

Application Number	Expiry Date	Parish	Ward
213380	16/02/2022	Swallowfield	Swallowfield

Applicant	Woodridge Developments, 11 Arkwright Road Reading RG2 0LU
Site Address	Balcombe Nurseries, Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield RG7 1PY
Proposal	Full application for the erection of 5 no. detached dwellings, two with detached garages and three with internal garages and associated landscaping works including one balancing pond, 2 no. accesses with entrance gates and 1.2m post and rail fencing
Type	Full
Officer	Senjuti Manna
Reason for determination by committee	Major application (site area > 1 hectare)

FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Planning Committee on Wednesday, 9 February 2022
REPORT PREPARED BY	Assistant Director – Place

<p>SUMMARY</p> <p>The application proposes the erection of five detached dwellings on the site with two access roads, associated landscaping and an ecological enhancement area. This is an amended scheme to the extant permission 193356 – the proposed amendments are minor in terms of increase in built development within the site.</p> <p>The current scheme differs from the extant permission in terms of site area – it now includes additional land with a redundant electric sub station which is proposed to be demolished and the built development will be exchanged for a new detached garage. Also, all 5 dwellings now propose additional habitable rooms in the loftspace – with the additional rooms for plot 1 already approved by a s.73 application. The proposal does not include any changes to the approved building footprint and ridge heights. Whilst the additional habitable space will result in increased eaves height, it would not significantly alter the scheme that has already been approved.</p> <p>A previous appeal inspector has already confirmed that small scale increase in built development within this site is acceptable since the dwellings will be set significantly back from the street frontage. There will be large areas of landscaping and an ecological enhancement area on the site and this remains unchanged from the extant permission. The proposed dwellings would have ample indoor and outdoor space, providing a satisfactory living environment for the future occupiers. Whilst a neighbour has objected to the proposal on loss of privacy grounds, it is considered that the proposed dwellings will maintain acceptable separation and no harmful impact is anticipated. Objections have been received from the Parish Council on overdevelopment grounds. However, since the proposal will not result in additional dwelling footprint and higher ridge height, additional habitable rooms in the loft space are considered acceptable in this instance.</p> <p>There are no objections to the proposal with regard to highway safety; parking; trees; drainage & flooding; and ecology. The development is considered acceptable in all other aspects subject to the recommended conditions and a legal agreement securing a commuted sum for affordable housing (£214,938.56); an index linked Strategic Access and Management Monitoring payment to offset the impact on the Thames Basins Heaths</p>
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Special Protection Area and an Ecological Enhancement Management Plan. The application is accordingly recommended for approval for the reasons set out in this report.

PLANNING STATUS

- Countryside location
- Green Route Enhancement Area
- Burghfield AWE Outer Zone (a section of the site)
- Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area – 5 and 7km
- Flood zone 1
- Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
- Landscape Character Assessment Area I2 and L3 (a small section in the west)
- SSSI Impact Risk Zones

RECOMMENDATION

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

A. A legal agreement securing a commuted sum of £214,938.56 in lieu of 2 affordable units; index linked Strategic Access and Management Monitoring to offset the impact on the Thames Basins Heaths Special Protection Area and an Ecological Enhancement Management Plan. If the agreement is not submitted and agreed within 3 months of the date of this resolution, planning permission will be refused unless the Operational Manager for Development Management in consultation with the Chairman of the Planning Committee agree to a later date.

B. Conditions and informative:

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 Plans

This permission is respect of the submitted application plans and drawings numbered 2542 – 116A; 2542 – 117A; 2542 – 10; 2542 – 11; BR02-02; BR03-02; BR04-02; BR05-02 and Planning Statement received by the local Planning Authority on 11 October 2021. The 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. Tree Protection Details

- a) No development or other operation shall commence on site until the tree protection measures, as detailed in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement (ref: EIP21607aia-ams Rev B, hereafter the Approved Scheme) are implemented in complete accordance with the Approved Scheme. The tree protection measures must be retained for the entire duration of the development (including, unless otherwise provided by the Approved Scheme) demolition, all site preparation work, 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.
- b) No development (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) shall commence until the local planning authority has been provided (by way of a written notice) with a period of no less than 7 working days to inspect the implementation of the measures identified in the Approved Scheme 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 of the local planning authority has first been sought and obtained.

