

ADDITIONAL SUPPORTING INFORMATION IN RESPONSE TO COMMENTS RAISED ABOUT THIS APPLICATION

SITE ADDRESS: 3 Oakwood, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, HP4 3NQ

PLANNING REFERENCE: 4/02075/18/FHA

DATE: 21/09/2018

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1. Site Context

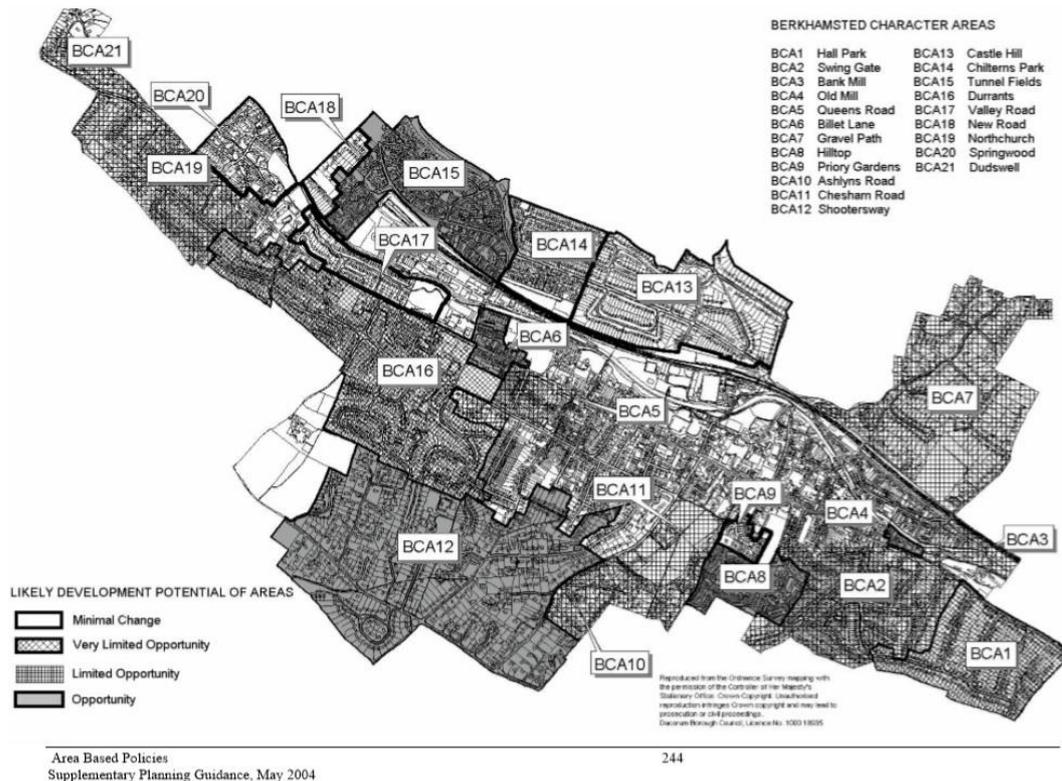
The application site is located on the edge of the Berkhamsted settlement, within the BCA12 Shootersway Character Area which comprises of a mix of properties of different sizes and styles (see separate comments below regarding Character Area). Whilst the property was originally built as part of the Oakwood Estate, the 'estate' itself has no separate Character Area statement nor protection or restriction in terms of materials used beyond standard local and national planning policy. It is not apparent when stood outside No.3 Oakwood that white cladding is a shared common material with any other property as No.'s. 1 and 2 are both tile hung at first floor, rather the contrast between two distinctive materials is the characteristic and common feature between the three properties and this is preserved in our proposals.

No.'s 1-3 Oakwood are built outside of the inward-looking Oakwood estate and therefore any assessment of context should give greater weight to the properties visible in the vicinity of No.3, including those on Shootersway and the top of Cross Oak Road, as well as the wider Shootersway Character Area.



The immediate context is formed by properties along Shootersway and the top of Cross Oak Road.

