

<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	<a href="#">P17/V3134/RM</a>
<b>SITE</b>	Land at Reading Road Harwell, OX11 0LW
<b>PARISH</b>	HARWELL
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Reserved Matters (Appearance, Landscaping, Layout, Scale) for 'Residential development of 16 homes and open space, and associated works, following Outline Planning Permission P15/V1074/O' (as amended by drawings received 11 January 2018).
<b>WARD MEMBER(S)</b>	Janet Shelley Reg Waite
<b>APPLICANT OFFICER</b>	Ede Homes Ltd Liz Fay

---

## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to the following conditions:

### Approved plans:

1. External materials samples to be approved.
2. Landscaping (hard and soft landscaping including lighting, boundary treatment, and replacement tree planting) to be approved.
3. Windows in plot 15 southern elevation to be obscured glazed.
4. Cycle parking facilities.
5. Garages to be used for vehicle parking only.
6. Refuse storage.
7. Turning space for refuse vehicles.

### Informatives:

1. Works within the public highway.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION AND PROPOSAL

- 1.1 This application comes to committee at the discretion of the Planning Manager as the Local Ward Member requested in December 2017 that the application be called in.
- 1.2 The site is located within the built-up area of Harwell village. The site is roughly square in shape, with defined boundaries. The site currently consists of two horse paddocks with stables and access track. The application site is adjacent to Reading Road to the north, and is bounded by existing and proposed residential development to the east and west. The existing vehicular access to the site is gained from Reading Road to the north-west corner of the site. A location plan is **attached** at Appendix 1.
- 1.3 The site lies on the southern boundary of North Wessex Vale AONB. The application site is classified as Landscape Character Area 5C Hendred Plain,

which is within the 'Downs Plain and Scarp' Landscape Character Type as defined in the North Wessex Downs AONB: Integrated Landscape Character Assessment. The AONB area has a high scenic quality which has statutory protection in order to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of its landscape.

- 1.4 The topography where the site is located initially rises steeply from Reading Road creating an earth bank, and then rises further forming a gentle slope towards the south. The character of the area along Reading Road is residential, and the immediate surroundings comprise a mixture of bungalows and two storey houses. The character of the surroundings also varies in terms of plots sizes, shapes and the location of the dwellings within their plots. The density of development in this part of Harwell is low and reflects the rural setting of the village, which falls within the North Wessex Downs AONB.
- 1.5 This application follows outline approval where the principle of developing the site to accommodate 16 dwellings was approved along with access arrangements (application Ref. P15/V1074/O).
- 1.6 This application seeks reserved matters approval for the appearance, landscaping, layout and scale of the development. The design of the proposed layout (provided at **Appendix 2**) provides a similar road arrangement to that previously approved, with small modifications to the layout of plots and to the design of the open space.
- 1.7 The development proposes 37.5% affordable housing (4 affordable rented and 2 shared ownership) as was agreed at outline stage. These are provided towards the northern boundary of the site with Reading Road, in two clusters, in pairs of semi-detached houses. This differs slightly from the outline layout which provided two clusters, each comprising a terrace of three dwellings. The remainder of the development comprises 10 detached houses, as did the outline layout.
- 1.8 Proposed external materials comprise a mixture of multi-brick walls, light coloured render, timber cladding and plain tile cladding walls, with roofing in natural slate and plain clay tiles. The same palette of materials is proposed for use for both the market and affordable housing.
- 1.9 A section 106 agreement with the district council was signed at outline stage. The agreement provides for affordable housing (4 affordable units and 2 shared ownership units), along with landscaping and future maintenance of public open space for the development. It also provides for financial contributions towards primary education, bus services, a BMX track, bowls, pavilion enhancement in Harwell, the Royal British Legion Club, Harwell Village Hall and the provision of waste and recycling facilities for the development.
- 2.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**
- 2.1 Amendments to the application were received in January 2018 and a full re-consultation was undertaken, with a closing date 26 January 2018. Below is a

summary of the most up to date responses received to this application. An update will be provided to committee on any further responses received. A full copy of all the comments made can be viewed online at [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk).

