

# Agenda Item 47.

<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/2015/0430 (151781)	29 weeks	Finchampstead	Finchampstead North	Cllr Stanton

<b>Applicant</b>	Mr and Mrs Lesner		
<b>Location</b>	Pine Platt Heath Ride, Finchampstead	<b>Postcode</b>	RG40 3QJ
<b>Proposal</b>	Proposed erection of 5 bedroom dwelling with associated car parking and landscaping following the demolition of existing dwelling		
<b>Type</b>	Householder		
<b>PS Category</b>	13		
<b>Officer</b>	James McCabe		

<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Planning Committee on 16 <sup>th</sup> September 2015
<b>REPORT PREPARED BY</b>	Head of Development Management and Regulatory Services

## SUMMARY

The proposal seeks planning permission for the erection of a new detached 5 bedroom dwelling following the demolition of the existing bungalow.

The applications site is located within settlement limits on the edge of the countryside where it sits within a linear strip of residential development along the unmade road. The site benefits from substantial private rear amenity space and on-site parking within the forecourt with an additional detached garage to the rear which has, until recently, been overrun with vegetation.

The report concludes that despite objections regarding the design, scale and character impact of the dwelling; loss of light, overlooking and overbearing impact to neighbours at Rosslea and Heath Cottage; and concerns with drainage, the scheme would not have significant adverse impacts to the extent it should be refused. The style of the dwelling would not be out of keeping with the character of the street, which is highly varied in nature. A number of conditions are recommended in order to secure measures to protect the verdant character of the area.

## PLANNING STATUS

- CAA
- Farnborough Aerodrome consultation zone
- Modest development location (officer note: the rear most 13 metres of the 57 metre plot is designated countryside)
- South East Water Consultation Area
- Special Protection Area – 5 and 7km
- TPOs (1 existing at front of site; 2 more removed before TPOs served).
- Wind Turbine Safeguarding Zone

## RECOMMENDATION

That the committee authorise the GRANT of PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three

years from the date of this permission

2. This permission is in respect of the revised application plans and drawings numbered 2932-01B, 2932-02B, 2932-03D, 2932-04E, 2932-05B, 2932-06C received by the local planning authority on various dates via email.
3. Before the development hereby permitted is commenced, samples and details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the building/s shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the so-approved details.
4. No part of any building(s) hereby permitted shall be occupied or used until the vehicle parking space has been provided in accordance with the approved plans. The vehicle parking space shall be permanently maintained and remain available for the parking of vehicles at all times.
5. Those windows shown on the approved drawings as having obscured glazing in part or full shall be so-fitted and shall be permanently so-retained, and shall be non-opening unless the parts of the window which can be opened are more than 1.7 metres above the finished floor level of the room in which the window is installed.
6. Before the development hereby permitted is commenced details of all boundary treatment(s) shall first be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented prior to the first occupation of the development or phased as agreed in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall be maintained in the approved form for so long as the development remains on the site.
7. Vegetation removal and demolition of any buildings on site shall be conducted outside the bird breeding season, March to August inclusive, or under the supervision and control of an ecologist if in March to August inclusive.
8. No trees, shrubs or hedges within the site which are shown as being retained on the approved plans shall be felled, uprooted wilfully damaged or destroyed, cut back in any way or removed without previous written consent of the local planning authority; any trees, shrubs or hedges removed without consent or dying or being severely damaged or becoming seriously diseased within 5 years from the completion of the development hereby permitted shall be replaced with trees, shrubs or hedge plants of similar size and species unless the local planning authority gives written consent to any variation.
9. Prior to the commencement of the development there shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority a scheme of landscaping, which shall specify species, planting sizes, spacing and numbers of trees/shrubs to be planted, and any existing trees or shrubs to be retained. Replacement tree planting along the site frontage should be included in the scheme and any planting within the root protection area (RPA) of the TPO tree shall be bare rooted and notch planted to reduce disturbance to tree roots in the RPA.

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 5 years from the date of the planting (or within a period of 5 years of the occupation of the buildings in the case of retained trees and shrubs) 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.

