

<b>Development Management Ref No</b>	<b>No weeks on day of committee</b>	<b>Parish</b>	<b>Ward</b>	<b>Listed by:</b>
F/2014/2865	10	Wokingham Without	Wokingham Without	Cllr Pauline Helliar-Symons

**Applicant** Mr Jason Brand C/O The Edwards Irish Partnership

**Location** Land at Heathlands, Heathlands Road, Wokingham **Postcode** RG40 3AS

**Proposal** Proposed erection of two no. bedroom single storey dwelling, to include the construction of a new roof on existing garage, following demolition and removal of existing garage block

**Type** Minor - Dwellings

**PS Category** 13

**Officer** Nick Chancellor

**FOR CONSIDERATION BY** Planning Committee on 04/03/2015

**REPORT PREPARED BY** Head of Development Management and Regulatory Services

## SUMMARY

The application site is in designated Countryside and fronts Heathlands Road, just to the south of Bevere Lodge and an access road serving Heathlands Court. The site is currently relatively open and hosts two garage blocks, the larger of which is set back from the highway by 11m.

The proposal seeks planning permission for the erection of a two bedroom lodge style bungalow property, following the demolition of an existing garage block. A smaller, existing garage block on the site would be converted to form a garage outbuilding to serve the new dwelling.

The application has been assessed against the relevant policies of Wokingham Borough Development Plan and account has been taken of other relevant material considerations. The report concludes that the proposal would not accord with Core Strategy Policy CP6 (Managing Travel Demand) and CP11 (Proposals outside Development Limits (including countryside)) as the site is isolated, leads to an undesirable increase in scale and change in character and does not constitute environmental improvement. The Tree and Landscape Officer has advised that the development would require replacement planting of TPO trees previously removed from the site, which would be at odds with future occupiers' expectation for an open, sunny garden.

Two previous and similar applications on the site have been dismissed at appeal and are notable material considerations. A planning application for a similar application pertaining to the same site was refused in November 2014. The current application is not considered to be a significant improvement such that the unsustainable location and harm to the countryside could be justified. As such it is recommended that planning permission is refused.

In reaching this conclusion due consideration has been given to whether the use of

landscaping conditions would be possible to mitigate the impact of the proposal or would out-weigh the above concerns. It is concluded that in this instance this would not be the case.

The development would require the creation of a safe access, but this could be ensured through planning conditions and so should not form further reasons for refusal. The development would also be required to make arrangements for the improvement or provision of infrastructure, services, community and other facilities. While a section 106 legal agreement has not been pursued due to the recommendation for refusal, this would be required and is included as an additional reason for refusal.

#### **PLANNING STATUS**

- Outside of Development Limits (Countryside)
- Potentially Contaminated Land Consultation Zone
- Special Protection Area (5km zone)
- Area Tree Protection Order (442/1989)
- SSSI 500m Consultation Zone
- Farnborough Aerodrome Consultation Zone
- Wind turbine consultation zone

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

REFUSE planning permission for the following reasons:

1. Due to the increase in scale and the site's isolated location, the proposed dwelling is a form of unsustainable development that would urbanise the application site; to the detriment of visual amenity, the character of the area, the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and the separate identity of neighbouring settlements. The application is therefore contrary to the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP3, CP6 and CP11.

2. In the absence of a planning obligation, the proposal does not secure appropriate mitigation of the service, amenity and infrastructure needs which would result from the development. As such, the proposal increases pressure on existing services and infrastructure and is therefore contrary to Policies CP1, CP3 and CP4 of the adopted Wokingham Borough Core Strategy.

3. In the absence of SPA contributions, the Planning Authority is unable to satisfy itself that the proposal would not have an adverse impact on the integrity of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA. Accordingly, since the planning authority is not satisfied that regulation 49 of the Conservation (National Habitats etc) Regulations 1994 applies in this case, it must refuse permission in accordance with regulation 48(5) of the 1994 Regulations and Article 6(3) of Directive 92/43/EEC. Furthermore, the proposal conflicts with Policy CP8 of the Core Strategy.

