DC/24/1881

OBJECTION

Erection of a 3No. bedroom dwelling with associated landscaping. Parking and the retention of the existing access arrangements.

Roundabout Place Common Hill West Chiltington West Sussex RH20 2NR

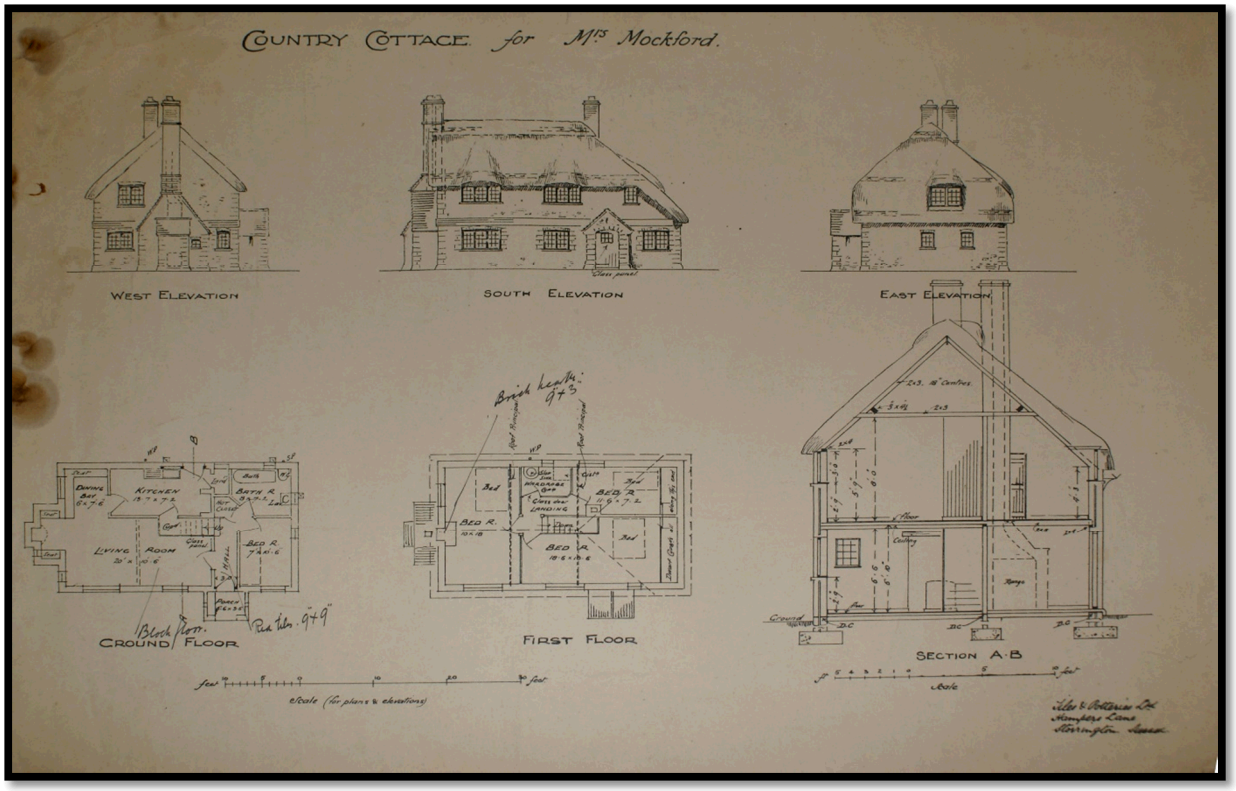
This planning application should be refused as it is contrary to policies 25,31,32,33,34, of the Horsham and District Planning Framework (HDPF 2015)

<u>West Chiltington Lanes Conservation Area, Roundabout Cottage, HDPF Policy 34</u>

The proposed development is sited within the original property curtilage of Roundabout Cottage, a Wells cottage and recognised non-designated heritage asset. The original plot has been previously subdivided to include the more modern infill housing developments of Roundabout Place and Melbury. The proposal therefore is for an infill development of the already infill development of Roundabout Place; an infill of an infill.