10. a) No development or other operation shall commence on site until an updated Arboricultural Method Statement and Scheme of Works (to reflect the changes in the driveway layout as detailed on plan 2932-06B) which provides for the retention and protection of trees, shrubs and hedges growing on or adjacent to the site in accordance with BS5837: 2012 has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. No development or other operations shall take place except in complete accordance with the details as so-approved (hereinafter referred to as the Approved Scheme).

b) No operations shall commence on site in connection with development hereby approved (including any tree felling, tree pruning, demolition works, soil moving, temporary access construction and or widening or any other operation involving use of motorised vehicles or construction machinery) until the tree protection works required by the Approved Scheme are in place on site.

c) No excavations for services, storage of materials or machinery, parking of vehicles, deposit or excavation of soil or rubble, lighting of fires or disposal of liquids shall take place within an area designated as being fenced off or otherwise protected in the Approved Scheme.

d) The fencing or other works which are part of the Approved Scheme shall not be moved or removed, temporarily or otherwise, until all works including external works have been completed and all equipment, machinery and surplus materials removed from the site, unless the prior approval in writing of the local planning authority has first been sought and obtained.

11. No development shall take place until full details of the Drainage System(s) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These shall include:

- Confirmation of the design standard of the proposed soakaway(s);
- Results of intrusive ground investigations demonstrating the depth of the seasonally high groundwater table and infiltration rates determined in accordance with BRE Digest 365;
- Full calculations demonstrating the performance of the proposed soakaway(s);
- Full details of all components of the proposed drainage system including dimensions, locations, gradients, invert and cover levels and drawings as appropriate;
- Full details of the maintenance arrangements for the development covering every aspect of the proposed drainage system;
- Full details of proposed levels across the site demonstrating the overland flood flow route through the site will not be impacted; and
- Confirmation that the finished floor levels will be constructed in accordance with the levels proposed in drawing 2932-06C.

12. Notwithstanding the provisions of Classes A, B, C, D, E, F and G of Part 1 of the Second Schedule 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 buildings, enlargement or alterations permitted shall be carried out without the express permission in writing of the local planning authority.

Reasons:

1. *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. *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. *To ensure that the external appearance of the building is satisfactory.  
Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3*
4. *To ensure adequate on-site parking provision in the interests of highway safety, convenience and amenity. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.*
5. *To safeguard the residential amenities of neighbouring properties.  
Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3*
6. *In the interests of amenity and highway safety.  
Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 and CP6*
7. *To ensure that the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended is complied with and breeding birds, their nests and eggs are not harmed or damaged.*
8. *To secure the protection throughout the time that development is being carried out, of trees, shrubs and hedges growing within the site which are of amenity value to the area. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21.*
9. *To ensure adequate planting in the interests of visual amenity as well as to ensure the RPA of the TPO tree is not adversely affected. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21.*
10. *To secure the protection throughout the time that the development is being carried out of trees shrubs or hedges growing within or adjacent to the site which are of amenity value to the area, and to allow for verification by the local planning authority that the necessary measures are in place before development and other works commence Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21*
11. *In order to ensure satisfactory provision is made for foul and storm water drainage, to prevent the increased risk of flooding, and to protect water quality.  
Relevant policy: NPPF Section 10 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change,*

*Flooding and Coastal Change), Technical Guidance on the NPPF (Flood Risk), Core Strategy policy CP1 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC09 and CC10*

12. *To protect the character of the area, protect the transition from the built up area to the adjacent Countryside and to safeguard neighbouring amenities.*

*Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 and CP11, and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC02 and TB21*

*Informatives:*

Should any bats or evidence of bats 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.

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:

- extending the determination period of the application to allow for additional drainage information and arboricultural work to be submitted in order for the application to be taken to planning committee;

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.

#### **PLANNING HISTORY**

- 531/56 – Outline application for residential development – Refused (23.07.1956)
- O/85/59 – Outline application for residential development – Refused (19.04.1959)
- O/194/63 – dwelling – Conditional approval (05.09.1963)
- 183/63 – bungalow – Conditional approval (02.01.1964)

#### **SUMMARY INFORMATION**

##### **For Residential**

Site Area	0.085 hectares
Existing bedrooms	2
Proposed bedrooms	5 (plus habitable roof space)
Existing parking spaces	1 garage and at least 2 drive spaces
Proposed parking spaces	4

#### **CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

Local Member:

Listing request:

1. Concerns about proposed height of the build in relation to adjacent dwellings and that a three storey dwelling would be out of keeping with the

character of the area.