Reason: *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.*

4. Landscaping

Prior to the occupation of any part of the development, all hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with drawings numbered 201280/700/01B Pavement Construction; EIP21607-11C (sheet 1) Soft Landscape Proposal; EIP21607-11B (Sheet 2) Soft Landscape Proposal and EIP21607-12C Hard Landscape Proposal. 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.*

5. External Materials

Materials used for the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be those included in the Materials Schedule 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.

6. Ecological enhancement area

No building hereby approved shall be occupied or used until ecological enhancement area is developed as per the Ecological Management Plan EIP21607 EMP dated 10/12/20 and permanently so-retained and used for no other purpose.

Reason: To ensure provision is made to allow satisfactory development and maintenance of the natural environment and biodiversity within the application site. Relevant policy: Core strategy policy CP3 and MDD Local Plan policy TB23.

7. Visibility Splays

No building hereby approved shall be occupied or used until visibility splays are provided in accordance with drawing numbered 202180/VS/01. The access shall be retained in accordance with these details and used for no other purpose and the land within the visibility splays shall be maintained clear of any visual obstruction exceeding 0.6 metres in height at all times.

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

8. Swept Path

No building hereby approved shall be occupied until the access roads have been constructed in accordance with the drawing numbered 201280/TR/01 Vehicle Swept Path Assessment, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

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

9. Construction Method Statement

Throughout the construction period, details included in the Construction Method Statement dated March 2021 and drawing numbered 2542-60 P1 shall be adhered to unless other minor variations are agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

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

10. Drainage

Prior to the first occupation of the development, drainage scheme shall be implemented in accordance with details provided in Technical Note dated September 2020 Rev A; and drawings numbered 201280/500/01; 201280/510/02; 201280/520/01; and 201280/520/03.

The drainage scheme shall be maintained in the approved form for as long as the development remains on the site.

Reason: *This is to prevent increased flood risk from surface water run-off. Relevant policy: NPPF (2019) Section 14 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change), Core Strategy policy CP1 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC09 and CC10.*

11. Access surfacing

No building shall be occupied until the vehicular access has been surfaced with a permeable and bonded material across the entire width of the access for a distance of 10 metres measured from the carriageway edge.

Reason: *To avoid spillage of loose material onto the highway, in the interests of road safety. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP6.*

12. Cycle parking

No building shall be occupied until secure and covered parking for cycles has been provided in accordance with the approved drawing(s)/details. The cycle parking/ storage shall be permanently so-retained for the parking of bicycles and used for no other purpose.

Reason: *In order to ensure that secure weather-proof bicycle parking facilities are provided so as to encourage the use of sustainable modes of travel. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 4 (Sustainable Transport) and Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.*

13. Garage to be retained as such

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), the garage accommodation on the site identified on the approved plans shall be kept available for the parking of vehicles ancillary to the residential use of the site at all times. It shall not be used for any business nor as habitable space.

Reason: *To ensure that adequate parking space is available on the site, so as to reduce the likelihood of roadside parking, in the interests of highway safety and convenience. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.*

14. Parking and turning space to be provided

No part of any buildings hereby permitted shall be occupied or used until the vehicle parking and turning space has been provided in accordance with the approved plans. The vehicle parking and turning space shall be retained and maintained in accordance with the approved details and the parking space shall remain available for the parking of vehicles at all times and the turning space shall not be used for any other purpose other than vehicle turning.

Reason: *To provide adequate off-street vehicle parking and turning space and to allow vehicles to enter and leave the site in a forward gear in the interests of road safety and convenience and providing a functional, accessible and safe development and in the interests of amenity. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.*

15.Retention of existing trees

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.

Reason: *To ensure adequate planting in the interests of visual amenity. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21.*

16.Hours of construction

No work relating to the development hereby approved, including works of demolition or preparation prior to building operations, shall take place other than between the hours of 08:00 and 18:00 Monday to Friday and 08:00 to 13:00 Saturdays and at no time on Sundays or Bank or National Holidays.

Reason: *To protect the occupiers of neighbouring properties from noise and disturbance outside the permitted hours during the construction period. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC06.*

17. Obscure glazing & 1.7m opening height

All first floor side windows in the development hereby permitted shall be fitted with obscured glass and shall be permanently so-retained. The window 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 and shall be permanently so-retained.

Reason: *To safeguard the residential amenities of neighbouring properties. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3.*

18.Restriction of permitted development rights - domestic

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.