2. Berkhamsted Character Area – Shootersway BCA12



“A large, mainly very low density residential area on the southern side of town featuring a variety of mainly detached houses in a spacious semi-rural setting, dominated by informal heavy landscaping”

The Shootersway Character Area – which this site forms a part of – is one of the largest and most varied Character Areas within the town, reflecting the increased level of design freedom often found towards the edge of settlements. The Character Area Appraisal states the design of houses features **“variety throughout”** and this is clearly evident in the existing variety of styles of properties encircling the area of green land at the top of Cross Oak Road which forms the context for the application site. The stated policy approach is to maintain this defined character i.e. to maintain variety throughout. It is further clarified within the Character Area statement that **“innovation in design is acceptable”**. This is understood and evidenced in properties such as Mariners, a contemporary new build dwelling on Cross Oak Road. Any insistence to adhere to singular material and stylistic preferences with the aim to homogenize properties aesthetically would be in contradiction to this policy approach. As stated previously there is no additional restriction placed on No.3 Oakwood that stylistically or materially ties it to either No.’s 1 and 2 Oakwood or indeed the wider Oakwood Estate.

While other Character Area statements such as BCA4 Bank Mill highlight detailed design requirements for developments within plots to follow the architectural style, themes and colours of the existing building, BCA12 Shootersway categorically states in this Character Area there are **no special requirements**.

3. Dacorum Adopted Core Strategy

Policy CS10: Quality of Settlement Design highlights the opportunity to ‘*deliver landmark buildings at movement and pedestrian gateways and enhance focal points with high quality architecture*’. Within this context, Landmark buildings are defined as being ‘*easily recognisable structures that aid navigation to and within an area. They are not necessarily defined by their height, but by their distinctiveness due to design and location*’.

No.3 Oakwood is located on a gateway site at the edge of the Berkhamsted settlement. Not only does this provide further justification to seek a landmark building of a distinctive design, but also it is appropriate that the distinctive design is inspired by and makes links to the adjacent Chilterns AONB with its characteristic use of black timber cladding.

The recently completed scheme at No.1 South Bank Road (ref: 4/02261/15/FUL) is similarly located at a gateway site, is contemporary in style, features vertical timber cladding and now forms a landmark building due to its distinctive design. There are no additional planning restrictions that should prejudice against comparable development at No.3 Oakwood.



No.1 South Bank Road (ref: 4/02261/15/FUL) is located at a comparable gateway site

Policy CS11: Quality of Neighbourhood Design states development should '*protect or enhance significant views within character areas*'. The application site is prominently located toward the top of Cross Oak Road, a key vehicle route through Berkhamsted and key junction within the Shootersway Character Area. As shown in the below image, No.3 Oakwood terminates the view at Cross Oak Road when passing the recently built contemporary dwelling 'Mariners'. As such the two properties will both enhance this significant view out of the settlement.



Existing view towards the application site from the top of Cross Oak Road

4. Proposed Materials

Our proposed selection of materials comes from a careful assessment of the neighbouring properties and the surrounding context. Relevant neighbouring properties include:

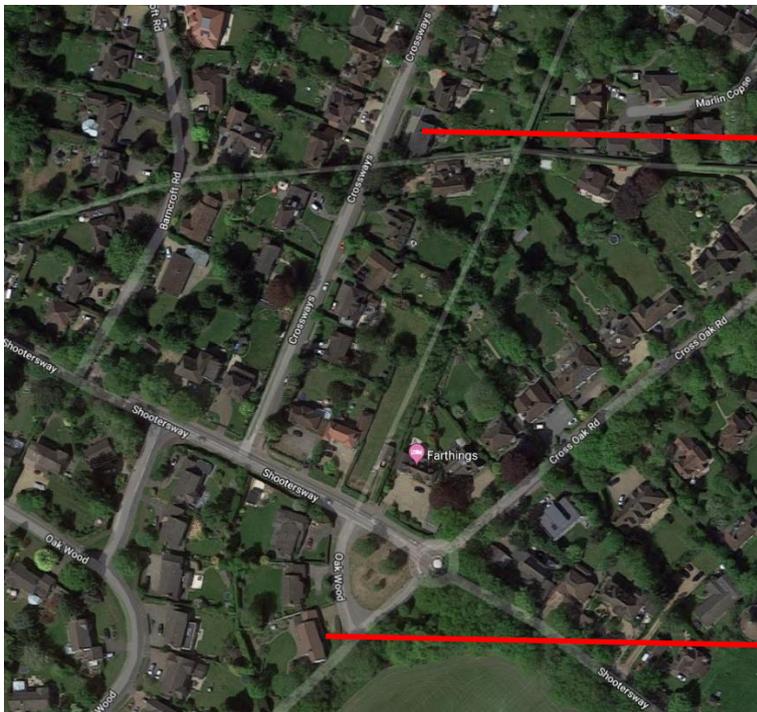
- 1. Chendyne, Shootersway** – white render and black timber beams
- 2. Hardrick House, Shootersway** – white render throughout
- 3. Farthings, Shootersway** – dark stained timber cladding at 1st floor, white render at ground floor
- 4. Mariners, Cross Oak Road** – contrasting timber and white render, very contemporary aesthetic