Harwell Parish Council	No strong views <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remain concerned about another access onto Reading Road.</li> </ul>
Neighbours	<i>Original Plans</i> 2 objections and 2 comments received. Main issues summarised as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outline permission should not have been granted, and there were procedural errors made at the outline stage.</li> <li>The development will have an unacceptable visual impact on the AONB.</li> <li>The development will increase noise and light pollution.</li> <li>Insufficient information on landscaping and screening has been provided.</li> <li>Concerns regarding the usability of proposed accesses (both vehicular and pedestrian) from Reading Road, particularly in adverse weather conditions.</li> </ul>
Drainage Engineer	No strong views
Waste Management Officer	No strong views <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tracking plan needed to show turning head is suitable for the waste collection vehicles.</li> </ul>
Landscape Architect	No strong views <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some concerns raised regarding building ridge heights to the southern boundary of the site, and the visual impacts of these on views from the public right of way to the south east of the site.</li> <li>Concerns over the boundary treatment to the northern side of plot 16 (adjacent to the Reading Road)</li> <li>Generally happy with the proposed landscaping scheme but further details required, particularly regarding hedgerow planting specifications and any proposed street lighting.</li> <li></li> </ul>
Forestry Team	No strong views <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerns raised regarding initial submission regarding boundary definition along Reading Road. Recommend submission of a landscape scheme to enhance the long term contribution that the boundary makes to the streetscene.</li> </ul>
Countryside Officer	No strong views

Thames Water Development Control	<p>No strong views</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thames Water has identified an inability of the existing waste water infrastructure to accommodate the needs of this application. Condition requested to prevent the commencement of development until a drainage strategy has been submitted and approved by the local planning authority in consultation with the sewerage undertaker.</li> </ul>
----------------------------------	---

### 3.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

#### 3.1 [P15/V1074/O](#) - Approved (16/09/2016)

Outline application for residential development (access only) consisting of 16 dwellings and open space. (Re-submission of previously withdrawn application P14/V2130/O) (amended illustrative layout, and revised Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment received 15 October 2015).

#### [P14/V2130/O](#) - Other Outcome (11/12/2014)

Outline application for residential development consisting for up to 44 dwellings and open space. (Additional Flood Risk Assessment submitted)

#### [P00/V0193](#) - Approved (31/07/2000)

Retrospective application for hay barn and stables together with the change of use of the land from agricultural to domestic use to graze, exercise, jump and school horses.

#### [P88/V5092](#) - Refused (18/07/1988)

Erection of 10 detached houses and 4 detached chalet bungalows. Site area approx. 1.6 hectares. For: Finlan New Homes

#### [P86/V5168](#) - Refused (04/08/1986)

Residential development. Site area 1.8 hectare. Land between New Haven, Lassen, previously known as Treetops. Adjacent A417. For: Finlan Group plc

#### [P80/V5182](#) - Refused (03/11/1980)

Residential development - Maximum of 12 houses Site area approx. 4 1/2 acres For: Mrs PS Woodall

### 3.2 **Pre-application History**

#### [P17/V2697/PEJ](#) - Other Outcome (08/11/2017)

Erection of 16 homes and open space  
(Outline Planning Permission in 2016 under P15/V1074/O)

### 3.3 **Screening Opinion requests**

None relevant.

### 4.0 **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

4.1 Given the AONB location of the site there was a need to screen the application to assess the need for an Environmental Statement, although it sits below the indicative thresholds of 150 dwellings and/or 5 hectare site area set out in

Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2015. This screening was carried out at outline stage and it was concluded that an Environmental Statement is not required for this site and that the development is not EIA development.

5.0 **MAIN ISSUES**

**Principle**

5.1 The principle of this development has been accepted through the earlier outline planning permission, where access arrangements were also approved. In addition the financial contributions from the development towards infrastructure improvements are detailed in legal agreements associated with the outline planning permission. This application does not provide an opportunity to review these matters.

**Affordable Housing and Housing Mix**

5.2 Local Plan Policy CP24 requires 35% of the total number of dwellings on the site to be provided as affordable housing, however when the outline consent was granted the requirement was for 40%. The legal agreement attached to the outline permission secured six (37.5%) units of affordable housing in the following mix:-

	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	Total
Affordable rented	0	3	1	4
Shared ownership	0	1	1	2
Total	0	4	2	6

5.3 Following pre-application discussions regarding the overall housing mix on the site it was agreed to vary the affordable housing provision on the site to provide one less 3-bedroom affordable rented property and one more 2-bedroom affordable rented property, resulting in the following provision on site:

	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	Total
Affordable rented	0	4	0	4
Shared ownership	0	1	1	2
Total	0	4	2	6

5.4 The proposed development provides these six affordable units in two clusters, one group of four semi-detached houses to the north-east of the site and a group of two semi-detached houses to the centre of the north of the site, overlooking the open space. Measures have been taken to ensure the affordable housing is tenure-blind, including providing the affordable units on spacious plots with larger than average gardens, the provision of a car port and the use of detailing and materials used in the market dwellings. Following discussion with the applicant further measures were provided in the amended plans including the provision of front gardens and front boundary treatment to

plots 7-10. Officers consider that a good level of tenure-blindness has been achieved.

