

Agenda Item 74.

App Number	Expiry Date	Parish	Ward
223108	19 January 2023	Wargrave	Remenham, Wargrave and Ruscombe

Applicant	Atlantic Swiss Agency LLP
Site Address	Templecombe, Wargrave Road, Remenham RG9 3HU
Proposal	Full application for the proposed erection of 1 no. dwelling, amendments to the internal access road, erection of a detached covered car port and associated landscaping following demolition of existing dwelling and pool house
Type	Full
Officer	Simon Taylor
Reason for determination by committee	Major application (Site area >1 hectare)

FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Planning Committee on Wednesday 11 January 2023
REPORT PREPARED BY	Assistant Director – Place and Growth
RECOMMENDATION	APPROVAL subject to conditions and informatives and a s106 securing a Conservation Management Strategy for the Templecombe Estate that is consistent with the intent of the existing Park Place Conservation Management Strategy/Integrated Estate Management Plan

SUMMARY

The application involves a replacement two-storey dwelling with modest basement within the countryside and Green Belt. It is set within the grounds of the Grade II* listed Historic Park and Garden known as Park Place and Temple Combe and is nearby to the Grade II listed Druid's Temple. The primary issues are summarised as:

- Whether the development is acceptable in the Green Belt, having regard to whether the replacement dwelling is materially larger than the one it replaces
- Impact upon the setting of the listed Druid's Temple and registered park and garden of Park Place
- Design of the replacement dwelling
- Potential harm to the landscape setting
- Potential ecological harm

The principle of the development is supported as a replacement dwelling is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt, subject to consideration of openness. Revisions to the scheme have resolved initial objections from Historic England and the Council's Conservation Officer. There is an outstanding objection from the Gardens Trust and the Council's Trees and Landscape Officer.

No resident objections have been received and the proposal is recommended for approval, subject to conditions relating to ecology and landscaping conditions at Conditions 3-6 (such as external lighting details and Construction Environmental Management Plan, landscaping details and submission of a Woodland Management Plan). Other conditions include archaeological details (Condition 7), materials (Condition 8), archival recording of the existing dwelling (Condition 9) and certification of the building height (Condition 11). An overarching Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) as part of a s106 is integral to the

recommendation for approval and this will deliver planning obligations relating to landscape and ecological mitigation and management, including protecting species and habitat of importance and delivery of a Woodland Management Plan and will provide consistency with the existing CMS for Park Place.

Following discussions with the applicant's agent in relation to unresolved tree impacts, the application no longer includes a pool house, outdoor swimming pool or a refuse store at the main entrance to the site.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

App No.	Description	Decision/Date
432/1948	CoU to boarding school	Approved 17 December 1948
1016/1954	Residential development (outline)	Refused 17 January 1955
O/212/1961	Detached house and two staff cottages	Refused 22 July 1961
O/269/1961	Two dwellings (outline)	Refused 18 October 1961
211/1961	Dwelling house	Approved 30 November 1961
O/311/1965	Addition of staff and guest accommodation	Approved 31 December 1965
527/1972	Swimming pool and enclosure	Approved 12 May 1972
1970/1972	Link between pool and dwelling	Approved 8 January 1973

DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION

	Existing	Proposed
Land use	Residential	Residential
Site area	Approximately 2 hectares	
Dwellings	1	1
Floorspace	779m ²	907m ² (including basement)
Parking spaces	Minimum 3	Minimum 4
Cycle storage	No specific provision	Minimum 3

CONSTRAINTS

- Countryside
- Green Belt
- Green Route (Wargrave Road)
- Listed Building (Grade II listed Druids Temple to the western end of site)
- Historic Park and Garden (Grade II* listed Park Place and Temple Combe)
- Bat consultation zone
- Priority habitat (mixed deciduous woodland to south east corner of site and part of wider estate)
- Local wildlife site (Templecombe Wood adjoining to west and north and part of wider estate)
- Biodiversity Opportunity Area (Chilterns Escarpment)
- Groundwater consultation zone 3
- Flood Zone 1
- AWE Burghfield consultation zone (special case zone)
- Potentially contaminated land consultation zone (western end of site)
- Heathrow Aerodrome wind turbine safeguarding zone
- Classified and adopted road

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal	
Environmental Health	No objection subject to conditions relating to plant noise and contamination. <u>Officer comment:</u> Given the absence of neighbours, there appears no meaningful need for any condition for plant noise. Condition 15 covers any unexpected contamination.
Drainage	No objection subject to drainage details in Condition 10.
Highways	No objection.
Economic Prosperity	No objection.
Built Heritage	Objection raised on the location of the pool house and its proximity to the Druid's Temple. <u>Officer comment:</u> The pool house was relocated such that the concerns of Historic England are resolved. It was later deleted from the scheme such that these concerns are wholly resolved.
Ecology	Whilst there is some reservation with the detail and conclusions in the Ecology Report, there are no in-principle objections that would preclude redevelopment of the site, subject to lighting details (Condition 3), a Construction Ecology Management Plan (Condition 4) and delivery of an overarching Conservation Management Strategy as part of the s106 process. Detailed commentary is at paragraphs 81-99.
Trees and Landscaping	An initial objection with the location of the pool house and loss of Trees T48 and T49 are resolved with its deletion. An objection is raised on the following other grounds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality and detail of the LVIA • Woodland Management Plan applying to areas outside of the red line area • Overall design of the replacement dwelling <u>Officer comment:</u> These matters are discussed in paragraphs 34-41, 46-51 and 66 respectively. In the absence of agreement, conditions have been applied in relation to landscape details in Condition 5, compliance with the Arboricultural Method Statement in Condition 12 and a requirement for a Woodland Management Plan in Condition 6.
External	
Historic England	No objection following relocation of the pool house building in amended plans (the pool house has since been deleted).
Thames Water	No objection subject to Informative 4.
Garden Trust	An initial objection with the location of the pool house is resolved with its deletion. The quality of the Heritage Statement and LVIA have not properly considered the effects of the development on the significance of Park Place and a Conservation Management Plan should be provided. <u>Officer comment:</u> These matters are discussed in paragraphs 34-41, 46-51 and with the requirement for a CMS in the s106 heads of terms.
Berkshire Archaeology	No objection, subject to a programme of archaeological work in Condition 7.

REPRESENTATIONS

Wargrave Parish Council	No objection, subject to acknowledgement that the development potential of the site has been maximised. <u>Officer comment:</u> The development potential of the site is discussed in 'Principle of the Development'.
Ward Member	No comments received.
Neighbours	No comments received.

PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF)	Section 2: Achieving Sustainable Development Section 12: Achieving Well-Designed Places Section 13: Protecting Green Belt Land Section 14: Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change Section 15: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment Section 16: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)	Design Green Belt Historic Environment Natural Environment
National Design Guide	Section I: Identity Section B: Built Form Section M: Movement Section N: Nature Section R: Resources
Core Strategy 2010	Policy CP1 – Sustainable Development Policy CP3 – General Principles for Development Policy CP6 – Managing Travel Demand Policy CP7 – Biodiversity Policy CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals Policy CP11 – Proposals Outside Development Limits Policy CP12 – Green Belt
Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014	Policy CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development Policy CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees, and Landscaping Policy CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction Policy CC05 – Renewable Energy and Decentralised Energy Networks Policy CC06 – Noise Policy CC07 – Parking Policy CC09 – Development and Flood Risk Policy CC10 – Sustainable Drainage Policy TB01 – Development within the Green Belt Policy TB07 – Internal Space Standards Policy TB21 – Landscape Character Policy TB23 – Biodiversity and Development Policy TB24 – Designated Heritage Assets Policy TB25 – Archaeology
Borough Design Guide SPD 2014	Section 4: Residential Section 6: Parking Section 8: Rural and Settlement Edge

Sustainable Design and Construction SPD	Section 8: Sustainable Design Section 9: Energy Efficiency Section 10: On-site Renewable Energy Generation Section 11: Water Resource Management Section 12: Flood Risk Management Section 13: Biodiversity Section 14: Waste, Recycling and Composting Facilities Section 15: Sustainable Transport Section 16: Health, Safety and Well-being Section 17: Sustainable Construction
Wargrave Parish Design Statement	Buildings Traffic and Transport Considerations
CIL Guidance	Charging Schedule

PLANNING ISSUES

Proposal

1) The proposal involves the following works:

- Demolition of the existing dwelling and enclosed swimming pool building
- Erection of a two-storey dwelling (with subterranean basement) comprising the following:
 - Basement comprising a plant room and storage
 - Ground floor comprising an entrance hallway opening off a large internal courtyard area, kitchen (with ancillary kitchen), living room, dining room and breakfast room opening onto a large terrace area with playroom, two study areas, three bathrooms and a boot room
 - First floor comprising five ensuite bedrooms (main bedroom with two ensembles and opening onto a balcony), cloak room, laundry and two internally facing balconies
- Removal of the existing access driveway from the west and realignment to arrive via the north eastern corner, leading to a parking courtyard with four car carport, cycle parking and bin storage
- Retention of the existing tennis court and extensive landscaping across the site including partial walled garden, including tree removal and planting and pathways

2) The application as originally submitted included the following additional works:

- Demolition of several outbuildings
- Erection of a two-storey pool building (with basement) to the east of the dwelling comprising the following:
 - Basement level comprising plant and storage
 - Ground floor comprising an indoor 11.5m long swimming pool, yoga studio, gym, and bathroom, opening onto a terrace and outdoor 20m long swimming pool
 - First floor comprising lounge area, massage room, steam room and sauna, opening onto terrace area
- Provision of a bin collection building adjacent to the gate lodge building

- 3) Following discussions with the applicant's agent, it has been agreed that these aspects of the scheme be deleted from the current application to allow the application to proceed to Planning Committee for determination. It is possible that the pool house and outdoor swimming pool will come forward in a future planning application to be considered at that time.