#### **PLANNING HISTORY**

32663 – Erection of a 2 bedroom lodge following demolition of garage. Refused 1989, appeal dismissed 19/02/1990.

98/68309/F – Proposed erection of detached dwelling with double garage and

demolition of existing garages. Refused 28/10/1998.

F/2000/1935 – Demolition of existing garage and erection of (two storey) dwelling with garage. Refused 18/10/2000.

F/2001/3221 – Demolition of existing garages and erection of a (bungalow) dwelling with detached garage. Refused at planning committee 03/05/2001, appeal dismissed 09/08/2001.

Officer note: The F/2001/3221 appeal decision is a material consideration for the assessment of the current application. Due to the very similar nature of the development proposed (also for erection of a lodge/bungalow dwelling), it should be attributed significant weight in the balancing process.

The Inspector's report concluded that *"the tailored, open conditions associated with a residential use would make the dwelling far more conspicuous ... I consider that it would look incongruous in this rural setting and damaging to the countryside amenities that the development plan seeks to protect. In my judgement the development would not enhance the rural environment"*.

The appeal scheme was clearly found to be unacceptable by the Inspector. Therefore, the current application will be assessed in terms of whether it offers material improvement, taking into account current Development Plan policies.

F/2004/2033 - Proposed erection of security fencing across site access. (Retrospective). Refused 12/07/2004.

F/2014/2081 - Proposed erection of a single storey detached dwelling, addition of pitched roof over retained single detached garage and blocking off of existing access and formation of a new access. Demolition of existing garage block. Refused 04/11/2014.

Officer note: Very similar application, but with 0.75m taller roof ridge (6.1m instead of 5.35m). The current application is therefore assessed in terms of whether it has overcome the reasons for refusal, cited below:

1. Due to the increase in scale, the proposed dwelling is a form of unsustainable development that would urbanise the application site; to the detriment of visual amenity, the character of the area, the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and the separate identity of neighbouring settlements. The application is therefore contrary to the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and Core Strategy Policy CP11.

2. In the absence of a planning obligation, the proposal does not secure appropriate mitigation of the service, amenity and infrastructure needs which would result from the development. As such, the proposal increases pressure on existing services and infrastructure and is therefore contrary to Policies CP1, CP3 and CP4 of the adopted Wokingham Borough Core Strategy.

3. In the absence of SPA contributions, the Planning Authority is unable to satisfy itself that the proposal would not have an adverse impact on the integrity of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA. Accordingly, since the planning authority is not satisfied that regulation 49 of the Conservation (National Habitats etc) Regulations 1994 applies in this case, it must refuse permission in accordance with regulation 48(5) of the 1994 Regulations and Article 6(3) of Directive 92/43/EEC. Furthermore, the proposal conflicts with Policy CP8 of the Core Strategy.

4. The proposals fails to demonstrate that the development would seek to achieve the requirements of the full Code for Sustainable homes Level 4 and would therefore be contrary to MDD Policy CC04.

**SUMMARY INFORMATION**

Site Area	0.07 Hectares
Existing units	Two garage structures
Proposed units	One dwelling
Number of bedrooms	Two
Number of affordable units proposed	Zero
Existing land use	Lock up garages ( not ancillary to primary use): Sui Generis
Proposed land use	C3 Dwellinghouse
Public open space proposed	None
Proposed parking spaces	2 – parking/turning area shown on plan

**CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

WBC Highways	<p>No technical objection subject to conditions to ensure parking and turning provision, cycle parking, no gates at site entrance, appropriate surfacing and access visibility. Only acceptable subject to an appropriate highways s.106 contribution.</p> <p>However, the highways officer notes that the development is not in a sustainable location, due to it not being within an existing settlement or within close proximity to local services to meet the everyday needs of future occupiers.</p>
WBC Ecology	No objection subject to informative re: native reptiles
WBC Trees and Landscape	<p>Objection due to incompatibility between the proposed residential use and area TPO corresponding to the site.</p> <p>Given the extent of replacement TPO planting that would be required (as per s.206 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) and the reasonable expectation from future residents for an open and sunny garden space</p>
Environmental Health	No comment