Reason: *To safeguard the character of the area and prevent overdevelopment of Countryside location. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 and CP11, and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB21.*

Informatives:

1. This permission should be read in conjunction with the legal agreement under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act dated __ 2022, the obligations in which relate to this development.
2. 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.
3. Adequate precautions shall be taken during the construction period to prevent the deposit of mud and similar debris on adjacent highways. For further information contact the Highway Authority on tel.: 0118 9746000.
4. Any works/ events carried out by or on behalf of the developer affecting either a public highway or a prospectively maintainable highway (as defined under s.87 New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 (NRSWA)), shall be co-ordinated and licensed as required under NRSWA and the Traffic Management Act 2004 in order to minimise disruption to both pedestrian and vehicular users of the highway. Any such works or events, and particularly those involving the connection of any utility to the site must be co-ordinated by the developer in liaison with the Borough's Street Works team (0118 974 6302). This must take place at least three months in advance of the intended works to ensure effective co-ordination with other works so as to minimise disruption.
5. The applicant is advised to consider the rubbish and recycling information on the Council's website: <http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/rubbish-andrecycling/collections/information-for-developers/>.
6. The development hereby permitted is liable to pay the Community Infrastructure Levy. This is a matter for the developer. The Liability Notice issued by Wokingham Borough Council will state the current chargeable amount. Anyone can formally assume liability to pay, but if no one does so then liability will rest with the landowner. There are certain legal requirements that must be complied with. For instance, whoever will pay the levy must submit an Assumption of Liability form and a Commencement Notice to Wokingham Borough Council prior to commencement of development. For more information see - <http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning/developers/cil/cil-processes/>.
7. 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.
8. 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 & Date
210566	Application for submission of details to comply with the following condition of planning consent 193356 dated 14/07/2020. Condition: 8. Construction Method Statement.	Approved 13.04.2021
202722	Application for submission of details to comply with the following condition of planning consent 193356 dated 14/07/2020. Condition 5 visibility Splays, 6 Swept path details 7 Dropped kerbs 9 Drainage details and 10 Archaeology.	Approved 29.03.2021
203522	Application for submission of details to comply with the following conditions of planning consent 193356 dated 14/07/2020. Conditions: 3. External Materials; 11. Ecological Enhancement Area.	Approved 09.02.2021
202787	Application to vary condition 2 of planning consent 193356 dated 14/7/2020. Condition 2 refers to Approved details and the variation is to substitute plans 15A and 16A with plans 10 and 11 to include habitable rooms in the roofspace of plot 1.	Approved 18.01.2021
193356	Full application for the erection of 5 No detached dwellings, one with separate garage and four dwellings with internal garages. Associated landscaping works including one balancing pond. 2 No accesses with entrance gates and 1.2m post and rail fencing.	Approved 14.07.2020
182370	Full planning permission for the erection of 5no. dwellings with garages and a balancing pond	Non-determination application; Appeal dismissed: 29.11.2019
173726	Full application for the proposed erection of 5no dwellings with detached garages, a balancing pond and an ecological enhancement area.	Approved: 24.07.2019
O/2014/1944	Proposed erection of 3 dwellings with garages and a balancing pond (means of access to be considered)	Approved: 31.10.2016
F/2007/2197	Proposed change of use of land from Garden Centre to Builders Merchant with demolition of existing sales building and erection of new building for builders merchants	Refused: 17.10.2007 Appeal Dismissed: 06.04.2009.
F/2005/6160	Change from garden centre to builders yard	Refused: 02.06.2006
VAR/2004/1391	Proposed variation of conditions 12 & 16 of consent 40500 to allow a substitute of layout plan	Approved: 22.04.2004
VAR/2003/9521	Proposed variation to condition 11 of consent 40500 to amend the schedule of goods sold	Approved: 12.08.2003