Site Description

- 4) The site is accessed via the A321 Wargrave Road with a 500m long drive meandering upwards to a 1960s dwelling built partly into the hill and sited about 80m above the River Thames with expansive views across the Berkshire and Oxfordshire countryside.
- 5) To the south west of the dwelling is the Grade II listed Druid's Temple (a collection of 45 granite megalithic stones) and the site forms part of Park Place and Temple Combe, which is a Grade II* Registered Park and Garden. It is designated countryside and Green Belt with the River Thames running parallel to Wargrave Road about 300m to the south west. Woodland and open fields predominate the immediate context. The town centre of Henley upon Thames is 2.3km to the north west.

Principle of Development

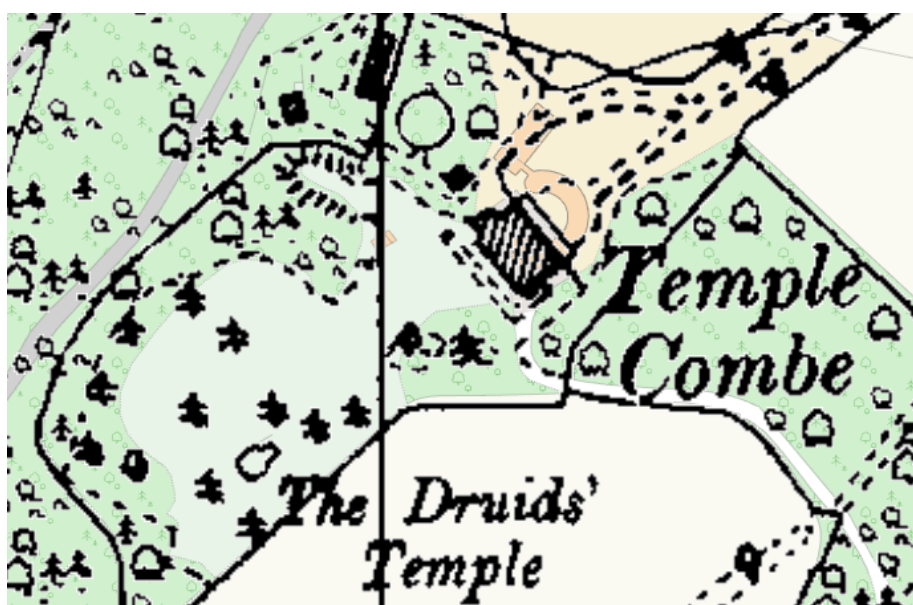
Location with the Green Belt and Countryside

- 6) The site is outside settlement limits within the Green Belt and the countryside. Section 13 of the NPPF outlines that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. The construction of new buildings/dwellings is inappropriate in the Green Belt, subject to exceptions (see paragraph 10).
- 7) Policy CP12 of the Core Strategy and Policy TB01 of the MDD Local Plan state that inappropriate development will not be granted nor would development that does not maintain the openness of and conflicts with the purposes of the Green Belt.
- 8) Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy does not normally permit development outside of development limits except in the case of replacement dwellings where it involves environmental improvement, maintains the quality of the environment, and does not result in inappropriate increases in scale, form, or footprint of the original building.
- 9) Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development for the purposes of Section 13 of the NPPF and development plan policy**
- 10) The NPPF states that new buildings in the Green Belt are inappropriate by their nature unless they fit into certain exception criteria. In accordance with part (d) of paragraph 149 of the NPPF, the replacement dwelling is one such exception of where it does not constitute inappropriate development. This is subject to the new building being in the same use and is not materially larger than the one it replaces.
- 11) The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt and Countryside**

- 12) The NPPF highlights that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open and that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence (paragraph 137). Its purpose is also to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment (paragraph 138).
- 13) Policy TB01 of the MDD Local Plan acknowledges that alterations to existing buildings should be limited in scale. Limited is defined in the explanatory text as a cumulative increase of no more than a 35% increase in volume relative to the original building. The original building is that which existed in 1948 or if constructed after this time, as it was built originally.
- 14) The Heritage Statement submitted with the application indicates that the original country house was erected in 1869 and this is not disputed following a review of the Council's planning and historical records. The same records suggest, with some uncertainty, that the building was used as a boarding school from 1948 until its demolition and replacement with the current dwelling in 1961.

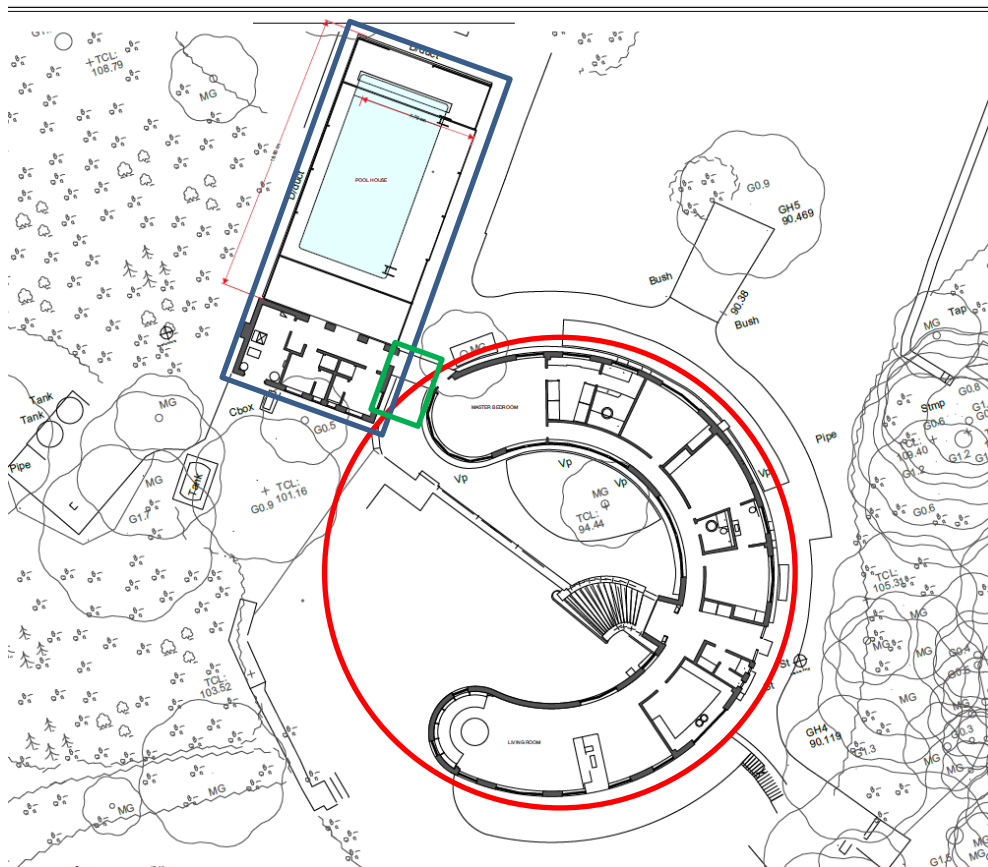


Original country house, since demolished



OS mapping of original country house (1960)

- 15) The current dwelling was extended in 1972 and 1973 with an enclosed pool house and link structure. The original building would therefore be the building circled red in the plan below because it is the building constructed after 1948 as it was originally constructed.