**REPRESENTATIONS**

Ward members	Cllr Pauline Helliard-Symons
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	<p><i>"In the past this application has failed under pre NPPF regulations as an additional dwelling in the countryside despite the benefits of removing the unsightly garages. The proposed bungalow would be an improvement to the amenity of the whole area, and the applicant's architects have taken a constructive approach to the design. The application last year was refused on 4 counts, the last three being administrative - i.e S106, SPA, Code 4. The substantive objection does not in our view hold water - 'Due to increase in scale, the proposed building is a form of unsustainable development that would urbanise the application site.....'. Quite the reverse is the case since the scale would overall appear to be less. It meets the current NPPF criteria such as 'Core Planning Principles' to 'seek to secure high quality design', 'take account of different roles and character of different areas...', 'not simply be about scrutiny but instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives'. Also in delivering sustainable development. It will without doubt improve the appearance of this corner, which is very visible. Thus whilst our Core Strategy was adopted before the NPPF came in, this application meets CP1, 3, and would provide a single dwelling suitable for its siting and an appropriate exception site for these reasons.</i></p> <p><i>The proposal therefore seems to be in keeping with the area, does not detrimentally affect adjoining Beveridge Lodge, and in particular has the support of the local residents; and there is now a prejudice in favour of local people's views having more influence. It enhances the area by ensuring an appropriate use which will maintain the site in an attractive condition. Overall there will be a net gain to the amenity of the area, and these environmental factors outweigh any possible harm that planning officers might understandably be concerned about."</i></p> <p>Cllr David Sleight:</p> <p><i>"Despite the planning history of applications for building on this site, I consider that this application should be approved. It is a small well designed cottage that would complement the rural scene in Heathlands Road and has, I understand, the support of the residents of Heathlands Court, the gated development to the rear of the application site.</i></p> <p><i>I know its location on Heathlands Road and consider that any traffic entering or exiting the site will be able to do safely although, should you recommend the application for approval, you may wish to consider some restriction on builders' vehicles waiting on Heathlands Road."</i></p>
Wokingham Without Parish Council	"On this occasion Wokingham Without Parish Council recommend APPROVAL of this application.

	<p>This is as a REPLACEMENT dwelling of the garage block that is already in situ on a Brownfield site. As a rule Wokingham Without Parish Council DO NOT support infills within the parish.”</p> <p>Officer note: The application is <u>not</u> for a replacement dwelling as there is no existing dwelling on the site.</p>
Local residents	<p>16 letters received – all in support of the application.</p> <p>The majority of these responses note the present ugly/untidy state of the site and consider that redevelopment would greatly improve its appearance.</p> <p>Responses also include (in summary):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Previous nuisances such as use of the site for a storage container, fly-tipping, temporary stationing of a caravan, parking of vehicles, fallen trees.</li> <li>- A dwelling on the site would mean that it is maintained</li> <li>- Need for bungalow properties in the Borough</li> <li>- Opportunity to re-use a brownfield site</li> <li>- Landscaping proposed seems sympathetic</li> <li>- There are other dwellings nearby</li> <li>- Pragmatic solution</li> <li>- Character of Heathlands Road has altered in recent years, a new bungalow would be consistent with the direction of travel.</li> <li>- NPPF states planning process should be a “creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve places people live their lives”.</li> <li>- The existing garages intrude on an area which is clearly residential</li> <li>- Design of the dwelling is modest and would be a pleasant addition</li> </ul>

**APPLICANTS POINTS**

The applicants Design and Access Statement concludes that the proposed dwelling is sympathetically designed in terms of layout, built form, height and will make a positive contribution to the long term character of the area without eroding the Countryside. Existing and proposed tree planting would screen and soften the road frontage, integrating the dwelling with its surroundings.