5.5 The internal floorspace of all proposed affordable units is at or exceeding the floorspace requirements of the section 106 agreement.

5.6 The proposed overall housing mix on the site is as follows:-

	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ bed
SHMA%	5.9%	21.7%	42.6%	29.8%
SHMA Estimate	1	3.4	6.8	4.8
Proposed	0	4	4	8

5.7 This clearly over-provides 4+ bed units and under-provides on the smaller units. However, the overall mix is the same as that proposed at outline stage, and the committee report for the outline concluded that the overprovision of larger units was “*acceptable, as it helps to keep the low density nature of the area and will retain the sense of spaciousness, which is a key characteristic of this part of the village*”. On balance whilst there is concern regarding the non-compliance with SHMA expectations, given the application history it would not be reasonable to refuse the application on these grounds.

### **Design and Layout**

5.8 The NPPF provides that planning decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment (paragraph 60). It gives considerable weight to good design and acknowledges it is a key component of sustainable development.

5.9 Core Policy 37 of the Local Plan Part 1 2031 expects all developments to be of a high design standard, and the Council’s Design Guide sets out detailed guidance on how to achieve high quality design.

5.10 A feasibility layout was included in the outline application (Ref. P15/V1074/O) and is provided at Appendix 3. The proposed layout is similar and proposes a vehicular access through the site from the agreed access off Reading Road, culminating in a turning point. A pedestrian route is provided through public open space from the north-east corner to the north-west corner, providing an alternative route for pedestrians travelling along the Reading Road. As with the outline layout, the proposed layout comprises mostly detached dwellings, which respects the existing pattern of dwellings in this area. The layout is very low density and includes significant areas of landscaping.

5.11 Due to the level of the site being above that of Reading Road there is limited opportunity for dwellings to front onto this, but the dwellings to the north east of the site face towards Reading Road and provide some surveillance and activity to this from a similar distance as neighbouring properties to the east. The feasibility layout showed plot 16 as providing a frontage to Reading Road,

however, after further investigation of the levels of this part of the site it was not been possible to achieve this and this plot now fronts into the site.

- 5.12 The layout allows for gaps between buildings and views out towards the countryside in accordance with principle DG78 of the design guide, which is welcomed. The layout no longer provides public open space leading to the southern boundary, due to concerns over the surveillance of this space. The dwellings and garages on Plots 12 - 15 front the internal access road and back onto the countryside beyond. This is often not an acceptable arrangement but is the same as the previously approved layout, and due to the sensitivity of the southern boundary of the site and the need to keep density low in this area this is an acceptable solution on this site. In addition, most of the surrounding development backs onto the countryside, and by providing a similar approach on this site the development will blend into its surroundings and be viewed as part of the existing residential development of the village.
- 5.13 The dwellings have been designed specifically for this site, and the applicant has provided an explanation within the Design and Access Statement of how the proposed house types were developed, taking their cues from examples in the village and local environment, to meet the requirements of part 2 of the Design Guide. The house types were developed to provide a more contemporary feel in line with the development in the immediate area following pre-application discussions with officers.
- 5.14 Proposed external materials comprise a mixture of multi-brick walls, light coloured render, timber cladding (mainly for garaging) and plain tile cladding on the walls, with roofing in natural slate and plain clay tiles. Similar materials can be seen in properties along the Reading Road and in the surrounding area. The materials are considered acceptable subject to provision of detailed samples.
- 5.15 Overall the design, layout, appearance and scale of the development is acceptable and in accordance with Core Policy 37 of the Local Plan Part 1 and the Council's Design Guide.

### **Residential Amenity**

- 5.16 Protecting amenity is a core principle of the NPPF. Saved policy DC9 seeks to prevent development that would result in a loss of privacy, daylight or sunlight for neighbouring properties or that would cause dominance or visual intrusion for neighbouring properties and the wider environment. Design principles DG63-64 of the Design Guide pertain to amenity, privacy and overlooking.
- 5.17 The Design Guide recommends a minimum distance of 21m between facing habitable windows to prevent unreasonable overlooking. In terms of front and back elevations, the proposed dwellings comfortably achieve this distance in relation to all existing neighbouring properties.
- 5.18 Due to the spacious layout provided within the development there is very little overlooking between the proposed properties. There is a degree of overlooking between the windows of plots 11 and 13, with a distance of

approximately 15m across the access road. However, this is essentially a front to front relationship and consequently is considered acceptable in order to enable surveillance of the street by plot 11. In addition, there is a bathroom window on the southern elevation of plot 15 which has the potential to overlook the rear windows on plot 14, and a condition to require this window to be obscure glazed is proposed.