1961 dwelling (denoted in red) with 1972 (blue) and 1973 (green) extensions

- 16) However, Policy TB01 of the MDD Local Plan refers to the extension of a dwelling and the construction, alteration, or extension of buildings ancillary to a dwelling over and above the size of the original building(s) (emphasis added) provided it is limited in scale. There is no such provision for replacement buildings within the Development Plan.
- 17) The Council has ordinarily adopted the maximum increase in volume of 35% stipulation is an appropriate 'rule of thumb' guide to assist in the consideration of openness and any interpretation of harm to the Green Belt where the proposal relates to a replacement dwelling. However, paragraph 149(d) of the NPPF allows for a replacement building that is "*not materially larger than the one it replaces*". This is distinct from paragraph 149(c) which allows extensions to a building "*provided it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building*". (emphasis added)
- 18) There is therefore a degree of inconsistency/conflict between the policies in the Development Plan and the NPPF. Paragraph 219 of the NPPF states that "*Due weight should be given to them (existing policies in the Development Plan), according to their degree of consistency with this Framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given)*". On the basis of the above, the weight applied to Policy TB01 is reduced and the weight applied to paragraph 149(d) of the NPPF is increased.

- 19) Dealing with paragraph 149(d), past appeal decisions have concluded that consideration of harm to the openness of the Green Belt requires consideration of spatial and visual impacts. Further, because the NPPF does not specify what would constitute 'materially larger', it is a matter of fact and degree. The Oxford definition of materially is "*in a significant way; considerably*". Other past appeal decisions have stated that it would not be sufficient to rely only on built volume when considering spatial impacts. Other physical dimensions such as floor space, footprint, height, or width are relevant.
- 20) The table below compares the existing dwelling (not the original dwelling), inclusive of the 1972 and 1973 extensions (pool house and its link) versus the proposed scheme.

	Footprint	Area	Volume	Height	Width	Depth
Existing house	395m ²	545m ²	1787m ³	3.5-6m	23m	42m
Existing pool house	234m ²	234m ²	752m ³	4m	10m	23m
Existing total	629m ²	779m ²	2539m ³	6m	38m	54m
Proposed dwelling	555m ²	907m ²	3006m ³	7.8m	28.6m	43.7m
% increase	-11%	16%	18%	30%	-24%	-19%
% increase less basement	-11%	2%	4%	30%	-24%	-19%

Note: Due to proximity and use, the proposed footprint and volume includes the carport/bin store (44m³) and balconies (12m³).

Note: The proposed area and volume includes the basement (110m² and 363m³), balconies and carport/bin store. The volume of the house when excluding these elements is 2609m³

- 21) The following observations are provided in relation to the table:
- There is a net reduction in the footprint, width and depth of the proposed dwelling which arises because of the consolidation of the built form into a more standard footprint as opposed to the circular original dwelling and the encroachment of the pool house extension
 - The increase in area includes 110m² within the basement and 85m² of balcony space, both of which pose little in terms of any spatial impression on the openness of the Green Belt because of their subterranean nature. Were these spaces to be excluded, there would be a 9% reduction in area
 - Similarly, the increase in footprint includes 363m³ of volume within the basement. Were this area to be excluded because it contributes little in terms of spatial impression, there would be a 5% increase in volume
 - The most pronounced impact is an increase in building height, partly because of larger floor to ceiling heights and a pitched roof
- 22) It is not sufficient to discount below ground area and volume because it cannot be seen nor are the above calculations indicative of whether a development would pose harm to the openness of the Green Belt. A wider impression of built volume and its impression on the landscape, including views from various vantage points, consideration of any associated intensification of the site such as from vehicular movements or residential paraphernalia must be considered.
- 23) On that basis, the following observations are noted:
- There is a material increase in the height of the proposed dwelling when measured against the existing dwelling and this would ordinarily be apparent

because the dwelling sits atop an open hillside, high above the River Thames. It is partly because the existing dwelling is set into the hillside and the proposed development involves removal of the existing access such that the dwelling will sit more within the natural topography of the site. In doing so, it would appear in distant views from the towpath on the western side of the River Thames (within Oxfordshire). However, the siting is also amongst woodland trees some 250m from Wargrave Road as the crow flies. The eastern side of the River Thames is also heavily wooded. There are no footpaths in the immediate vicinity and so the increased building height would not be appreciated from the eastern side of the river and would not be overly dominating.

- The towpath lies on the western side of the River Thames, about 420m from the proposed dwelling. At this distance, a 2.3m increase in building height would not be appreciated such that it would be viewed as a material change.
- The proposal includes the removal of the driveway approach from the southern side of the dwelling. The driveway is partially cut into the landscape, leading to the excavated lower floor of the existing dwelling. It will be landscaped, and the new driveway will be via the side and rear of the dwelling. There are measurable benefits upon the landscape when viewed from the south and west. The resulting parking and turning areas are of similar scale although the proposed parking arrangement is in a more concealed location behind the dwelling, which is a positive.
- The proposal includes the removal of about 370m³ of compacted soil, more than this when expanded. However, as a proportion of the proposed footprint and because it is wholly contained within the footprint, there are no measurable impacts upon the openness of the Green Belt.
- The width and depth of the proposed dwelling is materially less than the existing dwelling with less encroachment when considered against the existing dwelling, which has a circular footprint and a pool house extending northwards.



Existing footprint (red) versus proposed footprint

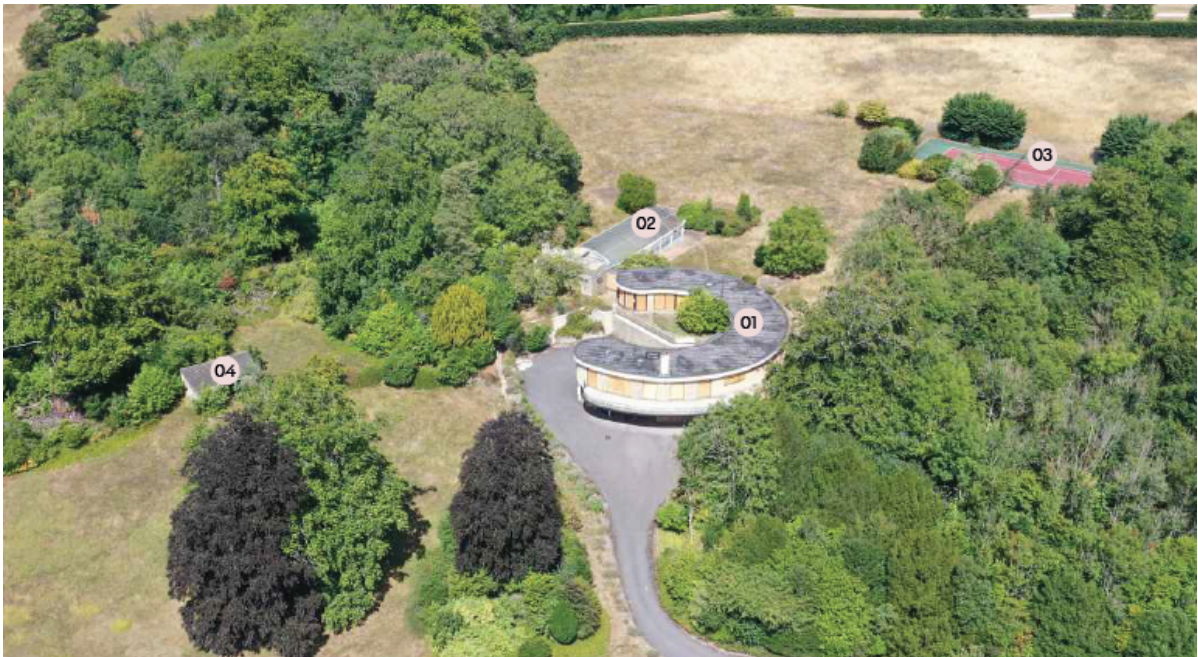


Existing height (pink) versus proposed height

- 24) Overall, it is concluded that whilst the height of the building is materially increasing, it would not be readily appreciated from a visual perspective. Further, the volume of the proposed dwelling is not materially larger than the existing dwelling and when considered with the reductions in footprint, width, and depth (material or otherwise), the cumulative conclusion is that the proposed dwelling is not materially larger than the one it replaces. It follows that the dwelling and the carport/bin store is not inappropriate development.
- 25) The proposal, as originally submitted, included a pool house building to the south west of the dwelling. It was reduced in size and relocated further north due to harm to the setting of the Druid's Temple. It was then removed from the proposal because its relocation posed issues for existing trees, and the resulting potential for impact upon the registered park and garden. For expediency, this part of the development was deleted, and no further assessment is required. A refuse store adjacent to the gate lodge at the entrance to the site on Wargrave Road has also been removed at the request of the applicant.
- 26) If it is inappropriate development, whether the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations, so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development**
- 27) On account of the proposed dwelling not being inappropriate development, there are no very special circumstances.

