

Planning Statement

**Southernwood, Tile Barn,
Woolton Hill RG20 9UZ**

Prepared For
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Planning permission is sought for the demolition of the existing dwelling at Southernwood, situated at Tile Barn, Woolton Hill RG20 9UZ, “the Site”) and in its place, the erection of two new dwellings (“the Proposal”), to make more efficient use of this sizeable plot within the built up area of Woolton Hill.

THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

1.2 The Site is situated centrally within the Settlement Boundary of Woolton Hill, which is classified as a ‘large village’ in BDBC’s Settlement Study Part 1 (published in September 2020). ‘Tile Barn’, the road from which the Site is accessed, runs in a roughly east-west alignment through the lower area of Woolton Hill. The Site lies to the north of the road, in the location shown in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1: Site Location

1.3 As is clear from Figure 1, there is a range of plot sizes in the immediate locality, with the Site being one of a few larger plots located in the area around Tile Barn, with other areas of higher density residential development immediately to the north, east and west of Woolton Hill.



- 1.4 Woolton Hill benefits from a number of services and facilities. The infant and junior schools are located to the south of Site (7-8 minutes' walk, each), along with the village hall and pre-school, and local church (St Thomas the Apostle). Woolton Hill also benefits from a sports club, football club, recreation ground and community café (held in the church hall), as set out in the NHP.
- 1.5 The Site itself is of verdant character, with large trees around the perimeter but otherwise limited biodiversity internally. Figures 2 -4 below show the existing dwelling (as viewed from a position to the south-west of the Site), the view towards the access (from the same position) and the view from the existing access, looking north.



Figure 2 Existing dwelling at the Site



Figure 3 Internal area of the Site looking towards the access



Figure 4 View towards the north of the Site



PLANNING HISTORY

1.6 The planning history of relevance to the Application is as follows:

BDB/38914 – felling of 1no. hornbeam, 1no. acacia and 1no. Scot’s pine (granted January 1996);

BDB/39644 – works to trees (dead-wooding/ crown lifting), and felling of 1no. horse chestnut (granted June 1996)

BDB/39449 and BDB/39893 – Erection of a Single Dwelling (Granted May and August 1996 respectively) – these permissions authorised the division of the Southernwood plot to create an additional dwelling to the east (which is now known as ‘Woodgate’).

THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

1.7 It is proposed to demolish the existing dwelling at the Site and replace this with 2no. dwellings, providing a net gain of one dwelling. The proposed layout has been carefully developed to avoid harm to the root protection areas of existing trees on the Site, as shown on the Proposed Site Plan (reference 22092/PL/15C). Each of the 2 new dwellings will have its own access onto Tile Barn – with Plot 2 utilising the existing access point, and Plot 1 utilising a new access point (which will necessitate removal of a small portion of hedgerow along the frontage). Plot 2 will have a detached garage. The proposal includes biodiversity enhancement, which delivers more than a 10% net gain in biodiversity units across the Site. A Biodiversity Net Gain report and metric calculation is submitted with the application, showing additional proposed tree and hedge planting.



2 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT AND OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- 2.1 Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 require that planning applications be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The relevant parts of the Development Plan are the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan 2011-2029 (“the Local Plan”), and the East Woodhay Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2029 (made in February 2023) (“the NHP”).
- 2.2 Key designations affecting the Site include its location within the settlement boundary (of Woolton Hill), and also within the North Wessex Downs ‘National landscape’ (formerly ‘AONB’). There are also trees on Site which are covered by a Tree Preservation Order (as discussed below). The nearest heritage asset (approximately 100m to the south-west of the dwelling at Southernwood) is former Tile Barn House (comprising Tile Barn House, Tile Barn Holt and Orton House); this is Grade II Listed (List Entry 1072583). The Site is at low risk of flooding (Zone 1) and is not in a Critical Drainage Area, but is located within the Source Protection Zone (although we note the Proposal is residential in nature and does not pose a risk of contamination).
- 2.3 The following policies (assessed further below) are of particular relevance to the Application:

Principle/ Location of Development: Policy SS1 of the Local Plan and Policies HO2 and HO5 of NHP;

Design Quality: Policy EM10 of the Local Plan and HO1 of the NHP;

Housing Mix: Policy CN3 of the Local Plan and Policy HO4 of the NHP;

Landscape: Policy EM1 of the Local Plan and Policy NE1 (and NE3) of the NHP;

Highways and Parking: Policy CN9 of the Local Plan and TT1 of the NHP;



Biodiversity: Policy EM4 of the Local Plan and Policy NE4 of the NHP;

Trees and Hedgerows: Policy EM1(e) of the Local Plan and NE5 of the NHP; and

Heritage: Policy EM11 of the Local Plan and Policy HE2 of the NHP.

OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

National Planning Policy Framework

2.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023) is also a material consideration. The sections of the NPPF which are of particular relevance include:

- 7 (sustainable development);
- 11 (presumption in favour of sustainable development);
- 60 (significantly boosting the supply of homes);
- 70 (small sites can make an important contribution);
- 82 – 84 (rural housing, support for housing that reflects local need, enhance vitality of rural communities, allow villages to grow/thrive to support local services);
- 114 (safe and suitable access and impacts on the highway network);
- 123 (effective use of land in meeting the need for homes);
- 180 (protect and enhance sites of biodiversity value; provide net gains for biodiversity);
- 186 (avoid, mitigate or compensate for significant harm to biodiversity).

Supplementary Planning Documents

2.5 The following Supplementary Planning Documents (“SPD”) are also material considerations:

Design and Sustainability SPD (2018);



Housing SPD (2018); and

Landscaping, Biodiversity and Trees (2018).

Village Design Statement for Woolton Hill and the Hamlets.

Emerging Development Plan Documents

- 2.6 BDBC published its Regulation 18 Local Plan on 22 January 2024, to invite public comments on the draft spatial strategy and other proposed policies. As it is at an early stage of preparation, it attracts no weight in the planning balance at present.

KEY ISSUES FOR DETERMINATION

The Principle of Development

- 2.7 Development and re-development is permitted within the Settlement Boundary, so long as it contributes to social, economic and environmental well-being (ie, it is “sustainable development”) (Policy SS1 of Local Plan and Policy HO2 of the NHP). Policy HO5 of the NHP also provides that “development proposals on residential garden land will be supported provided that the following criteria are met:

- a) They have regard to the prevailing plot characteristics in the surrounding area.
- b) They maintain the prevailing character and appearance of buildings in their immediate locality.
- c) They reflect the scale, mass, materials, design and layout of existing residential dwellings.
- d) They safeguard the amenities of adjacent residential dwellings and their curtilages.
- e) They provide off-street parking to Development Plan standards.
- f) They have appropriate and safe access to the highway network.

- 2.8 The Proposal meets all of these criteria; it has been designed with regard to the plot characteristics in the area and maintains the prevailing character and appearance, reflecting the scale, mass, materials, design and layout which is seen locally. Neighbouring dwellings will not be adversely affected, in terms of amenity impacts, and adequate parking/safe access is achieved. Questions of design, materials, landscape character and parking are addressed in more detail below.



