to avoid adverse impact on the public highway and long term/permanent harm to the character of the area.*

*Relevant policy: NPPF Sections 9 and 15 and Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3, CP6 and CP11.*

4) Materials details

To eliminate glare and noise disturbance, details of the polytunnels (including the steel structure, fittings and polythene sheeting) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority within one month of the date of this planning permission. Where required, changes are to be implemented within three months of the discharge of this condition and thereafter maintained for the life of the development.

*Reason: To protect neighbouring properties from adverse glare and noise disturbance and road users from adverse glare and to ensure a satisfactory form of development in the countryside*

*Relevant policy: NPPF Sections 9 and 15 and Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3, CP6 and CP11.*

5) Months of use of polytunnels

The polytunnels hereby permitted shall only be covered with the polythene sheeting between 1 January and 30 June.

*Reason: In the interests of the visual amenity of the countryside.*

*Relevant policies: NPPF Section 15 and Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3, CP6 and CP11.*

## Informatives

### 1) Discharge conditions

The applicant is reminded that this approval is granted subject to conditions which must be complied within one month of the planning permission. Retention of the development hereby approved without complying with these requirements may be outside the terms of this permission and liable to enforcement action. The information required should be formally submitted to the Council for consideration with the relevant fee. Once the details have been approved in writing, the development should be maintained (or modified where required) only in accordance with those details.

### 2) Discussion

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received. This planning application has been the subject of positive and proactive discussions with the applicant in terms of addressing concerns relating to landscape and visual impact with the submission of a Landscape Visual Appraisal.

The decision to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF is considered to be a positive outcome of these discussions.

<b>PLANNING HISTORY</b>		
<b>App Number</b>	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Decision</b>
227/1949	Calf house buildings	Approved 16 June 1949
AG/2006/7094	Agricultural building	Approved 27 March 2006
AG/2010/1446	Agricultural barn (prior approval)	Approved 19 July 2010
AG/2011/2110	Irrigation reservoir (prior approval)	Approved 28 October 2011
AG/2011/2616	Irrigation shed (prior approval)	Approved 13 January 2012
CLP/2012/0189	20 polytunnels (1.85ha) (certificate)	Refused 25 April 2012
F/2011/2620	20 polytunnels (1.85ha), ditch and hardstanding	Approved 22 May 2012, subject to sheeting being installed January to June only (Condition 9)
F/2012/0039	Use of barn for two caravans for seasonal workers and installation of sewage treatment plant	Approved 3 October 2012, subject to a three year limit and use by EU Plants only
F/2013/1493	Plant irrigation frame (retrospective)	Approved 11 December 2013
VAR/2013/1489	Variation of F/2011/2620 by deleting Condition 9 to allow year round use	
152683	Variation of F/2012/0039 to remove the three year limit	Approved 26 November 2015
153434	3 agricultural cold store buildings	Approved 3 March 2016
160643	12 polytunnels (0.61 ha) (retrospective)	Approved 25 May 2016
161194	10 polytunnels (1.02ha) (retrospective)	Approved 15 June 2016
160655	Agricultural worker's dwelling	Approved 19 January 2017

<b>SUMMARY INFORMATION</b>	
Site Area	36.3 hectare farm
Plot Area	2.2 hectares
Land use	Agricultural
Existing polytunnels	4.85 hectares (13% of farm)
Proposed polytunnels	7.05 hectares (19% of farm)

<b>CONSULTATION RESPONSES</b>	
WBC Environmental Health	No objection.
WBC Ecology	
WBC Conservation	
WBC Tree and Landscape	No objection, subject to additional landscaping details in Condition 2 to partly screen the polytunnels when viewed from Jubilee Road.
WBC Highways	No in-principle objection, subject to additional traffic management details in Condition 3.

<b>REPRESENTATIONS</b>	
Finchampstead Parish Council	No objection is raised but the spoiling of the view is 'unfortunate'.
Local Members	No comments received.
Neighbours	<p>The application was consulted to neighbours from 28 May to 18 June 2019 and a site notice was installed from 30 May to 20 June 2019.</p> <p>Submissions <b>against</b> the proposal were received from the following properties:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Bolney House, Jubilee Road, Finchampstead RG40 3RU</li> <li>2) Bolney House, Jubilee Road, Finchampstead RG40 3RU (x2)</li> <li>3) 4 Merryweather Close, Finchampstead RG40 4YH</li> <li>4) Ridgewood, Dell Road, Finchampstead RG40 3TD</li> <li>5) Dell Road, Finchampstead RG40 3TB (no house specified)</li> <li>6) Dell Road, Finchampstead RG40 3TB (no house specified)</li> <li>7) The Ridges, Finchampstead RG40 4YH (no house specified)</li> <li>8) The Ridges, Finchampstead RG40 4YH (no house specified)</li> <li>9) 1 Blackwater View, Finchampstead RG40 3TF</li> <li>10) Fair Green, Longwater Lane, Finchampstead RG40 4NR</li> <li>11) Moor Green House, Lower Sandhurst Road, Finchampstead RG40 3TH</li> <li>12) Lower Sandhurst Road (no specific address supplied)</li> </ol> <p>The submissions raised the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too close to the war memorial</li> <li>• Heritage and religious significance of the memorial is affected</li> </ul> <p><u>Officer comment:</u> The impact upon the Grade II listed war memorial is acceptable, as noted in 'Heritage and Conservation'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Polytunnels are highly visible, unsightly and will affect views</li> <li>• Landscaping is inadequate, particularly in winter months</li> </ul>

- Would be better located on flat land

Officer comment: The application was supported by a Landscape Visual Appraisal and it is agreed that the location and appearance of the polytunnels is acceptable, subject to additional landscaping in Condition 2, which includes evergreen cover. Refer to 'Character of the Area' for further commentary.

