

Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update 2023-2040

Matter 4.1: The Assessment of Potential Site Allocations for Employment and Housing

Tuesday 28 April, 10AM session

The Site: Silverstock Manor, Sandhurst Road, RG40 3JE

The Applicant: Nicholas Prior

Question to be addressed: Is the assessment that has been undertaken robust in all other respects?

The Applicant has been promoting ‘Silverstock Manor, Sandhurst Road’ throughout both the FNDP and Wokingham Local Plan making process. The location of the Site is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Site Location Plan



Overview of Site

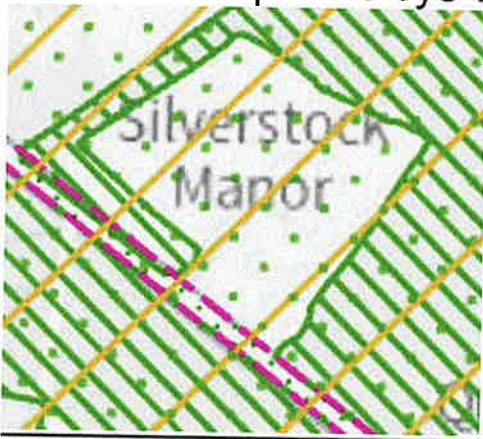
This is relevant to give context to how the site has been continuously misrepresented in the FNDP, and across WBC planning policy maps and documents.

1. Silverstock Manor is a 2.4-hectare, accepted brownfield site.
On a previous application (Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/W/17/3168848) The Planning Inspectorate stated: "The site is brownfield land, a matter which is accepted by the Council."
2. It has several existing buildings including a residential dwelling, large barns, yard and hardstanding. It also has a long-established driveway through the site, and a very residential road frontage with brick walls and gates.
3. The site has had interest from multiple residential developers. It has a history of accepted modest planning applications including a proposed erection of 2 storey extension to enlarge existing dwelling. The site also had Planning history of 7 large dwellings which were accepted subject to S106 which was unfortunately not agreed.
4. The site is clear of trees. Flood risk report previously agreed.
5. Ecology surveys have previously been undertaken for the site. It was concluded all habitats and species potential on the site were negligible, with the only exceptions being birds and reptiles which were considered low.
6. The development of this site would not affect any heritage assets.
7. The existing entrance to the site is wide and there is clear vision either way
8. The site is approx 0.2 miles to the west (which is less than a 5-minute walk) from the modest development location allocation by WBC. This is also on the same road in a straight line so would be the route of travel. Silverstock Manor is also approx. 0.3 miles to the south of the modest development location allocation by WBC.
9. The Site has potential to accommodate a sustainable high-quality development that responds to its surroundings and context

Issues with the process

Policies Map

- I dispute that the site is shown as a valued landscape area. It is included in "Forest and Rides".
 - Several scenic quality attributes are mentioned, none directly relate to my site. As mentioned, my site has a clear entrance, it is not woodland, there are tall visible barns / outbuildings, and lots of hard standing visible from the road.
 - None of these provide "scenic quality", "rarity", "recreational value" nor "representativeness" as described by the Wokingham Borough Council Landscape Character Assessment.
 - It is clear my site should be excluded from the valued landscape area, as it does not fit the descriptions from both a map birds eye view, and ground street view.



 Valued Landscape Area (See policy NE6)

FNDP

- Grossly biased, obstructed development, and misrepresented the site.
- Definitions continuously being changed, moving goalposts after I would give responses addressing any concerns / correcting misinformation.
- Photographs that did not show the full frontage of the property and caused an incorrect view that the site is not already visually developed.
- Showed my property incorrectly in the key as a "key gap" site, even though it was not a key gap site on the maps and never should have been, adding further negative bias in regard to development on my site.

GDPR breach

- Minutes from the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group meeting held on 17 September 2021 included my name and personal data.
- This breach was visible on the Parish website for the public to view for weeks until I noticed and complained. This is evidence to the poor management and misuse of the Neighbourhood Planning process.
- It showed clear bias against myself personally and my site, and the lack of competency to professionally manage consultation and produce the required development draft plan. This is a clear attempt of deformation of character and shows Finchampstead Future did not act fairly nor just.

Bell Cornwell conflict of interest

- I have previously employed Bell Cornwell for a number of planning applications in which they have given their professional advice in promoting my site as suitable for development. This can be evidenced on the WBC planning portal. Bell Cornwell was used during the FNDP process to provide professional advice to the FNDP group which is a clear conflict of interest when there was an anti-development rhetoric towards my site.
- **Sites were not equally visited in person.** There were no measurable criteria which determined which sites would or would not get a visit.
- The Government is very clear that it will not be possible to use Neighbourhood Plans to stop development. However, the Parish/Finchampstead Future throughout their plan had a clear emotional tone against development and the sites which are keen to help with the housing demand.

Other

- The NPPF suggests strategic policies should look ahead for a minimum of fifteen years from the date of policy adoption.

Wokingham Borough Council is currently proposing 13 years which does not match national policy.

- There is a heavy reliance on large Strategic Development Locations in the plan. These sites are more at risk to have delays. Smaller brownfield sites should be considered to help boost housing figures in these likely scenarios.