Design Quality

- 2.9 Policy EM10 of the Local Plan seeks to ensure that the development which comes forward in the district is of high quality, based upon a robust, design-led approach. The policy requires, inter alia, that proposals “promote the efficient use of land and achieve appropriate housing densities which respond to the local context, as informed by community documents” (such as village design statements and neighbourhood plans). The policy also seeks to ensure neighbour amenity is respected. The design should positively contribute to local distinctiveness and sense of place. Future occupants should achieve a high quality of amenity, as should neighbouring properties (in terms of overlooking, lighting, outlook and amenity space). The proposed density, scale, layout and appearance should bear an appropriate relationship to neighbouring buildings as well as to landscape features and heritage assets. Architectural detailing and material should also be appropriate to the local context. In general the policy seeks to ensure that development is “visually attractive as a result of good architecture”, which is a requirement also reflected in the Government’s more recent drive for ‘beauty’ in the built environment.
- 2.10 Policy HO1 of the NHP seeks to ensure respect for the rural character of the NHP area. Regard should be had to the village design statement. Important trees should be retained, where important to the character of the area (as is the case at the Site). Parking, bin and cycle storage areas, as well as hard landscaping, should be no more extensive than is necessary, so as not to dominate or ‘urbanise’ the appearance of the area.
- 2.11 The Village Design Statement for Woolton Hill and the Hamlets is also a material consideration. It sets out a number of guidelines which are relevant including the following:
- Guideline 011 – new buildings should seek to harmonise with the landform so as to avoid adverse impact on the landscape; buildings should be sited to maximise the use of existing tree cover;



- Guideline 041 – new development should avoid the appearance of large scale estates, and instead provide for individual/ small groups of houses;
- Guideline 046 – new dwellings should be of a size appropriate to their plot and the character of the area.
- Guideline 050: “There is a diverse mix of building forms and materials. Variability is an important part of the character and appearance of the village. No single type dominates”
- Guideline 052 – new development should utilise building elements characteristic of the area; use of more modern materials is acceptable in some circumstances;
- Guideline 061 – where walls are painted or rendered, colours should complement those in the village/ surrounding area;
- Guideline 067 – Variety of roofs/ varying ridge heights is to be encouraged;
- Guideline 069 – existing hedgerows should be retained

2.12 As is clear from above, the scale of dwellings in the locality varies, as does the ridge height, and the materials utilised. Houses in the area are typically of brick construction with or without hanging tiles or weatherboard to the upper elevations (for example, in the 1960s housing areas to the north, such as Greenacres and Aird Close). There are also examples of rendered elevations; for example, permission has been granted for 2 new dwellings at Yew Tree Cottage on Mount Road (23/01087/FUL), and these will have rendered walls with brickwork plinth detailing, with clay tile roof. The officers’ report confirmed the view (at page 10) that there are a range of dwelling sizes and scales in the area and the use of brick, render and clay would be acceptable in terms of local character. She also noted that there are examples of large gravelled driveways in the local area so the proposal for the same at Yew Tree cottage was acceptable. The property opposite the application Site, South Oak, is a large 5 bedroom modern detached property with rendered elevations above damp proof course level (and some timber boarding) (approved and built under 20/02338/HSE).



2.13 The design of the Proposal is considered appropriate to the area, in terms of its scale, materials, and ridge height.

Housing Mix

2.14 Policy CN3 of the Local Plan seeks a range of house types to address local requirements. The proposed housing mix should be justified, proportionate to the scale of the proposal. Paragraph 5.29 of the Local Plan notes that for smaller developments, of 3 units or less, it may not be appropriate to meet the requirements of this policy.

2.15 Policy HO4 of the NHP seeks a variety of housing typologies across the district. Where a proposal delivers 2 or more net new dwellings it is necessary to justify the housing mix (the preference, as set out in that policy, being 50% of 1, 2 or 3 bedrooms). This proposal does not deliver a net gain of 2 or more dwellings (as it involved demolition and replacement of 1 dwelling, plus a net gain of 1), so the requirements of the policy are not triggered.

2.16 This is a small scale proposal, delivering a net gain of 1 dwelling. The Proposal delivers 2 no. bed dwellings, which is appropriate to the character of the area; if smaller dwellings were delivered, this would not make efficient use of the large plot, and the dwellings would be less in keeping with their surroundings. As such, the proposed housing mix is demonstrated to be justified, and the policy requirements are met.

Landscape and Visual Impact

2.17 The settlement of Woolton Hill is within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape (formerly the 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty', or "AONB").

