

Item No.	Application No. and Parish	Statutory Target Date	Proposal, Location, Applicant
(1)	19/00832/REM Cold Ash Parish Council	13 th May 2019*	<p>Approval of reserved matters following outline permission 16/02529/OUTD - Change of use of part of existing agricultural field to residential and the erection of 5 no. detached dwelling houses with ancillary garages, access, parking, landscaping and associated works. Matters seeking consent - Appearance, landscaping and scale.</p> <p>Land Adjacent To Summerfield, The Ridge, Cold Ash, Thatcham, Berkshire</p> <p>T A Fisher and Sons Ltd</p>
*Extension of time agreed until 20 th March 2020			

To view the plans and drawings relating to this application click the following link:
<http://planning.westberks.gov.uk/rpp/index.asp?caseref=19/00832/REM>

Recommendation Summary: To delegate to the Head of Development and Planning to **GRANT APPROVAL OF RESERVED MATTERS** subject to conditions.

Ward Member(s): Councillor Garth Simpson
Councillor Hilary Cole

Reason for Committee Determination:

- 1) At the request of the local ward member due to concerns over visual impact, destruction of hedgerow, impact on the setting of the AONB, overdevelopment of site/excessive scale and massing and incompatibility of the proposed access ways; and
- 2) More than 10 letters of objection.

Committee Site Visit: 12 March 2020

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 **Proposal summary** - This application seeks reserved matters approval relating to appearance, landscaping and scale pursuant to outline planning permission 16/02529/OUTD dated 24 October 2017 relating to the change of use of part of existing agricultural field to residential and the erection of 5 no. detached dwelling houses with ancillary garages, access, parking, landscaping and associated works.
- 1.2 **Site description** - The application site covering some 0.73Ha is located on the southern side of 'The Ridge' at the eastern end of the village within the defined settlement boundary. It comprises an allocated housing site (Policy HSA 7 HSADPD) and also benefits from outline planning permission for the erection of 5 detached dwellings. The site is in a prominent location, with an established mixed deciduous hedge (3 metres high in summer and reduced when managed to 2.5 metres high in winter months) forming the boundary with the highway 'The Ridge'. The site slopes away from The Ridge from north-west to south-east by approx. 8m. The angle at which the land falls results in changes in levels from the frontage of the site to rear being approx. 2m in the western part of the site increasing to approx. 5m at the eastern end.
- 1.3 The site is presently undeveloped with an open boundary to the south. The outline permission allows for the enclosure of the site to the south with new tree planting to create a landscaped boundary with the open farmland beyond. The adjacent uses comprise residential dwellings 'Ridge End Barn' and 'Summerfield' to the east and west, and agricultural land to the south. To the north, beyond a frontage hedgerow is the public highway 'The Ridge' beyond which is existing housing sited in a linear form along the road that fall within the North Wessex Downs AONB.
- 1.4 This part of The Ridge takes a linear form and is characterised by detached mainly two storey dwellings occupying large plots with properties on the southern side benefitting from extensive views to the south. However, it is recognised that in the case of the adjacent dwellings to the east and west of the site, Ridge End Barn is 1.5 storey (approx. 7m in height) and Summerfield is a bungalow (approx. 5m in height). The prevailing character is of dwellings and outbuildings on both sides of the road set back from the road and benefitting from mature hedging and tree screening in the front and rear gardens, breaking up the built form and creating a pleasant rural feel.
- 1.5 **Background** – This application is a revised submission of reserved matters application reference 18/01977/REM 9 October 2018 which was refused for the following reasons:
- The proposal for five two storey dwellings, in this prominent open location would, by virtue of scale (in particular height) and external appearance, be out of character with the area introducing a dominant and urbanising form of development. The development would fail to respect the prevailing character of the area and detract from the local distinctiveness and spatial character of this part of this rural village to its detriment.*

As such the development would be contrary Planning Policies ADPP2, CS14, CS19, HSA7 and advice set out within the NPPF and principles set out within the Cold Ash and Ashmore Green Village Design Statement (HOU1, HOU2, SPGR3, SGPR4 and SDM3).
 - The proposed dwellings would, by virtue of scale and external appearance, including first floor balconies in the rear elevations, adversely affect the residential amenity and outlook of neighbouring dwellings.*

As such the development would be contrary Planning Policies ADPP2, CS14, CS19, HSA7 and advice set out within the NPPF and principles set out within the Cold Ash and Ashmore Green Village Design Statement (GAP2 and GAP3).