- 5.19 In terms of living conditions for future occupiers of the development, all of the market dwellings are generously sized. The two bed affordable houses are 76sq m which is in accordance with the size specified in the S106 and the three beds are 91 sq m and 99 sq m, which is larger than required.
- 5.20 The Design Guide requires the following garden sizes:- 2 bedrooms - 50 sq m, 3 or more bedrooms - 100 sq m. The gardens for all units comply comfortably with these standards and indeed the gardens for all units on the site both market and affordable are generously sized.

### **Open Space**

- 5.21 The development provides three areas of useable public open space, and these have altered somewhat from the feasibility layout at outline stage. Areas of public open space along the northern boundary will provide a pedestrian route through the site while a central space provides a meeting point and recreational area for residents. All areas of public open space have adequate surveillance from surrounding properties.
- 5.22 The proposals provide for approximately 2,150sq m useable public open space, which equates to about 13% of the site area, slightly under the 15% required by policy H23. However, a further approx. 750sq m (5%) of landscaping areas are also proposed, which while not being considered useable as public open space, will enhance the setting and attractiveness of the public realm. In addition, the applicant has made efforts to provide public open space of a high quality, with several seating areas proposed. On balance officers consider that the proposed public open space is acceptable.

### **Landscape and Visual Impact**

- 5.23 This site is on the boundary of the North Wessex Vale AONB. The impact of the proposed quantum of development on both the character of the AONB and views into the AONB from Reading Road were considered at outline stage (Ref. P15/V1074/O), and found to be acceptable. The officer's report on the outline application concluded that "*whilst the application site is within the AONB, the existing site is not a particularly crucial part of it, and does not play an integral role to the character of the AONB, and the proposed sixteen dwellings in this location are considered appropriate. The new dwellings would not to be significantly more prominent or visually intrusive in the wider views across the AONB, than the houses presently at Reading Road.*"
- 5.24 The outline application was accompanied by a feasibility layout, which showed potential locations of dwellings in relation to the southern boundary. This shows the southernmost property provided 22m from the boundary. The



proposed layout provides two dwellings in proximity to the southern boundary, plot 4 at a distance of 16m and plot 5 at 21m. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment was also provided at outline stage, showing the impact of ridge heights of 8m and 9m. The proposed dwelling heights of plots 4 & 5 are 9.75m and 9.2m respectively. The approved outline Design and Access Statement provided maximum eaves heights for all dwellings on the site of 5.4m and this requirement has been met.

- 5.25 The Council's Landscape Officer has commented that the proposed ridge heights of plots 4 and 5, at 105.92 AOD and 105.24 AOD respectively, are somewhat higher than one example (5263/CS) provided in the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment which showed a height of 103.4 AOD. However, another example in the same document (5263/SSBE) suggested a potential maximum ridge height of approx. 106 AOD. No condition regarding maximum ridge heights was placed on the outline permission and the plans provided in the feasibility layout and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment are indicative.
- 5.26 The applicant has shown the provision of additional hedgerow and trees on the southern boundary of the site, to provide screening of the development. This will help to soften the appearance of the development when viewed from the Public Right of Way which runs to the south-east of the site. Overall, it is concluded that the proposed ridge heights, while possibly somewhat higher than suggested at outline stage, do not represent a significant departure from the approved feasibility layout and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment which could justify a refusal of the application.
- 5.27 With regard to the boundary along Reading Road, it is proposed to reinforce the bank and hedgerow which is currently forming the northern boundary of the site. This will provide a boundary to both the open space and to plot 16, which backs on to Reading Road. The Council's Landscape Officer has concerns regarding how the boundary to plot 16 will be achieved while still providing a secure boundary and a condition is recommended to require the provision of additional boundary treatment and landscaping details for the site which will address this.
- 5.28 Internally the development provides a number of 1800mm high walls. These are proposed in those instances where private gardens meet the public realm, be that a street or open space. Officers seek the provision of 1800mm high walls in such instances in order to ensure privacy for residents while also providing security and a uniform appearance throughout a development. Walls are longer lasting than fencing and less prone to damage in high winds. Officers consider that the proposed use of 1800mm high walls within this development is acceptable and conditions on boundary treatment and materials details will ensure these walls are in keeping with surrounding development.