2.18 Policy EM1 of the Local Plan requires a demonstration that proposals are sympathetic to the character and visual quality of the area concerned; development must "respect, enhance and not be detrimental to the character or visual amenity of the landscape", paying particular regard to the matters set out in that policy. These include particular features identified in the Landscape Character Assessment, local character of buildings, trees and woodland features and dark landscapes. Furthermore, development proposals in the AONB (now referred to as the 'national landscape') are to be



determined in accordance with NPPF policy and the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan.

- 2.19 Policy NE1 of the NHP also requires reference to the AONB Management Plan, and requires that planting schemes reflect native species found locally, and that new buildings sit below ridgelines and scarps of the Downs.
- 2.20 The North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 is a material consideration. The primary purpose of the designation is to conserve and enhance the beauty of the national landscape/AONB, and the management plan sets out strategic objectives to this effect. A number of key issues are identified; these include matters such as the maintenance of chalk grassland habitat, the need to conserve remoteness and intimate landscapes, maintenance of the patten of discrete villages in quiet rural landscapes and conserving small scale, secluded and rural character. It is also notes that intense pressure for development threatens the character and quality of the landscape, via the merging of small settlements, and encroachment of larger settlements into the AONB. Chapter 7 of the AONB Management Plan covers the issue of development. At paragraph 7.25 it states that in general, strategic levels of new housing should be avoided in the AONB except in exceptional circumstances, but it does not take the same stance in respect of small scale proposals such as this.
- 2.21 The Proposal is for a net gain of one dwelling - it is not major development¹. There is no significant harm to the character of the AONB/ national landscape.
- 2.22 Paragraph 10.23 of the NHP suggests that the area within the Woolton Hill settlement boundary is of an 'urban' character (whilst those areas outside are 'non-urban' or 'rural' and are considered 'open countryside'). Therefore, despite the designation as 'national landscape' the settled part of the parish, in Woolton Hill has a more developed 'semi-urban' character. Tile Barn itself retains a verdant character, with a high level of screening of the individual properties either side of the road.

¹ The NPPF provides that permission should be refused for major development in AONBs, other than in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that development is in the public interest.



2.23 Redevelopment of the Site will not cause harm to the AONB, particularly given the high level of screening. There are other examples of much more open plots outside the village itself being approved for new dwellings. For example, Land adjacent to Woolton Hill Sports Club (APP/H1705/W/22/3310335; 22/00183/PIP) where permission in principle was granted on appeal for up to 3 dwellings on an undeveloped open site in the AONB just outside the settlement boundary of Woolton Hill. BDBC's landscape officer was content in that case that there was no significant harm to the AONB. The BDBC Statement of Case for that appeal did not raise concern regarding the impact of that proposal on the AONB. As can be seen at page 27 of that statement BDBC stated the opinion that "any landscape impacts to the AONB would not be "a significant adverse impact".

Highways and Parking

2.24 Policy CN of the Local Plan requires that proposals provide "safe, suitable and convenient access for all potential users" and that the on-site movement layout be compatible with parking and servicing provision. Traffic generation should not be inappropriate or compromise highway safety.

2.25 Policy TT1 of the NHP requires that proposals "address opportunities to provide safe, suitable transport and identify how it can link up with existing or proposed footpaths, enabling a reduction in car usage", and also provide offsite parking which is appropriate for the character of the area.

2.26 The Proposal delivers 2no. 4-bedroom dwellings, which generates the need for 3.25 car parking spaces and 3 cycle parking spaces per dwelling / 6.5 car parking spaces and 6 cycle parking spaces across the development. These standards are met.

Biodiversity

2.27 Policy EM4 of the Local Plan seeks the avoidance, or mitigation of, significant harm to biodiversity. It should be demonstrated that there will be no adverse impact on key species or designated sites (such as statutory sites, or locally important sites such as SINC's or Local Nature Reserves). A proportionate level of information is required.



- 2.28 Policy NE4 of the NHP goes further, in that it requires that any new development “endeavour to protect and enhance” existing natural features of sites and enhance biodiversity. On sites over 0.1ha it is necessary to show a measurable net gain delivered through a Biodiversity Management Plan. This echoes the requirements of the Landscape, Biodiversity and Trees SPD.
- 2.29 The application is supported by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Bat Activity Report, and Biodiversity Net Gain calculation (and metric) which collectively demonstrate that impacts on biodiversity are acceptable.