- Glare and distraction will disrupt drivers

Officer comment: Details of materials are required in Condition 4 and this includes reference to glare.

- Expansion of business will lead to additional HGV movements on small country lanes

Officer comment: This is agreed but it does not form the basis of any unreasonable impact. Condition 3 requires additional management details to ensure that any ongoing traffic issues are properly identified and managed. This is discussed further in 'Highway Access'.

- Wildlife habitat will be lost

Officer comment: There are no unreasonable ecological impacts, as noted in 'Ecology'.

- Will affect property values

Officer comment: This is not a relevant planning consideration.

- Is within an Area of Special Landscape Importance

Officer comment: The designation of the site as an Area of Special Landscape Importance no longer applies. Regardless, the importance of the landscape has been considered in 'Character of the Area'.

- The last application was determined to be the last requirement for polytunnels
- The sheeting for the polytunnels was initially only for six months a year

Officer comment: The above comments are correct but do not form a basis for the refusal of the application. Refer to a further explanation in 'Principle of Development'.

- Use of single use plastics

Officer comment: The polytunnels do not consist of single use plastic and the storage of the plastic between July and December is subject to further details in Condition 3.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application is retrospective</li> </ul> <p><u>Officer comment:</u> The Council has the ability to grant retrospective approval.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hedgerow has been removed</li> </ul> <p><u>Officer comment:</u> It is unclear which hedgerow has been removed but the recommendation in this application is subject to Condition 2, which requires landscape details, including an enhancement of landscaping along the northern boundary with Jubilee Road.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cannot sustain additional industrial activity</li> </ul> <p><u>Officer comment:</u> The use remains agricultural in nature and subject to Conditions 2-5, the additional polytunnels represent a well-managed approach for the farm.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not a sustainable development</li> </ul> <p><u>Officer comment:</u> The installation of polytunnels is used to increase yields, protect against damage from adverse weather conditions and extend the growing season and this allows for increased UK production and a reduction in the reliance upon imports. On this basis, it represents a sustainable approach to farming.</p> <p>Submissions <b>for</b> the proposal were received from the following properties:</p> <p>13) Court Cottage, Jubilee Rd, Finchampstead RG40 3SD 14) Ridge End, The Ridges, Finchampstead RG40 3SY</p> <p>The submissions raised the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allows for a profitable local business</li> <li>• Is not a traffic hazard</li> </ul> <p><u>Officer comment:</u> The above comments are noted, including that the proposal allows for business growth.</p>
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<b>APPLICANTS POINTS</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The polytunnels are required to allow the enterprise to continue growing and meet customer demand</li> <li>• The plant husbandry requirements of the enterprise require the controlled growing environment provided by polytunnels</li> <li>• The scale of the proposed development results in an area of 6% covered by polytunnels on the land holding. This will result in a total 19% of the land holding being used for polytunnels</li> <li>• The polytunnels are of typical design and are sited on an area of low lying land which will minimise visual and landscape effects</li> </ul>

- The proposal is in compliance with National and Local Planning Policy supporting a sustainable rural enterprise

<b>PLANNING POLICY</b>		
National Policy	NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
Core Strategy 2010	CP1	Sustainable Development
	CP3	General Principles for Development
	CP6	Managing Travel Demand
	CP7	Biodiversity
	CP8	Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area
	CP9	Scale and Location of Development Proposals
Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014	CC01	Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
	CC03	Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping
	CC04	Sustainable Design and Construction
	CC09	Development and Flood Risk
	CC10	Sustainable Drainage
	TB21	Landscape Character
	TB23	Biodiversity and Development
	TB24	Designated Heritage Assets
Borough Design Guide SPD	Section 9	Rural and Settlement Edge

<b>PLANNING ISSUES</b>
<p><b>Description of Proposal</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The application involves the erection of 25 polytunnels consisting of a steel frame and polythene sheeting, aligned in parallel rows generally north/south in arrangement across a 2.2 hectare area at the northern end of the farm. The polytunnels have a height of 3m, width of 7.7m and variable length of 75m-120m. They are used to house strawberries that are growing on elevated tables.</li> <li>2. The supporting documentation indicates that the frames are permanent and will be covered in polythene from January to June dependent on weather conditions. No new access tracks are proposed and no trees have been removed.</li> <li>3. The polytunnels and tables have already been constructed/installed and the application is retrospective. It follows an initial enforcement investigation in January 2019 (reference RFS/2019/084829).</li> </ol> <p><b>Site Description</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Manor Farm is a 36.3 hectare soft fruit farm roughly bounded by Jubilee Road, Dell Road, Lower Sandhurst Road and Cricket Hill/Longwater Road. To the north, the farm is readily visible in wider views across towards Backwater Valley from the intersection of The Ridges and Jubilee Road.</li> <li>5. On the farm are two areas of buildings – in the centre of the farm (which includes an agricultural worker’s dwelling) and towards the southern end near Lower Sandhurst Road (which includes seasonal workers accommodation). There is 4.85 hectares of existing polytunnels concentrated in the south eastern corner of the</li> </ol>

farm with open farmland, access tracks and reservoirs occupying up the rest of the farm.

