



DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Application:	Change of use from agricultural land for the construction of a hard permeable surfaced tennis court with surrounding fencing to be used ancillary to Rivermead House.
Property:	Rivermead House, Lockeridge, Marlborough, SN8 4EL
Client:	Mr J Sheppard
Date:	February 2026
Agent:	Chris Powell BSc (Hons) MRICS FAAV

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Symonds and Sampson have been instructed by Mr James Sheppard to resubmit an application for the construction of a hard permeable surfaced tennis court with surround fencing at Rivermead House. The previous application PL/2025/08719 was withdrawn after the planning officer stated the decision was to be a refusal.
- 1.2. The purpose of this report is to identify and address the relevant planning considerations in connection with the Construction of a hard permeable surfaced tennis court with surround fencing and address and rebut the points raised by the planning officer.
- 1.3. This document provides:
 - Policy Information
 - Information surrounding the application regarding design and need.
 - Further Supporting Information

2. LOCATION AND SITE INFORMATION

- 2.1. The proposed site is located off Overton Road. It is approximately 500 meters west of Lockeridge and 3 miles southwest from Marlborough.
- 2.2. The site and proposed development will use the existing access directly of the Overton Road, to which no changes are proposed.
- 2.3. The site is presently laid to grass and is being used for leisure and recreational purposes by the owner.
- 2.4. The following Statutory and non-statutory designations apply:
 - North Wessex Downs – National Landscape
 - The Environment Agency Flood Risk Map confirms the site is not located in a Flood Zone.

3. PROPOSAL

- 3.1. The proposal is for the construction of a tennis court with surround fencing within the grounds of Rivermead House which is a private dwelling.
- 3.2. To limit the visual impact the applicant proposes to construct an earth bund on the West side. This is with the aim that the neighbouring cricket field will only be able to see the top 4 ft of the fence.
- 3.3. The court will be constructed on an area of existing grass.

4. DESIGN

- 4.1. The tennis court will measure 16.80m x 36.30 m (609.84m²) and will be surrounded by a dark green, metal perimeter fence which will measure 2.8 m high on all ends only dropping slightly off at the centre of the east side where the access gate is located.
- 4.2. The court will have a dark, green-coloured surface which will include the lines marked in white. The surface will be porous to allow the court to drain quickly to avoid any surface water problems.

5. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACTS

- 5.1. The proposed tennis court will be visible from the neighbouring cricket club to the west of the site. However, There will be an earth bund built on the west side of the court to limit the amount of the court seen.
- 5.2. The court will be screened from neighbouring property to the east by area of mature hedgerow and established mature trees.
- 5.3. The fencing for the tennis court will be a dark green to better blend in with the natural environment and limit visual impact.
- 5.4. There is also NO proposal of exterior lighting to remove the risk of light pollution, especially at night.
- 5.5. There are multiple properties in the immediate vicinity of the site which have tennis courts within their grounds.
- 5.6. The siting of the tennis court has been chosen as it is the lowest point and naturally screened.
- 5.7. The site sits within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape but is surrounded by residential and amenity land, The site is screened naturally by the topography and would not be seen by any public right of way within the area.

5.8. The earth bund will screen from the neighbouring sports field and create a natural green screen within the landscape.

5.9. There were no objections or concerns raised on impact on landscape by the relevant consultees.

6. HIGHWAYS

6.1. Access to the site for construction will be accessed directly off the public highway, Overton Road.

6.2. There will be no issue with access to the court once complete as they will be for personal use and will be accessed from the house by walking down the garden.

7. ECOLOGY AND BNG

7.1. An ecological assessment on the site is required as the tennis court will be replacing an area of grass garden to the rear of the property.

7.2. As the proposed tennis court creates additional floor space of less than 1000 m² it is classified as a 'Small Site'. Therefore, the Small Site Metric can be used to calculate the required Biodiversity Net Gain.

