

Notice of Meeting



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Western Area Planning Committee Wednesday 16 December 2020 at 6.30pm Written Submissions

Members Interests

Note: If you consider you may have an interest in any Planning Application included on this agenda then please seek early advice from the appropriate officers.

Further information for members of the public

Plans and photographs relating to the Planning Applications to be considered at the meeting can be viewed by clicking on the link on the front page of the relevant report.

For further information about this Agenda, or to inspect any background documents referred to in Part I reports, please contact the Planning Team on (01635) 519148
Email: planningcommittee@westberks.gov.uk

Further information, Planning Applications and Minutes are also available on the Council's website at www.westberks.gov.uk

Any queries relating to the Committee should be directed to Jenny Legge on (01635) 503043 Email: jenny.legge@westberks.gov.uk

Date of despatch of Agenda: Tuesday, 8 December 2020



Agenda - Western Area Planning Committee to be held on Wednesday, 16 December 2020 (continued)

To: Councillors Adrian Abbs, Phil Barnett, Dennis Benneyworth, Jeff Cant, Hilary Cole, Carlyne Culver, Clive Hooker (Chairman), Tony Vickers (Vice-Chairman) and Howard Woollaston

Substitutes: Councillors Jeff Beck, David Marsh, Steve Masters, Andy Moore, Erik Pattenden, Garth Simpson and Martha Vickers

Agenda

Part I

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| <p>(1) Application No. and Parish: 20/02322/FUL, Boames Farm, Boames Lane, Enborne</p> <p>Proposal: Erection of two sheds for housing cattle during winter</p> <p>Location: Boames Farm, Boames Lane, Enborne, Newbury, RG20 0JT</p> <p>Applicant: J C Cottrell & Son</p> <p>Recommendation: To delegate to the Head of Development and Planning to refuse planning permission.</p> | <p>5 - 12</p> |
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Background Papers

- (a) The West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.
- (b) The West Berkshire District Local Plan (Saved Policies September 2007), the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire, the Waste Local Plan for Berkshire and relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance and Documents.
- (c) Any previous planning applications for the site, together with correspondence and report(s) on those applications.
- (d) The case file for the current application comprising plans, application forms, correspondence and case officer's notes.
- (e) The Human Rights Act.

Sarah Clarke
Service Director (Strategy and Governance)

If you require this information in a different format or translation, please contact Moira Fraser on telephone (01635) 519045.

Western Area Planning Committee

Wednesday 16th December 2020

Written Submissions

Item:	(1)
Application Number:	20/02322/FUL
Location:	Boames Farm, Boames Lane, Enborne, RG20 0JT
Proposal:	Erection of two sheds for housing cattle during winter
Applicant:	J C Cottrell & Son

Submissions received

Enborne Parish Council	John Leeson
Adjoining Parish Council	N/A
Objectors	N/A
Supporters	John Handy
Applicant/Agent	Simon Tomkins (Applicant)

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Boames Farm planning application 20/02322/FUL

Written Submission to 16-12-2020 Planning Committee from Enborne Parish Council

Enborne Parish Council strongly supported this very well-designed planning application at its special planning meeting on Monday 2nd November 2020 noting widespread resident support.

The Tree Officer has visited the site and confirms no existing trees would be damaged and planned new woodland and hedgerow planting is welcomed. The proposed development links Little Copse with Redding's Copse which, unlike Little Copse, is designated ancient woodland, thus creating a linked landscape promoting increasing biodiversity.

The Arboricultural Report with recommendations incorporated in the plan strengthens woodland protections and creates a sheltered area behind the barns for undisturbed exploitation by wildlife.

The nearby mature (over 100 years old) oaks within the Local Wildlife Site (LWS) bordering the proposed development area show no sign of competition for light from that direction for well beyond the 20 years conjectured elsewhere, so woodland absence. The photo on page 16 (Public Document Pack – Photographs) shows a typical woodland edge growth pattern. The foreground shows the area for development is not woodland and a Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) survey in 2004 (Design and Access Statement (DAS) Appendix 5) suggested that area could be removed from LWS designation as it was not woodland. The photographs presented of aerial views taken in 2010 and 2018 therefore do not show woodland and the shot from 1999 is of even less quality. The pond was a short-lived feature which dried out naturally. The shot on page 8 showing the proposed barns in their setting is copied from Plate 4 of the DAS and must be seen in the context of Plate 1 showing the area today without the barns.

The application demonstrates continued pursuit by this farmer of sensitive management of his farmland environment well summarised in the conclusion, Section 5, of the DAS and includes active encouragement of increased biodiversity within Little Copse itself. In a wider context this farmer also carefully maintains areas of locally rare 'Lowland Meadow Priority Habitat' helped by Higher-Level Stewardship status. The role of browsing animals in the maintenance of such habitats is well understood and the nationally important rare breed herd to be supported by the development is key to that ongoing management.

The fundamental problem with objections raised to this development is that they rely entirely on alleged loss of historic woodland and ancient woodland indicators. The development loses no historic woodland and the ancient woodland indicators are a feature of Little Copse as a whole. The ecological appraisal found no species of concern within the proposed development site.

Photographs of the street scene on pages 9-12 and 30 indicate what would be lost from the rural appeal of the street scene if the suggested alternative site was implemented. The local community would object and the loss of a large area of prime grazing land would be uneconomic in a farm struggling to be sustainable while maintaining high animal and environmental standards. The farmer seeks 'Farm Assured' status to promote his high-quality grass fed produce.