- 1.6 This submission also provides amended garage design and siting to overcome the reasons for refusal relevant to planning application reference 18/02111/FUL which sought the erection of three detached garages only to be built and used to serve the dwellings granted under planning permission 16/02529/OUTD. The application was refused for the following reasons:

1. *The proposal for garages to be erected to the front of the new dwellings (which have not yet been constructed) in this prominent location would, by virtue of siting and scale be out of character with the area and overdevelop the site. The development would fail to respect the prevailing character of the area, break the building line and detract from the local distinctiveness and spatial character of this part of the village to its detriment.*

As such the development would be contrary Planning Policies ADPP2, CS14, CS19, HSA7 and advice set out within the NPPF and principles set out within the Cold Ash and Ashmore Green Village Design Statement (GAP2 and GAP3).

- 1.7 **Proposal details** – This application seeks the approval of reserved matters following the granting of outline planning permission 16/02529/OUTD dated 24 October 2017. Layout and means of access were approved at the outline application stage.
- 1.8 The details are for the erection of five detached dwellings. Each dwelling would be two storey. The dwellings have been individually designed with a variety of materials and elevational detailing. Each dwelling would have different layouts comprising elements such as entrance hall, lounge, study, open plan kitchen, family room, breakfast room, utility room on the ground floor with stairs to the first floor comprising five bedrooms, two with en-suites and a family bathroom.
- 1.9 The dwellings would all have a hard surfaced parking and turning areas to the front and a patio areas to the rear with steps then leading down to the lower garden areas. The dwellings include garages with plots 3 and 4 having an integrated or adjoining garage/car port. The other 3 dwellings (plots 1, 2 and 5) are proposed to have detached garages.
- 1.10 Private rear gardens are proposed along with landscaping of the site which include 3m buffer to the southern boundary and supplementary planting to the frontage hedgerow. Cycle storage is proposed within the garages. Refuse storage and collection are also accommodated within the site.
- 1.11 As considered further below, the applicant has put forward this revised scheme in order to overcome the reasons for refusal relevant to refused reserved matters application 18/01977/REM 9 October 2018. It also seeks to address the member concerns in respect of positioning of garage to the front of three of the five plots (18/02211/FUL). The applicants approach has been to essentially reduce the height of the dwellings, change the appearance of the houses using dormer windows amongst other detailing, change the rear balconies, to reduce proposed rear patio areas, hiping of roof designs on houses and garages, repositioning of garages and more substantial landscaping to frontage and rear.
- 1.12 A full suite of supporting technical reports can be found on the council's website.

2. Planning History

2.1 The table below outlines the relevant planning history of the application site.

Application	Proposal	Decision / Date
18/01657/COND1	Approval of details reserved by Condition 4 - External Materials Schedule and samples, 7 - Construction Method Statement, 8 - Surfacing for driveways/access points, 10 - Vehicle parking and turning, 11 - Access details, 12 - Cycle storage, 13 - Refuse storage and 15 - Boundary hedge, of planning permission reference 16/02529/OUTD.	Deferred from planning committee - October 2018
18/01977/REM	Approval of reserved matters following outline application 16/02529/OUTD. Matters to be considered: Scale, Appearance and Landscaping	Refused - 09.10.2018
18/02211/FUL	Erection of three detached garages only to be built and used to serve the dwellings granted under planning permission 16/02529/OUTD.	Refused - 01.10.2018
16/02529/OUTD	Outline application for change of use of part of existing agricultural field to residential and the erection of 5 no. detached dwelling houses with ancillary garages, access, parking, landscaping and associated works. Matters to be considered - Access and Layout.	24.10.2017 – Approved

3. Procedural Matters

- 3.1 The application has been screened in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, which concluded that the proposed development is not “EIA development” and therefore an Environmental Statement is not required.
- 3.2 The application has been publicised in accordance with the legal requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2015, and the Council’s Statement of Community Involvement. This has involved the display of site notices.
- 3.3 The proposed development would create new residential floor space that would be liable to CIL payments in accordance with the Councils CIL Charging Schedule.

4. Consultation

Statutory and non-statutory consultation

- 4.1 The table below summarises the consultation responses received during the consideration of the application. The full responses may be viewed with the application documents on the Council's website, using the link at the start of this report.