2. Concerns with drainage of the site
3. Out of keeping with countryside setting (officer note: the dwelling itself is located wholly within the settlement boundary)
4. Concerns with vegetation loss at the site and protected trees.

Finchampstead Parish Council: Objections to the bulk, size and massing of the proposal as well as lack of heights included, and lack of drainage and ecological information. (Further comments to additional plans and Information are forthcoming.)

Biodiversity: No objection subject to condition to protect breeding birds and informative should evidence of bats be found during development.

Landscape & Trees: No objection subject to conditions

Highways: No objection subject to condition

Environmental Health: No comment

Thames Water  
Surface Water Drainage - With regard to surface water drainage it is the responsibility of a developer to make proper provision for drainage to ground, water courses or a suitable sewer. In respect of surface water it is recommended that the applicant should ensure that storm flows are attenuated or regulated into the receiving public network through on or off site storage. When it is proposed to connect to a combined public sewer, the site drainage should be separate and combined at the final manhole nearest the boundary. Connections are not permitted for the removal of groundwater. Where the developer proposes to discharge to a public sewer, prior approval from Thames Water Developer Services will be required. They can be contacted on 0800 009 3921. Reason - to ensure that the surface water discharge from the site shall not be detrimental to the existing sewerage system.

Thames Water would advise that with regard to sewerage infrastructure capacity, we would not have any objection to the above planning application.

Water Comments:

With regard to water supply, this comes within the area covered by the South East Water Company. For your information the address to write to is - South East Water Company, 3 Church Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex. RH16 3NY. Tel: 01444-448200

## REPRESENTATIONS

Objections received from 4 residents in response to initial submitted plans raising following issues (see brackets for where this has been addressed in the report)

- Concerns with flooding relating to: the high water table; slow draining soil composition; levels of the road mean site would drain into adjacent properties; additional drainage from a larger house will add to historical flooding of neighbouring sites; impact on natural streams along the road; incorrect assertion that a connection will be made to a mains sewer where none exists (Paragraphs 22-27)
- Description of current materials is inaccurate (Officer note: existing character assessed on site visit).
- Lack of ecological surveys given previous occupant developed the garden as a habit and much vegetation has been subsequently cleared. Asserted that newts have been present in the garden.(Paragraph 30)
- Urbanising and harmful character impact as a result of vegetation loss and replacement with panel fencing. (Paragraph 12, 14)
- Inconsistencies with plans. (Officer note: rectified by revisions to plans)
- Incorrect name given to neighbouring property (Officer note: the footprint of the dwelling shown appears consistent with that observed on site visit so this anomaly, presumably as a result of slightly old OS maps, is not an issue)
- Objection to size and bulk of the dwelling in the context of the plot and whose block like nature out of keeping with adjacent properties. Dwelling would be a 6 bedroom house in place of a 2 bedroom bungalow which represents excessive expansion.
- Modern nature of development out of keeping with character of the area (Paragraphs 6, 9, 10)
- Incorrect labelling of private drive to west of site as access road (Officer note: no access to this is proposed and any right of way issues would not be a planning concern)
- Concern with tree and vegetation felling which has altered the character of the site and landscaping details very vague (Paragraphs 12, 14)
- Narrow gap to side boundary (east) with access drive to Rosslea leading to concerns over encroachment of fencing (Paragraphs 8, 14)
- Loss of light and overbearing concerns to amenity space and windows of adjacent properties. (Paragraphs 15-19)
- Overlooking to neighbouring dwellings by introduction of second storey (Paragraphs 15-19)
- Light pollution (Paragraph 10)
- Proposal contrary to policy CC02 as the scale does not respect the transition from the countryside to the built up area. (Paragraph 13)
- Concerns over current access road to Rusticott being used by Pine Platt which would have health and safety concerns. (Paragraph 31)
- Proposal in front of the building line. (Paragraph 5, 9)
- Concerns with asbestos and hazardous materials during demolition (Paragraph 32)
- Danger of construction traffic on narrow lane. (Paragraphs 31 )

## PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework

- Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policies: CC01, CC02, CC03, CC04, CC05, CC06, CC07, CC09, CC10, TB07, TB21 & TB23
- Wokingham Borough Local Development Framework – Core Strategy CP1, CP3, CP4, CP5, CP6, CP7, CP8, CP9
- SPD Borough Design Guide.

## **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. 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.
2. The site is located within a minor development location 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.

