

LOCATION:	Land To The Rear Of, 19 Crofters Close, Deepcut, Camberley, Surrey
PROPOSAL:	Proposed change of use of former road to residential garden land (C3) and the erection of a close-boarded fence.
TYPE:	Full Planning Application
APPLICANT:	E Pearman
OFFICER:	Julia Taylor

This application would normally be determined under the Council's Scheme of Delegation but is being reported to the Planning Applications Committee because the applicant has been employed by the Council, as a planning officer, within the previous 4 years.

RECOMMENDATION: GRANT subject to conditions

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This planning application is for the extension of the rear garden of the application site into an area of land which used to form part of a military access road but which has become redundant since the construction of the Dettingen Park residential estate in the early 2000s.
- 1.2 The proposal is considered to be an appropriate change of use of the land and would not be harmful to the character of the area, to residential amenities or the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area.
- 1.3 The application is therefore recommended for approval subject to conditions.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The application site comprises a rectangular area of approximately 108 sq. m. and is located immediately north of the existing rear boundary of no. 19 Crofters Close and the wider Dettingen Park estate. This area of land is predominantly concrete and is enclosed by a chain link fence to the northern boundary, gates to the eastern boundary and with residential garden fences to the south and west, respectively.
- 2.2 The site is adjacent to the Princess Royal Barracks redevelopment and is part of an unused road connected to the former Alma Dettingen Barracks. Parts of this disused road have been incorporated into residential gardens and the western and eastern ends used for parking.
- 2.3 No. 19 Crofters Close and the existing rear garden is within the settlement area. The site, the subject of this application, lies in the Countryside beyond the Green Belt and the eastern end of the site is within 400m of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA.

3.0 RELEVANT HISTORY

- 3.1 00/1276 Erection of 342 dwellings with estate roads, footpaths, amenity open space and play areas, a community building, a supermarket with associated infrastructure and landscaping.

Approved in June 2001

- 3.2 12/0546 This application was for the land abutting the application site to the south (Dettingen Estate) of which 19 Crofters Close was one of the dwellings. Hybrid planning application for major residential-led development totalling 1,200 new dwellings.

Approved in April 2014

- 3.3 22/1066/RRM This application was for the redevelopment of the former Princess Royal Barracks site which surrounds the Dettingen Estate. Reserved Matters application pursuant to Condition 4 for the provision of Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGST) and the allotments (Phases 5e, 5f and 5j) with access, layout, scale, appearance and landscaping being considered and the partial submission of details pursuant to conditions 16 (Ecological Mitigation and Management), 29 (Tree Retention and Protection), 32 (Hard and Soft Landscaping) and 33 (Landscape Management Plan) attached to 12/0546 as amended by 18/0619 and 18/1002 and Schedule 5 Parts 5 (Provision of ANGST Land) and 11 (Provision of Allotments) of the Section 106 agreement dated 17 April 2014 as varied in relation to these phases and also details of the Northern Access Route Road Network including access to Phase 4i (Care Home), Phase 5d (Sports Hub) and Phase 4d (residential parcel).

Approved in September 2023

This application gave consent for development of the land immediately to the north of the application site (phase 4d).

4.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The application seeks to change the use of a rectangular area of land measuring approximately 16.4m x 6.6m into an enlarged rear garden area for domestic use for no. 19 Crofters Close. It is also proposed to erect a 1.8m high close boarded fence on the east and north boundaries, of approximately 23m in overall length.
- 4.2 The existing concrete base would be removed and the site would be laid to lawn. Self-seeded conifer trees and other vegetation within the site would also be removed.
- 4.3 In support of the planning application a planning statement and arboricultural report have been submitted. Relevant extracts will be referred to in section 7 of this report.

5.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSES

- 5.1 The following internal consultees were consulted, and their comments are summarised in the table below:

Internal Consultee	Comments received
Arboricultural Officer	No objections raised. Tree protection fencing will not be required, the existing tarmac will have to be taken up as per the AMS and the proposals will bring a positive benefit to the retained trees by increasing both water and oxygen percolation.

Scientific Officer	<p>As a former MoD site, there could be underlying ground contamination issues. Recommend conditions to ensure that the land is suitable for the proposed use, in terms of land contamination.</p> <p>As the garden area would be closer to a planned sports hub, an informative is recommended advising the applicant to consider acoustic fencing.</p>
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6.0 REPRESENTATION

- 6.1 A total of 6 individual letters of notification were sent out on the 22 November 2023 and 4 January 2024. Additionally a site notice was displayed on 10 January 2024. To date, no representations have been received.

7.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATION

- 7.1 This application is considered against advice contained with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) where there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Regard will be given to Policies CP1, CP4, CP14A & B, DM4 and DM9, of the adopted Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document 2012 (CSDMP).

- 7.2 The main issues to be considered with this application are:
- Principle of the development
 - Impact on the character and appearance of the area
 - Impact on residential amenity
 - Impact on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area

7.3 Principle of the development

- 7.3.1 Policy DM4 of the CSDMP is relevant as it refers to the replacement, extension or alteration of existing dwellings in the Countryside beyond the Green Belt. This policy supports development that does not have a detrimental impact on rural character through its siting or design. Provided, therefore, that this proposal does not harm the rural character of the area, it can be supported.