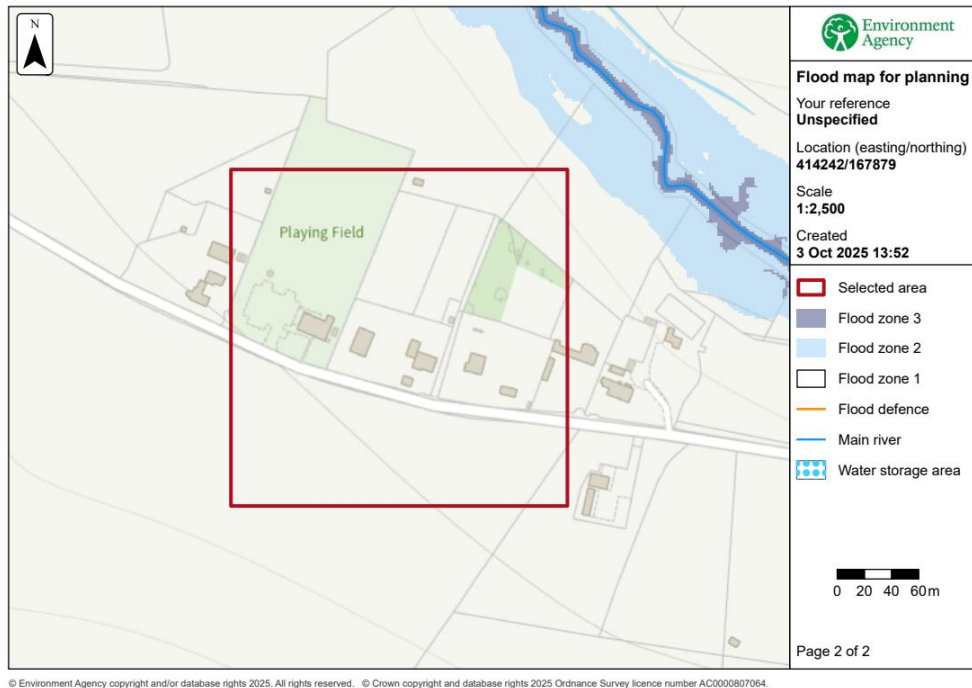
7.3. The Small Sites Metric Statutory Calculation Tool document is included with this application. It indicates a loss of 0.244 habitat units. To create the required 10% biodiversity gain, the planting of broadleaf species is proposed at Rivermead House. This will create 0.2859 habitat units, greater than the required 10% increase.

7.4. An additional plan has been submitted showing the planting areas.

7.5. The ecologist who was consulted stated "no obvious ecology issues."

8. FLOOD RISK

8.1. The Site is located within an area classified as Flood Risk Zone 1 thus considered to have a low probability of flooding as identified by the Environment Agency Flood Risk Map.



9. PLANNING POLICY

9.1. National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was updated in December 2024 and the following paragraphs are considered relevant to this application:

Paragraph 187:

Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland; and:*
- d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;*

Furthermore, in terms of the protection given to designated landscapes Section 15, paragraphs 189 and 190, state:

Paragraph 189:

Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.

Paragraph 190:

When considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

- a) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy*
- b) the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and*
- c) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.*

Also of relevance to this project is Section 12. Achieving Well-designed Places, specifically paragraph 135, which states:

Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and wellbeing, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.*

9.2. Local Policy - Wiltshire Core Strategy (Adopted January 2015)

Adopted by Wiltshire Council in January 2015, the Wiltshire Core Strategy Development Plan Document replaced the four local plans that covered Wiltshire. The Core Strategy provides a positive and flexible overarching planning policy framework for Wiltshire for the period up to 2026 in order to ensure that any proposed development is of a high standard and is compatible with the character and visual qualities of the area.

Core Policy 51: Landscape

Development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character and must not have a harmful impact upon landscape character, while any negative impacts must be mitigated as far as possible through sensitive design and landscape measures. Proposals should be informed by and sympathetic to the distinctive character areas identified in the relevant Landscape Character Assessment(s) and any other relevant assessments and studies. In particular, proposals will need to demonstrate that the following aspects of landscape character have been conserved and where possible enhanced through sensitive design, landscape mitigation and enhancement measures:

- i. The locally distinctive pattern and species composition of natural features such as trees, hedgerows, woodland, field boundaries, watercourses and waterbodies*
- ii. The locally distinctive character of settlements and their landscape settings*
- iii. The separate identity of settlements and the transition between man-made and natural landscapes at the urban fringe*
- iv. Visually sensitive skylines, soils, geological and topographical features*
- v. Landscape features of cultural, historic and heritage value*
- vi. Important views and visual amenity*
- vii. Tranquillity and the need to protect against intrusion from light pollution, noise, and motion*
- viii. Landscape functions including places to live, work, relax and recreate, and*
- ix. Special qualities of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and the New Forest National Park, where great weight will be afforded to conserving and enhancing landscapes and scenic beauty. Proposals for development within or affecting the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), New Forest National Park (NFNP) or Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site (WHS) shall demonstrate that they have taken account of the objectives, policies and actions set out in the relevant Management Plans for these areas. Proposals for development outside of an AONB that is sufficiently prominent (in terms of its siting or scale) to have an impact on the area's special qualities (as set out in the relevant management plan), must also demonstrate that it would not adversely affect its setting.*

This application supports continuation of a rural business without detrimental impact to the National Landscape.

