

CR3 FORUM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

SITE ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

1. Site Details

- a. What is the site's name/reference?

CR3NPCH3003 Birchwood Lane/Mount Avenue. Ref: CH3003

- b. Where is the site located?

Situated south of Mount Avenue and north of Birchwood Lane
TQ 319551.

- c. What is the site description?

Site is generally level and currently used as grazing for horses. Access to the site is currently from Birchwood Lane and the land is generally level with varying depths of trees along each boundary.

- d. What are the adjoining uses to the site?

The North boundary is with the end houses in Mount Avenue whilst the East boundary is with the large detached house and garden of 15 Mount Avenue and Field View. Houses off Chaldon Common Road lie beyond these two properties.

The West boundary abuts redundant farm buildings being in mixed use and the semi-detached houses Birchwood and Fairview. The South boundary is Birchwood Lane.

- e. What is the site area (hectares)?

Approximately 1.4 Hectares.

- f. What is the existing land use?

Open grassland used for horse paddock.

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g. Who is/are the owner(s) of the site?

Site is privately owned

h. What is the site's planning history?

2000/911 application for 2 stables, haystore and store was refused as the proposed buildings by reason of size and location would be harmful to the openness of the GB and detrimental to the rural character and appearance of the immediate locality.

i. Desk top research & planning policy considerations:

1. Any relevant planning policies
2. Is the site allocated for particular use in the Local Plan?
3. Do any Local Plan designations apply to the site? For example:
Greenbelt / Public Open Space / Strategic open space / Village confines / extent of settlement
Conservation Area / Protected wildlife or habitat / Landscape character area
4. Do any other designations apply? e.g. National Park/AONB/Village Green / Local Green Space
5. Are there any emerging local planning documents with relevant policies or designations?

Site is designated as Green Belt DP 10 DP 13 DP 14 DP 15 CSP1.

Historic Landscape Ref: 111 (Medium Regular fields etc)

Potential Site for Nature Conservation Importance CSP 17 DP 19.

Development would be contrary to Neighbourhood Plan Policies.

j. Are there national policy considerations that are relevant to the site? Are there policies, or is there evidence related to the regional strategy that is relevant to the site?

National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Framework Guidance

k. Does the site feature in or are there relevant policies in other local planning documents e.g. supplementary planning document, Village Design Statement, Conservation Area Appraisal?

Policies in emerging CR3 Neighbourhood Plan

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- I. Does the site feature in assessments undertaken to support the Local Plan e.g. Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), Sustainability Appraisal?

No.

2. Desktop evidence review

- a. Is the site in flood plain / known to be affected by flooding?

Not applicable

- b. Could the land be contaminated by a former use or activity?
Would development require the remediation of contaminated land?

Not as far as we are aware.

- c. Are there any nearby sources of noise or air pollution which could affect the site?

No

- d. Does the site contain a valuable mineral resource?

Not as far as we are aware

- e. Is the land of agricultural value / official designation of agricultural land?

Not used for mainstream agriculture

- f. Are there any 'Listed' buildings on or close to the site?

No although site is listed as part of Historic Landscape

- g. Could the site contain any archaeological remains?

Not as far as we are aware but to be checked if development was being considered.

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- h. Are there any issues of capacity on the local road network (congestion and/or parking)?

Major development of site would raise issues with capacity on Birchwood Lane and its exit to Chaldon Common Road. Birchwood Lane is an unmade up and unadopted lane (D class road) and is very narrow. Any attempt to increase the width of the lane would be restricted by existing houses particularly at the junction with Chaldon Common Road.

Access from the site via Mount Avenue would raise issues with capacity for this road and its exit on to Rook Lane.

- i. Are there any known legal considerations relevant to the site e.g. covenant?

Not known

3. Onsite considerations

- a. Access / How is the site accessed / Is it easily accessible from the highway?

See 2 h above. Major improvement of both road and junction with Chaldon Common Road would be needed to access from Birchwood Lane. There would be capacity restraints on access from Mount Avenue and with subsequent access to Rook Lane.

- b. Is the site accessible by public transport, cycling and walking?

Public Transport is available in Rook Lane

Cycling access is not a problem. Pedestrian access is available through Birchwood Lane.

4. Existing features

- a. Are there any physical constraints affecting the site e.g. access, slope, pylons?
Will the topography of the site constrain development e.g. steep slopes?
Are there any power lines, pipelines or other infrastructure crossing or affecting the site?

The site is generally level and there would appear to be no physical restraints on development other than access as described above.

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- b. What natural features are there e.g. any trees, hedgerows, watercourse?
Are there features of particular biodiversity value?
Could the site be home to protected species such as bats, badgers, great crested newts etc.?

The site as green open space mixed with trees around its borders makes an important contribution to bio diversity in this space on the boundary of the green belt. Prior to any development a Tree and Biodiversity Study would be required. The existing trees and open space provide a valuable physical and visual contribution to the character of Chaldon and provide an effective boundary between the built up area of Chaldon and its green belt location.

- c. Are there any health and safety constraints e.g. nearby major hazard site?

Not as far as we are aware

- d. Are there existing buildings that could be retained or converted?

Not as far as we are aware.

- e. Are there important views into or out of the site?

The site forms an important visual open space separating built up areas from the rural part of Chaldon. Any major development would compromise this view and could lead to the loss not only of this space but also set a precedent for further loss of green belt on land to the west.

Any development would be highly visible from the footpath along Birchwood Lane and from neighbouring property and would open up the site to views from the south.