Trees and Hedgerows

- 2.30 Policy EM1(e) of the Local Plan requires that development pays particular regard to trees, hedgerows and other landscape features.
- 2.31 Policy NE5 of the NHP seeks to protect good quality trees and hedgerows, giving them adequate space.
- 2.32 The Landscape, Biodiversity and Trees SPD (2018) provides further guidance, with section 6 focusing on trees, woodlands and hedgerows. Principle T1 recommends that a tree survey be carried out in accordance with the British Standard 5837. Such survey has been undertaken and is submitted with the application. Principle T2 recommends the retention of important trees and T3 suggests they be given adequate space for future growth. Principle T4 sets out a need for tree protection during demolition and construction works, which can be detailed in a construction management plan and secured by condition.
- 2.33 There is a large number of trees in the immediate locality which are protected by Tree Preservation Order (TPO), including some on the Site itself as shown in Figure 5 below.

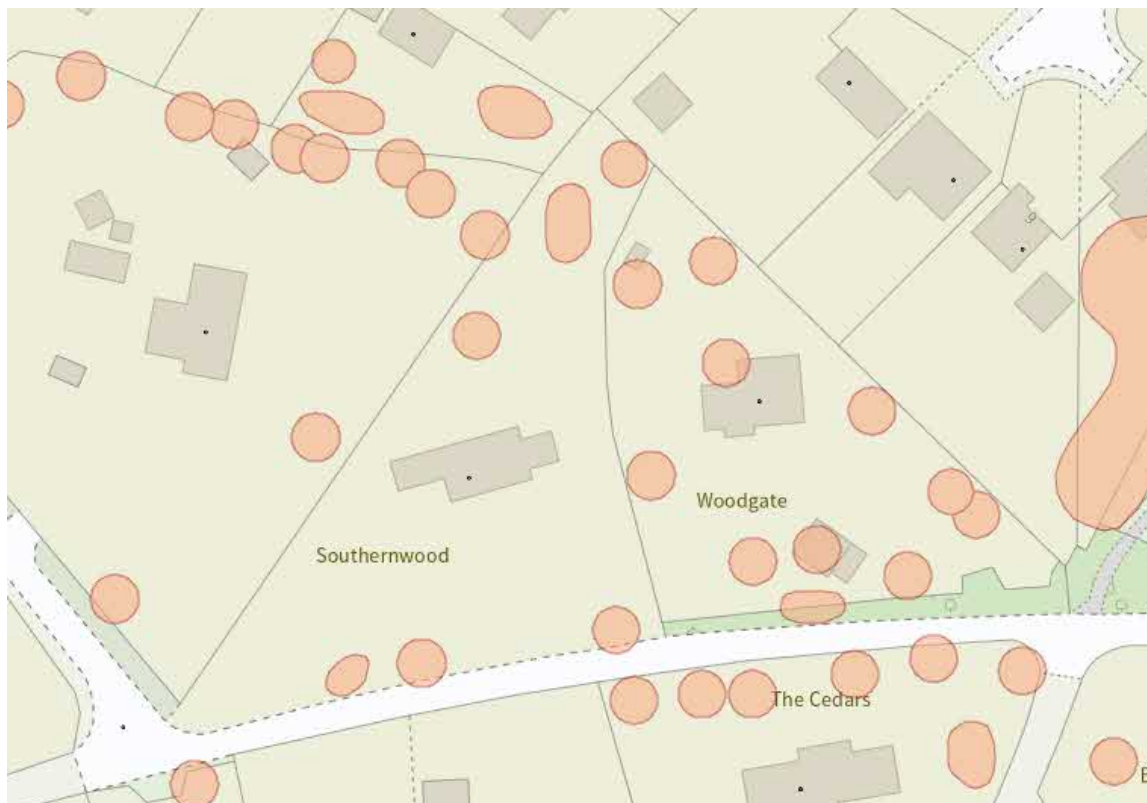


Figure 5 Tree Preservation Orders

2.34 In summary, the TPO/BDB/0376 relates to the following trees on the Site:

TPO/BDB/0376 – G8 – Spine (site frontage)