Cold Ash Parish Council	<p>Objection - The proposed site is of significant importance to both the village and surrounding countryside, being on the eastern gateway to the village and abutting an AONB. We feel that the development, as proposed, would have a significant detrimental impact on both the impression of the village and doesn't meet the requirement to blend from an AONB into an urban environment. In particular, the proposals fail to meet the 'Guidelines for Housing' as laid out in the Cold Ash and Ashmore Green Village Design statement, which is the latest, and current, document relating to planning considerations and was approved by WBC. The key issues with the proposed development are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This application will damage the hedge by having so many entrances; we understand the hedge is protected by law, removal will change the rural gateway to the village. The look and appearance of the hedge is important to the parishioners.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Measurements of the hedge size and location by the developers appear to be generally exaggerated by up to 0.5m○ The proposed gateways through the hedge in the graphical representation appear to be minimised whereas in reality they would be much larger and remove much more of the hedge than is pictured.○ The hedge is located at the entrance to the village which it is believed should be a rural introduction to the village and not a sudden introduction of urbanisation.• The uniformity, size & style of the proposed housing is out of keeping with the eclectic mix of the surrounding properties<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The proposed housing would present a large-scale urbanised development to the gateway of a very rural area which would be out of keeping with the rurality of the village.• Developer's graphical representations do not comply with their own aborcultural report.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Drawings supplied appear to downplay the impact/size of the proposed new housing and play up the size of existing housing in the area to give a false impression of the impact of the proposed new housing.○ There is much made of soft landscaping but no real effort to mitigate the concerns raised in the objections.• Cold Ash Parish Council are disappointed that the applicant has disregarded previous objections specifically with reference
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	<p>to the size of the proposed new buildings, the hiping of roof areas and the flat roof areas that are obvious candidates for new owners to convert to raised sun terraces (amongst the original objections) and which would then overlook existing housing.</p> <p><i>Previous comments</i></p> <p>Objection – Unanimous</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This application will damage the hedge by having so many entrances, we understand the hedge is protected by law and will harm the rural gateway to the village. The look and appearance of the hedge is important to the parishioners. • The uniformity, size & style of the proposed housing is out of keeping with the eclectic mix of the surrounding properties.
Bucklebury Parish Council	<p>Objection - BPC continues to object to this application for the same reasons as previously stated. No material changes have been made to the proposed 5 dwellings, with the exception of removing balconies, hiping roofs and reducing decking space – in reality these changes do not change the size of these dwellings.</p> <p><i>Previous comments</i></p> <p>Bucklebury Parish Council objects to this application on the following grounds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An additional three entrances on to The Ridge at this location will significantly increase the danger of this section of road; at school drop off and collection times, it becomes incredibly congested. Cars are frequently parked on the verge of The Ridge adjacent to the land proposed for these houses. Additional drives at this point will cause displacement of cars and increased danger. A single drive to access all of the five dwellings would be safer, as is the case in other locations on the Ridge (e.g. site of former Ridge House School). • The impact on the street scene; the south side of the Ridge is characterised by a good mix of size and style of property including a number of bungalows; this proposal is for five large imposing properties on the edge of the settlement and will be incongruous with the existing. • The existing field hedge is covered by the 1997 hedge act and is therefore protected. Making 3 entrances through it will break it up into a number of chunks which will themselves have to be severely cut back in order to accommodate visibility splays, thus making them essentially unviable. As a result the five new dwellings will have an even greater impact on the street scene. • Concern has been raised about the accuracy of the drawings. It is believed that the existing buildings are shown as larger than they are and further away from the site than reality. There is also concern that the hedge adjacent to the road is set further back from the road than

	it is in reality, thus more would need to be removed for the visibility splays than the plans portray.
WBC Highways:	No objection subject to conditions.
WBC Waste Management	No objection.
WBC Drainage (SUDS)	No objection.
WBC PROW	No comments received.
WBC Ecology	No comments received.
WBC Planning Policy Team	No comments received.
WBC Landscape	No objection subject to conditions.
NWD AONB	No comments received.

Public representations

- 4.2 Representations have been received from approximately 52 individual contributors, all of which object to the proposal (some of the contributors have made multiple representations which count as one objection per person).
- 4.3 The full responses may be viewed with the application documents on the Council's website using the link at the start of this report. In summary, the following issues/points have been raised:
- The reasons for the refusal of the previous reserved matters application (18/01977/REM) (as well as concerns raised by the Parish Council, WAP members, local community) are not overcome by this revised application and the applicant has not provided any substantial changes to the scheme - the minor changes only relate to repositioning of garages, reduction in height, changes to balconies, reduction in patio areas, hiping of garage and plot 5 roof are not sufficient.
 - There has no tangible change in proposed floor space between the refused application and the current proposal.
 - The design and form lack variety, fails to address the sensitivities of the site, monolithic dwellings out of the character with the area, inappropriate housing style and adverse impact on hedgerow.
 - Proposal amounts to overdevelopment of the site and should be reduced e.g. through reduced internal ceiling heights.
 - Excessive scale and massing of development which would be overbearing on the occupiers of The Ridge and Summerfield.
 - Excessive levels of hardstanding proposed including rear patio areas.
 - Proposal harms the character and appearance of this rural area and gateway location through inappropriate urbanisation.
 - Proposal would harm the setting of the AONB.
 - Proposal is supported by inaccurate plans and documentation including underplaying the potential impact on the historic hedgerow (which is protected

under Hedgerow Regulations 1997 and The Environment Act 1995 as an important hedgerow), amongst other errors – objectors have also provided surveys/information to support their objections.