6. It is bounded on Lower Sandhurst Road and Jubilee Road by hedgerow, partial or otherwise. It is also framed by a sporadic collection of residential dwellings in the countryside, including along the western side of Dell Lane, equestrian facilities along the western boundary, the village of Finchampstead to the west beyond and Blackwater Lakes across Lower Sandhurst Road to the south.

### **Principle of Development**

7. The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the local Development Plan. Policy CC01 of the MDD Local Plan states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for Wokingham Borough will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

### Definition of development

8. Section 55(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 notes that development means the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operations in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any buildings or other land. This is distinct from the use of any land and buildings for the purposes of agriculture, which is not development as outlined in subparagraph (2)(e).
9. The polytunnel structure comprises of a steel frame, with polythene sheeting and table tops in which the strawberries are grown. The polytunnels are between 75m and 120m long and 3m in height and with 25 rows, afford a prominent size. The polytunnels and the tables are affixed to the ground, there is no intention for them to be moved and there is a large amount of manual labour involved with the construction of the structure. With the exception of the sheeting, they are also intended as permanent elements. On the basis of the above, the erection of the polytunnels and the tables represents development. This is consistent with the conclusions reached in the officer report for CLP/2012/0189 and in subsequent planning applications.

### Location within the countryside

10. The site is within the countryside with the site located 385m to the east of the limited development location of Finchampstead although Manor Farm itself extends roughly to the settlement edge.
11. Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy does not permit development outside of development limits unless it involves, as this application does, a sustainable rural or recreational enterprise without excessive encroachment or expansion of development. Furthermore, paragraph 83 of the NPPF requires consideration of the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses.
12. The proposal represents a sustainable rural enterprise because the polytunnels allow for an extended growing season of up to six months and it also protects

against adverse weather conditions, allows greater control of temperature and increased yield. It also allows for more efficient picking of fruit and protection from the weather for pickers. In doing so, this allows for the production of more locally grown produce to meet projected future demand and reduces the reliance upon imported fruit, which results in increased transportation and environmental costs. It is also consolidated within an existing efficient farming operation.

13. The polytunnels are visible in the views from Jubilee Road to the north but as noted in 'Character of the Area', the harm is not unreasonable. It is a typical agricultural element that is increasingly used for soft fruit production and for this reason, it does not appear adversely out of place in the rural setting and does not represent an adverse encroachment of expansion of development. It is therefore consistent with the intent of Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy.

#### Expansion of business

14. Manor Farm was acquired by EU Plants Ltd in 2011 and now grows strawberries, raspberries, blackberries and blueberries. Supporting documentation with the most recent planning approval (161194, approved 15 June 2016) noted that '*Due to a significant increase in orders, the applicant has brought forward polytunnel construction to the maximum desired level on the farm. With all tunnels in place, the farm will be able to grow 3 million strawberry tray plants and 2.5 million raspberry cuttings. The 3 million strawberry plants grown in the tunnels will be enough to plant out in the strawberry fields at Manor Farm*' and that '*The block of polytunnels now proposed represents the final phase of polytunnels required on the farm*'. (underlined emphasis added)
15. This application clearly represents a further expansion of the business beyond what was stated in the previous application. The reasoning is the signing of a new contract for an additional 110,000 strawberry plants per year. This is due to increased demand within the UK because of the uncertainties of the Brexit process, including the possibility of a 'No Deal' departure that poses significant unknown constraints for the imports of soft fruits from Europe.
16. On its own, the additional polytunnels represents a demonstrated ongoing growth of a viable farming enterprise and the expansion of the existing farming operations is actively encouraged by paragraph 83 of the NPPF. On this basis, there is no objection to the expansion. When considering the reasoning behind the additional expansion, no additional objection is raised as the business case has changed.
17. The previous application also referred to the fact that the sustainability of the farming operations relies upon a balance of open field growing and propagation in polytunnels. At the time, it incorporated 13% of the farm within polytunnels and this has increased to 19% under this application. There is no reason to dispute that this balance remains acceptable.

#### **Character of the Area**

18. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its layout, form and character and must be of high quality design. RD1 and NR1 of the Borough Design Guide SPD also require that development



contribute positively towards and be compatible with the character and quality of the local area.