Demolition of existing building

- 28) Paragraph 203 of the NPPF notes that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be considered in determining the application. Whilst the existing dwelling has unique architectural characteristics, it has not been identified as a non-designated heritage asset and Historic England have declined to list the building. Buildings and structures to be demolished are of modern provenance and of limited architectural merit and quality of craftsmanship. The principle of demolition is accepted and of no harm to relevant heritage assets.



View of existing dwelling (with pool house and tennis court behind)

Curtilage

- 29) The red line area extends to some two hectares and includes a large expanse of land to the rear or north of the dwelling. It includes manicured and unmaintained gardens and a tennis court to the north of the dwelling. There is also a collection of outbuildings across the site, some more visible and intact than others.
- 30) The proposed dwelling will be largely confined to the footprint of the existing dwelling, and nothing turns on this aspect. A walled garden directly north or behind the dwelling would be sited in an area of open grassland between the existing pool house and the tennis court. It would be concluded that it would fall within the existing curtilage.

Character of the Area

- 31) Paragraph 170(b) of the NPPF requires that planning applications enhance the natural and local environment by *'recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.'*
- 32) Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale, mass, layout, built form, height and character of the area and must be of high-quality design. R1 and RD1 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires that development contribute positively towards and be compatible with the historic or underlying character and quality of the local area and R11 requires a coherent street character, including in terms of scale, rhythm, proportion, and height.
- 33) RD11 notes that replacement buildings may be appropriate in the countryside where there is no adverse increase in scale, form, or footprint and where there are environmental improvements. As a reference, a 50% increase in volume for a one storey development is acceptable when compared with the original building.

Landscape impact

34) Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (November 2019) (WBLVA) identifies this site as being located within the Remenham Wooded Chalk Slopes (D1) landscape character area, the main characteristic of which is the dramatic chalk slopes and cliffs rising sharply from valley floodplain of the River Thames and steep valley sides. The site encompasses many of the other typical characteristics of this landscape character area including, heavily wooded (in places) on the steep valley sides, areas of open pasture or 'downland', connection with the formal parkland estates, sense of peacefulness, and dramatic views over the Thames Valley. This is an important landscape directly influenced by the dramatic landscape of the chalk slopes and is in good condition.

35) The strategy for this landscape identified within the Landscape Character Assessment is:

'...to conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape and sense of place created by the combination of dramatic landform, parklands and tracts of woodland and pockets of open pasture.

The key aspects to be conserved and actively managed are the extensive woodland, including ancient woodland. There is an opportunity to restore and strengthen the hedgerow network and to manage, and increase the extent of, the ecologically valuable chalk grassland.

In terms of development, the aim is to conserve the sparse settlement pattern and historic built form of the hamlets, farms, and manors.'

36) The Landscape Guidelines within the WBLCA for LCA D1 are as follows:

- Conserve and enhance the wooded character of the landscape. Conserve BAP priority habitats, ancient woodlands, and woodland copses, which provide ecological interest, and a wooded backdrop. Continue to promote appropriate management through natural regeneration, control of non-native species and coppicing as a management tool for neglected woodland.
- Increase the extent of native deciduous woodland, using locally occurring native species following the existing pattern of wooded ridges. Plan for the next generation of parkland and hedgerow trees with a programme of tree planting. Seek to avoid introduction of coniferous boundaries and shelterbelts.
- Conserve the open and rural qualities of the landscape. Manage and enhance the wildlife interest of agricultural fields by encouraging the creation of uncultivated field margins and other wildlife-friendly farming methods, particularly around the more intensively farmed fields in the north.
- Conserve and manage hedgerows as important wildlife habitats and landscape features, as well as the links they provide across the landscape and between areas of woodland. Reinstate or repair hedgerows with native species where there are opportunities to do so.
- Conserve and protect the landscape pattern of mixed pasture and arable fields and encourage appropriate management of grassland by grazing.
- Conserve and protect the parkland landscapes by limiting possible harmful changes of use. Retain mature and veteran trees while planning for the next generation of parkland trees to ensure a sustainable population.

- Conserve, enhance and manage woodland and chalk grassland habitats particularly the BAP priority habitats from development and changes in land use. Much of this area is part of the Chiltern Escarpment BOA. This network of natural habitats, which extends into Windsor and Maidenhead, has been identified as a target for habitat creation and restoration and positive management of chalk grassland and woodland. An appropriate woodland and grassland management regime is critical.
- Conserve the numerous listed historic buildings and structures, including those in Wargrave Conservation Area and Park Place and Temple Combe Registered Park and Garden.
- Enhance sense of place through careful design (including siting, massing, scale materials and landscape – and sensitive lighting to retain dark skies at night) to minimise the impacts of any potential new development on valuable attributes.
- Conserve distinctive wooded character of undeveloped skylines. Consider the impact of any development, particularly vertical development, on skylines, particularly where it would have the potential to be highly visible from adjacent character areas. Develop sympathetic fell cycles to maintain positive character, particularly phased cycles along sensitive skylines to ensure that the wooded backdrop to the Thames is maintained. Particular care should be taken in the siting of communication masts or other vertical elements, which have the potential to be highly visible in this elevated landscape.
- Protect the views across and along the Thames Valley, into and from the Chilterns.
- Protect the strong perceptions of tranquillity, remoteness, and dark skies in the landscape, through the management of development

- 37) The application was supported by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) which has considered the effects of the proposed development on the landscape character and public views to the site. The effects of the proposed development on the site landscape character are considered to be Substantial Adverse during construction leading to Moderate Adverse after construction. However, the effects of the proposals on the wider landscape character Remenham Wooded Chalk Slopes (D1) are assessed as Moderate Adverse during construction and Negligible Adverse once completed.
- 38) It is agreed that views to the site are limited especially from the north and north-east due to restricted public access and large blocks of woodland. However, it is important to note that the site has long ranging views out from the top of the chalk river cliff / valley side, which is one of the significant features of the site. Therefore, conversely there will be views towards the site, some of which are identified in the LVIA. Views to the site, wooded chalk slopes and wooded horizons, from the opposite side of the valley and from the River Thames are an important and a special part of this landscape which should not be compromised.
- 39) In chapter 10 of the LVIA, a number of landscape and ecological mitigation objectives are proposed and these form part of the assessment in considering the overall magnitude of effects. These proposals will provide a positive benefit to the development and parkland setting. The suggestion of the Trees Officer is that as many of the landscape and ecological proposals in the Woodland Management Plan are outside the red line of the site they cannot be conditioned and would need to be addressed through a s106 agreement. However, Section 72(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 allows for conditions to be imposed for regulating the

development or use of any land under the control of the applicant (whether or not it is land in respect of which the application was made) or requiring the carrying out of works on any such land, so far as appears to the local planning authority to be expedient for the purposes of or in connection with the development authorised by the permission. Application of the Woodland Management Plan is therefore reasonable as a condition of the consent, and this is outlined in Condition 6.

- 40) The Council's Trees and Landscape Officer has noted that the sensitivity or significance of the RPG nor landscape features of significance as being important, do not seem to be factored into the LVIA approach. They had requested that the setting and context of the proposal within this important and historical landscape be carefully considered in relation to the Druids Temple, Registered Historic Park and Garden and long-distance views into the site be incorporated. A Conservation Plan for the whole of the Registered Park and Garden dated 2005 identified the separate character areas within the park and the significance of various landscape, architectural and ecological features within those areas. Within the Temple Combe Estate, which encompasses this site, the features of National significance are the views, woodland and Druids Temple with other aspects being of Regional or Local importance. The overall significance was assessed as Regional, i.e., of some significance. These views are shared by the Gardens Trust.
- 41) In response to the absence of detail, the planning agent has referred to the Heritage Impact Assessment, namely paragraph 5.28-5.37 where it is stated that "*the change to this view would not be harmful to heritage values and the residential character of the estate would remain appreciable alongside its clear landscape value*". Whilst this is somewhat limited in terms of the scope of the assessment, it is still addressed. It is the view of the Trees and Landscape Officer, however, that due to the other changes that have occurred within the RPG, it is essential that these are properly considered in combination with the significant changes proposed within this site and therefore a Conservation Management Strategy will need to be produced so that a comprehensive ecological and landscape approach is taken to the RPG as a whole. An existing Conservation Management Strategy as part of an Integrated Estate Management Plan applies to Park Place but it excludes Templecombe as it falls outside the ownership. The application provides a good opportunity to incorporate this particular site under a separate plan and ensure a consistency in approach with the existing Park Place strategy and this can be reasonably required as part of the s106 process. The Woodland Management Plan in Condition 6 would form part of this.