- Strength of local objections must be given significant weight.
- Adverse impact on highway safety due proximity to existing accesses serving neighbouring properties, school traffic and associated on-street car parking demand supported by traffic surveys.
- Adverse impact on landscape and visual amenity.
- Insufficient soft landscaping to mitigate the visual impact of the proposed houses.
- The proposed visibility splays would remove nearly all of the historic hedgerow and it should be retained through trans-relocation within the site.
- Proposal would have an adverse ecological impact through removal of the hedgerow.
- Proposal would have an adverse on neighbouring residential amenity through overlooking/loss of privacy and loss of light and outlook contrary to the Human Rights Act, in particular Protocol 1, Article 1 which states that a person has the right to peaceful enjoyment of all their possessions - windows overlooking Summerfield and Ridge End Barn should also be replaced with high level skylights to avoid overlooking.
- The flat roof extensions would facilitate first floor balconies in the future resulting in a loss of privacy to the occupiers of neighbouring properties.
- No views maintained through the site from the ridge to the Kennet Valley due to excessive width of built form within the site.
- Plans relating to dwelling 'Rooksdown' inaccurate – shown as 9m high when is 7.2m in reality.
- The proposal does not comply with local plan policies, supporting SPG/SPDs, village design statements as well as the NPPF.

Other comments

- The applicant would be required to apply for consent from the LPA to remove any part of the Hedgerow.
- A revised access arrangement with a single point of access into the site would minimise the impact on the hedgerow.
- A reduced scheme of 3 or 4 units on this site appears to be more appropriate.
- The massing and scale should be reduced to more closely reflect Ridge End Barn and Summerfield.
- Hipping of roofs that reduces second floor ceiling height is essential to avoid future attic conversions.
- Raised decking is not in keeping with the surroundings and should be replaced with ground level patios. This has been done for Plots 3 and 4, and must be extended to Plots 1 and 2.
- Planting of a more extensive southern boundary, including trees is welcomed, however, the fall away of the land means that any screening of the houses would be largely unachievable. Furthermore, the proposed planting of mature oak and beech trees is completely at odds with the principle selling point for the housing, the views. Indeed, as the trees grow, it is likely that the owners will look to have them removed. It is extremely difficult to enforce protection of trees and we believe the mitigation plans are therefore flawed.
- The council needs to assess whether Outline Approval was granted as a result of misleading plans and whether to serve a modification or revocation order to address access arrangements.
- Mature trees sited in the rear gardens of the houses will eventually block the views the buyers paid a premium for

- TPOs would be required to protect the trees, however, these would be very difficult to enforce, and can be expected to fail.
- Only mitigating factor is for the developer to build bungalows or other low rise 1.5 storey housing, with greater use of chalet features such as hipped roofs. Such houses would naturally blend better into the landscape and require less screening.
- A much more sympathetic housing design is needed.
- Greater diversity in housing size and visual appearance is needed to ensure the new houses reside well within the existing housing and do not unduly impact the character of the village.
- Increased use of hipped roofs and dormer roofs would impart more of a chalet-style
- Bungalows should be considered on Plots 1 and 5 to ensure the houses relate well to those around them, and mitigate issues of overlook and privacy.
- PD rights should be removed to avoid overdevelopment of the site.
- Essential that all contractors are able to park on site with no spill over parking on the road. Failure to do so would further exacerbate school parking problems and associated safety of parents and children.
- Deliveries must avoid school pick-up and drop-off periods to avoid unnecessary additional traffic congestion. Specifically, deliveries between 08:40-09:05 and 14:45-15:35 must be prevented. This should be conditioned with approval of the Reserved Matters.
- Maintenance of visibility splays after houses are in private ownership cannot be ensured.
- Any new hedge behind the current hedge must be fully established before any destruction of the current hedge can be allowed, and must be protected by legally and practically enforceable means. In addition, the height of the replacement hedge needs to be clarified.
- The proposed landscaping would to southern boundary would be inappropriate by restricting views from the proposed houses inevitably leading to pressure for their removal from future occupiers of the scheme.
- New soft landscaping would take 5-10 years to mature during which time there would be significant visual harm to the locality from the proposed development.
- The developers have not responded to the issues raised in their pre-application consultation with the occupiers of neighbouring properties.
- Legal covenants should be imposed now to limit alterations to the houses after completion.
- If the council are minded to approve the application, the developer should be required to apply for a permit to remove any hedgerow above that shown on the relevant outline and reserved matters plans.

5. Planning Policy

5.1 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The following policies of the statutory development plan are relevant to the consideration of this application.

- Policies ADPP1, ADDP2, ADDP5, CS1, CS4, CS5, CS6, CS13, CS14, CS15, CS16, CS17, CS18, CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026 (WBCS).
- Policies GS1, HSA7, C1, P1 of the Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document 2006-2026 (HSA DPD).
- Policies OVS.5, OVS.6 and TRANS.1 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007).

