



West Berkshire Council

24 March 2026

Application reference: 26/00261/RESMAJ

Our reference: MLP25076



Institute For Animal Health, High Street, Compton, RG29 7NN

26/00261/RESMAJ – Reserved Matters application for the approval of appearance, landscaping, layout, and scale for the erection of 160 residential dwellings including public open spaces, landscaping pursuant to Outline planning permission 20/01336/OUTMAJ for development comprising of up to 160 dwellings.

1. Master Land and Planning Ltd is instructed by 'Compton Parish Council' (CPC) who **OBJECT** to the above Reserved Matters Application.

Introduction

2. Planning Application 20/01336/OUTMAJ ('the application') was approved by West Berkshire Council (WBC) for the erection of up to 160 dwellings (all matters reserved with the exception of access) on 14th March 2023. The applicant has now submitted Reserved Matters Application 26/00261/RESMAJ for appearance, landscaping, layout, and scale which was validated on 13th February 2026.
3. The Statement of Compliance (SoC) (Parts 1 to 3) prepared by Focus On Design has been undertaken to demonstrate compliance with the design principle approved at Outline stage and the approved plans at Condition 7. The SoC also provides the Applicant's justification for any departures from the initially agreed scheme whilst also summarising the considerations that have been taken into account in developing the detailed layout and supporting plans. This has been carefully considered upon setting out the below objection.

Planning Policy Context

4. Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) states that in dealing with an application for planning permission, the LPA shall have regard to the provisions of the development plan, any local finance considerations, and any other material considerations, so far as material to the application. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that, if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of determination to be made under the Planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
5. The Development Plan comprises the West Berkshire Local Plan Review (LPR) 2023-2041 (Adopted June 2025) and Compton Neighbourhood Plan (CNP) made on 10th February 2022. It is key to note that the Outline Application was considered and approved under the West Berkshire Core Strategy (CS) 2006-2026 as this was decided prior to the adoption of the LPR.
6. National planning policies are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework updated December 2024 (NPPF), and in the National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).
7. Additional Planning Documents of relevance include the Quality Design SPD (2006), the Sustainable Drainage Systems SPD (2018), the Planning Obligations SPD (2014), the Housing Needs Assessment 2022 (HNA), the Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2016

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(SHMA), and the West Berkshire – Employment Land Review Update (February 2024), the National Design Guide (NDG), Compton Village Design Statement (VDS), the Highways Design Guidance (HDG), and the Pirbright Institute Site, Compton SPD.

Layout

Housing Layout

8. NDP Policy SP8 requires new development to be (c) *'appropriate in terms of location, scale, and design in the context of the existing settlement form, pattern, and character'*. CNP Policy C5 states that *'the size mix and tenure of affordable homes should take into account the recommendations of the CCB Report on Housing Need and other up to date evidence of local need'*. The NDG states that *'well-designed parking is attractive, well landscaped and sensitively integrated into the built form so it doesn't dominate the development or street scene'*.
9. The REM layout has not departed from the developable area which was approved in the Parameter Plans and the housing mix and tenure have been provided in accordance with the S106 agreement. However, with regard to density, the SoC (Part 3) confirms that the layout achieves approximately 30dph. Whilst this was approved at Outline stage, it is key to highlight that is contrary to the CNP which states that a density of 20dph is considered appropriate for development within the National Landscape (NL).
10. The REM layout now identifies housing types with associated garages, parking provision, boundary treatments, and private garden space, as is appropriate at this stage. Whilst the level of detail is consistent with a REM submission, it is noted that a large proportion of parking is either provided in double or triple tandem arrangements or spaces situated in front of plots, both of which are considered to be less desirable in relation to convenience and attractiveness of street scenes. This creates a car dominant scheme which departs from the Outline layout and particularly the requirements of Condition 14 of the Outline permission, which states that design codes should *'avoid over dominance of car parking at the front of dwellings in particular onto the green street'*. The layout is suggested to be less landscape-led in order to prioritise parking and vehicular movements.