**PLANNING POLICY**

NATIONAL

National Planning Policy Framework

LOCAL

Development Plan: -

Core Strategy 2010

- CP1 – Sustainable development
- CP3 - General Principles for development
- CP4 - Infrastructure Requirements
- CP6 - Managing Travel Demand
- CP7 – Biodiversity
- CP9 – Scale and location of development proposals
- CP11 – Proposals outside development limits (including countryside)

Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (Adopted Feb 2014)

*Cross-Cutting Policies*

- CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CC02 – Development Limits
- CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping
- CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction
- CC07 - Parking

*Topic-Based Policies*

- TB07 – Internal Space Standards

Guidance: -

- Borough Design Guide SPD 2012
- Sustainable Development and Construction SPD 2010
- Landscape Character Assessment SPG 2004
- Planning Advice Note: Infrastructure Impact Mitigation Contributions for New Development (Revised November 2010)

**PLANNING ISSUES**

**Principle of Development:**

1. The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the local Development Plan. 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.
2. There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. The NPPF stipulates that the environmental role is intended to protect and enhance our natural environment. However, the environmental role should not be undertaken in isolation, because they are mutually dependent. To achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system.
3. NPPF paragraph 17 states that planning should encourage the effective use of land by reusing previously development (brownfield land), provided it is not of high environmental value. Development should take into account the roles and character of different areas, recognising the intrinsic character of the countryside.

4. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Proposed development that accords with an up-to-date Local Plan should be approved and proposed development that conflicts should be refused, unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. The WBC Core Strategy and Managing Development Delivery LP constitute an up to date Development Plan, accord with the NPPF, and are therefore the starting point for decision making.
5. Development Limits are defined within the policies map associated with MDDL Policy CC02. The application site is located within the countryside where development plan policies seek to ensure the protection, and where possible the enhancement of the open and rural character of such areas.
6. New dwellings within the countryside would not normally be permitted and are only be acceptable in principle subject to an assessment of the potential impacts on the open and rural character of the countryside. Core Strategy Policy CP11 supports the principle of replacement buildings outside development limits only in cases where environmental improvement can be demonstrated. Development should not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building
7. Policy CP3 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. Policy CP6 states that development should be located where they are (or will be at the time of development) choices in the mode of transport available and which minimise the distance people need to travel.
8. For reasons outlined in the body of this report, the application proposals constitute inappropriate development within the countryside and are therefore in conflict with Development Plan policies. There are no other material considerations weighing in favour of the proposal. Therefore, planning permission should be refused.

#### **Planning History:**

9. Planning application 32663 (originally submitted 1989) sought the erection of a single storey detached dwelling on the application site. The application was refused by the Local Authority and later dismissed at appeal. In doing so, the planning inspector noted that, although the dwelling would have been partially screened by vegetation that was on the site at that time, it would *“be visible through the trees going south, and because it would be near to the road and to the lodge would have the character of ribbon type development, which would be intrusive and harmful to the surrounding area”*.
10. A similar planning application for a lodge style bungalow dwelling was submitted in 2001 under application reference F/2001/3221. The proposed dwelling was similarly sized to the current application, although positioned at right angles to the road and facing north. The application was refused and subsequently dismissed at appeal.
11. In commenting on the F/2001/3221 appeal scheme, the Inspector identifies that “the

development proposed is the erection of a single storey lodge house with single garage". Consideration was given to the (then) development plan policies, including Policy C2, which indicated that development may be permitted *"for the redevelopment of existing buildings ... to enhance the rural environment ... provided it is appropriate ... in the countryside"*.