### Description of development

3. The replacement dwelling proposes a two storey property with additional habitable loft space to have a total height of 8.4 metres at a width of 12.3 metres. The dwelling will have a depth of 11.5 metres with an additional 3.5 metre single storey element to the rear which comprises a width of 6.5 metres and a two storey front gable is also proposed which will project 2 metres. Additional associated changes to the front amenity space and parking layout are proposed.

### Impact on the character of the area

4. The application site is located within Heath Ride which is an unmade residential road with a distinct verdant character. There exists a wide variety in the dwellings within Heath Ride which comprise bungalows, chalet bungalows, and two storey dwellings of varying architectural styles and built forms but which are predominantly detached in nature. There are some agricultural type buildings/businesses located off Heath Ride, but the area is nevertheless predominantly residential in character. A thin strip of the road along its northern side is within development limits, linking the area to the residential developments to the north and northwest. The southern section of the road, as well as its eastern extent, comprises designated countryside.
5. There exists a fairly consistent front building line to the dwellings along the street, with the dwellings largely set back from the road with significant screening. The building line is therefore largely obscured from long views by virtue of this verdant character. It is noted that a number of detached garages have been erected along the road to the front of properties which further detract from the reading of a consistent, hard building line.

6. The site itself comprises a deep linear plot of a slightly larger, though similar, width to the adjacent plots. Currently a bungalow occupies the site with a detached garage set behind the dwelling. The bungalow is generally in a state of disrepair with a run down appearance and the proposal seeks to demolish the existing dwelling to be replaced with a two storey dwelling with additional habitable roof space. This will comprise a full two storey façade with higher eaves than the two adjacent dwellings. While it is noted that these adjacent dwellings do have roof designs with lower eaves that include the second storey as window features within the roof form, there are examples of conventional two storey dwellings to the south-east of the site (Victoria House and Crimble). Given the wide variety in architectural styles there is not considered to be an established, consistent design within the streetscene as a whole that contributes a single distinct character to the street. Therefore, given this design variation within the street it is not considered that the new building form would be significantly detrimental in character terms.
7. This proposed height of the dwelling is to be slightly taller (200mm) than the immediate neighbours and represents an increase of 70mm from the original proposal which is a result of an increase to the finished floor levels in order to demonstrate that the said floor levels are adequate to mitigate for the surface water flood depths anticipated in the area. Such floor levels are now considered adequate (as discussed below) and the modest increase in height, though resulting in a taller building than the adjacent neighbours, is not considered to be of significant difference so as to be detrimental to the character of the area. As previously discussed, there are a variety of housing types of varying heights and sizes along the street scene, and the uneven ridgeline that would result in this section of the street would not be out of keeping with the wider streetscene. An objection is noted relating to the fact the streetscene elevation does not factor in the gradient between the adjacent dwellings and therefore makes the appeared height difference appear more sympathetic. As viewed on site, it is not considered that there is any significant change in levels and the measurements of 8.4 metres in height of the proposed compared to 8.2 and 8.1 of the adjacent neighbours, are to be taken as accurate.
8. It has additionally been noted by local residents that the proposed dwelling would have excessive width in comparison to the plot size and the adjacent dwellings. These comments are noted, however, as discussed above, there is a varied character to the dwellings within the wider streetscene which includes differences in the widths of dwellings within their plot. Notwithstanding this variety, in the context of the application dwelling's immediate neighbours, the proposed would have comparable separation distances to its site boundaries to the two adjacent properties. The width of the dwelling would therefore not be significantly different from these two adjacent properties. It is noted that the proposal would conform with the Borough Design Guide in that a 1 metre gap to the east side boundary will be retained with a 1.5 metre gap to the west side boundary which is considered sufficient to negate any harmful terracing effect. Considering all these points, it is deemed that the width of the dwelling would not be harmful within the context of the wider streetscene nor the context of its immediate neighbours.
9. The proposal includes a two storey front gable projection. Front gables are not an uncommon feature within the streetscene, and indeed are a feature of the two

adjacent properties, though with hipped roof designs, and a large two storey gable element is also seen at Forresters to the south-east of the site on the opposite side of the road. The gable element is not considered to project beyond an established building line and, in design terms, its glazed nature is not considered to be out of keeping with an established character given the abovementioned variety in the design within the streetscene.