5.2 The following material considerations are relevant to the consideration of this application:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
- North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan 2014-19
- WBC House Extensions SPG (2004)
- WBC Quality Design SPD Part 2 Residential Development (2006)
- Cold Ash and Ashmore Green Village Design Statement (2002)
- Planning Obligations SPD (December 2014)
- Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule, Adopted March 2014 – Effective from 1st April 2015.

6. Appraisal

6.1 The main issues for consideration in this application are:

- Principle of development;
- Character and appearance (including scale and landscaping);
- Setting of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB);
- Residential amenity;
- Highways matters;
- Other matters.

Principle of development

6.2 The site has been allocated for residential development in the Housing Site Allocations DPD through policy HSA7 described as 'St Gabriels Farm'. Furthermore, the principle of development of this site for five dwellings has been accepted through outline planning permission 16/02529/OUTD dated 24 October 2017. It is noted that layout and access including the 3 vehicular access ways into site were approved at this stage.

6.3 For these reasons, the proposed development is considered acceptable in principle subject to the detailed material considerations set out.

6.4 For the avoidance of doubt, this application seeks approval of details relevant to scale, appearance and landscaping only.

Character and appearance (including scale and landscaping)

6.5 According to Core Strategy Policy CS14, good design relates not only to the appearance of a development, but the way in which it functions. Paragraph 127 of the NPPF, states that planning decisions should ensure that developments (amongst others):

- will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks;

- create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users, and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.
- 6.6 The Council has adopted a Supplementary Planning Document series entitled Quality Design (SPDQD) which provides detailed design guidance on residential development. The NPPF, The SPG Quality Design, The Cold Ash and Ashmore Green Village Design Statement (2002) and House Extensions SPG also support these aims.
- 6.7 Policy HSA7 seeks to ensure the development of the application site secures 5 individually designed dwellings that reflect the existing settlement pattern comprising linear development fronting the ridge, built development on the higher part of the ground only, gaps in the built form to allow views of the open landscape to the south, retention of the front boundary hedgerow and provision of a soft edge to the southern boundary with tree planting, amongst other environmental criteria.

Scale and massing

- 6.8 The site occupies a prominent position at the eastern edge of this rural village. Development of this part of the village is in linear form, with existing dwellings set back from the road on large plots with mature trees and hedgerows which contribute to the visual distinctiveness and rural character of the locality. Existing dwellings within the locality are of differing scales and design. The two dwellings with a boundary to the site are Summerfield, a bungalow, to the east and Ridge End Barn, converted farm buildings to the west. These are approx. 5 metres and 7 metres in height, respectively. Other dwellings within this locality are two storey and are approximately 7.5 metres in height.
- 6.9 To overcome the reasons for refusal relevant to the refused reserved matters application 18/01977/REM and full application 18/02211/FUL, the applicants approach has been to essentially reduce the height of the dwellings, change the appearance of the houses including dormer windows amongst other detailing, change the rear balconies, reduce the rear patio areas, hiping of roof designs, repositioning of garages and more substantial landscaping.
- 6.10 This revised proposal has reduced the heights of plots 1 from 8.83m to 7.78m, plot 2 from 8.89m to 7.75m, plot 3 from 8.97m to 7.84m, plot 4 from 9.57m to 7.89m and plot 5 from 8.75m to 7.69m. The garages have been re-positioned on plots 1, 2 and 3 so they located to the side of the dwellings rather than projecting forward of the proposed building line. The garage ridge heights have to be reduced to 4.95m and are all single storey. These measures would help reduce the impact of the development from views on the Ridge and from the Kennet Valley. Furthermore, the proposed massing and scale would ensure gaps in the built form are maintained to allow views of the open landscape to the south from The Ridge.
- 6.11 More substantial landscaping and mitigation has been proposed to the frontage hedgerow and currently open southern boundary of the site including 'heavy standard' trees to the southern boundary would also help filter views of the proposed built form from the Kennet Valley and PROW to the south/south-west in the longer term.
- 6.12 This revised scheme, in terms of massing and scale, when taking into account all of the above mentioned proposed changes cumulatively, and taking in to account the wider variation in built form within Cold Ash with a range of building heights, but also acknowledging the proposal would be larger and higher than the adjacent dwellings at Ridge End Farm and Summerfield, on balance, would harmonise with the surroundings in the medium to longer term once soft landscaping matures.

Appearance

- 6.13 It is noted that existing development along the Ridge is largely characterised by two-storey dwellings in well-established large plots. Existing dwellings include significant variety in design and form which contributes to the character of the area. Features include dormer windows, projecting gables, hipped roofs as well as range of external materials from different brick types, render, tile hanging and weather boarding.
- 6.14 The proposal includes 5 individual two-storey houses with variation in external materials, hipped roofs, projecting gables, dormer windows and other architectural detailing including chimneys, timber framing and plinths. Taking into account the surrounding context, a modern residential development of the form proposed would, on balance, harmonise with the character and appearance of the area and would respect the existing settlement pattern.
- 6.15 It is also recognised having regard to the provisions of HSA Policy 7, the development has been informed by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and would accord with the 2015 Landscape Capacity Assessment (2015) which confines built development to the higher ground along the road.