12. The F/2001/3221 appeal scheme was clearly found to be unacceptable. The Inspector's report concluded that *"the tailored, open conditions associated with a residential use would make the dwelling far more conspicuous ... I consider that it would look incongruous in this rural setting and damaging to the countryside amenities that the development plan seeks to protect. In my judgement the development would not enhance the rural environment"*.
13. Although C2 no longer forms part of the Development Plan, current Core Strategy Policy CP11 is very similar. Development within countryside will not normally be permitted, unless certain criteria are met (see 'Principle of Development' above).
14. A more recent application, again for a lodge style bungalow dwelling, was submitted in under application reference F/2014/2081. The application was refused in November 2014 by the Head of Development Management under delegated authority, as the development was considered to urbanise the site, to the detriment of visual amenity, the character of the area, intrinsic character of the countryside and separate identity of neighbouring settlements. The Borough's adopted planning policies (as regards countryside) were considered sufficiently similar to those used to assess previous applications. The application was in conflict with adopted policy as regards the scale and location of development and was not considered to be an exception to Core Strategy Policy CP11 in terms of environmental improvement. The current application is highly similar (the only significant difference being that the roof ridge height is now shown 0.75m lower at 5.35m instead of 6.1m).

#### *Summary*

15. The planning policy context has not changed significantly since the two previous appeals were dismissed at appeal and a very similar recent planning application was refused under current development plan policies. The planning history is considered to weigh heavily against the current application. Were the current application to be approved, the decision would need to be justified against this history.

#### **Impact on the character of the area:**

16. As with the two appeal schemes outlined above, the current application is for a bungalow / lodge dwelling and for the demolition of the main (larger) garage block. However, it would be sited in a different location within the plot.
17. As with the recent F/2014/2081 scheme, rather than facing the neighbouring Beveridge Lodge at an angle the dwelling is centrally located within the plot, approximately 2m forward of the existing main garage block and fronting Heathlands Road head on. However, the roof ridge as currently proposed would be 0.75m lower at 5.35m, whereas it was previously shown at 6.1m. The dwelling would be 14m wide by 6.5m deep and with a tiled, pitched roof. A front porch and gable feature would extend slightly forward of the main front building line. The elevations indicate an attractive lodge style property.

*Assessment against Local Policy*

18. At the time of the F/2001/3221 appeal, the site was described by the Inspector as being “*overgrown*”. The same cannot be said of the site now, although there are significant clusters of trees that remain around the edges of the site, including specimens that are protected under TPO 442/1989. Just as before, the new dwelling would have a more conspicuous appearance than the existing main garage block. This is exacerbated by its being sited 2m further forward towards Heathlands Road than the existing garages. What little development there is along this stretch of the road tends to be set well back and concealed by thick foliage. By introducing a more prominent structure in close proximity to the main road, the proposal is at odds with the surrounding rural, sylvan character of the area. While it is accepted that the impact could be softened through landscaping, the residential use would formalise and urbanise the countryside setting which would in turn detract from the separate identity of neighbouring settlements.
19. The proposed development does not qualify under any of the exceptions to Policy CP11, including the stipulation that replacement buildings must bring about “*environmental improvements*”. Given the prominent countryside location of the site along Heathlands Road, the site is considered to have significant environmental value due to its role in maintaining the existing rural character. This is reflected in the area TPO designation pertaining to the application site. Commenting on the F/2001/3221 appeal scheme, the Inspector also expresses concerns that the residential use would result in “*tailored, open conditions*” along the road frontage. Whilst planning conditions could be imposed to secure frontage hedge planting, such an arrangement only be guaranteed for the short to medium term, save for trees that are protected by TPO.
20. The dwelling would be 5.35m to the roof ridge and the proposed height represents an inappropriate increase in scale and form relative to the existing garages. The reduction of 0.75m since the previous F/2014/2081 application (down from 6.1m), is not considered a significant improvement that would justify residential development in an unsustainable location or the harm caused to the countryside. The previous reason for refusal (which refers to an inappropriate increase in scale) therefore remains relevant to the current application. If the application were to be approved then this would need to be justified in relation to the site planning history, including the recent F/2014/2081 decision.