- f. How might development at the site affect the skyline?

Views looking into the site and particularly from the south would affect the background skyline and the boundary of built up Chaldon and rural Chaldon.

- g. Are there any public rights of way affecting the site?

FP 13 runs to the south of the site along Birchwood Lane.

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- h. Information to record about neighbouring sites and the surrounding area.
What are the neighbouring uses? (What are the existing uses and are there any development proposals?). Are any of the adjacent uses, 'bad neighbours' giving rise to noise or fumes that could impact the development?
Could the original site be expanded into neighbouring sites?

Whilst this site has residential roads on 3 of its boundaries it does provide a clear open space and effective boundary between the built up area of Chaldon and its rural setting. The houses along Birchwood Lane essentially pre date the Town and Planning Acts and are rural in character.

There is a danger that the site could set a precedent for expansion of development into the green belt which would seriously change the rural setting of Chaldon.

The present uses in redundant farm buildings on the west boundary may, if residential development expanded into this area, become bad neighbours.

- i. What is the local style of buildings – materials, scale, density?

Modern detached and semi- detached buildings in Mount Avenue and Chaldon Common Road. Smaller mixed style houses in Birchwood Lane.

If development was considered appropriate density should be at the very lower end of local policy to preserve the existing character and emerging Neighbourhood Plan Policies.

- j. Could development at the site cause any issues of overlooking or loss of privacy for neighbouring uses?

Main visual overlooking and loss of privacy would be to residences on either side of the site.

- k. Physical infrastructure and local services considerations

Is the site connected to local utilities (such as water, energy supply and sewerage disposal)?

A major development is likely to require new utility services to the area and could put unacceptable pressure on sewerage disposal. Apart from water there do not appear to be any other services on site.

- l. Does the site have high speed broadband connection?

No

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5. Local facilities and services

- a. How close are the following local services and facilities? Where is the nearest: School (primary & secondary) / GP practice / Pharmacy / Local shops / Post Office / Library / Play space / Sports centre and/or pitches.

All of these facilities are reasonably accessible

- b. What is the capacity of local schools?

Chaldon infants school has a student capacity of 90 infants. The school is greatly oversubscribed each year.

Secondary education is provided at de Stafford school in the parish of Caterham Hill. The school has a student roll of 809. A significant proportion (25%) of children attend private or state schools outside of the area.

- c. Are local services accessible by public transport, cycling and walking?

Yes

6. Community Infrastructure Levy

- a. What are the priorities for local infrastructure improvements linked to the development of this site?

Improvement in the structure of Rook Lane including the installation of pedestrian crossings and effective vehicle speed control measures.

Deliverability

Starting to think about whether development of the site is deliverable and viable...

7. Suitability - potential constraints on development

- a. Is there a record of local opinion towards development of the site?

No record of local opinion to this particular site as no major Planning applications or consultation have been made.

Based on results and comments from CR3 Neighbourhood Plan Survey of residents, it is highly likely that residents would oppose major development of this site or any form of development which would set a precedent for a change to green belt boundaries.

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8. Availability

- a. Is the land owner willing for their site to come forward for development?

It is assumed so as it has been put forward for inclusion in the Site Assessments for the Neighbourhood Plan.

- b. Are there any factors which might prevent or delay development e.g. tenancies, leases?

Not as far as we are aware.

9. Summary

Desktop research findings

Planning policy considerations

Onsite considerations

Infrastructure & local services

Deliverability

Over what timeframe might the site become available for development - in years, 1-5 | 6-10 | 10+?

The key planning issue for this site is its designation as green belt and its location at the boundary with the built up area of Chaldon. It forms an effective demarcation of that boundary.

The site plays an important part in maintaining the open green character of Chaldon, helping to consolidate the effectiveness of the green belt and its boundary in preventing urban sprawl moving further out of the built up area of Chaldon

Building development of this site is considered to be unacceptable for the following reasons:-

- This site is highly valued for its contribution and support of the open green character of this part of the green belt and Chaldon. Section 4 of our Neighbourhood Plan states that for development in the green belt to be acceptable it should not be located in a visually prominent location, and it should provide specific community benefit which strongly overcomes any harm caused by the loss of green belt amenity. Whilst not visibly prominent to main roads it is prominent within views from the countryside and to walkers, cyclists and others using footpath 13. No benefit has been identified to overcome the harm its loss would cause. Development of this site therefore would not accord with either of these aims.
- The NPF (para 80) defines 5 purposes for the retention of green belt status. The first is to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas. The development of this site would have the effect of expanding the urban built up area contrary to this purpose. We can confidently state that any planning application for this site would be vigorously opposed by the residents in particular of Chaldon but also the general public using this area for leisure purposes.

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Summary Continued

- The capacity and structure of Rook Lane would not sustain further large scale development from this site. It is a B class road and it is clear that any significant development would cause traffic problem. Access from Birchwood Lane (a D road), in its present condition is not sustainable. Access through Mount Avenue would restrict density of development and would raise increased access problems on to Rook Lane.

For the reasons given in this assessment and summary we believe that this site fully supports three of the five purposes set out for Green Belt status namely:

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; CR3 area and Countryside;
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; and
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; whilst Chaldon may not be considered a historic town, its location within the green belt defines much of the character and reason for living in CR3 and Chaldon in particular.

Its present status and use is sustainable as green belt.

In conclusion, the CR3 NP cannot support the development of this site.