Examples of neighbouring properties with comparable materials to those proposed



15 Crossways – Materials: First floor – dark stained cladding; Ground floor – white render



15 Crossways

Application Site

The above example is located within the same Character Area i.e. Shootersway BCA12. The existing materials are directly comparable with our proposals with dark stained timber cladding at first floor and white render at ground floor. The simple, linear, pitched roof form and horizontal emphasis is also comparable with our proposed designs.

Properties on the wider Oakwood Estate typically feature two dominant and contrasting external materials, often with masonry at ground floor level and boarded cladding at first floor above. This is characteristic of the wider, secluded Oakwood Estate (which is not directly visible from the site) and is featured on the current dwelling. Our proposals would remain within this description.



No's 1 and 2 Oakwood are both tile hung, No.3 Oakwood stands out as being composed of different materials and this would continue to be the case.

5. Colour

Using their Permitted Development Rights, the applicants could paint the existing first floor cladding black and the ground floor brickwork white. There is no restriction against this as the site is not located on Article 2(3) land and there is no Article 4 Direction on the property. Whilst we appreciate this is not the actual existing colour of the dwelling, it must be given weight when considering the notion of 'remaining in keeping' with the street scene as the materials proposed excluding their colour do not otherwise fundamentally differ from those already prevalent in the surrounding area.



The above proposed colours changes could be implemented under Permitted Development Rights

With regard to the specific proposed material, charred timber cladding is recognised as a high quality and environmentally sensitive cladding solution, providing a low tech process which preserves the wood without using chemicals. As noted in our Design and Access statement, vertical black timber boarding has been used successfully on other contemporary dwellings in the Chilterns, notably at the RIBA award winning House 19 in Amersham by Jestico + Whiles. The application site's proximity to the Chilterns AONB and its location as a gateway site on the edge of the Berkhamsted settlement means reference to the traditional materials found throughout the Chilterns AONB is an entirely appropriate and contextually sensitive approach to design in this instance.



House 19, Amersham by Jestico + Whiles

6. Style

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) seeks a high quality of design and that new development is sympathetic to local character, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change. To ensure sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 130 of the NPPF states *'where the design of a development accords with clear expectations in plan policies, design should not be used by the decision-maker as a valid reason to object to development.'* Paragraph 131 goes further to state *'In determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings'*. As noted within our submitted Design and Access statement the modernisation of this property with minimal change in footprint, improved thermal performance and use of higher quality materials represents an improvement in the standard of design in the area and promotes a very sustainable approach to development generally. The overall form and layout of the property remains largely unchanged.

The acknowledged variety of house designs within the Shootersway Character Area and close proximity to Mariners on Cross Oak Road would mitigate any suggested harm or inappropriateness caused by the evolution of the current property towards a more contemporary aesthetic in this location.

7. Privacy

There have been neighbour objections expressing concern regarding the proposed rear balcony. The proposed balcony is located on the south site boundary to capture views up Denny's Lane and is therefore set away from and oblique to all the adjacent properties. For information, the distances between the proposed balcony and the rear of the adjacent properties are set out below. In all cases there are heavily landscaped property boundaries to screen No.3 Oakwood:

No.6 Oakwood – distance to proposed balcony = approx. 66m

No.7 Oakwood – distance to proposed balcony = approx. 57m

No.8 Oakwood – distance to proposed balcony = approx. 54m

No.9 Oakwood – distance to proposed balcony = approx. 67m



The proposed balcony would provide views along Denny's Lane and be screened by the mature planting to the rear of the site (note: depth of garden to No.3 Oakwood is approx. 25m).