19. From a landscape perspective, Policies CC03 and TB21 of the MDD Local Plan require consideration of the landscape character and paragraphs 170(a) and (b) of the NPPF state that development should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
- a) *Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
  - b) *Recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.*
20. Prior to the unauthorised erection of the polytunnels, the farmland comprised open countryside and their construction represented an interruption to the rural backdrop that is visible across the valley from Jubilee Road and The Ridges. However, it is also framed to the north and east by woodland, which gives it a semi enclosed appearance. The main public vantage points include an approximate length of 190m of Jubilee Road/The Ridges that follows the ridge and when approaching from the north over the crest of Jubilee Road. Views from the pedestrian footpath on the southern side of the road are also interrupted. It is less visible from other areas in the valley, including Dell Lane and not readily visible from Lower Sandhurst Road. There are some distant glimpses from beyond the general vicinity of Manor Farm.
21. In short, the polytunnels are at the highest point on the farm and in the most visible location, both because of the extent of view lines and proximity to road users and pedestrians on the road network as well as from several surrounding residential properties. The white colour of the polytunnels represents a clear contrast to the green of the rural countryside and there is potential for glare to contribute to this impact.



**Proposed**



Previous

22. The site is split between two Landscape Character Areas - N2 in the south and M2 in the north. The polytunnels are in the northern M2 section of the site, on the upper slopes of the Blackwater River Valley affording views south across the valley and more confined views north of the B3348 and scattered dwellings on the rising slope to the north in Finchampstead Village.
23. The M2 character area 'Finchampstead Ridges Forested and Settled Sands is a high quality area as a result of the strong character and good condition. It has a distinctive sense of place making a strong contribution to the overall landscape character, particularly the distinctive ridge, woodland and heath. The good condition is the result of the well-managed and maintained landscape elements. The future landscape strategy is to conserve the existing character continuing the active management of all the elements. It has a high sensitivity with a low capacity for change particularly given the ridgeline and its views of the river valley which is the most sensitive of all.
24. When considering the landscape impact, it requires a consideration of the best location within the farm. Accordingly, at the request of the Council, the application was accompanied by a Landscape Visual Appraisal (LVA), which has been reviewed by the Council's Trees and Landscape Officer.
25. The LVA considers the sensitivity of the site to be medium, which is '*an area with a well-defined sense of place and/or character in moderate condition; or an area valued by designation at a local or regional level; or a partly damaged feature of high intrinsic value; or an intact feature of moderate intrinsic value [such as prominent trees or tree groups which contribute to the character of the site, screening of views, landscape or historic landscape pattern]; a landscape or feature which is partially tolerant of change of the type identified.*'
26. Whilst some of the reasoning is contested, there is no dispute with the conclusion. It also concludes that there are no significant residual effects anticipated beyond 2.5km and that the overall magnitude of change would be minor adverse because there are no landscape features of value, polytunnels are a characterising feature of the landscape and the proposal does not introduce any new elements. Minor adverse is where there is '*a perceptible change to the view, but which would not materially affect the composition, the appreciation of landscape character or the ability to take in or enjoy the view*'.
27. The LVA concludes that given the medium sensitivity of the landscape receptor and the minor landscape magnitude of change, the predicted overall residual level

of effect on the landscape of this part of the Manor Farm landholding would be at most minor adverse when mitigation planting has become established. To its benefit, the LVA argues that the location of the development area is on rising ground, is set into the local topography and benefits from a high degree of screening of mature trees and hedgerow limiting visibility. Where the development is seen, it is in the context of the existing established landscape pattern of the soft fruit farming operation.

28. The conclusions of the LVA are not disputed but it is reliant upon additional hedgerow planting and it will take 3-5 years for the hedgerow to establish and for the harm to be alleviated. Accordingly, Condition 2 requires enhanced screening at a slightly lower level than the existing road screening, which would be acceptable in both retaining the intermittent views of the river valley from the higher vantage points, including the war memorial whilst reducing the visibility of the polytunnels.
29. The officer reports for the two most recent applications for polytunnels from 2016 noted that they do not overwhelm the landscape. These polytunnels were in a different area of the farm but the conclusion remains consistent. They are now commonplace elements within the rural countryside and their existence does not overwhelm from the character of the countryside. Whilst the harm is not eliminated, it is limited to the foreground and is adequately screened. On this basis, an alternative location for the polytunnels is considered unnecessary.
30. Furthermore, the polytunnels in the south eastern corner of the farm have year round use and are not subject to any seasonal restriction relating to the plastic sheeting being removed between July and December. However, because of their more prominent location, there is sufficient justification for this condition to be applied in this application. See Condition 5.

### **Heritage and Conservation**

31. The Grade II listed Finchampstead War Memorial occupies a deliberately prominent position at the intersection of Jubilee Road and The Ridges. Poor Ridge Cottage on Dell Road is also a Build of Traditional Local Character and it lies 50m to the east although it is separated by a ribbon of ancient woodland.
32. Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that development must ensure the preservation of any nearby listed building, including its setting, Paragraphs 192-196 of the NPPF require consideration of the harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset and Policy TB24 of the MDD Local Plan requires the conservation and enhancement of Listed Buildings, including their views and setting. Policy TB26 of the MDD Local Plan also requires the retention and enhancement of the traditional, historical, local and special character of a Buildings of Traditional Local Character and their setting.
33. There is no in-principle objection on heritage and conservation grounds. The polytunnels are sited significantly below the level of the war memorial and adequately separated by a distance of 25m, inclusive of the the roadway, fencing and landscaping. They are visible in views when standing at the war memorial. However, as the polytunnels serve an agricultural purpose within an agricultural

paddock, they are not out of character for the area and the impact upon the listed item, including its purpose as a monument of reflection and remembrance and its wider setting on a prominent intersection, is not unreasonable. The Council's Conservation Officer concurs, noting that whilst the polytunnels are visible in immediate views, they are partly screened by vegetation and are not evident in wider views with no direct visual impact on the direct setting of monument

34. There is adequate separation and a significant coverage of woodland to the eastern side of the farm boundary such that there is no apparent impact upon the adjoining Building of Local Traditional Character.