1. Less Desirable Parking Arrangements throughout the Proposed Layout.

Road Layout

11. Following the evolution of the housing layout, it is noted that the internal road arrangement differs in certain respects from the indicative movement framework shown at Outline stage. In particular, the introduction of additional private streets extending off the main spine road which results in a more linear form of development, which has led to more hard landscaping and a reduction in front garden spaces.
12. Whilst some variation was expected given that the illustrative layout submitted at Outline stage was not approved as a fixed layout, it is not considered that the REM layout delivers a high standard of design or an appropriate layout and density. The increased use of private

roads to serve dwellings, when compared against the approved parameter plans, encourages reliance on private cars and reduces the quality of the space by limiting opportunities for soft landscaping. This approach reduces the amount of developable space, resulting in smaller dwelling plots, in turn creating a denser looking layout.



2. Proposed Outline Layout compared against REM Layout showing private road differentiation

Appearance

- The REM application is supported by a Design and Access Statement (DAS) and Design Code document, providing a detailed summary of the design elements of the built form and to ensure compliance with Condition 14. The application is also supported by individual plans and elevations of housing types which allow for clear identification of each plot.

Design and Materials

- LPR Policy SP7 states that *'new development will be required to strengthen a sense of place through high-quality locally distinctive design and place shaping'* This will be achieved by *'conserving and enhancing the character, appearance, and quality of an area and the way it functions'* and should respond to national and local design guidance. CNP Policy C8 states that *'all development will be expected to have high standards of design, to assist in the creation of beautiful and distinctive places, and to reflect the guidance of the Compton Village Design Statement'* (VDS) and incorporate principles of the NDG and the National Model Design Code.
- At Outline stage, the DAS included a 'Character Appreciation' section, which sought to define the identity of Compton and establish the architectural cues to which new development should respond. This drew on precedents from the surrounding built form to inform the proposed design approach and the appearance of the dwellings. The DAS identified key features such as orientation, block structure, materials, detailing, boundary treatments, and density, with the aim of creating *'high quality, residential led environment which responds well to its local context whilst improving Site accessibility and inclusivity for all. The Proposed Development seeks to improve the environmental quality of this previously developed site and bring it back into function as a sustainable and attractive neighbourhood within the village, whilst respecting its landscaped setting and character'*.
- While the DAS illustrates variation within the wider area, the materials, architectural detailing, scale, and roof forms proposed within the REM application remain largely consistent across all character areas. The Design Codes are intended to build on the DAS by defining these character areas and establishing specific design principles for each, ensuring development

responds sensitively to its context and contributes to a cohesive sense of place. However, limited variation is evident between the identified character areas, and the proposals therefore fail to demonstrate a meaningful distinction between them.

17. As a result, the scheme lacks sufficient variation and does not clearly define distinctive character areas or how individual plots relate to them. Furthermore, Conservation and Design comments on the application confirm that the street scene will display styles that diverge from those set out in the Design Code.



CORE Typical Street Scene



GREEN AVENUE Typical Street Scene



CONSERVATION EDGE Typical Street Scene

3. Sections within the Design Code Document showing Lack of Variation in Character

18. The street scenes above reinforce the similarities by clearly showing repetition of dwelling types across all character areas. Upon further review of each proposed dwelling type, the similarities are particularly evident with the 'Avondale' & 'Cornell', 'Winstone' & 'Glidewell', and 'Manning' house types, which are effectively the same design. Minor variations in materials and finishes are not, in themselves, sufficient to create meaningful distinction between character areas. This is identified in insert 4 below.