Enborne Parish Council 14/12/2020

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Introduction.

Working locally since 1984 and providing a woodland and arboricultural service, there are few who have done more to sustain local trees and woodlands as myself.

As such I wouldn't be supporting this application if I considered any detriment would accrue to the trees and the important biodiversity of Little Copse.

There have been misunderstandings in the assessment of this proposal, exacerbated by the paucity of site visits and material considerations have been misinterpreted.

The site.

This small open area, once polluted, much excavated, made-up ground, NOT 'a large area of woodland'. Growth structure of the adjacent woodland trees demonstrates that this has not been woodland for many years.

Proposals will NOT result in the loss of any existing woodland habitat.

Woodland classification.

The Inventory of Ancient Woodland includes land continuously wooded since 1600. Little Copse is included on neither the Rocque map of 1761 nor on the Inventory.

Some other historic maps, including Ordnance Survey, depict the area as scrub.

The oak are not 'Veteran' trees by any recognised authority; in 100years, they might be.

The indicator species and features are NOT exclusive to 'Ancient woodland'.

Little Copse is 'secondary woodland'; insisting that the advanced protection rightly accorded to 'ancient woodland' and 'veteran trees' is misplaced.

Potential harm to woodland habitat.

Council documents uses phrases such as "direct impact", 'loss of habitat', 'detrimental' etc. to both retained trees and the visual amenity. These assertions have not been explained or demonstrated.

In contrast:

The proposed damage mitigation within the application adheres to the recommendations in BS5837, the 'bible' when it comes to building near trees.

The proposals will NOT intrude into or affect the existing copse.

The building and robust fencing will provide a permanent barrier, outside the tree-line, between the cattle husbandry operation and the delicate woodland habitat for the future.

The straw bedding system and internal drainage is designed to prevent seepage of any exudate

Extensive drainage in the yard using the natural gradient will prevent the likelihood of external run-off towards the copse, all doing away with the need for a habitat buffer.

As such, proposals fulfil NPPF175; significant harm is 'adequately mitigated'.

Visual Amenity

The proposed barns are tucked at the back of the yard and will NOT diminish the visual benefits provided by the wooded skyline of Little Copse.

Both alternative positions proposed by the Council are further forward, with vastly greater impact on the skyline and thus the visual amenity of the local countryside.

Additional native woodland and hedge planting is proposed, more than doubling the area of the site, screening the yard and inter-linking hedgerows, Little Copse and Redding's Copse. The green infrastructure will be enhanced, increasing biodiversity and increasing ecological corridors for fauna and migrating flora.

Summary

These barns will:

- have no undue impact on the existing habitat of Little Copse.
- have an imperceptible effect on the visual amenity, nearby or more distant.
- result in net increase in native habitat.
- result in significantly more benefits to the countryside than potential disadvantages.

John Handy

20/02322/FUL Boames Farm, Applicant Written Statement

I am the applicant, and I farm the land subject to discussion this evening.

Little Copse is not ancient woodland, by definition or by designation.

We have not removed any trees in order to facilitate the development.

The much quoted '16 indicator species' is taken from the 2004 TVERC survey of Little Copse. This is a single reference point, upon which so of the Committee Report is based. The same survey recommended that the site area be removed from the Wildlife Heritage site designation. An important consideration.

Plate 9 from the Ecological Appraisal is also important, but has been excluded from the CRP.

The Tree Officer is the only consultee to have ever visited the site. This short visit was conducted in December, making it impossible for the Officer to have verified the presence of, or distribution of any summer floral 'indicator species'. The Officer's views as to the status of Little Copse are based on the 'indicator species' sentence from 2004.

The Forestry Commission clearly states that they do not comment on applications. The FC also never state that Little Copse is ancient woodland, or refer to any 'indicator species' being present. The closest ancient woodland to which they may be referring to in their guidance is Redding's Copse.

In order to comply with WBCS 17 we had to ask if any potential site would be a 'reasonable location' for the barns to be built. A plan and concise breakdown of the impacts of all potential sites was submitted.

Our neighbours are not farmers. Having a working livestock unit (Feeding 7AM/4PM November to April) 30m from their bedroom window, would have a serious environmental health impact upon their lives. This fact alone would make the Council's preferred site an 'unreasonable' location.

With regard to WBCS 18, the Case Officer has recommended refusal on the basis that the loss of 0.08Ha of 'rank grassland' (as described in 2004) would be an unacceptable loss of green infrastructure. By the same logic, applied to the Council's preferred site, the loss of 0.35Ha of semi-improved grassland, in full view of the public domain would be even more unacceptable.

In order to prepare the application I have had to understand the planning policies. In writing the Planning section of my Design and Access Statement, I was able to literally copy the exact wording of the policies, such is the compliance with WBCS 14 & 19 of the proposed site.

Apply these policies to the 'preferred site' and ask any questions about whether or not it would protect the secluded nature of Boames Lane, whether it conserves heritage assets and their settings, would it conserve the existing form and pattern? The answer is always no, so it is not a 'reasonable' location.

In recommending refusal the Council are hoping that we as private landowners leave the proposed site to 're-wild' over the next 50 years, at the cost of our business, everything we have worked for and have dreamed of Boames Farm some day becoming.

Simon Tompkins

Applicant