### **Neighbour Amenity**

35. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy aims to protect neighbouring amenity.

### Dominance and light

36. The polytunnels sit within the south facing slope of the farm, have a height of 3m and occupy an area of 2.2 hectares. They will be visible from various vantage points, including from neighbouring residential properties but there is no unreasonable neighbour amenity impact in terms of dominance or loss of light because of the separation distance of at least 130m when measured to the nearest property to the west, existing tree coverage in the ancient woodland to the east and the change in topography to the north and across the wider area.

### Views

37. There is an interruption to the landscaped and rural views from various residential surrounding properties, including from properties that adjoin the eastern boundary of the farm on the western side of Dell Lane.
38. However, the findings of the LVA are concurred with and because of the level of vegetation cover in the immediate boundaries of the farm and on neighbouring properties and for the same reasons outlined above in 'Character of the Area', the impact is not such that would render the application unreasonable. The LVA determines that the magnitude of change in the views for residents is assessed as moderate adverse during construction, reducing to minor adverse (locally moderate adverse immediately after and when mitigation planting has become established. The residual level of effect on these high sensitivity receptors is therefore generally moderate-minor adverse, locally major-moderate adverse.
39. As more than 75% of the farm remains as undeveloped farmland, the rural countryside remains the dominant appearance and the polytunnels fit suitably within its backdrop. On this basis, no objection is raised.

### Glare and noise

40. Because of the expanse of polythene sheeting and its orientation on the southern face of the hillside facing towards the sun, there is potential for ongoing glare and it is important that this be minimised, particularly as any glare can affect properties across substantial distances. There is also the potential for ongoing noise disturbance from the clattering of the steel fittings and flapping from the polythene

sheeting in the wind although it is likely that this would dissipate through distance. Details of methods to deal with these factors forms part of Condition 4.

### **Highway Access**

41. Policy CP6 of the Core Strategy requires the mitigation of any adverse effects upon the local and strategic transport network, an enhancement of road safety and no highway problems or traffic related environmental problems.
42. The proposal represents a 45% increase in the area covered by polytunnels and will generate an additional 110,000 strawberry plants per year. These are transported in 11,300 x 1m long poly bags, which will ultimately result in additional HGV and lorry movements to and from the site.
43. Whilst the polytunnels adjoin Jubilee Road, access to and from Manor Farm is via Lower Sandhurst Road in the south. Surrounding roads have a limited width, including a 6 foot 6 inch width restriction at the junction of Cricket Hill and Longwater Road. Issues of limited access and increased traffic generation on local roads has been raised by several residents.
44. The existing (pre application) farming operations are viewed as acceptable and the Council's Highways Officer raises no in-principle objection. However, given the increase in production and the lack of any details or controls regarding the existing movement of vehicles, an Operational Management Plan would be required within one month of this decision, which will include details of the number of movements, types of vehicles, hours of access, proposed access routes and points and provision for on-site manoeuvring. Subject to these details in Condition 3, no objection is raised.
45. Several submissions have raised concerns of glare affecting vehicles along Jubilee Road and The Ridges. Consistent with comments about in 'Neighbour Amenity', there are no in-principle objections but it is prudent to seek additional details to ensure that there is no adverse impact to the visibility of motorists on the highway network. This is detailed in Condition 4.

### **Trees**

46. Policy CC03 of the MDD Local Plan requires the protection of green infrastructure networks and existing trees. The polytunnels are located on open countryside and have not necessitated the removal of any trees on the farm. Furthermore, the ancient woodland that adjoins the eastern boundary will be unaffected. On this basis, no objection is raised,

### **Ecology**

47. Policy TB23 of the MDD Local Plan requires the incorporation of new biodiversity features, buffers between habitats and species of importance and integration with the wider green infrastructure network.
48. The polytunnels are located in existing farmland and pose no real adverse localised ecological impact, including on the adjacent Ancient Woodland. Notwithstanding, Condition 2 requires additional screen planting to the northern

boundary, which will be able to support additional birdlife and other wildlife. Despite its retrospective nature, the Council's Ecology Officer does not raise objection and on this basis, the proposal is acceptable in terms of Policy TB23.

### **Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area**

49. Policy CP8 of the Core Strategy states that where development is likely to have an effect on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (TBH SPA), it is required to demonstrate that adequate measures to avoid and mitigate any potential adverse effects are delivered.
50. Manor Farm is within 5km of the TBH SPA but the scope of the works are agricultural in nature and are minor whereby there is no foreseeable impact upon the SPA. The proposal is therefore acceptable in terms of Policy CP8.

### **Flooding**

51. Policy CC09 of the MDD Local Plan requires consideration of flood risk from historic flooding. The site and access thereto is located within Flood Zone 1 and the polytunnels represent no additional flood risk or vulnerability. It is therefore acceptable in terms of Policy CC09.