*Assessment against the NPPF*

21. Consideration has been given to NPPF paragraph 17, which encourages the reuse of brownfield land, provided this land is not of high environmental value. However, this must be balanced against other core principles within the NPPF. For example, also set out within paragraph 17 is a requirement for development to take account of the roles and character of different areas, including the intrinsic character of the countryside.
22. Although the NPPF (para 55) post-dates the Core Strategy, the local policy does not rule out residential development in the countryside per se and is not in conflict with the Framework. Core Strategy CP11 similarly sets out special circumstances where development may be acceptable within the countryside; hence there is a very significant overlap between national and local policies.

*Comparison to previous Wokingham Borough Council policies*

23. The 2001 appeal for a similar development on the site was dismissed by the Inspector as it was not found to be consistent with the council's then planning policies, including superseded policy WCC1 because the development was within a designated 'green gap'. Though the council does not currently have a 'green gap' policy, the successor policy (CP11) also seeks to ensure separation between settlements. In dismissing a recent appeal decision for two new dwellings (1 net additional) at Paddock Farm, Nine Mile Ride (F/2013/1950) the Inspector noted that *"although the name has changed, the aims of the settlement policy remain ... similar or the same"*. The Inspector goes on to say *"although one more house would cause little harm in itself [i.e. to settlement separation], this argument could be used for each new house so that the cumulative effect would seriously undermine the aims of consolidating development in accessible locations and reducing reliance on the private car for most journeys"*.

24. Therefore, for the purposes of assessing the current application, the council's adopted policies can be considered to be in accordance with those that were previously used to assess the 2001 appeal scheme. The dismissal of that appeal is therefore a significant material consideration for the current application.

#### *Area Tree Protection Order (TPO)*

25. It is noted that some (but not all) of the site's TPO trees have been removed since the "area" designation was first made. Had the principle of development otherwise been found to be acceptable, the Tree and Landscape officer has advised that replacement (like for like) planting of previously removed TPO trees should be sought by condition. However, the officer has also advised that an equivalent intensity of replacement planting would be incompatible with a residential use on the site, given its modest dimensions and reasonable expectation for open and sunny garden space from future residents.

#### *Summary*

26. Two previous appeal decisions for similar schemes have been dismissed and are notable material considerations for the current application. Current planning policies are equivalent to those previously used to appraise the site and the Inspector's previous analysis can be similarly applied.

27. The development would introduce a new dwelling in a prominent, unsustainable countryside location. While it is accepted that the existing main garage block may be unattractive, it does not follow that its substitution with a dwelling would bring about an environmental "improvement", since any such development should also be in keeping with the council's wider planning policies and aspirations, which seek to prevent urbanisation within the countryside and to protect the identity of neighbouring settlements. The brownfield status of the land and current unattractive appearance are not therefore overriding factors weighing in favour of the application proposal.

#### **Impact on Neighbours:**

28. The dwelling would be relatively well separated from its neighbours and would not result in any material loss of light, overlooking or overbearing impact.

#### **Amenity Space:**

29. Although no detailed calculations have been provided, the development appears to meet the council's internal space standards for a 2 bedroom/4 person dwelling.
30. Superficially, an adequate area of private garden amenity space is provided (in excess of the 11m garden length recommended within the Borough Design Guide). However, the extent to which the space would be 'usable' is questionable given the site layout and in view of the Tree Officer's stipulation that a significant number of replacement trees would be required in line with the area TPO.

#### **Highway Issues:**

31. The existing site access would be recreated further to the south. An acceptable quantum of parking has been provided. The Highways Officer raises no technical objection, subject to conditions.
32. However, the Highways Officer considers that site not to be in a sustainable location due to the relative distance to services and amenities, lack of a pedestrian route along Heathlands Road and reliance on the private car for journeys.

#### *Unsustainable location*

33. A nearby planning application for a new dwelling at Jalens, Nine Mile Ride was dismissed at appeal (application F/2013/0685, appeal reference APP/X0360/A/13/2203660). In dismissing the appeal, the Inspector noted that the application site was at the end of a long line of residential development, and though it was covered in hard standing and used for the parking of a number of vehicles, was also adjacent to undeveloped woodland. In dismissing the appeal the Inspector considered the site to be inappropriate due to there not being any local services within a comfortable walking distance of the site, concluding that the site "*would be isolated and therefore would not constitute sustainable development*".
34. The application site is within close proximity to the 'Jalens' appeal site. If anything, the application site constitutes an even more isolated location due to the absence of any pedestrian route along Heathlands Road. The application is for a new, rather than replacement dwelling and is therefore an unsustainable form of development.