Core Policy 57: Ensure High Quality Design and Place Shaping

A high standard of design is required in all new developments, including extensions, alterations, and changes of use of existing buildings. Development is expected to create a strong sense of place through

drawing on the local context and being complementary to the locality. Applications for new development must be accompanied by appropriate information to demonstrate how the proposal will make a positive contribution to the character of Wiltshire through:

- i. Enhancing local distinctiveness by responding to the value of the natural and historic environment, relating positively to its landscape setting and the existing pattern of development and responding to local topography by ensuring that important views into, within and out of the site are to be retained and enhanced.*
- ii. The retention and enhancement of existing important landscaping and natural features, (e.g. trees, hedges, banks and watercourses), in order to take opportunities to enhance biodiversity, create wildlife and recreational corridors, effectively integrate the development into its setting and to justify and mitigate against any losses that may occur through the development.*
- iii. Responding positively to the existing townscape and landscape features in terms of building layouts, built form, height, mass, scale, building line, plot size, elevational design, materials, streetscape and rooflines to effectively integrate the building into its setting.*
- vi. Making efficient use of land whilst taking account of the characteristics of the site and the local context to deliver an appropriate development which relates effectively to the immediate setting and to the wider character of the area.*
- vii. Having regard to the compatibility of adjoining buildings and uses, the impact on the amenities of existing occupants, and ensuring that appropriate levels of amenity are achievable within the development itself, including the consideration of privacy, overshadowing, vibration, and pollution (e.g. light intrusion, noise, smoke, fumes, effluent, waste or litter)*
- xii. The use of high standards of building materials, finishes and landscaping, including the provision of street furniture and the integration of art and design in the public realm.*

The proposed development satisfies the criteria detailed above in the following ways:

- The proposal would not result in any buildings on the land, and the site would be levelled to an extent, but due to the nature of the proposal, the impact on the wider character of the area would be minimal. There will be a fence erected to surround the courts which will be of a neutral colour and will not result in a dominating feature within the landscape.
- The proposal includes some amount of planting in order to help screen the development and the erection of a bund for additional screening from the cricket club to the west. This is considered to not only properly mitigate the visual impact of the development but will also have benefits from a biodiversity and ecological perspective.
- The area of planting will remain within the land in ownership and as such will be an enforceable element of the scheme. The proposed planting will include a mix of native trees and shrubs.

10. RELEVANT APPLICATIONS AND DECISIONS

10.1 PL/2022/09690

- 10.1.1 An application for a tennis court with surrounding fencing at Greenlands Farm, Lockeridge. A near identical application only 820m from the proposed development.
- 10.1.2 This was in a more rural location on agricultural land in a prominent position within the North Wessex Downs Natural Landscape.
- 10.1.3 This application was approved with no issues yet is a more contentious, in my opinion, site. The planning officer stated *"In conclusion, the proposed application seems fitting with regard to scale, design and materials. The proposal is considered acceptable in the context of its surroundings and is accordance with the general criteria set out in aforementioned policies of the local plan."*

10.2 14/04031/FUL

- 10.2.1 An application for a tennis court located at Gypsy Furlong, Lockeridge, situated under 100m from the proposed development.
- 10.2.2 This application was approved again with zero issues.
- 10.2.3 The proposed site lines up with the application in terms of how it is set back from the road.
- 10.2.4 The application was on agricultural land and the planning officer stated *"in conclusion the proposed application seems fitting with regard to scale, design and materials. The proposal is considered acceptable in the context of its surroundings and is accordance with the general criteria set out in the aforementioned policies of the local development plan."*

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1. The applicant seeks to gain planning permission to erect tennis court at Rivermead House for personal recreational use.
- 11.2. The proposal has shown that the proposed tennis court would be located within Rivermead House in an area that will be screened by existing and proposed mixed native trees, shrubs and erection of a bund. The dark green fencing and posts and court surfacing will be unobtrusive against the backdrop of the existing and proposed native planting. The sensitive design will ensure that the court area is inconspicuous and that there is no material adverse impact on the local setting or the wider landscape.
- 11.3. The national and local planning policy framework provides support for recreational and sporting development in countryside areas as long as the development is designed sensitively and does not harm the local setting or character of the open countryside. Recent precedent since the introduction of the NPPF confirms that a tennis court and surround fencing is an acceptable form of development within the countryside.
- 11.4. The Government's revised National Planning Policy Framework makes it clear that there should be a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 11.5. There is clear precedent set by two applicants in very close proximity that are very similar to the proposed development, with one being a significantly bigger impact on the National Landscape yes has been deemed acceptable. There is a clear disparity to how the applications have been assessed.
- 11.6. It is clear that the proposed development will bring benefits and have no material adverse impacts and is consistent with the policy framework. On this basis, it is respectfully requested this application is approved.