### **Drainage**

52. Policy CC10 of the MDD Local Plan requires sustainable drainage methods and the minimisation of surface water flow. Whilst the polytunnels are non-permeable in nature and there would have been an increase in runoff as a result of their initial construction, there is no foreseeable short or long term impact upon existing on-site water infiltration into the soil as there is ample turf around the structures and ample separation to neighbouring properties. It is therefore acceptable in terms of Policy CC10.

### **Waste**

53. Policy CC04 of the MDD Local Plan requires adequate internal and external storage for waste and recycling. As noted in 'Highway Access', the additional polytunnels represents an expansion of the farm operations. It is likely that the resulting increase in waste generation within the farm could be accommodated within the existing arrangements but in the absence of any actual details, Condition 3 is applied and this requires operational management details.

### **Contamination**

54. There is no known contamination in the area.

### **Community Infrastructure Levy**

55. The application is not liable for any CIL payments

### **Employment Skills**

56. Policy TB12 of the MDD Local Plan states that proposals for major development should be accompanied by an Employment and Skills Plan to show how the proposal accords opportunities for training, apprenticeship or other vocational initiatives to develop local employability skills required by developers, contractors or end users of the proposal.
57. The application is retrospective in nature and involved a limited construction phase that can be undertaken within the scope of the existing farming operations. Furthermore, the farm employs a collection of seasonal workers based upon demand. On this basis, it is not subject to any Employment Skills requirements.

### **The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010)**

58. In determining this application, the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief.
59. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that persons with protected characteristics as identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

### **CONCLUSION**

60. The construction of the polytunnels has resulted in a clear alteration to the landscape in a prominent viewpoint of the Finchampstead Ridges. However, it also represents a sustainable enterprise and an appropriate intensification of an existing business. Whilst the proposed landscaping in Condition 2 will not entirely eliminate any views of the polytunnels, these are characteristic features of the agricultural landscape and are an expansion of the existing development on Manor Farm. Any discernible harm to the character of the area, traffic movements or neighbour amenity are adequately addressed by Conditions 2, 3 and 4 respectively and when weighing the planning balance, the social, environmental and economic benefits are outweighed by the mitigated harm,

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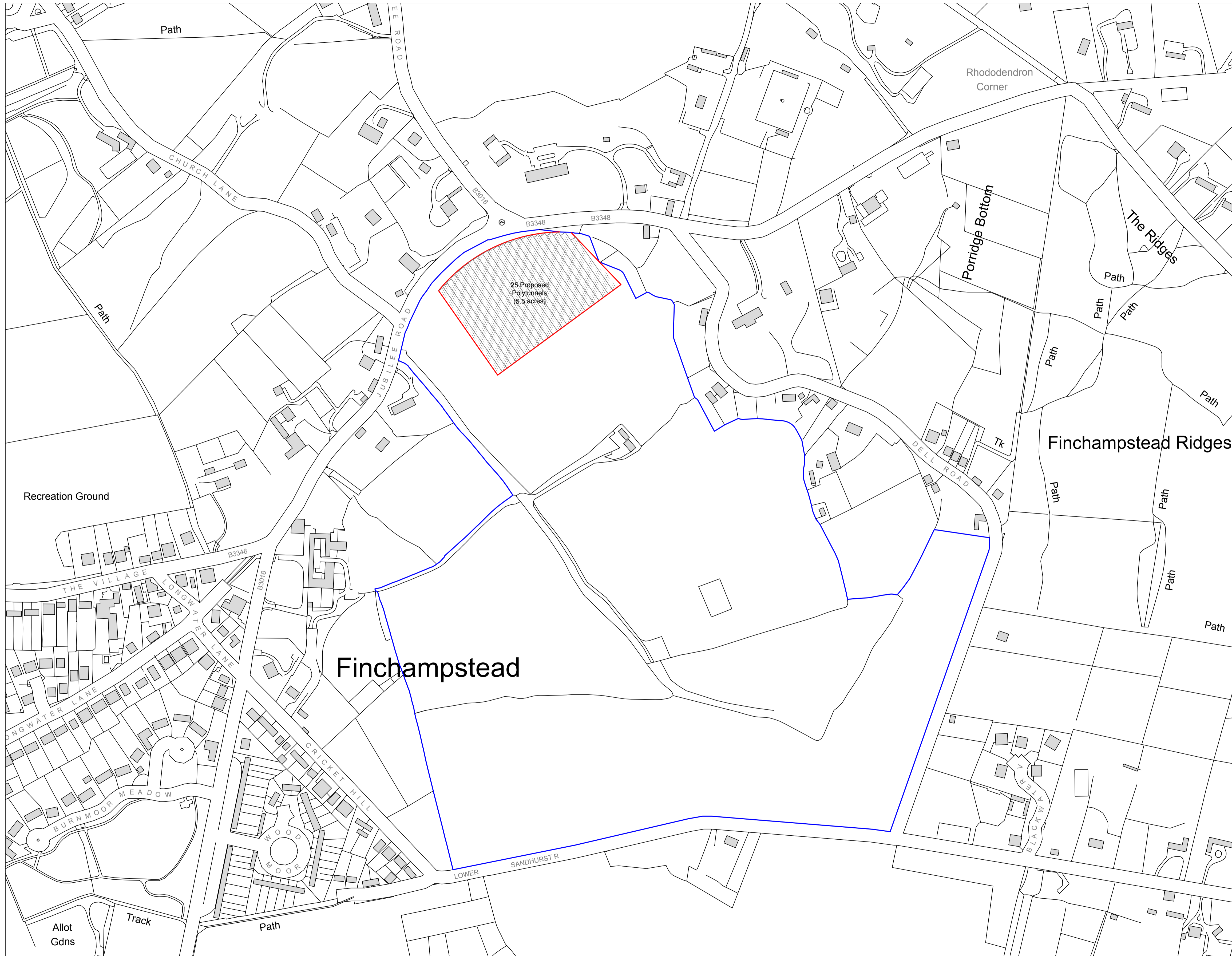