7.4 Impact on the character and appearance of the area

- 7.4.1 The proposal would provide the dwelling at 19 Crofters Close with additional garden land changing the use into residential. The existing land was part of a road on a military estate, linking the barracks to Deepcut Bridge Road, however shortly after the development of the Dettingen Estate some 20 years ago, the road was blocked at either end and thereafter became redundant and unsuitable for access. The road has since remained largely intact, other than in areas which have been used by adjacent homeowners for garden extensions. Therefore, whilst in the countryside for policy purposes, it does not contain many of the positive features commonly associated with a countryside designation, such as uneven, open land and layered vegetation.

- 7.4.2 The land falls in the 'sports hub' character area as defined by the Deepcut supplementary planning document (SPD) and forms part of the northern edge of the Dettingen Park estate and the southern edge of phase 4d of the Princess Royal Barracks (PRB) redevelopment. The site is located between two allocated housing sites, and given that it is a small area of the land, the proposed change of use would not conflict with the delivery of development at PRB nor would it have a detrimental impact on the character of the countryside.

- 7.4.3 The land would be enclosed with a close boarded fence, which would be in keeping with existing fences in the area. In light of the surrounding development proposals, the use of such fencing would provide security and privacy and would be acceptable in terms of visual impact.
- 7.4.4 According to the applicant's planning statement the current site is overgrown with piles of mud and self-seeded trees and has attracted fly tipping. In the officer's opinion the removal of the concrete and change of this land to grass would therefore improve the appearance of the site and wider area and be more in keeping with the residential character of the area. Having regard to the site's trees, the submitted Arboricultural Report advises that the 3 trees on site are low quality specimens which would be removed and these currently provide a low amenity value. Two better specimen trees to the north of the site would be retained and the Council's Arboricultural Officer raises no objection, subject to compliance with the AMS, indicating that the removal of the tarmac will bring a positive benefit to the retained trees.
- 7.4.5 The proposal would therefore comply with Policies DM5 and DM9 of the CSDMP.

7.5 Impact of the proposal on neighbour amenity

- 7.5.1 Policy DM9 is relevant as this seeks to protect the amenities of neighbouring properties and uses.
- 7.5.2 It is considered that the use of this land for garden use would not result in adverse overlooking or privacy concerns for the nearest residential properties at no. 20 to the east and no. 18 to the west. The proposed close boarded fence would help to maintain privacy levels. The proposal would also have no adverse residential impact on the PRB redevelopment site to the rear.
- 7.5.3 The proposal would therefore comply with Policy DM9 of the CSDMP.

7.6 Impact the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area

- 7.7.1 Policy CP14 of the CSDMP is relevant. CP14B resists new residential development within 400 metres of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA (TBHSPA). Part of the site is within the 400 metre buffer zone. However, this proposal would not result in a new residential development and so in the officer's opinion would not result in further pressures on the SPA. The proposal therefore complies with the policy.

8.0 PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

- 8.1 Under the Equalities Act 2010 the Council must have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment or victimisation of persons by reason of age, disability, pregnancy, race, religion, sex and sexual orientation. This planning application has been processed and assessed with due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty. The proposal is not considered to conflict with this duty.

9.0 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The proposal to change the use of a section of former military access road to residential garden area and the enclosing of this land with a close boarded fence would have an acceptable impact on the character and appearance of the area and would not adversely impact the amenities of neighbours. It would not harm the integrity of the TBHSPA and would not harm the rural character of the area.

Therefore, the proposal would comply with the relevant policies of the Development Plan and is accordingly recommended for conditional approval.

10.0 RECOMMENDATION

GRANT subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun within three years of the date of this permission.

Reason: To prevent an accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions and in accordance with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51(1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The proposed development shall be undertaken in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

- Proposed site plan TQRQM23269130719081
- Location plan TQRQM23269133559067
- Proposed part fence elevation
- Planning Statement Rev A Nov 23
- Arboricultural Report by APArboriculture, dated 23rd October 2023 Ref: APA/AP/2023/139/B

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interest of proper planning and as advised in ID.17a of the Planning Practice Guidance.

3. The fence hereby approved shall be constructed in materials as set out in the materials section of the submitted application form, and in accordance with the approved plans.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the area and to accord with Policy DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012.

4. The works hereby approved shall be undertaken in full accordance with the AIA and AMS produced by AP Arboriculture. Hard surfacing within the RPA of G2 must be carried out using hand tools only and under strict arboricultural site supervision. Erection of the boundary fence must also be supervised by the retained arboriculturist.

No trees, shrubs or hedges within the site which are shown as being retained on the approved plans shall be felled, uprooted, wilfully damaged, or destroyed, cut back in any way or removed without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority. Any trees, shrubs or hedges removed without such consent, or which die or become severely damaged or seriously diseased with five years from the completion of the development or from the date of the occupation of the building hereby permitted shall be replaced with trees, shrubs or hedge plants of similar size and species and shall be planted in the immediate vicinity unless the Local Planning Authority gives its written consent to any variation.

Reason: To protect trees which contribute to the visual amenities of the site and surrounding area and to comply with Policy DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012.

Informative(s)

1. Access: Where consent is issued it does not grant to the applicant or his agent, the right to carry out work over, or give access to, property, not in their ownership, such access must be with the agreement of the property owner.

2. This Decision Notice is a legal document and therefore should be kept in a safe place as it may be required if or when selling your home. A replacement copy can be obtained, however, there is a charge for this service.