FRONT ELEVATION
Winstone in 'Core' and 'Green'



FRONT ELEVATION
Glidewell in all Character Areas



FRONT ELEVATION
Manning in 'Core'



FRONT ELEVATION
Manning in 'Green' and 'Conservation'



SIDE ELEVATION
TAX WINDOWS TO PLOTS 55 & 56 ONLY.
Manning Side Elevation

Side Elevations

19. Design Parameter 9 in the CNP and Design Guideline 8 of the VDS confirm that 'corner plots are particularly sensitive' and that 'initial designs should be carefully considered to ensure that the public face of the development makes a positive contribution to the street scene'.
20. Another key consideration in the preparation of a detailed layout is ensuring that plots, particularly those located on corners or with side elevations visible from publicly accessible area, present attractive facades. The REM application includes a significant number of plots with prominent elevations, especially when compared to the approved outline layout. These plots predominantly comprise the 'Cornell', 'Avondale', 'Moreton', and 'Manning' house types.
21. The majority of these dwelling types incorporate distinctive detailing appropriate to their positions within the street scene, thereby contributing positively to visual amenity. However, the side elevation of the 'Manning' house type, as proposed within the 'Green' character area, includes blank windows that result in an unattractive façade and thus impacting the visual quality and coherence of the surrounding area. Thames Valley Police further acknowledge in their comment that there are a number of locations where the layout exposes vulnerable rear and side boundaries which increases the amount of blank frontages to the street, further confirming that this also leaves these plots to be more vulnerable to unauthorised access.
22. While it is acknowledged that this design approach at 'Manning' may be intended to facilitate bat corridors, it is considered that an alternative design solution or house type in this location would better respond to its prominent siting and would enhance the overall character and quality of the street scene.
23. Overall, whilst the appearance of the REM largely complies with that approved at Outline stage in relation to the presented character areas, there is distinct lack of variation between each area which suggests non-compliance with LPR Policy SP7 which requires development proposals to identify the local character and distinctiveness of an area. Conflict is also

established with CNP Policy C8 which requires development to assist in creating distinctive places as well as conflict with the CNP Design Parameters and VDS Design Guidelines.

Scale

Floor Areas

24. CNP Design Parameter 10 VDS Design Guideline 9 require development to respect neighbouring properties in scale, siting, and style. The Quality Design SPD states that respecting the physical massing of a residential area is critical to protecting the residential character, and therefore the physical bulk of a building should be considered in terms of its footprint, length, width, and height. The NDG confirms that well-designed places use the right mix of building types, forms and scale of buildings to create a coherent form of development.
25. It is noted that the single-storey dwellings are predominantly positioned along the northernmost edge of the developable area in order to provide a sensitive buffer towards the adjoining open landscape. This assists in minimising visual impact and protecting the character of the landscape to ensure accordance with the NDG. However, the layout within this area appears relatively constrained as a result of the larger building footprint associated with single-storey dwellings. This has led to reduced garden area and overall amenity provision, thus contrary to the Quality Design SPD (this is explored further in the landscaping section). This raises concerns regarding the quality and functionality of residential development within this part of the site.
26. In assessing the proposed housing mix in further detail, it is evident that detached dwellings comprise a significant proportion of the developable area. As confirmed within the SoC (Part 2), this results in areas of lower density across parts of the site. However, the distribution of these larger detached plots appear disproportionate, giving rise to an imbalanced layout. This leads to a more constrained arrangement of other plots, particularly to the north. This contrast in plot sizes raises concerns regarding the efficiency of the layout and differs significantly from Outline stage (evidenced in insert 2) which shows more variation in plot sizes and types across the site on more generous sized plots.