	and areas within the garden centre sales building to include the sale of conservatories & garden buildings	
F/2003/9191	Proposed erection of replacement workshop and store building. Demolition of existing building	Withdrawn
F/2003/0044	Proposed erection of replacement workshop and store building plus demolition of existing building	Approved: 22.10.2003
CLE/2002/7744	Application for certificate of lawful existing use of land as garden centre	Approved: 12.02.2003
F/2002/6245	Proposed redevelopment of garden centre, reuse of buildings, access improvement, road, parking and landscaping	Refused: 12.06.2002
F/1999/69285	Proposed erection of 3 detached dwellings 2 garages and associated works	Refused: 04.05.1999 Appeal Dismissed: 29.09.1999.
F/1998/68734	Proposed erection of 6 detached dwellings and garages demolition of redundant building	Refused: 09.02.1999 Appeal Dismissed: 29.09.1999.
V/1997/66449	Proposed Relaxation Of Conditions 1 And 3 on Consent 40500 For Extension Of Time For Commencement Of development for further 5 years (condition 1) & removal of condition 3 relating to removal of building	Approved: 25.02.1998
F/1996/63285	Proposed Erection Of 25 Detached Dwellings	Refused: 11.04.1996 Appeal Dismissed: 04.03.1997
40500	Redevelopment of garden centre including the construction of garden centre sales building	Approved
37103	Redevelopment of existing garden centre	Approved: 13.03.1991

SUMMARY INFORMATION	
Site Area	2.32 Hectares
Existing units	0
Proposed units	5
Existing density	0 dwellings per hectare
Proposed density	2 dwellings per hectare
Number of affordable units proposed	0 (commuted sum of £214,938.56 in lieu of 2 affordable units)
Previous land use	Garden centre (sui generis) / Nil use with an extant permission for residential development that has commenced.
Proposed Public Open Space	N/A
Existing parking spaces	N/A
Proposed parking spaces	16

CONSULTATION RESPONSES	
Natural England	No objections subject to SAMM and SANG payments
Southern Gas Networks	No objections
SEE Power Distribution	No objections
WBC Biodiversity	No comments received
WBC Economic Prosperity and Place (Community Infrastructure)	No objections subject to Affordable Housing contributions.
WBC Drainage	No objections subject to condition
WBC Environmental Health	No objections subject to conditions
WBC Highways	No objections subject to conditions
WBC Tree & Landscape	No objections subject to condition
WBC Public Rights of Way	No objections
WBC Emergency Planner	Objected to the proposal since the site adjoins the AWE DEPZ.
<p>(Officer's note: A small section of the site falls within the outer zone of Burghfield AWE where any increase of 200 dwellings or more would require additional consultation. It does not fall within DEPZ. In this instance, the proposal is for an additional 5 dwellings, which is acceptable).</p>	

REPRESENTATIONS

Town/Parish Council: Objected to the proposal on the following grounds:

- The proposal represents over development of the site. Condition 19 of the original application (193356), that this application seeks to replace, restricted domestic permitted development rights to ensure that the site was not overdeveloped. The current proposal contradicts that.

(Officer's note: The proposal does not include any changes to the footprints of the approved dwellings and ridge heights remain the same. The only changes include additional habitable rooms in the roofspaces and one new detached garage which is proposed in exchange of the existing redundant electric substation. Overall, the net increase in built volume on the site is considered acceptable).

- Four three storey dwellings will be out of keeping with the area and rural setting.

(Officer's note: The proposal includes additional habitable accommodation in the roof space of already approved dwellings – it does not propose to increase building heights. As such, these will not be three storey houses. Moreover, the residential area is more than 1 hectare, and the dwellings will be set approximately 100m from Basingstoke Road street frontage. As such, these houses will not appear as a dominant feature within the street scene. It is also to be noted that 1Ha of area to the rear of the dwellings will be permanently kept open as ecological enhancement area and this will provide adequate setting for the enlarged dwellings).

Local Members: No comments received

Neighbours:

Two representations were received from local residents one supporting the proposal and one objecting to the scheme.

Support: Received from occupants of Lancambria, Basingstoke Road, RG7 1PY

- The room in the roofspace will provide additional office area which is needed as people are now working from home.
- The garage is acceptable given the size of the property.

Objection: Received from the occupants of Oak Cottage, Basingstoke Road, RG7 1PY

- The proposal includes habitable rooms in the roofspace of plots 2-5 resulting in habitable windows at second floor level. This will directly overlook the rear private amenity areas of neighbouring properties resulting in detrimental loss of privacy.
- The application site is located on higher grounds compared to neighbouring properties along Basingstoke Road. As a result, the extant permission already has had a degree of loss of privacy impact on neighbouring properties. The current scheme will further exacerbate the situation by introducing habitable rooms with windows at a higher level.

(Officer's note: The objection was received from neighbouring property Oak Cottage which is located 104m from the new dwellings at plots 2 and 3. The boundary of Oak Cottage is approximately 55m from the new houses. The separation distance is significantly more than the 30m recommended by the Borough Design Guide for houses with more than 2 storey and as such, no loss of privacy impact is anticipated even when accounting for increased expectation to privacy in a rural setting. The site is on a flat terrain and existing boundary vegetation provided additional screening).