### **Flood Risk and drainage**

- 5.29 A planning condition attached to the outline requires details of sustainable drainage scheme for foul and surface water. The Council's Drainage Engineer

has no objection subject to the condition already attached to the outline consent. Thames Water had no objections at outline stage but have requested a grampion condition be attached to this reserved matters application. It is not possible to attach such a condition as this application does not provide an opportunity to revisit flood risk and drainage matters.

### **Traffic, parking and highway safety**

5.30 Saved Local Plan policy DC5 requires safe access for developments and that the road network can accommodate the traffic arising from the development safely. The NPPF (Paragraph 32) states “*Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe.*”

5.31 Transport and highways matters were assessed at outline stage along with the access arrangements, and Oxfordshire County Council had no objection subject to contributions towards bus services through Harwell and the provision of details regarding refuse collection arrangements and tracking, car and cycle parking. Details of parking and refuse collection arrangements have been provided, with conditions proposed for details of refuse tracking and cycle storage. A condition was placed on the outline application requiring details of access and visibility splays to ensure that these are provided to acceptable standards. No comments were made by OCC on the reserved matters application.

### **Historic Environment**

5.32 The site is not within a conservation area and there are no heritage assets on site. The County Council archaeology officer had no objection at outline stage. The proposal accords with core policy 39 of the Local Plan 2031 Part 1.

### **Biodiversity**

5.33 Core Policy 46 of the Local Plan part 1 requires no net loss of biodiversity. The outline application placed a condition requiring the submission of a biodiversity enhancement strategy to meet this requirement.

### **Financial contributions**

5.34 Financial contributions were sought and secured through section 106 at the outline stage. This site is not liable to pay CIL, having been granted an outline permission prior to the adoption of the CIL Charging Schedule.

## **CONCLUSION**

6.1 The principle of this development has been accepted through the earlier outline planning permission, where access arrangements were also approved.

6.2 This reserved matters application presents a satisfactory layout, and whilst the provision of dwellings backing onto the countryside is not ideal in most circumstances, it is an acceptable solution given the circumstances and surrounding development of this particular site.

- 6.3 The development as proposed will not have a significantly greater impact on the AONB than that already judged to be acceptable at outline application stage.
- 6.4 The design of the development is contemporary to fit with the character of the surrounding area, and external materials take cues from existing dwellings along Reading Road.
- 6.5 The development is neighbourly and no adjoining occupier will suffer any undue loss of amenity. The standard of amenity within the development is high and adequate garden and open space areas are provided.
- 6.6 Landscaping proposals are acceptable, subject to further details including lighting and boundary details which will be secured by condition. The proposed landscaping will help integrate the development into its surroundings, and a condition will ensure proposals are implemented and maintained.
- 6.7 Affordable housing is provided in accordance with the S106 as varied. The market housing mix deviates from the SHMA, with an over-provision of larger units, however the market mix is the same as that shown at outline stage, and given the application history it would be difficult to justify refusing the application on these grounds.
- 6.8 Overall, the application is acceptable and in general accordance with the relevant core policies in the adopted Local Plan part 1 2031, saved policies in the Local Plan 2011, the Design Guide and the NPPF.

The following planning policies have been taken into account:

Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 (part 1) policies:

- CP01 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CP03 - Settlement Hierarchy
- CP04 - Meeting Our Housing Needs
- CP07 - Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Services
- CP22 - Housing Mix
- CP23 - Housing Density
- CP24 - Affordable Housing
- CP33 - Promoting Sustainable Transport and Accessibility
- CP35 - Promoting Public Transport, Cycling and Walking
- CP37 - Design and Local Distinctiveness
- CP38 - Design Strategies for Strategic and Major Development Sites
- CP40 - Sustainable Design and Construction
- CP42 - Flood Risk
- CP44 - Landscape
- CP45 - Green Infrastructure
- CP46 - Conservation and Improvement of Biodiversity

Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011 (SOLP 2011) policies:

- DC3 - Design against crime
- DC5 - Access
- DC6 - Landscaping

**Vale of White Horse District Council – Committee Report – 31 January 2018**

DC7 - Waste Collection and Recycling

DC9 - The Impact of Development on Neighbouring Uses

NE6 - The North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

NE10 - Urban Fringes and Countryside Gaps

Vale of White Horse Design Guide 2015

**Case Officer:** Liz Fay

**Email:** [planning@whitehorsedc.gov.uk](mailto:planning@whitehorsedc.gov.uk)

**Tel:** (01235) 422600