Landscaping

- 6.16 It is noted that a significant number of objections have been received in relation to the impact on the site frontage hedgerow. The importance of the hedgerow is also evidenced by specific reference to its retention under HSA Policy 7 and Landscape Capacity Assessment 2015. The main issue being on the extent of hedgerow being lost to facilitate the proposed access ways and associated visibility splays.
- 6.17 The Council's Tree Officer has carefully considered the proposal following a site visit as well as a review of all of the supporting submissions and considers the mitigation strategy offered by the applicant which includes the planting of an instant rural hedge of minimum 1.5m height early in the construction phase to off-set any hedgerow lost to facilitate the development to be acceptable. The species mix would contain Blackthorn, Field Maple, Hazel, Hornbeam and Dogwood (minimum 3 plant per linear metre) which is considered suitable. Other options such translocation of the hedgerow has been explored but it is considered that the planting of a new hedgerow is the most viable long term solution.
- 6.18 In coming to conclusion, the Council's Tree Officer has taken into account the provisions of The Hedgerow Regulations 1997 and The Environment Act 1995. Furthermore, the Officer considers that the application is supported by sufficient information to assess the overall impact on the frontage hedgerow and necessary mitigation.
- 6.19 It is also recognised that the principle of 3 new access ways with associated visibility splays was established at the outline application stage under application reference 16/02529/OUTD. Furthermore, it is also noted that the HSA Policy allows for up to 5 individual access ways with associated visibility splays to be provided through frontage hedgerow which would inevitably have a greater impact on hedgerow than the access arrangement approved under 16/02529/OUTD.
- 6.20 The proposed soft landscaping scheme shows new 3m wide landscape buffer to southern boundary which includes heavy standard trees and nature hedgerow, as well as the retention of the majority of existing hedgerow to the site frontage with new supplemental planting. The proposal would facilitate substantial new tree planting with the site resulting in a net gain in the site overall. The hard landscaping plans shows a mixture of tarmac, block paving, flag stones, timber decking and patio areas which would ensure the creation of a good quality landscaped environment.

- 6.21 Overall, the proposed landscaping would harmonise with surroundings.

Conclusion on scale, appearance and landscaping

- 6.22 In summary, whilst the matters relating to scale and appearance are more balanced, it is considered that the proposal would have an acceptable impact on the character of the area and would preserve the overall distinctiveness and spatial character of this part of the rural village in terms of scale, appearance and landscaping.

Impact on the setting of AONB

- 6.23 Policy ADDP5 seeks to ensure development proposals conserve the scenic beauty and distinctive character of the AONB. The NPPF gives the highest status of protection for the landscape and scenic beauty of AONBs, and states their conservation should be given great weight in planning decisions. The statutory purpose of the AONB is to conserve and enhance the area's natural beauty. The Planning Practice Guidance confirms that this duty also applies to proposals outside the designated area but impacting on its natural beauty.
- 6.24 The proposal would be located outside of the AONB but within its setting, taking into account the revised scale and massing of the proposal, and intervening road 'The Ridge' and new soft planting to the road frontage, it is considered that the proposal would conserve the scenic beauty and distinctive character of the AONB.

Residential Amenity

- 6.25 According to paragraph 127 of the NPPF, planning decisions should ensure that developments create places with a high standard of amenity for existing and future occupiers. According to Core Strategy Policy CS14, new development must make a positive contribution to the quality of life in West Berkshire. As such, the impacts on neighbouring living conditions in terms of any loss of light, loss of privacy, loss of outlook, any overbearing impacts, or any significant noise and disturbance, are material considerations. The Council's adopted Quality Design SPD and House Extensions SPG provide guidance on such matters that may be applicable to all development proposals. The Human Rights Act 1988 (as amended), protocol 1, article 1 sets out further provisions which states that a person has the right to peaceful enjoyment of all their possessions.

Neighbouring residential amenity

- 6.26 This revised application has removed the first floor external balconies above the first floor flat roofs that created a loss of privacy to the occupiers of neighbouring dwellings and replaced them with Juliet balconies. In addition, the scale of the houses and garages have been reduced.
- 6.27 In terms of separation distances, based on the supporting layout plans, Plot 5 at two-storey level would be approx. 14m from the side elevation of Summerfield and would be approx. 6.5m away at single storey level (proposed garage). Plot 1 at two-storey level would be approx. 23m from the front elevation of Ridge End Farm and at single storey level (proposed garage) would approx. 15m away. On balance, it is considered that this revised proposal, taking into account relevant separation distances and well as the provision of suitable boundary treatment/soft landscaping, would preserve neighbouring residential amenity in terms of loss of outlook, light and privacy and would avoid any significant overbearing impact. Furthermore, this revised proposal addresses the reasons for refusal under reserved matters application 18/01977/REM in terms of impact on neighbouring residential amenity.