APPLICANTS POINTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The proposal includes minor changes from the extant permission 193356 that was granted in 2020 for the construction of 5 houses within this site.• The site area is enlarged to include a former and now redundant repeater station, the built development parameters for which will be exchanges to construct a detached garage for plot 5.• Confirmation of the same changes to Plot 1 has already been agreed under the S.73 application 202787.• Redesign of plots 2-5 to include an additional floor of accommodation within a redesigned upper floor and roof. This is primarily to allow for additional home working space following the pandemic.• The footprint of each dwelling will be unchanged, and the new ridge height will not be more than the approved ridge height.• The main elements of the scheme remain unchanged from the extant permission including the crescent shaped layout, feature balancing pond and ecological enhancement area.• Planning obligations similar to the extant scheme will be made and this will be secured using s106 legal agreement.

PLANNING POLICY	
National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
Core Strategy (CS)	CP1 – Sustainable Development CP3 – General Principles for Development CP5 – Housing Mix, Density and Affordability CP6 – Managing Travel Demand CP7 – Biodiversity CP8 – Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals CP11 – Proposals Outside Development Limits CP17 – Housing Delivery
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 – Development Limits CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction CC06 – Noise CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB04 – Development in vicinity of Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE), Burghfield TB05 – Housing Mix TB07 – Internal Space Standards TB12 – Employment Skills Plan TB21 – Landscape Character TB23 – Biodiversity and Development TB25 – Archaeology
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document DCLG – National Internal Space Standards Swallowfield Village Design Statement

PLANNING ISSUES

Description of Development:

1. The proposal is for the construction of 5 no. detached dwellings comprising of one 6 bedroom dwelling with detached garage (plot 1), one 4 bedroom house with integrated garage (plot 3) and three 5 bedroom houses – one with detached garage (plot 5) and two with integrated garages (plots 2 and 4). These dwellings will be served by two access roads from Basingstoke Road – one for plot 1 and other for the remaining dwellings. Both accesses will have entrance gates and will be sited within the existing commercial bell-mouth with 1.2m post and rail fencing along the front boundary. Plot 1 will be separated from the group of other 4 houses by 1.2m high closed board fencing. The proposal also includes associated landscaping works with a balancing pond and 1.1 hectare of ecological enhancement area.

2. The proposal is an amended scheme of the extant permission 193356. The amendments include increased site area, one additional detached garage following demolition of a redundant electric repeater/ substation building, additional habitable rooms in the roof spaces of all 5 houses (of which Plot 1's loft conversion has already been approved by s.73 application 202787) and minor amendments to the garden layouts of plots 2- 5.

Site Description:

3. The application site comprises of an open green field of more than 2.3ha, located within designated Countryside to the south-west of Swallowfield village. Parts of the site have previously been developed and were historically used as a garden centre. The existing access to the site is onto Basingstoke Road which is proposed to be retained and subdivided into two accesses. Surrounding areas comprise of open countryside to the east and south and detached dwellings of varying types and designs set within varying plot sizes to the north and west of the site. Mature trees surround the periphery of the site. The area has a rural character and appearance with expansive views across open fields to the east.
4. Construction works are currently on-going in the site in connection with implementation of the extant permission.

Principle of Development:

5. 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 (MDD) 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.
6. Policy CC02 of the MDD Local Plan sets out the development limits for each settlement as defined on the policies map. Policy CP9 sets out that development proposals located within development limits will be acceptable in principle, having regard to the service provisions associated with the major, modest and limited categories. The site is outside of any settlement limits and is within the countryside between Riseley and Swallowfield, which are both defined as limited development locations.
7. Whilst the site is within the countryside and the proposal does not fall within any of the exceptions listed in the Core Strategy policy CP11, there is an extant planning permission for the erection of 5 dwellings (ref: 193356) on the land, valid until 14 July 2023, which is a material consideration for the current scheme. At the time of this approval it was considered that the residential development would have a preferable impact on the character and appearance of the area compared to the previous garden centre use. As such, the principle of residential development on this site has already been established by the extant planning permission that allowed erection of 5 houses. The current scheme does not propose to increase the total number of dwellings and as such, the proposal is considered acceptable in principle, subject to consideration of impacts upon the character of the area and other matters.