10. It is noted that a letter of objection has been received from a neighbour citing that there is no street lighting along the road and that the glass fronted gable would contribute to light pollution. Whilst the proposal as a whole would introduce additional fenestration to the area above the existing, given the residential nature of the street it is not considered that the amount of windows proposed would lead to a level of light that would not be reasonably expected in a residential street. Further, there is a high level of vegetation cover on the opposite side of the road which serves to shield the house from views across the open countryside. As such it is not considered that a harmful urbanising effect will result to the adjacent countryside setting. Therefore, due to wide variety in the design of the buildings within Heath Ride and the proposed front gable is not considered to raise any concerns as regards character.
11. The proposed dwelling is to be constructed of brick with the gabled element to be rendered. The majority of houses along the street are constructed of red brick with some wood detailing and hanging tiles which are mainly of similar colours. It is not stated in the submitted plans what colour the rendering will be. It is deemed prudent to request by condition (Condition 3) that samples of the materials are submitted to the local planning authority prior to development taking place, in order for a fuller assessment to be made as to the potential impact on character. It is however noted that, again due to the variety within the streetscene, a contrasting colour is not likely to be harmful.
12. Despite the above arguments, it remains that the area has a distinct verdant character which has been somewhat undermined at the application site by vegetation removal. This has included two trees to the front. It would be expected that a degree of landscaping be undertaken in order to re-establish the sylvan character of the site, for which it is reasonable to attach an appropriate condition in order for a scheme of landscaping works to be submitted for approval prior to development. With an appropriate scheme of landscaping in place, the verdant character of the area will be maintained and would also serve to minimise any visual impact of the development.
13. The dwelling itself is located within a 'modest development location' with the settlement boundary comprising a linear strip which covers the residential properties, and much of their gardens, along the northern edge of Heath Ride. Therefore, though the dwelling is located within defined settlement boundaries, areas of countryside surround the site. In accordance with policy CC02 of the MDD proposals should respect the transition between the built up area and the countryside. The relationship of the proposed dwelling to the countryside surroundings is not considered to be appreciably different from that of neighbouring properties which are themselves two storey dwellings. The submitted street scene elevation shows that, while the proposed will have a modest difference in height to the neighbouring dwellings, its scale is to be similar to the existing. Therefore, the proposed is not considered to detract from

an already established linear residential character on the settlement boundary. It is further noted that to the rear of the application site there is situated a dwelling which, while itself located within designated countryside, serves to soften the transition from countryside to built up area to a greater extent than elsewhere along the road where properties back directly onto open rural land. As such the proposal is not considered to be contrary to CC02. Notwithstanding these points, it is considered reasonable to condition the removal of permitted development rights in order that the council has control over any future development at the site which may harm this transition and could lead to excessive development on the countryside edge.

14. A neighbour letter of objection has been received highlighting that it is their understanding that panelled fences will be used to replace the vegetation that previously acted as the boundary treatment along the side and rear boundaries of the rear amenity space of the application property. The neighbour contends that this will have a detrimental impact on the character of the area. It should be noted that, from a planning point of view, there are no controls on the removal of vegetation given that the area is not a conservation area. Additionally, the erection of fencing is, in most cases, permitted development and as such planning permission would not necessarily be required to erect such fencing. This fencing would largely be to the rear and would not be visible from public viewpoints. That said, it is considered that the previously existing vegetation contributed to the verdant character of the area; it is therefore considered reasonable to condition that details of boundary treatments be provided (in addition to a landscaping condition) to allow the council to assess more detailed plans of the proposed boundary which should also allay concerns regarding the encroachment of fencing.

#### Impact on neighbouring amenity

15. The dwelling is situated between two residential dwellings both of two storeys. The neighbour to the east, Heath Cottage, is separated by a private access road to Rusticott to the rear. This means there is a separation distance of some 5.5 metres from Heath Cottage to the proposed dwelling. Two ground floor side windows exist in elevation facing the proposed dwelling which serve a kitchen diner and a study and which are both served by other windows to the rear and front respectively. Notwithstanding the fact there are other windows serving these rooms, whilst a kitchen diner is considered to be a habitable room, a study is not and therefore there would be no harmful loss of light to this room, and indeed the kitchen. It has also been noted in letters of objection that loss of light will be experienced to the upstairs bathroom of Heath Cottage which is served by flank windows. These windows do not serve habitable rooms and consequently it is considered that there would be no significantly harmful loss of light.
16. As regards loss of light to the rear amenity space of the neighbouring dwellings, it is noted that the increased height and bulk of the proposed dwelling would block a degree of sunlight from the south. However, the street has a verdant character with many mature trees which currently act as barriers to light and, as has been pointed out by objectors, a number of previously existing trees/vegetation (including two trees which had pending TPOs) have been removed which previously would have blocked light in a similar vein to the proposed two storey dwelling. It is not considered that such concerns are significant enough to justify

a reason for refusal.