PLANNING REF : 191112  
PROPERTY ADDRESS : FBC Centre  
: Gorse Ride, Finchampstead, Wokingham  
: RG40 4ES  
SUBMITTED BY : Finchampstead Parish Council  
DATE SUBMITTED : 31/05/2019

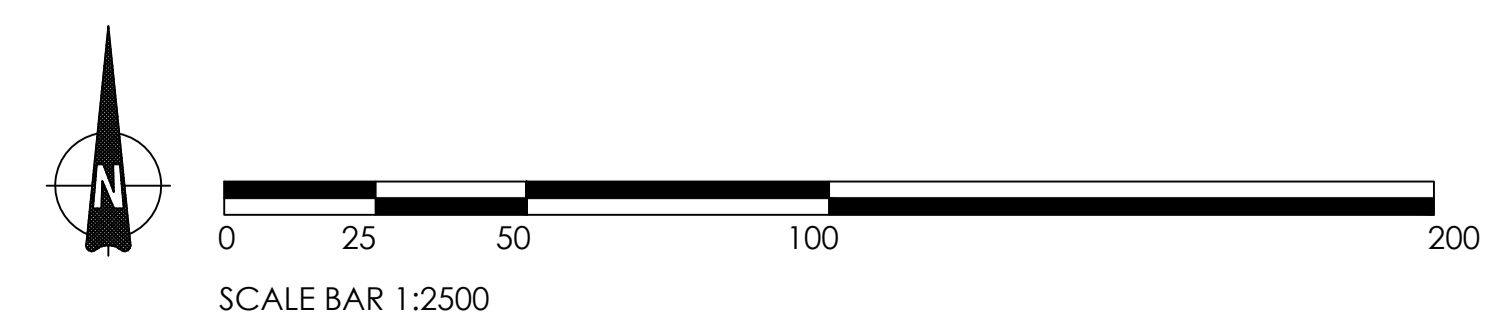
COMMENTS:

Finchampstead Parish Council does not object on planning grounds.  
However it is unfortunate it is necessary to spoil the view of the countryside  
from this key viewing point in the parish.

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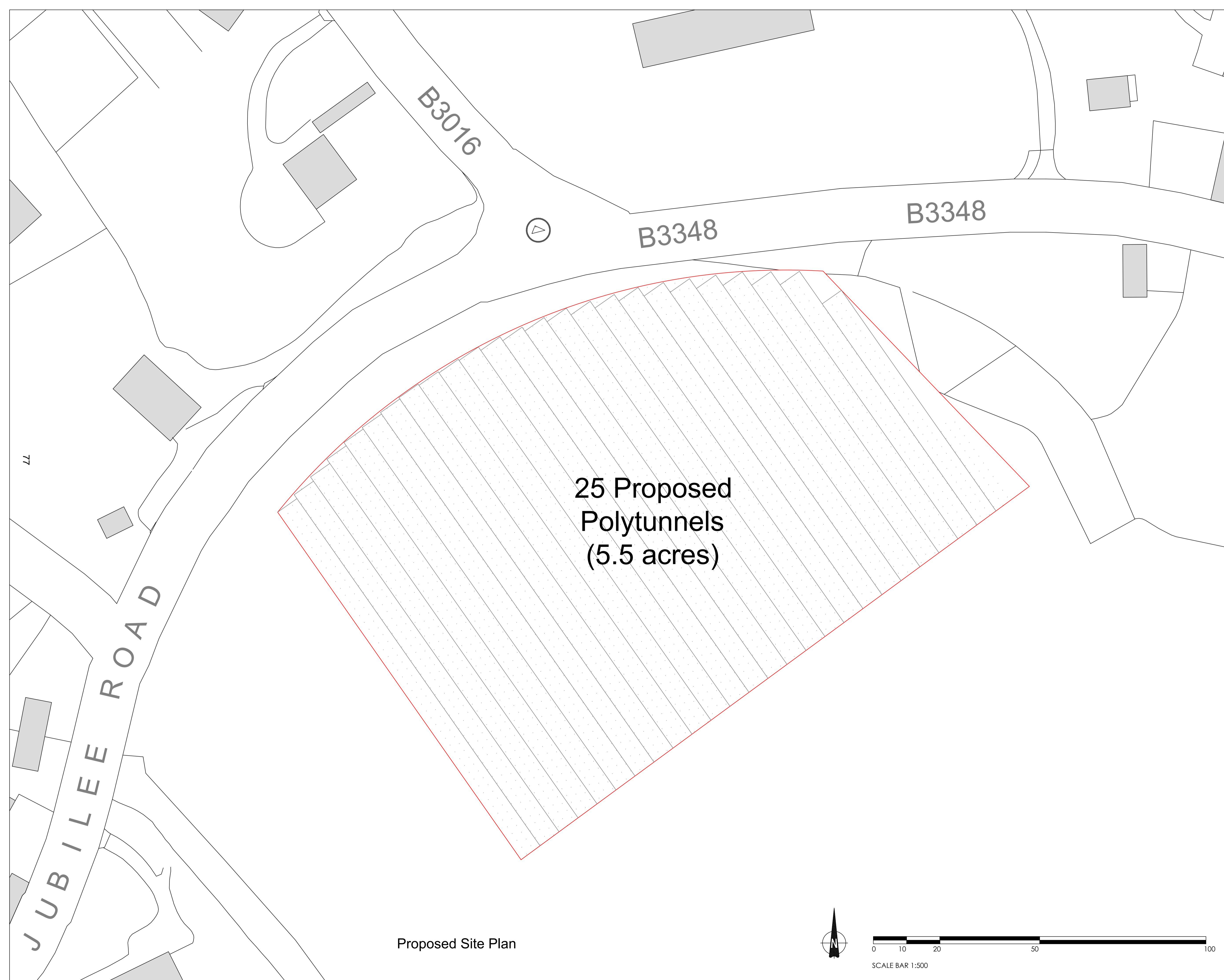
Proposed Location Plan