Character of the Area:

8. The site is in Wokingham District Landscape Character Area I2 – ‘Risely Farmed Clay Lowland’. The Landscape Character Assessment sets out that the Landscape is of overall moderate quality and in moderate condition. The immediate surrounding area is characterised by scattered detached dwellings of varying types and plot sizes.
9. The proposal is an amended scheme for the extant permission and does not propose additional units. All building footprints and ridge heights are proposed to remain same as the extant scheme. The additional developments included in the current scheme are habitable accommodations in the roofspace for 4 dwellings (plots 2 – 5) and a detached garage for plot 5. It is to be noted that an additional floor for plot 1 has already been approved by variation of condition application 202787.
10. A proportion of built form has already been approved for the site and this can be viewed as the base point of the consideration of any impacts, particularly when the siting and form of the dwellings is largely unchanged. Table 1 below provides a comparative analysis of building footprint, volume and hardstanding between the extant permission and the current scheme.

	Plot 1 + Garage	Plot 2	Plot 3	Plot 4	Plot 5 (+ Garage)	Total
2019 Approval (193356)						
Footprint (m ²)	292 + 40	145	130	149	153 + 0	909
Gross Internal Area (m ²)	512 + 36	236	196	238	284	1,502
Volume (m ³)	2,020 + 140	1,005	659	977	1,025 + 0	5,826
Hardstanding (m ²)						1535
2021 Application (213380)						
Footprint (m ²)	292 + 40	145	130	149	153 + 40	949
Gross Internal Area (m ²)	625 + 36	318	274	322	352 + 36	1,963
Volume (m ³)	2,020 + 140	1,054	919	1,062	1,118 + 140	6,453
Hardstanding (m ²)						1535

Table 1: Built parameters between extant permission and the current scheme

11. As can be seen from the above table, the proposal would result in 40sq.m of additional footprint of the detached garage for plot 5. However, this will be constructed following demolition of an existing electric substation building of 17sq.m footprint and 57cu.m of volume. As such, the cumulative increase of footprint would be approximately 2.5%. Similarly, the cumulative volume increase will be 627cu.m which is 10.75% of the extant permission. Since the proposal is a low density development (2 dwellings per hectare), a 2.5% increase in plot coverage and 10.75% increase in volume are not considered to have any significant additional harm to the character of the area including surrounding countryside.
12. The dwellings are proposed to be sited more than 100m from the Basingstoke Road street frontage. Because of the great set-in distance, the scheme will not be readily visible from public realm. Moreover, the immediate neighbouring area is characterised by large detached dwellings and the proposed dwellings will be comparable in bulk and form to surrounding developments. Furthermore, there is an existing wooded backdrop to the site and this will be maintained through the ecological enhancement area. The wooded backdrop would also provide a spacious setting for the dwelling reflecting the

open rural character of the area. As such, the impact of additional built-form on the overall landscape would be limited in comparison to the extant permission.

13. Objections were received from the Parish Council on overdevelopment grounds. However, as noted, the increase in overall quantum of development of the proposed scheme will not be significantly greater than the extant permission, in this instance it is considered acceptable.
14. In a previous appeal decision for a scheme of 5 detached dwellings on this site (application reference 182370), the Inspector had commented that slightly greater quantum of development in this location will not result in a significant harm on the surrounding character and appearance of the area due to the distance from the road and the surrounding character of large, detached dwellings. A similar inference can be drawn with respect to the current scheme. Consequently, no objection is raised on character grounds. However, any further increase in quantum of development within this site can potentially have harmful impact on the rural character of the area. For this reason and consistent with the extant permission, condition 18 is included restricting domestic Permitted Development rights of the new houses.
15. The materials for the proposed dwellings include facing brick and clay tiles. These have already been assessed as part of a Discharge of Condition application (ref. 203522) in connection with the extant permission. These details have been submitted with the current proposal which are acceptable. Condition 5 requires the proposed development to be constructed in accordance with the approved materials details.