17. The neighbouring dwelling on the opposite side, Rosslea, has a ground floor side window which serves a utility room and as this is not a habitable room no harm is considered to result with regards loss of light or overbearing. Additionally, the proposed dwelling would not project significantly beyond the rear elevation of its neighbouring dwellings – the revised plans detail that this has in fact been brought further forward than originally proposed lessening any rearward projection – and therefore there would be no significant harm regarding overbearing and loss of light to any rooms to the rear of these dwellings.
18. A number of objections have been raised regarding loss of privacy, not only as a result of the added storey, but also due to vegetation clearance at the site. It is noted that the site visit confirmed that a significant degree of vegetation clearance has been undertaken at the site which has opened up the boundaries of the site to allow views into the curtilage of adjacent properties. As noted above there are no restrictions on vegetation removal. It is stated in the application forms that a close boarded fence will be erected along the boundaries which would be a departure from the previously naturally screened site. For this reason a boundary condition (Condition 6) is recommended in order to allow for the character of the site to be maintained with appropriate boundary treatment, and a landscaping condition (Condition 9) will also ensure that this particular objection is overcome.
19. It is however acknowledged that the added storey to the dwelling, with 3 first floor rear windows, would lead to a perceived increase in overlooking above any boundary treatment that may exist. While this is noted, it is considered that the views would be of an oblique nature and that overlooking of this type is not uncommon in a residential street such as this and is indeed evident between the two storey dwellings to the west and east into the amenity space of the applicant dwelling. For this reason, it is not considered that there would be a harmful loss of privacy to the extent permission should be refused on these grounds.

#### Trees and landscape

20. As discussed above, the area has a distinct verdant character which has been undermined by vegetation removal, including that of a Scots Pine and an Oak tree along the plot frontage. These trees had been identified for a TPO but had been removed prior to this being served. Another Scots Pine exists in the south east corner of the site and which remained intact at the time that the TPO was being served and therefore has protected status. The Council's Trees and Landscape team have requested that an Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) is submitted in order to assess the potential impact that the proposed new parking and access arrangements to the front of the property would have on this protected tree.
21. The submitted AMS proposed a no dig solution but did not clearly show what the existing and proposed levels would be in order for the local planning authority to confidently assess whether or not the no dig solution would be appropriate to mitigate harm to the TPO. Further information was requested to clarify before and after levels for the driveway, particularly in the root protection area (RPA) of the TPO. Alternatively, the local planning authority suggested that the proposed

access be moved away from the root protection area.

22. A revised plan (number 2932-06C) has subsequently been submitted detailing the revised position of the driveway outside of the RPA with planting proposed within the RPA area. This is now considered satisfactory subject to the condition that the shrubs be bare rooted and notch planted to reduce disturbance to tree roots in the RPA and it has also been advised that the number of shrubs planted in this area be reduced by half in order to minimise the impact to the roots of the protected tree (Condition 9). A full landscaping plan is to be requested by condition (Condition 9) which should take this into account. Additionally, it is suggested that the landscaping plan provides provision for new tree planting on the road frontage to replace the two trees recently felled and additional planting between Pine Platt and Rosslea, to the left of the proposed entrance, is advisable as this will enhance the frontage made barren by recent removal. Any new planting will adapt to the new driveway as it matures.
23. Finally, the AMS has not been updated to reflect the change in the plans and therefore, given that a pre-commencement condition requesting further landscaping information will be attached to any permission granted, it is considered prudent to condition that an updated AMS be submitted for approval prior to development.