Scale and form

- 42) The Templecombe estate was subdivided from the Park Place estate between 1867 and 1970 with a modest mansion built on the site at the time. It was demolished and replaced with "*a large curvaceous house in a Modernist Style inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright (Hadley & Partners, 1963-64) and replacing a house of c.1867). Random rubble facings, flat roofs, all the living quarters on one storey*". A linked pool house extends to the north of the building.
- 43) The proposed dwelling is of a grander size and scale, partly because of an enlarged building height and floorspace and partly because it sits higher on the site (as part of the application, the existing driveway from the south will be removed and the natural topography restored). Paragraph 24 has concluded that the dwelling is not materially

larger than the one it replaces, and, on this basis, the overall scale, form, and bulk of the development is not inappropriate. The dwelling sits atop but not at the top of the hillside, partly concealed by existing woodland. It would be visible in wider views from the River Thames and the Oxfordshire side of the river but despite the assessment of the LVIA from the Landscape Officer above, the change in topography and the significant size of the site and its position within the site are such that it would not be any concerns with the scale and form of the structure in a broad planning sense. Certification of the building height is, however, required in Condition 11.

- 44) A four-car carport and bin store are located to the north of the replacement dwelling in a more concealed location behind the dwelling. It forms part of a reconfigured driveway that approaches from the south east of the site thereby allowing for the removal of the existing driveway from the south west. This has a positive landscape outcome for the site and improves the views and setting of the dwelling within the site.
- 45) An existing tennis court 60m to the north of the dwelling will be retained and a landscaped walled garden established between the parking court and the tennis court. It comprises a mix of hedges, hard paving, manicured lawn, and gates. There are no in-principle objections both because of its concealed location and as much of the proposal not comprising development, if at all. Final landscaping details are required by Condition 5.

Design and materials

- 46) The Design and Access Statement offers the following on design grounds:

"The proposal references the previous manor house in its form while reducing the roof pitches of the new dwelling to be more sympathetic to the surroundings. The massing of the main house is also broken up into 3 elements of different heights - the front wings, accommodating the bedrooms, a central volume for the reception and living areas, and the rear wings, which provide additional family and guest spaces. The lowest form in the rear garden, faces the Thames Valley offering an expansive view over the river. The surrounding landscape follows the topography of the site and has been designed to step down around the building - giving the impression that the new dwelling nestles into the landscape."

- 47) There is some contention with the proposed design of the dwelling. The Council's Trees Officer has raised objection, noting that "...the use of materials does not reflect the local vernacular of the area. The proportions of the structure in relation to the windows and roof form does not reference classical characteristics of large country houses as found in this borough, and large wooden balconies such as proposed are also not features commonly found. Overall, I consider the design and form of the proposed dwelling to be unsympathetic and incongruous and will detract from the character and quality of the RPG, Green Belt designation and wider landscape character."
- 48) Amendments have been made to adopt consistency in window proportions and to ensure that the two wings sit more comfortably with the eaves of the main part of the dwelling. The shallow roof pitch is partly a response to the depth and width of the footprint and to reduce any perception of built volume. The architect has indicated

that the design ethos is a synthesis of the wider context of the Park Place Estate where design typologies range from the traditional Franco-Italian mansion to the more contemporary typologies evident for example at Stowdes and Conway Park.

- 49) These elements have been assimilated into a design approach which is predicated on a contemporary interpretation of the original Templecombe House which stood on this site as a design template and built 1867 yet ensuring that through a better understanding of the landscape and heritage that the proposed development assimilates and better relates to the registered park and gardens and the listed Druid's Temple.
- 50) The strategy has been extended into the landscape where the design takes inspiration from historic 18th and 19th century houses and gardens with a sweeping lawn drawing inspiration from Victorian gardens, and a walled garden for growing vegetables, fruit and cutflowers adopting a feature from many historic houses located in estate and parkland settings.
- 51) There are no concerns raised by the Council's Conservation Officer, which notes that the *"proposed dwelling is a two-storey structure over a basement, set on a H-plan, with a strong horizontal emphasis, under a hipped roof. The design is contemporary but with a nod to the now demolished 1860s mansion."* There are also no objections from Historic England or the Gardens Trust (the latter in relation to design).
- 52) The Design and Access Statement also offers the following with respect to the materials palette:
- "It was of central importance to incorporate a simple palette of locally sourced and natural materials into the design, such as stone, timber, and slate. Referencing the local vernacular, the design celebrates craftsmanship by using intricate stonework on most of the building's facades. The rear wings of the building are clad in weathered timber, giving the structure a light and weightless appearance in line with surrounding barns. This material choice also ties in with the proposed pool house to the West of the main dwelling, providing continuity across the site's elevation."*
- 53) Specific details are limited and so are required by Condition 8. Therefore, in light of the above analysis, there is insufficient evidence withholding planning permission on design grounds.

External lighting

- 54) Paragraph 180 of the NPPF aims to limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes, and nature conservation. There are no specific details of external lighting and to ensure that there is no adverse impact upon the setting, details are required in Condition 3.

Conclusion

- 55) The listed status of the park and garden, the proximity of the dwelling within the wider setting of the Druid's Temple, the siting within the Green Belt and the ecological significance of the site (as discussed from paragraph 82) are adequate reasons to

justify the removal of permitted development rights in Classes A and E of Part 2 of the GPDO. This is outlined in Condition 17.

Heritage and Conservation

56) Local Authorities are required by Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a listed building, including its setting. Paragraphs 199-202 of the NPPF requires consideration of the harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset and Policy TB24 of the MDD Local Plan requires the conservation and enhancement of Listed Buildings and Historic Parks and Gardens, including their views and setting.

57) The property forms part of Park Place and Temple Combe, which is a Grade II* listed Historic Park and Garden. The listing refers to the following:

“Park Place, a C19 country house on the site of an earlier house, surrounded by C18 and C19 gardens and pleasure grounds and landscape park, with work in the mid to late C19 by Robert Marnock. A second, smaller estate, Temple Combe, developed during the late C18, lies enclosed within the Park Place estate.”

58) Of the Templecombe Estate, which the application concerns, the register entry notes:

“South of Happy Valley lie the grounds of the former Temple Combe, a house erected during the later C18 at the top of the scarp, enjoying panoramic views of the Thames Valley. The original house, lying 700m south-east of Park Place house, was demolished in the C20, to be replaced in 1963-4 by a low, curvaceous modern house on the same site (Pevsner 1966), known as Happy Valley. This small estate, enclosed within the Park Place estate, is largely composed of woodland surrounding open lawns and paddocks, its principal feature being the Druidic Temple (erected 1787, listed grade II) [...] From the Temple views extend south-west across the river to the water meadows and the distant hillside.”

59) About 85m to the south west of the existing dwelling is the Grade II listed Druid Temple, with the following listing:

“C18. A collection of 45 granite megalithic stones set vertically into the ground with other stones as lintols, in the form of a circular area approximately 9 metres in diameter, approached by a passage on the north east side nearly 5 metres long by one and a half metres wide, through an entrance of 2 large stones with lintol, and roofed with 4 capstones. Tablet stone with inscription stone in French near entrance. The temple was presented to Field-Marshal the Honourable Henry Seymour Conway by the inhabitants of Jersey when he was Governor of that Island, where it was found on the Mont de la Ville near St. Helier. Was formerly part of Park Place estate. Included for historic interest. V.C.H. Vol.III. p.192. B.O.E. Berkshire p.208.”



Druid's Temple

- 60) A 19th century gate lodge to the estate (by the main drive) has also been identified as a non-designated heritage asset.
- 61) The Council's Conservation Officer, Historic England and the Gardens Trust were all consulted. Objections were initially raised in relation to the siting of the pool house as it would harm the significance of the Druid's Temple and this area of the registered parkland (less than substantial).
- 62) The key significance of this part of the estate resides with the Druid's Temple and its naturalistic setting of grassland enclosed by woodland with views of the Thames Valley. The ability to see the existing dwelling and pool house buildings is currently limited from the Druid's Temple, which is positive.
- 63) The parkland setting in which the Druid's Temple is experienced forms a discrete but important part of the wider Park Place and Templecombe Estate registered parkland. The temple was clearly set out as a destination within the 18th century landscape, originally with an avenue leading in its direction that ended to reveal an open area of grassland with trees framing the backdrop. The megalithic structure was positioned very deliberately to take in the handsome views of the Thames Valley to the south west but within an open grassed area such that the structure itself could be appreciated.
- 64) The replacement dwelling is to occupy the site of the existing house. This location was previously inhabited by an 1860s mansion, cleared for the present structure. As such, the principle of replacing the dwelling on the site a new high-quality dwelling of the period is follows from precedent and is in-keeping with the characteristic of the site.
- 65) The height and width of the replacement dwelling helps limit its visibility from the Druid's Temple when combined with existing trees and vegetation. This element of the proposal is considered to have a neutral impact on the significance of relevant heritage assets.
- 66) The detached car port to the rear of the new dwelling, within a large hard-landscaped forecourt is relatively modest, appropriately designed in materials to match the main house, and screened by proposed built form. This element has negligible impact on the relevant heritage assets. It serves to regularise parking arrangements, which at

present have a more dispersed and random character due to lack of adequate provisions.