Residential Amenities:

16. The proposed buildings will be positioned between 6 – 9 metres from the boundaries of the existing properties and this far exceeds the minimum separation distances set out in the Borough Design Guide SPD of 2 metres. Furthermore, the boundaries are defined by trees and planting that will further screen the development from neighbouring houses.
17. The current scheme proposes to reduce the separation distances between plots 2 – 3 and 4 – 5 compared to the extant scheme. The separation between 2 – 3 is now proposed to be 2.5m and that between 4 – 5 will be 3.5m. Whilst these are lesser than the 4m that was proposed in the extant scheme, the proposed flank to boundary separation remains significantly more than the SPD recommended 1m and are acceptable.
18. Plot 1 will be separated from the rest of the development by a 1.2m closed board fencing and will have a separation distance of 9m from plot 2. These separation distances are acceptable and no mutual overlooking impact is expected from the proposal. However, in order to minimise any further overlooking, condition 17 is recommended to ensure first floor side windows are obscurely glazed and top hung.
19. All new houses will maintain considerable separation distance from existing neighbouring properties and no negative impact on neighbouring residential amenity is anticipated. Objections were received from Oak Cottage on potential overlooking impacts. This property is located approximately 100m from plots 2 and 3. The separation distance along with intervening boundary vegetation will minimise any overlooking from the additional habitable windows even when considering the

increased expectation for privacy in a rural setting. It is considered that the proposed development will have an acceptable impact on the amenity of the neighbouring occupiers with respect to overlooking, overshadowing and overbearing impact.

Highways:

20. The proposed development includes 2 accesses similar to the extant permission – one for plot 1; the other to be shared by the four remaining dwellings. Visibility splays and swept path details have already been approved by discharge application 202722 and these details remain the same for the current application. Consequently, there is no objection to the proposed accesses subject to the conditions 7 and 8 requiring the visibility splays and swept path details to be provided in accordance with the approved details.
21. The proposal indicates 16 parking spaces will be provided within the development with further opportunities for informal parking available on the hard surfaced areas. This is considered acceptable and conditions 13 and 14 are included to secure permanent retention of garage and parking. Cycle storage is included in the proposed site plan, and these are acceptable.

Flooding and Drainage:

22. The extant permission included a drainage condition (number 9 of 193356) to secure drainage details for the proposed development. This has been discharged by application 202722. These details have been submitted with the current application. Whilst the current application will result in an additional 23 sq.m of footprint, this will not require the drainage strategy to be amended. Consequently, it is considered that the details submitted with the application are acceptable and these are secured by condition 10.

Landscape and Trees:

23. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for proposals that 'maintain or enhance the ability of the site to support fauna and flora including protected species'. Policy CC03 of the MDD Local Plan states that development proposals should demonstrate how they have considered and achieve to 'protect and retain existing trees, hedges and other landscape features'.
24. The changes to the proposed landscape are few – there is a slight reduction to the front of Plots 2 and 3 with some loss of landscape to Plot 2 that has been gained by Plot 3 and there is a change of the boundary fence between the rear gardens of Plots 4 and 5 making Plot 4 garden a bit larger. Additionally, the site area is now increased by incorporating the electric substation within the application red line.
25. A revised landscape scheme is submitted with the application with tree protection details during construction period. These have been reviewed by the WBC Trees and Landscape Officer and no objections are raised. Conditions 3, 4 and 15 are included to secure satisfactory provision of landscape within the proposed development.

Environmental Health:

26. According to historical mapping there is no contamination on or near to the site. Therefore, no objection is raised with regard to contamination. However, due to the close proximity of the neighbouring residential properties, the Environmental Health Officer had recommended conditions limiting working hours and controlling of noise and dust emission with the extant permission. Accordingly, condition 16 is included to restrict hours of construction. The Construction Methods Statement is secured using condition 9.

Outdoor Amenity Space for future occupiers:

27. Plots 2 – 5 will have rear gardens at least 20 metres deep and plot 1 will have a rear garden approximately 35 metres deep. This will comply with the minimum garden depth of 11 metres set out in the Borough Design Guide SPD. The proposed development will provide a suitable level of private amenity space.

Internal Space Standards:

28. The proposed development comprises of 1 no. 6-bedroom detached dwelling, 1 no. 4-bedroom detached dwelling and 3 no. 5-bedroom detached houses. The Nationally Described Space Standard recommends a minimum floor area of 97sq m for a 4 bedroom property; 110sq m for a 5 bedroom house and 123sq m for a 6 bedroom house. The proposed dwellings will significantly exceed the national minimum requirements. The 4 bedroom house will have floor area of 274sq m, the 5 bedroom houses will have floor area between 318 – 352sq m and the 6 bedroom property 625sq m. The proposed dwellings will therefore provide an acceptable standard of accommodation for the future occupiers. Guidelines for bedrooms, living spaces and storage are also met.