Drainage and flooding:

24. The application site is less than 1 hectare and wholly situated within Flood Zone 1 which therefore means that a full Flood Risk Assessment is not required. Notwithstanding this fact, policy CC10 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan requires that all development proposals ensure that surface water arising from the proposed development is managed in a sustainable manner.
25. The Environment Agency's Risk of Flooding from Surface Water map indicates that some areas of the site have a low (between 1 in 1000 and 1 in 100 annual probability) and medium (between 1 in 100 and 1 in 30 annual probability) risk of surface water flooding.
26. The submitted drainage information/plans demonstrate that a Surface Water Drainage Strategy has been provided for the proposed development, which proposes to discharge surface water to ground via soakaways. It has been commented by the Council's drainage consultants that it must be demonstrated that the groundwater table is at a depth of at least 1.0m below the base of the proposed soakaways. It is further noted that the results of groundwater monitoring demonstrating seasonal variations in the groundwater levels at the application site must be submitted and additionally that soakaways must not be sited within 5.0m of any existing or proposed building.
27. The most recent finished floor level, as proposed in drawing 2932-06C, is 300mm above the adjacent ground level and therefore, demonstrates that the proposed building will be above the depth of the surface water associated with the overland flow path in the western area of the site. On the basis of the submitted information, it has been recommended that sufficient detail has been submitted in the planning application to satisfactorily determine that the proposed development will not exacerbate flood risk over its lifetime accounting for the

effects of climate change. It is recommended that the condition detailed above (number 11) be attached to any permission in order to further evidence that the proposal would not have a harmful drainage impact.

28. It is noted that concerns have been raised by neighbours with regards to foul sewage disposal given that the road is not connected to a mains sewer. This is not a planning issue and concerns in this regard would be addressed through a building regulations application.

29. Thames Water have been consulted on this application (full comments included above) and have advised that with regard to sewerage infrastructure capacity, they would not have any objection to the planning application.

### Biodiversity

30. A bat survey has been submitted as part of the application which has been reviewed by the Council's biodiversity officer who is satisfied that bats are unlikely to be harmed as a result of the demolition of the existing bungalow. As regards great crested newts, the nearest three ponds are at approximately 180m, 200m, and 450m from the application site. Of these, the first and third nearest have reasonable habitat connectivity to the application site and the second appears to have a moderate dispersal barrier. The Council's biodiversity officer does not believe that any of these three ponds have been surveyed for great crested newts but the Crowthorne area of Wokingham Borough does not appear to have had any successful surveys for this species where surveys have been undertaken. Even if it were assumed that all three ponds have great crested newt presence, a case could be made that their relative remoteness greatly reduces the risk to any local population. Therefore, given the current level of knowledge regarding great crested newt distribution (from surveys conducted by WBC, BRAG and independent ecological consultants), it is advised that it would be unreasonable to impose this condition or request further survey work from the developer (given the scale of the development).

### Highways

31. The dwelling currently has access to Heath Ride at the front of the plot. The access arrangement is to be slightly altered, however, the council's highways officer has no objection to this. There are to be 4 car parking spaces provided within the plot (including 1 integral garage space) which is considered more than adequate for the proposed size of the dwelling. Concerns have been raised about the potential for a side access way to be added to the boundary of the plot to the access road to Rusticott. The current plans indicate no such access is detailed on the submitted plans and therefore speculation regarding such access cannot form part of the current planning consideration. It is also noted that a condition of any approval would be a submission of boundary treatments given that this is considered to be important to the character of the plot. No objection to construction traffic using the road has been raised by the Highways Officer.

### Environmental/contamination Issues

32. The site is not identified as being in an area of contaminated land. While

concerns have been raised by neighbours with regards to asbestos and other potentially hazardous materials, Environmental Health have been consulted on the application and have indicated that they would have no concerns from a health and safety point of view. As such, it is considered that there would be no significant concerns in this regard.

#### Community Infrastructure Levy

33. The Council adopted its Community Infrastructure Levy charging schedule on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2015. As the proposal is for the erection of a replacement dwelling it would be liable to the council's Community Infrastructure Levy charging schedule (£365 per square metre) for the net increase in floor space, which, as per the submitted CIL form is to be 326.6 square metres. As a self-build scheme relief from the CIL charge can be sought and the applicant has submitted the self-build exemption claim forms to this effect.

#### **CONCLUSION**

It is considered that, subject to conditions, the proposal would not lead to an unacceptable impact on the character of the area and that it accords with development plan policies. The application is therefore recommended for conditional approval.

#### **CONTACT DETAILS**

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