- 67) As identified in the Register Entry, the primary landscape features of the Temple Combe Estate are large areas of lawn and grassland surrounded by woodland. These features are largely retained within the proposed scheme, which also sees the addition of a walled formal garden and orchard planting to the north of the site. The redirection of access will follow a sweeping and sinuous route, in-keeping with the character of the registered park and garden.
- 68) The existing woodlands at Templecombe largely still reflect the historic form and the area of the Pleasure Ground around the Druid's Temple contains an excellent collection of exotic and native specimen trees including lime, wellingtonia, pine and beech. The Gardens Trust have recommended conserving important veteran and specimen trees with a view to thinning the woodland to create tree clumps within an open grassland setting, recovering the 18th-century character of this area. Future proofing the management of the estate is key given the effects of climate change on historic plantings. Condition 6 reflects this aspect with the submission of a Woodland Management Plan.
- 69) In this respect, having regard to the less than substantial harm, the development as amended would be acceptable in terms of Section 16 of the NPPF and Policy TB24 of the MDD Local Plan and no objection is raised. The proposal also complies with the requirements of Section 66 of the Town and Country (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the statutory duties of the Council have been discharged.

Archaeology

- 70) Policy TB25 of the MDD Local Plan requires the retention of archaeological sites in situ. An Archaeological Desk Based Assessment (HCUK Group, dated March 2022) was submitted with the application. The assessment concludes that the site does not contain any designated heritage assets of archaeological importance.
- 71) Berkshire Archaeology have reviewed the proposal and when noting that the proposed dwelling is mostly sited within the footprint of the existing dwelling, no objection is raised, subject to a programme of works in Condition 7. This will secure a scheme of archaeological works to evaluate areas of the site where below-ground impacts are proposed, in order to assess for the presence or absence of buried archaeological remains. Should such remains be encountered, a further phase of mitigation works may be required.

Accessibility (incorporating The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010))

- 72) The Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010, including with respect to age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion, or belief. Policy CP2 of the Core Strategy also seeks to ensure that new development contributes to the provision of sustainable and inclusive communities.
- 73) There is no indication or evidence that persons with protected characteristics have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities and there would be no

significant adverse impacts as a result of the development. Ramped access is provided from the parking area and a passenger lift serves all three floors. The open plan nature of the dwelling allows for good wheelchair access and there are sleeping and toilet facilities on the ground floor such that it is adaptable and accessible for disabled use.

Housing Amenity

- 74) The proposal exceeds the minimum internal space standards, including with respect to bedroom sizes, living spaces and storage as required in Policy TB07 of the MDD and R17 of the SPD and Technical Housing Standards. There is also adequate external garden space extending to over one hectare.

Neighbour Amenity

- 75) There are no immediately adjoining neighbours and no neighbour amenity issues as a result.

Highway Access and Parking Provision

- 76) Policy CC07 and Appendix 2 of the MDD Local Plan stipulates a minimum of three off street parking spaces and two bicycle parking spaces for a development of this scale. A carport is proposed at the rear of the dwelling which includes four parking spaces and three cycle spaces. This accords with policy and no objection is raised. EV charging is included as integrated into the design of the carport and the Council's Highways Officer has sought details. However, given the development relates to a single dwelling and the charging point is integrated, there is no reasonable requirement for these details by condition.
- 77) The existing access from Wargrave Road is being used, with a rediverted driveway near the dwelling providing access to the rear of the property. This is to the satisfaction of the Highways Officer.

Landscaping and Trees

- 78) Policy CC03 of the MDD Local Plan aims to protect green infrastructure networks, retain existing trees, and establish appropriate landscaping and Policy TB21 requires consideration of the landscape character. R14 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires well-designed hard and soft landscaping that complements housing.
- 79) An Arboricultural Impact Assessment Survey and Report dated October 2022 has been provided. Overall, the development has been carefully considered to restrict the removal of trees and woodland as much as possible and been assisted by locating the new dwelling on a similar footprint of the existing dwelling. There are some tree removals proposed as the extent of the proposed development is greater than the existing, and the Council's Trees Officer has no objection in the main provided replacement trees/woodland are included in the detailed landscape proposal as required by Condition 5.
- 80) A Woodland Management Plan has been produced as part of the overall approach to the long-term management of the site. The Trees Officer is supportive of this approach but notes that all the woodland parcels are outside the red line site

boundary. As noted in paragraph 39, this is best accommodated via Condition 6 and would fall within the scope of the s106 process.

Ecology

- 81) Policy TB23 of the MDD Local Plan requires the incorporation of new biodiversity features, buffers between habitats and species of importance and integration with the wider green infrastructure network.
- 82) The majority of the site is within a Local Wildlife Site (LWS) - Templecombe Wood SU78V04 and an Ecological Impact Assessment (Brindle and Green, October 2022) was submitted with the application. The dwelling will be sited mostly within the footprint of the existing dwelling which will aid the scheme on biodiversity grounds. The Impact Assessment makes the following observations:
- Breeding bird surveys concluded that the habitats in the site ownership offer foraging and nesting habitat for a diverse range of locally frequent species, including Red Kite a Schedule 1 bird species.
 - An exceptional population of slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*) and a small population of grass snake (*Natrix helvetica*) were recorded along the woodland edge within the landownership. Surveys within the impact areas (application boundary) revealed a low population of slow worm and grass snake. Habitat onsite is considered suitable to support amphibians.
 - The existing dwelling was found to support 4 soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) day roosts. All roosts are of low conservation value.
 - Bat activity around the redline boundary was moderate, with the majority of passes relating to individual bats. Activity was recorded adjacent to Building 1 and 3 by common and rarer light sensitive species including brown long eared, *Myotis* sp, and barbastelle.
 - Badger activity was recorded across the blue line ownership boundary of the estate.
 - Three invertebrate assemblages and eleven invertebrate species were recorded which are species of conservation concern, notably stag beetle and striped lychnis (Caterpillar).

Local Wildlife Site

- 83) The red line boundary of the proposed development is almost entirely within Templecombe Wood local wildlife site (SU78V04). The current process for drawing local wildlife site boundaries would expect to exclude residential development unless these dwellings support a key feature of the local wildlife site being designated. Templecombe Wood's boundary was drawn prior to this approach and so the existing dwelling and ancillary buildings are included even though they do not appear to contribute to the reason for local wildlife site designation. The Appraisal should review the habitats in and around the dwelling and use the survey results to determine whether the proposal leads to a net loss of qualifying habitat but accept that development within the footprint of the current development could occur without deterioration to the local wildlife site.

Habitats of Principal Importance

- 84) The Appraisal survey indicates that there is lowland calcareous grassland habitat of principal importance to the immediate front and rear of the existing dwelling. This is an extremely rare habitat in the borough – the most recent monitoring report from Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (2022) indicates that only 5.06ha of this grassland habitat has been identified in the Borough up until this discovery. The proposed development would result in the loss of 0.26ha of lowland calcareous grassland. Uncompensated, this would be a significant net loss of circa 5% of this habitat of principal importance. The Appraisal proposes that this loss can be compensated through habitat enhancement within the blue line of land ownership and proposed locations for habitat enhancement are shown in a plan in Appendix 10. No further information is given about the habitat type and condition of the areas identified in Appendix 10 that are outside of the red line.
- 85) The Council's Ecology Officer is not convinced that sufficient compensation can be achieved within the areas highlighted to offset the loss of 0.26ha of lowland calcareous grassland. However, sufficient compensation could be achieved through enhancement across a larger area within the blue line. Rather than secure this via a Landscape and Environmental Management Plan, the long term management and monitoring requires compensation via a planning obligation in the s106 process.
- 86) The wider site (within the blue line) contains woodland habitat of principal importance – a mixture of lowland mixed deciduous woodland and the locally rarer lowland beech and yew woodland. With the removal of the pool room from the proposed development, it is reasonable to conclude that there will be no net loss of woodland habitat of principal importance. A Woodland Management Plan (November 2022) has been submitted to indicate how the woodland on site will be protected and enhanced. This appears to have excluded the section of woodland called 'Fox Bury' on OS MasterMap. All woodland areas should be covered by the management plan as required by Condition 6 and as following through to the Conservation Management Strategy for the whole site so as not to have separate strategies that may conflict. Broadly, the activities given in section 6 of the Woodland Management Plan are appropriate although there may not be a need for new planting in years 1 and 2 and this item needs to be covered in more detail. The vision and objectives of the Woodland Management Plan may be appropriate, but it does not clearly set out measurable indicators of success and monitoring required, and this detail needs to be within the Conservation Management Strategy.
- 87) The proposed development does include creation of a traditional orchard in a location of species poor neutral grassland. Traditional orchard (that is managed to retain a species rich grassland underneath) is a habitat of principal importance and this would be a welcome improvement to the local wildlife site.