TPO/BDB/0376 – T59 – Oak (site frontage)

TPO/BDB/0376 – T64 – Oak (site frontage)

TPO/BDB/0376 – T62 – Oak (to the north of existing dwelling)

TPO/BDB/0376 – T63 – Ash (to north of existing dwelling)

TPO/BDB/0376 – G9 – (to north of existing dwelling)

2.35 There is also an oak, T56, which is located on the adjacent Site to the west but the root protection area of which extends into the Site.

2.36 The application is supported by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment (SJ Stephens and Associates, Jan 2024) which provides detail of the condition and location of trees on site,



and proposes details of tree protection measures. As set out in section 6.1 of that report, it is proposed to remove a hedgerow section (G36) which is mostly laurel and rhododendron, to facilitate the extra access.

Heritage

- 2.37 Policy EM11 seeks to ensure that development conserves and enhances the borough's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. Proposals must demonstrate an understanding of the significance of assets/ their setting which may be affected by a proposal. Policy NE2 of the NHP is similar in its requirements.
- 2.38 The nearest heritage asset is the former Tile Barn House (Grade II), 100m to the south west of the dwelling at Southernwood (and separated by tall trees). The house is now divided into 'Tile Barn Holt', 'Tile Barn House, Orton House'. Tile Barn Holt is the section of the house which is closest to the application Site.
- 2.39 In April 2023 a proposal was made for an outdoor swimming pool to the east of Tile Barn Holt (23/00901/LBC and 23/00900/HSE); the listed building consent application has been withdrawn but the planning application appears to still be live and undetermined. Similarly, an application for an oak framed garage is presently under consideration (23/01083/HSE). Both applications are supported by a Heritage Statement (Shaun Tanner Architecture and Planning, April 2023) which provides useful information regarding the heritage asset. This describes the history of development of Tile Barn House, including the substantial remodelling undertaken some time between 1860 and 1874. The north-west corner has also accommodated an addition at some point prior to 1911, and the kitchen range to the north-east was demolished at some point in the twentieth century. The house was divided into three following auction in 1955. Despite the alterations, the heritage statement produced by Shaun Tanner Architecture and Planning identifies that the house has special architectural interest, and also identifies that the site is well screened and secluded.
- 2.40 The Council's heritage team have responded to confirm they have no objection to either the swimming pool or garage proposals (as per their response dated 10 August 2023 in respect of the pool and 26 September 2023 in respect of the garage).



2.41 It is not considered that the Proposal at Southernwood will have any significant impact on the setting of Tile Barn House, given the degree of separation and mature screening via protected trees.



3 PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSIONS

- 3.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 3.2 The Proposal has been carefully considered in the context of all the relevant national, local and neighbourhood planning policies and it is compliant in all regards. As the Site is within the Settlement Boundary, the principle of redevelopment of the Site is supported. The design of the Proposal is appropriate to the site context, in terms of the scale of development, the appearance and scale of the dwellings and the materials proposed. Whilst the Proposal delivers 2no. 4-bed dwellings, rather than smaller dwellings, the policy seeking the latter does not apply to small developments such as this. The Site is situated in the AONB/national landscape but is well screened and situated centrally within the built up area of the settlement; the Proposal will not cause harm to the landscape or its special qualities. Highways and parking requirements are met, as are policies seeking to protect important trees, biodiversity and heritage. The Proposal delivers more than 10 % gain in biodiversity across the Site.
- 3.3 There is also support in the NPPF for this Proposal; it makes efficient use of land in a built up area; and makes a small but important contribution to housing supply, which helps the rural community to thrive.
- 3.4 On this basis, the Proposal is compliant with all relevant policy and other material considerations, and the Application should therefore be approved.