Landscaping

Rear Garden Spaces

27. The Quality Design SPD advises that north-facing gardens should be of increased depth to ensure that direct sunlight can reach the garden. Furthermore, the SPD sets out minimum private amenity space standards of 70sqm for 1–2 bedroom dwellings and 100sqm for dwellings of three bedrooms or more.
28. It is noted that a number of private garden areas are limited in size, particularly when compared against the Outline layout. A review of the submitted plans indicate that a number of dwellings, particularly those located along the northern edge, are provided with gardens below 70sqm (shown at insert 5 below), which falls significantly short of the stated minimum requirement, without taking into account the amount of garden space that is useable and those that are north facing and thus require more space. As such, there is clear non-compliance with elements of the Quality Design SPD and no justification is provided otherwise to understand the departure from these standards.
29. The REM layout also results in a number of irregular and poorly configured garden areas, generally caused by the positioning of garages and parking courts. This creates narrow or awkwardly shaped parcels of private amenity spaces which are unlikely to function effectively as usable garden areas. This is particularly evident at, but not limited to, Plots 6, 56, 57, 59, 76 and 77, where the layout arrangement appears to compromise the quality and usability of the remaining garden space.



5. Compromised Garden Spaces and Large Footprint of Northern Dwellings.

Frontage Landscaping and Planting

30. CNP Design Parameter 5, and VDS Design Guideline 14 state that 'development should be landscape-led, with important landscape features, such as mature trees and hedgerows, forming an integral part of the development design'. LPR Policy SP8 confirms that 'landscaped development which conserves and enhances the diversity and local distinctiveness of the Landscape character of the district will be supported'. The Quality Design SPD discusses the importance of gaps in the urban form to break development into groups and provide opportunities for tree planting to soften the edge.
31. As briefly outlined in the above section, the provision of frontage green space and street tree planting is notably reduced when compared against the Outline layout. Whilst this was not approved as a fixed layout, it demonstrated a stronger landscape framework, with more generous frontage planting and a more attractive street scene, thus contributing towards the overall character and visual amenity of the development.
32. In contrast, the REM layout appears more vehicle dominated, with limited opportunities for meaningful landscaping within the street scene. The reduction in frontage green space and tree planting identifies non-compliance with LPR Policy SP8 and SP10, the objectives of the Quality Design SPD and the design guidelines/parameters of the CNP and VDS.
33. The SoC (Part 2) provides a section of the Primary Street build up which identifies 1.2m of front garden space with frontage development and trees along both sides of the spine road. This is not seen as a true representation of what is presented on the REM layout.
34. The provision of appropriate levels of safe pedestrian connectivity throughout the site is supported by CPC, who recognise the importance of ensuring the site is accessible for all users. The CPC would welcome opportunities to increase tree planting and soft landscaping to the front of properties where possible within the site, in order to enhance the visual quality of the street scene, provided this doesn't compromise the provision or effectiveness of footpaths and overall pedestrian accessibility, which is of greatest importance.
35. CPC would also welcome the opportunity to see additional measures introduced to protect areas of soft landscaping from damage caused by vehicles parking on unallocated land. Such measures could include the use of low-level fencing, bollards, or other appropriate boundary treatments in areas identified as being at risk.

Conclusion

36. The REM application must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. These representations have identified several conflicts with relevant policies and SPD guidance. Compton Parish Council therefore wish to object to the REM application for the above reasons, and as concluded below.

- Provision of Tandem Parking and Frontage Parking.
 - Large differentiation in internal road layout, suggesting a car dominant scheme.
 - Lack of setback houses with front gardens, landscaping, and street trees.
 - Sense of overdevelopment to the north given the type of plots proposed.
 - Large proportion of small gardens and amount of useable garden space.
 - Large proportion of detached dwellings which differs from Outline layout.
 - Less of a 'Landscape-Led' scheme.
 - Lack of distinct character areas as initially defined in the DAS
37. The application conflicts with LPR policies SP7 & SP8, CNP policy C8 as well as the design guidelines/parameters within the CNP and VDS. The application also conflicts with guidance set out in the National Design Guide, Quality Design SPD, and the Pirbright Institute Site, Compton SPD.
38. We trust that these representations by Compton Parish Council can be taken into account when the LPA determine this REM planning application. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any additional information.

Yours sincerely,

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