Species of Principal Importance

- 88) The Appraisal identified a number of species of principal importance supported by/within the lowland calcareous grassland:
- The record of Chalk Hill Blue butterfly is a first for Wokingham Borough in recent history according to the local environmental records centre. This is a species restricted to calcareous grassland. This is a major discovery for the Borough. This species should be used as a key indicator of successful compensation and enhancement of habitats on site.

- The record of Striped Lychnis moth is a first for Wokingham Borough in recent history according to the local environmental records centre. This is a species restricted to calcareous grassland. This is a major discovery for the Borough. This species should be used as a key indicator of successful compensation and enhancement of habitats on site.
 - The records of Dingy Skipper butterfly are a first for Wokingham Borough in recent history according to the local environmental records centre. This further emphasises the importance of the site and justifies the selection as a local wildlife site.
 - The record of Grizzled Skipper butterfly is the second only for Wokingham Borough in recent history according to the local environmental records centre. This further emphasises the importance of the site and justifies the selection as a local wildlife site.
- 89) The record of White Helleborine is the second only for Wokingham Borough in recent history according to the local environmental records centre. This further emphasises the importance of the site and justifies the selection as a local wildlife site. White Helleborine could well be within the woodland habitat of principal importance within the blue line, also, and this species should be factored into ongoing management of the woodland. The Council's Ecology Officer is not convinced that successful translocation of this species is possible because of its strong reliance on a mycorrhizal connection to a host tree throughout its life. This species would need to be used as an indicator of success for management for biodiversity in the Conservation Management Strategy – not only would it be appropriate for biodiversity, but it is also worth noting that G.C. Druce mentions this species as being a notable part of the parkland estate in his Flora of Berkshire published in 1897.

Protected Species

- 90) Red Kite has been recorded as breeding on site. Recommendations are made in the Appraisal to apply mitigation measures during construction to avoid disturbance of this species during the breeding season. This is outlined in the CEMP in Condition 4.
- 91) Badger setts have been identified. There is a risk to the setts and species during construction. The Appraisal recommends mitigation measures during construction – potentially requiring a licence from Natural England to close one or more setts. The favourable conservation status of this protected species could be maintained the CEMP in Condition 4.
- 92) Soprano Pipistrelle bats have been identified as using two of the buildings on site proposed to be demolished. It is possible for the development to provide sufficient compensation to maintain favourable conservation status. It is not unlikely that Natural England will issue a derogation licence to allow destruction of these roosts with licence conditions to provide compensation. The Natural England derogation licence and details of agreed compensation be an item that is covered within the CEMP in Condition 4.
- 93) The transects and static detector surveys indicate that the site has at least three very important species using the site - Greater Horseshoe bat, Barbastelle bat and Serotine bat. The first two species are listed as Annex 2 under the Habitats Directive and the third species has been classified as vulnerable to extinction in a 2018 review by the IUCN. It is unlikely that the site is functionally linked land to a Special Area of

Conservation for the two Annex 2 species and that this aspect does not need to be considered further.

- 94) The survey results do highlight that the site is important for foraging bats, with significant activity in the woods and along the access drive. It will be important to ensure that the proposed development does not introduce external lighting to these sensitive areas that would deteriorate the value of the foraging habitat for these species. Lighting is conditioned at Condition 3.
- 95) The Appraisal makes the case that the proposed development is unlikely to adversely affect the local conservation status of Great Crested Newts and that the risk of killing and injuring individual Great Crested Newts can be adequately mitigated through precautionary measures secured within the CEMP. This is agreed and forms part of Condition 4.
- 96) A significant population of Slow-worms has been discovered on site along with the occasional Grass Snake. The approach recommended in the Appraisal that mitigation measures for these two species can be secured via the CEMP in Condition 4 such that killing and injuring individuals is satisfactory. The local planning authority can be confident that the favourable conservation status of these species of principal importance can be maintained provided that a Conservation Management Strategy for the whole site edged blue is secured through a planning obligation.
- 97) The survey effort undertaken is sufficient to conclude that Hazel Dormouse is likely absent from the woodlands on site and the species does not need to be considered further.

Conclusion

- 98) Subject to Conditions 3 and 4 and the planning obligation for a Conservation Management Strategy in the s106 process, the proposal is capable of providing sufficient habitat compensation/enhancement and the Council's Ecology Officer is of the opinion that the proposed development will not be detrimental to biodiversity nor contrary to local plan policies on biodiversity.
- 99) For the avoidance of doubt the CMS in the s106 should include the following ecological requirements as a minimum:
 - a) Sufficient compensation in both area and quality for loss of habitat of principal importance.
 - b) Ongoing management of these habitats for a minimum of 30 years.
 - c) Details of monitoring and reporting against measurable indicators of success.
 - d) Indicators of success to include (as a minimum):
 - Biodiversity Net Gain metric assessment of habitats
 - Population assessments of Chalk Hill Blue, Dingy Skipper, Grizzled Skipper and Striped Lychnis lepidoptera
 - Population assessment of White Helleborine
 - Ongoing presence of reptile species of principal importance

Building Sustainability

- 100) An Energy and Sustainability Statement was submitted with the application (The PES, dated 14 October 2022). It recognises the good south western aspect and

references large areas of glazing, inset balconies allowing for summer shading, glazing to g value of 0.5 to avoid overheating, slab floors for heat absorption, meeting, or exceeding standards for boilers. An air source heat pump and solar array is also proposed. The net energy saving is specified at an 86% reduction over the baseline model. This is supportive of Council policy and no objection is raised. Compliance with the Energy Statement is required by Condition 16.

Waste Storage

- 101) A dedicated bin storage area is located alongside the carport. It is sufficiently sized to accommodate general waste, recycling, green waste and food waste/compost bins and no objection is raised. The bins will then be delivered to Wargrave Road for kerbside collection, much the same as the existing arrangement. This is acceptable. A previous proposal for a waste collection point alongside the existing gate lodge building has been removed from the proposed plans as it is now surplus to requirements.

Flooding

- 102) The site and access are within Flood Zone 1 and the replacement dwelling represents no additional flood risk or vulnerability. It is therefore acceptable in terms of Policy CC09.

Drainage

- 103) The application was supported by a Flood Risk Assessment (The PES, dated 14 October 2022). The proposal involves a marginal increase in impermeable area and proposes a sustainable drainage system which accords with the drainage hierarchy. The Council's Drainage Officer has reviewed the proposal and raises no objection, subject to final drainage details and permeable paving in Condition 10. It is therefore acceptable in terms of Policy CC10.

Contamination

- 104) The site is listed as potentially contaminated on Council's inventory and the application was supported by an Environmental Report (October 2020) that stated that there is a moderate to high risk of contaminants being present due to historical and current gas works use elsewhere on the site. However, the Council's Environmental Health Officer has reviewed the proposal and raises no objection. Given there is no change of use of the land and the proposed dwelling is sited on the footprint of the existing dwelling, there are no foreseeable risks, subject to further details in the event of unexpected contamination in Condition 15.

Community Infrastructure Levy

- 105) The application is liable for CIL payments because it involves a net increase of more than 100m² in floor area. It is payable at £365/m² index linked.

APPENDIX 1 - Conditions and informatives

APPROVAL, subject to:

- A) A Section 106 agreement to deliver landscape and ecological measures within a Conservation Management Strategy for the Templecombe Estate consistent with the existing Park Place Conservation Management Plan/Integrated Estate Management Plan**
- B) The following conditions and informatives:**

Conditions

1. Timescale

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

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

2. Approved details

This permission is in respect of the following plans:

- 20083-XX-010 Rev P4, dated 30 December 2022
- 0083-XX-700 Rev P5, dated 30 December 2022
- 20083-XX-701 Rev P4, dated 30 December 2022
- 20083-MH-702 Rev P1, dated 14 October 2022
- 20083-MH-703 Rev P2, dated 19 October 2022
- 20083-MH-704 Rev P2, dated 13 December 2022
- 20083-MH-705 Rev P2, dated 19 October 2022
- 20083-MH-715 Rev P3, dated 13 December 2022
- 20083-MH-720 Rev P3, dated 13 December 2022
- 20083-MH-721 Rev P4, dated 13 December 2022
- 2.04, 2.05, 2.06 and 2.07, dated 28 September 2022

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details unless other minor variations are agreed in writing after the date of this permission and before implementation with the Local Planning Authority.