Ecology:

29. Policy CP7 of the Core Strategy states that development proposals that may harm habitats or species of principle importance or features of the landscape that are of major importance for wild flora and fauna (including wildlife and river corridors), will only be permitted if it has been clearly demonstrated that the need for the proposal outweighs the need to safeguard the nature conservation importance; that no alternative sites that would result in less or no harm is available which will meet the need.
30. The application site comprises a grassland field over previously developed area. The extant permission includes a legal agreement securing the retention of open space to the west which would be managed for wildlife enhancements. The current scheme also retains the area to the west as open space and the applicant has agreed for a legal agreement to secure its management similar to the extant permission. This would be broadly consistent with the obligations for biodiversity net gain from the site. As such subject to the legal agreement, there is no objection to the current proposal on ecology grounds.
31. Details of ecological enhancement area is included in Ecological Management Plan EIP21607 EMP dated 10/12/20, which is acceptable and adherence to this is secured by condition 6.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010)

32. 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.
33. The design and layout of the buildings are acceptable on accessibility grounds. Each dwelling include a large room on the ground floor that is capable of functioning as a bedroom. Additionally, toilet facilities are available on the ground floor and the open plan layout allows for good circulation. Level access can easily be created to the grounds floor and these facilities indicate that the buildings would be adaptable or accessible for future occupants.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), Special Protection Area (SPA) & Affordable Housing:

Community Infrastructure Levy:

34. As the proposal is for new residential floor space, it would be a CIL liable development. CIL is charged at a rate of £365 (index-linked) per square metre. If the development is approved, a CIL liability notice would be issued.

Special Protection Area:

35. The site is within 5km of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. Policy CP8 of Core Strategy as well as saved policy NRM6 of the South East plan require that proposals mitigate their impact upon the TBHSPA. Avoidance payment towards SANG is classed as infrastructure and therefore is included within the CIL payment. SPA-wide Strategic Access and Management Monitoring (SAMM) is not considered to fall within the definition of infrastructure and therefore is continued to be secured through legal agreements. The application is recommended for approval subject to a legal agreement securing an index linked payment for SAMM contributions.

Affordable Housing:

36. The application site is over 0.16 ha in area and policy CP5 of the Core Strategy requires the proposal to contribute towards affordable housing. The site is outside of the development limits and therefore a minimum contribution of 40% is required, equating to 2 equivalent affordable units. The Affordable Housing Team has advised that an offsite commuted sum would be acceptable, and this has been calculated as £214,938.56.
37. The applicant has agreed to pay the full commuted sum and this approval is subject to the applicant entering into a legal agreement.

Atomic Weapons Establishment:

38. The site is adjacent to Burghfield Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) with a small section along northern boundary falling within the Outer Consultation Zone. Within this zone, a planning application for 200 dwellings or more would require consultation with Office of Nuclear Regulation (ONR) and an emergency plan will be sought as part of the application. Since the proposal falls significantly below the threshold of 200 dwellings, it does not require additional consultation and consideration.

CONCLUSION

39. The application follows an extant planning permission (ref: 193356) for the erection of five dwellings on the site. The principle of residential development has therefore been established and the assessment falls upon what impact the additional built form would have upon the character of the area including surrounding countryside when compared to the extant planning permission.
40. The proposed development does not seek to increase the total number of dwellings. It now proposes additional habitable rooms in the roof spaces to provide additional home office facilities and one extra detached garage resulting in 2.5% increase in building footprint and 10% increase in volume. Whilst this represents an increase in quantum of development, it is considered acceptable since the density of the proposed development would be low. The inspector of a previously dismissed appeal for a similar scheme (ref: 182370) did not raise any objection to the additional built-up area since the plots are large and development will be set back from the street frontage. There will be large areas of landscaping and an ecological enhancement area on the site, and this remains unchanged from the extant permission. The proposed dwellings will have ample indoor and outdoor space and will provide a satisfactory living environment for the future occupiers.
41. There are no objections to the proposal with regard to highway safety; parking; trees & landscaping; drainage & flooding; and ecology. The development is acceptable in all other aspects subject to conditions and a legal agreement securing a commuted sum for affordable housing; a SAMM avoidance payment to offset the impact on the Thames Basins Heaths Special Protection Area and an Ecological Enhancement Management Plan. The application is accordingly recommended for approval.

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