- 6.28 Planning conditions can also be imposed to further protect neighbouring residential amenity including ensuring the use of obscure glazing to the first floor windows of plot 1 and plot 5 where they face Summerfield and Ridge End Farm and as well as suitable boundary treatment with these adjacent properties to mitigate any potential loss of privacy.

Residential amenity of future occupiers

- 6.29 The supporting plans demonstrate ample levels of internal and external amenity space would be provided in the interests of ensuring a high quality living environment for future occupiers.
- 6.30 For these reasons, the proposal would have an acceptable impact on neighbouring residential amenity and would result in the creation of a high quality living environment for future occupiers. In coming to conclusion, officers have also taken into account the provisions of The Human Rights Act 1988 (as amended).

Highways Matters

- 6.31 According to Core Strategy Policy CS13, development that generates a transport impact will be required to (amongst other criteria): reduce the need to travel; improve and promote opportunities for healthy and safe travel; and demonstrate good access to key services and facilities.
- 6.32 It is noted concerns that have been raised over the potential highways impact taking in to account cumulative impacts associated with the operation of the nearby school. In this regard, Policy HSA7 allocates the site for 5 dwellings, and therefore the traffic impacts of the proposal on the local highway network, and the location terms of its accessibility by sustainable modes of transport, have already been judged to be acceptable through the plan-making process. In addition, the granting of outline planning permission reference 16/02529/OUT approved the access arrangements for the development, as such, in terms of highways impact, the proposal is considered to be acceptable.
- 6.33 Notwithstanding the above, this detailed proposal has been carefully considered by the Council's Highway Team who raise no objection subject to the imposition of planning conditions to secure electric car charging points, setting back of gates and appropriate driveway gradients. Other details such as construction management plan, visibility splays and access surfacing are covered under planning conditions forming part of the outline planning permission.
- 6.34 In terms of refuse storage and parking provision, the supporting layout plans demonstrate the site would adequately meet the refuse storage, off-road cycle and car parking provision requirements of development.
- 6.35 For the above reasons, taking into account any cumulative impacts, the proposal would not have an adverse impact on the local highways infrastructure in terms of traffic generation or highway safety.

Other matters

- 6.36 Representations have been received from objectors of the need to assess whether Outline Approval was granted as a result of allegedly incorrect information and whether the council should serve a modification or revocation order to address access arrangements. These matters are beyond the scope of this officer report and therefore are being considered separately by the Council.

- 6.37 Matters relating to flood risk, ecology, housing mix, affordable housing provision, new footway links and contamination, amongst others matters were settled through the approval of the outline application reference 16/02529/OUT and therefore are not commented on further as part of this report.
- 6.38 Satisfactory amended plans have been received during the course of the application to address concerns that 'Rooksdown' and elevations to the proposed dwellings were not represented accurately within the applicants planning submissions.

7. Planning Balance and Conclusion

- 7.1 Having taken account of all the relevant planning policy considerations and other material considerations set out above, whilst a balanced decision, it is considered that the proposed development complies with the development plan when considered as a whole and is therefore recommended for approval.

8. Full Recommendation

- 8.1 To delegate to the Head of Development and Planning to **GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION** subject to the conditions listed below.

Conditions

1.	<p>Approved plans</p> <p>The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18-P0023-100 Rev D – Colour site plan • 18-P0023-101 Rev F – Proposed site information plan • 18-P0023-102 Rev B – Plot 1 • 18-P0023-103 – Plot 2 • 18-P0023-104 – Plot 3 • 18-P0023-105 Rev A – Plot 4 • 18-P0023-106 Rev A – Plot 5 • 18-P0023-107 Rev E – Street scene Sections • 18-P0023-108 Rev A – Proposed garages plots 1 to 2 • 18-P0023-109 Rev A – Proposed garage plot 5 • 18-P0023-110 Rev E – Soft landscaping • 18-P0023-111 Rev C – Hard landscaping • 18-P0023-112 Rev D – Access plot 1 to 2 • 18-P0023-113 Rev D – Access plots 3 to 4 • 18-P0023-114 Rev D – Access plot 5 • 18-P0023-115 – Proposed entrance gates • 18-P0023-CP – Context Plan <p>Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.</p>
2.	<p>Electric Charging Points</p> <p>Prior to above foundation level development taking place on the dwellings hereby permitted, details of electric vehicle charging points shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Each individual dwelling hereby</p>