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

3. External lighting

No development shall be occupied until a lighting design strategy for biodiversity for the access drive, woodland habitat and any other structure supporting compensation bat roost features has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The strategy shall:

- a) identify those areas/features on site that are particularly sensitive for bats, badgers and glow-worms and that are likely to cause disturbance in or around their breeding sites and resting places or along important

routes used to access key areas of their territory, for example, for foraging; and

- b) show how and where external lighting will be installed (through the provision of appropriate lighting contour plans and technical specifications) so that it can be clearly demonstrated that areas to be lit will not disturb or prevent the above species using their territory or having access to their breeding sites and resting places. All external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the strategy, and these shall be maintained thereafter in accordance with the strategy. Under no circumstances should any other external lighting be installed without prior consent from the local planning authority.

Reason: To limit the impact of light pollution on the Natural Environment, and bats in particular. Relevant policy: NPPF Paragraphs 170, 174 and 180 and Core Strategy Policy CP7.

4. Construction Environmental Management Plan

No development including demolition, ground works or vegetation clearance shall commence until a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The biodiversity and wildlife measures shall include the following:

- a) Risk assessment of potentially damaging construction activities
- b) Identification of “biodiversity protection zones”
- c) Practical measures (both physical measures and sensitive working practices) to avoid or reduce impacts during construction (may be provided as a set of method statements)
- d) The location and timing of sensitive works to avoid harm to biodiversity features
- e) The times during construction when specialist ecologists need to be present on site to oversee works
- f) Responsible persons and lines of communication
- g) The role and responsibilities on site of an ecological clerk of works (ECoW) or similarly competent person
- h) Use of protective fences, exclusion barriers and warning signs
- i) A licence for development works affecting bats obtained from the Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (Natural England)

The approved CEMP shall be adhered to and implemented throughout the construction period strictly in accordance with the approved details, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority until completion of the development. This includes mitigations measures approved in the bat licence shall be maintained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To prevent queuing and parking off site, in the interests of highway safety and convenience and neighbour amenities and to protect wildlife and biodiversity. Relevant policy: National Planning Policy Framework Policy 2021, Core Strategy policies CP3 and CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy TB23.

5. Landscaping

No development excluding demolition shall commence until a final landscape strategy and scheme of hard and soft landscaping (including boundary treatments and finishes to the walled garden) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Details shall include species, planting sizes, spacing and numbers of trees/shrubs to be planted, and any existing trees or shrubs to be retained.

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.

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.

6. Woodland Management Plan (Grampian condition)

No development excluding demolition shall commence until a Woodland Management Plan (WMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The WMP shall be undertaken by qualified practitioners and shall demonstrate long term management and regeneration of the Lowland Beech Woodland within the Templecombe Estate (within the blue line boundary) consistent with the wider management of Park Place through to 2033. The approved WMP shall be implemented through the plan period.

Reason: To ensure management of the woodland as part of the wider registered park and garden. Relevant policy: National Planning Policy Framework Section 16, Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03, TB21 and TB24.

7. Programme of archaeological work

No development other than demolition necessary to undertake works associated with this condition and in consultation with Berkshire Archaeology shall commence until the applicant or their agents or successors in title have secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work (which may comprise more than one phase of works) in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the planning authority. The development shall only take place in accordance with the detailed scheme approved pursuant to this condition.

Reason: The site lies within an area of archaeological potential. The condition will ensure that any archaeological remains within the site are adequately investigated and recorded in order to advance our understanding of the significance of any buried

remains to be lost and in the interest of protecting the archaeological heritage of the Borough.

8. External materials

No development excluding demolition shall take place until details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the building has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the so-approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the external appearance of the building is satisfactory.

Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3, CP11 and CP12 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policies TB01 and TB24.

9. Archival recording

No development shall take place until a detailed record of the existing dwelling has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The recording is to be in the form of 1:50 survey plans and elevations, black and white photographs of all elevations, and typical interior details.

Reason: To maintain a record of the features to be demolished which form part of the historic development of the site. Relevant policy: National Planning Policy Framework Section 16 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB24.

10. Drainage

No development shall take place until details of the drainage system for the site have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The details shall include how the site currently drains and will be drained after proposed development with consideration to SuDS. The approved scheme shall be implemented prior to the first occupation of the development and shall be maintained in the approved form for as long as the development remains on the site.

The hard surfacing shall be constructed from porous materials or provision shall be made to direct water run-off from the hard surface to a permeable or porous area, and the hard surfacing shall thereafter be so maintained.

Reason: To prevent increased flood risk from surface water run-off. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 14, Core Strategy policy CP1 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC09 and CC10.

11. Ground and building levels

No occupation of the development shall take place until a measured survey of the dwelling, as constructed, that certifies that the dwelling has been constructed in accordance with the approved details has been undertaken and submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory form of development relative to surrounding buildings and landscape. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3, CP11 and CP12 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies TB01 and TB21.

12. Protection of trees

No development or other operations shall take place except in complete accordance with the approved Arboricultural Method Statement (ref: BG21.142.23, Rev), dated 20 December 2022 and the accompanying Tree Protection Plans numbered BG.21.142.13 (Plan and Sections 1, 2 and 3), dated 19 December 2022, all prepared by Brindle and Green and (hereinafter referred to as the Approved Scheme).

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.

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.

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.

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.

13. Parking

The dwelling shall not be occupied until the vehicle and cycle parking has been provided in accordance with the approved plans. The vehicle parking spaces shall be permanently maintained and remain available for the parking of vehicles at all times.

Reason: 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.

14. Access construction

The dwelling shall not be occupied until the access has been constructed in accordance with the approved plans.

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

15. Unexpected Contamination.

In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken and where remediation is necessary a remediation scheme must be prepared which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme, a verification report must be prepared, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other off-site receptors in accordance with policy. Relevant policies: National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 118, 170 and 178.

16. Compliance with Energy Statement

The development hereby permitted shall be implemented in accordance with the Energy Strategy Report prepared by The PES, dated 14 October 2022 before the development is first occupied and shall remain operational for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To ensure developments contribute to sustainable development. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 14, Core Strategy policy CP1, Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC05 & the Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document.

17. Restriction of permitted development rights – Classes A and E

Notwithstanding the provisions of Classes A and E 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 outbuildings, enlargement, extensions, 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 neighbouring amenities and to prevent harm to the ecological and landscape qualities of the Registered Park and Garden and the Green Belt. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3, CP11 and CP12 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03, TB01, TB21, TB23 and TB24.

Informatives

1. Section 106 agreement

This permission should be read in conjunction with the legal agreement under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act dated **[INSERT]**, the obligations in which relate to this development.

2. Community Infrastructure Levy

The development hereby permitted is liable to pay the Community Infrastructure Levy. The Liability Notice issued by Wokingham Borough Council will state the current chargeable amount. A revised Liability Notice will be issued if this amount changes. 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, failure to do this will result in penalty surcharges being added. For more information see - [Community Infrastructure Levy advice - Wokingham Borough Council](#). Please submit all CIL forms and enquiries to developer.contributions@wokingham.gov.uk.

3. Pre commencement conditions

The applicant is reminded that this approval is granted subject to conditions which must be complied with prior to the development starting on site. Commencement of the development without complying with the pre-commencement requirements may be outside the terms of this permission and liable to enforcement action. The information required should be formally submitted to the Council for consideration with the relevant fee. Once the details have been approved in writing the development should be carried out only in accordance with those details. If this is not clear please contact the case officer to discuss.

4. Thames Water

Thames Water will aim to provide customers with a minimum pressure of 10m head (approx 1 bar) and a flow rate of 9 litres/minute at the point where it leaves Thames Waters pipes. The developer should take account of this minimum pressure in the design of the proposed development.

5. Demolition Notice

The applicant is reminded that a Demolition Notice may be required to be served on the Council in accordance with current Building Regulations and it is recommended that the Building Control Section be contacted for further advice.

6. Changes to the approved plans

The applicant is reminded that should there be any change from the approved drawings during the build of the development this may require a fresh planning application if the changes differ materially from the approved details. Non-material

changes may be formalised by way of an application under s.96A Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

7. Discussion

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received. This planning application has been the subject of positive and proactive discussions with the applicant in terms of a pre-application process and addressing concerns relating to highway safety.

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.

APPENDIX 2 - Parish Council Comments

Wargrave Parish Council had NO OBJECTION to this application.

Note: It is acknowledged that the original dwelling (that standing as at 1st July 1948), was much larger than both the replacement (the current building) and the proposed. Notwithstanding this and with the aim of seeking improvements through the development process, a condition is requested requiring an agreement being entered into that acknowledges that the proposal represents the maximum extent of development permissible for the Green Belt location thereby effectively extinguishing any perceived (or otherwise) 'surplus' of historical built volume for all earlier iterations of a dwelling on this site.

Marion Woods
Administrative Officer
Wargrave Parish Council

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