#### **Ecology Issues:**

35. The Ecology Officer is satisfied that the ecology survey demonstrates that the development is unlikely to cause harm to the local reptile population. However, it is recommended that caution be exercised in the event that reptiles are found, so that appropriate mitigation can be put in place.

#### **Sustainability:**

36. MDD Policy CC04 states that planning permission will only be granted for proposals that seek to deliver high quality sustainably design and constructed developments. New homes should seek to achieve the requirements of the full Code of Sustainable Homes Level 4 and meet internal potable water consumption targets of 105 litres or less per person per day. Waste management and on site recycling should also be addressed in all development.
37. A code for sustainable homes pre-assessment report has been undertaken since the

refusal of the previous F/2014/2081 application and demonstrates that the development is capable of achieving the criteria for Level 4. The previous reason for refusal in relation to sustainability has therefore been overcome and is not included in the recommended decision. Had the development been otherwise acceptable, a condition would have been recommended to require the Level 4 to be achieved.

**Section 106 contributions**

38. In accordance with Core Strategy policy CP4 new development is expected to make arrangements for the improvement or provision of infrastructure, services, community and other facilities.

The Borough has adopted a Planning Advice Note on Infrastructure Impact Mitigation - Contributions for New Development (PAN)

The catchment Hatch Ride Primary school is currently over-subscribed and the development thus needs to contribute towards additional mainstream primary education in the area. The catchment Edgbarrow (Bracknell) school currently has surplus capacity and there is thus no need for the development to contribute towards the provision of additional mainstream secondary education in the area.

The highway authority has identified the need for local highway and public transport improvements to accommodate increased traffic in the area.

In accordance with the PAN the development would necessitate contributions as follows:

Education	£4,142.00
Leisure, recreation & sports facilities	£2,893.94
Country parks, biodiversity & countryside access	£578.00
Libraries	£229.27
Highways	£2,600.00
Thames Basin Heathlands SPA	£2,542.20
Monitoring fee	£200.00
Legal costs (minimum)	£1,000.00
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>£14,185.41</b>

**NOTES:**

No contributions sought for mainstream secondary school places; the catchment school currently having capacity.

39. Although the applicant has indicated a willingness to enter into a section 106 agreement, these contributions have not been pursued due to the scheme being considered unacceptable. On this basis, a further reason for refusal is necessary.

**CONCLUSION**

40. The development would introduce a new dwelling in a prominent, unsustainable countryside location. The application scheme does not constitute an exception to Core Strategy Policy CP11 as it would not bring about environmental improvement

that is consistent with the council's broader policy aspirations to prevent urbanisation of the countryside, protect the separate identity of neighbouring settlements and avoid the siting of new dwellings in isolated, car-dependant locations. The landscape officer has advised that necessary replacement planting of TPO trees is potentially inconsistent with future occupiers' reasonable expectation for an open, sunny garden. The development would urbanise the site, contrary to countryside policies and so a neater, tidier appearance does not constitute environmental improvement in this instance.

41. Two previous planning applications (32663 and F/2001/3221) were appraised under a similar countryside policy framework and were dismissed at appeal in each case. A very similar application was refused in 2014 under current development plan policies. It is not considered that the proposed 0.75m reduction in the roof ridge height would overcome the F/2014/2081 reason for refusal. If the application were to be approved then this would need to be justified in relation to the site planning history, including the recent F/2014/2081 decision.

42. As such it is recommended that planning permission is refused.

<b>CONTACT DETAILS</b>		
<b>Service</b>	<b>Telephone</b>	<b>Email</b>
Development Management and Regulatory Services	0118 974 6428 / 6429	development.control@wokingham.gov.uk