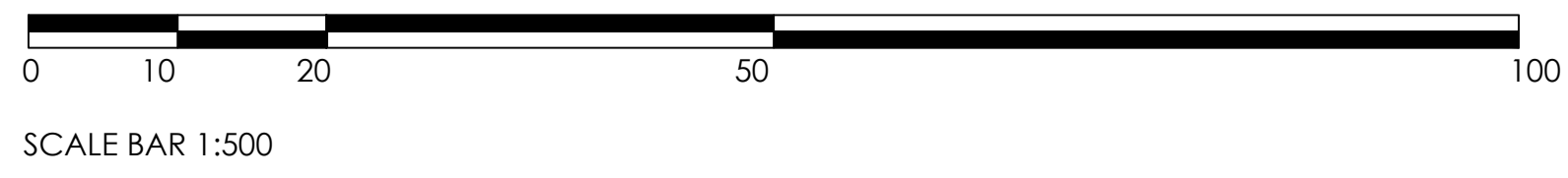
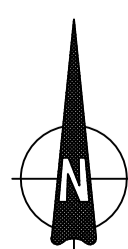
Rev.	Comment	Date
Drawing title Proposed Location Plan		
Contract Manor Farm Finchampstead Wokingham Berkshire RG40 3TL		
Reading Agricultural Consultants Ltd Gate House Beechwood Court Long Toll Woodcote RG8 0RR 01491 684233  www.readingagricultural.co.uk		

Ref. RAC/8369/1	Rev. A
Drawn by RC	Checked by OW
Scales 1:2500 @ A1	Date May 2019

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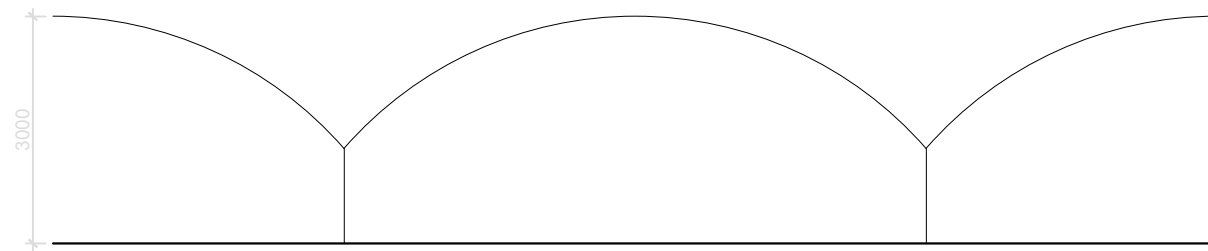


Proposed Site Plan



Rev.	Comment	Date
Drawing title Proposed Site Plan		
Contract Manor Farm Finchampstead Wokingham Berkshire RG40 3TL		
Reading Agricultural Consultants Ltd Gate House Beechwood Court Long Toll Woodcote RG8 0RR 01491 684233  www.readingagricultural.co.uk		
Ref. RAC/8369/2	Rev.	
Drawn by RC	Checked by OW	
Scales 1:500 @ A1	Date April 2019	

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Typical Cross Section  
through Polytunnels



SCALE BAR 1:100

Rev.	Comment	Date
Drawing title Polytunnel Typical Cross Section		
Contract Manor Farm Finchampstead Wokingham Berkshire RG40 3TL		
Reading Agricultural Consultants Ltd Gate House Beechwood Court Long Toll Woodcote RG8 0RR 01491 684233 <a href="http://www.readingagricultural.co.uk">www.readingagricultural.co.uk</a>		
Ref. RAC/8369/3		Rev.
Drawn by RC		Checked by OW
Scales 1:100 @ A3		Date April 2019

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