	<p>permitted shall not be occupied until the electric vehicle charging point(s) has been provided in accordance with the approved drawings for that respective dwelling. The charging point(s) shall thereafter be retained and kept available for use by electric vehicles.</p> <p>Reason: To promote the use of electric vehicles. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019), Policies CS13 and CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026), Policy P1 of the Housing Site Allocation DPD and Policy TRANS1 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007).</p>
3.	<p>Boundary Treatment</p> <p>Notwithstanding the information shown on the supporting plans, prior to the first occupation of any dwellings hereby permitted, details (indicating the position, design, materials and type) of all boundary treatment shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The boundary treatment shall be completed in accordance with the approved scheme before any dwelling hereby permitted is first occupied. The approved boundary treatments shall thereafter be retained as such.</p> <p>Reason: To protect neighbouring residential amenity from loss of privacy and to ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development in accordance with Policy CS14 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Core Strategy (2006-2026) and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019), Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), WBC House Extensions SPG (2004), WBC Quality Design SPD Part 2 Residential Development (2006) and Cold Ash and Ashmore Green Village Design Statement (2002).</p>
4.	<p>Soft Landscaping Specification</p> <p>No development or other operations shall commence on site until a detailed scheme of landscaping for the site that accords with the landscaping strategy set out on drawing no. 18-P0023-110 REV E has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include schedules of plants noting species, plant sizes and proposed numbers/densities, an implementation programme and details of written specifications including cultivation and other operations involving tree, shrub and grass establishment. The scheme shall ensure;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Completion of the approved landscape scheme within the first planting season following completion of development. b) Any trees shrubs or plants that die or become seriously damaged within fifteen years of this development shall be replaced in the following year by plants of the same size and species. <p>Reason: To ensure the implementation of a satisfactory scheme of landscaping in accordance with Policies ADPP1 CS14, CS18 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026 and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019), Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), WBC House Extensions SPG (2004), WBC Quality Design SPD Part 2 Residential Development (2006) and Cold Ash and Ashmore Green Village Design Statement (2002). A pre-commencement condition is necessary because insufficient detailed information accompanies the application; landscaping measures may require work to be undertaken throughout the construction phase and so it is necessary to approve these details before any development takes place.</p>

5.	<p>Instant Hedge</p> <p>Within 3 months of development commencing, the instant hedge as shown on drawing 18-P0023-110 REV E shall be planted as shown to include at least 6 native varieties of shrubs with a minimum height when planted to be at least 1.5metres and any maintenance regime is to be carried out as per the grower's specification. Any plants that die or become seriously damaged within fifteen years of this development shall be replaced in the following year by plants of the same size and species.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure the implementation of a satisfactory scheme of landscaping in accordance with the Policies ADPP1, CS14, CS18 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026 and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019), Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), WBC House Extensions SPG (2004), WBC Quality Design SPD Part 2 Residential Development (2006) and Cold Ash and Ashmore Green Village Design Statement (2002).</p>
6.	<p>Setting Back of Gates</p> <p>Any gates to be provided at accesses where vehicles will enter or leave the site, shall open away from the adjoining highway and be set back a distance of at least five metres from the edge of the public highway.</p> <p>Reason: In the interest of road safety and to ensure that vehicles can be driven off the highway before the gates are opened. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2018) and Policy CS13 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026).</p>
7.	<p>Driveway Gradients</p> <p>The gradient of private drives shall not exceed 1 in 8 or, where buildings are likely to be occupied by the mobility impaired, 1 in 12.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure that adequate access to parking spaces and garages is provided. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019) and Policy CS13 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026).</p>
8.	<p>Balconies</p> <p>Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended), the external areas above first floor flat roofs over any single storey rear extensions to the dwellings hereby permitted shall not be used as first floor balcony areas/sun terraces or similar external domestic use.</p> <p>Reason: To protect neighbouring residential amenity from loss of privacy in accordance with policy CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019), Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), WBC House Extensions SPG (2004), WBC Quality Design SPD Part 2 Residential Development (2006) and Cold Ash and Ashmore Green Village Design Statement (2002).</p>

9.	<p>Obscure glazing</p> <p>Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended), the first floor windows in the east facing elevation of plot 1 (facing towards Ridge End Barn) and west facing elevation of elevation of plot 5 (facing towards Summerfield) shall be of a top opening design only and shall be fitted with obscure glazing before each respective dwelling is first occupied and thereafter shall be retained in this form. Any replacement windows shall also be of top opening design and incorporate obscure glazing.</p> <p>Reason: To protect neighbouring residential amenity from loss of privacy in accordance with policy CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019), Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), WBC House Extensions SPG (2004), WBC Quality Design SPD Part 2 Residential Development (2006) and Cold Ash and Ashmore Green Village Design Statement (2002).</p>
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Informative Notes

1.	<p>Working Proactively with the Applicant</p> <p>This decision has been made in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development having regard to Development Plan policies and available guidance to secure high quality appropriate development. The local planning authority has worked proactively with the applicant to secure a development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.</p>
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