<u>Historical Context</u>

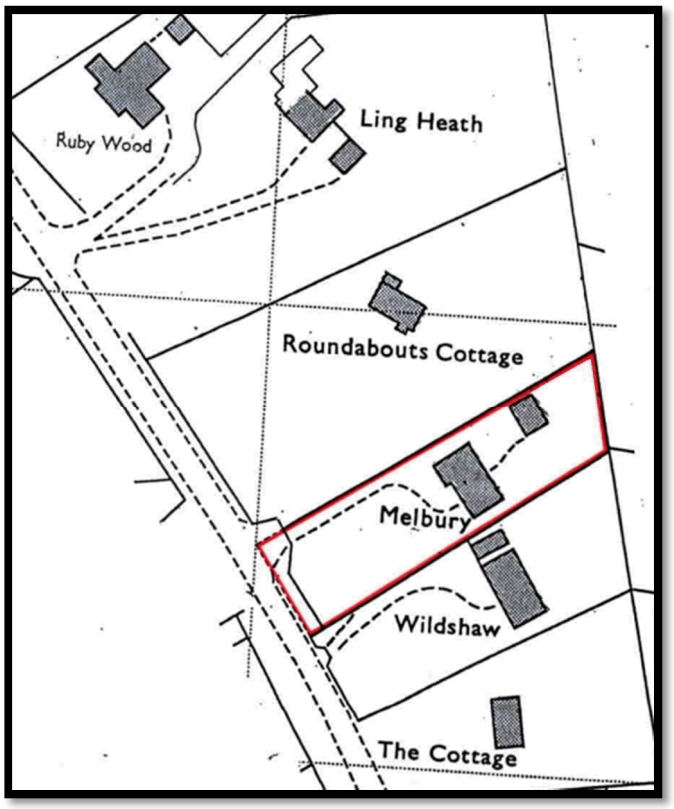
Roundabout Cottage was built by Reginald Fairfax Wells, following the purchase of the plot of land (which now contains Roundabout Cottage, Roundabout Place, and Melbury) by Mrs Daphne Mockford in 1926.

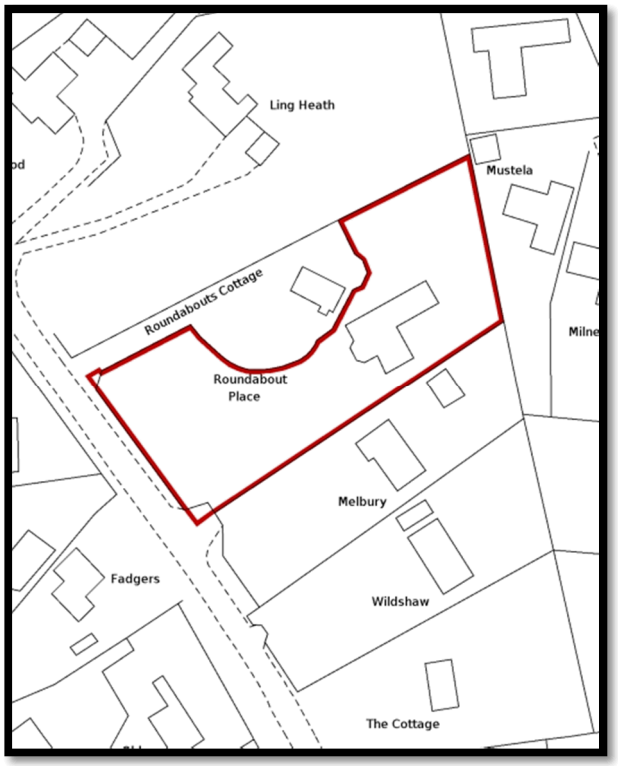




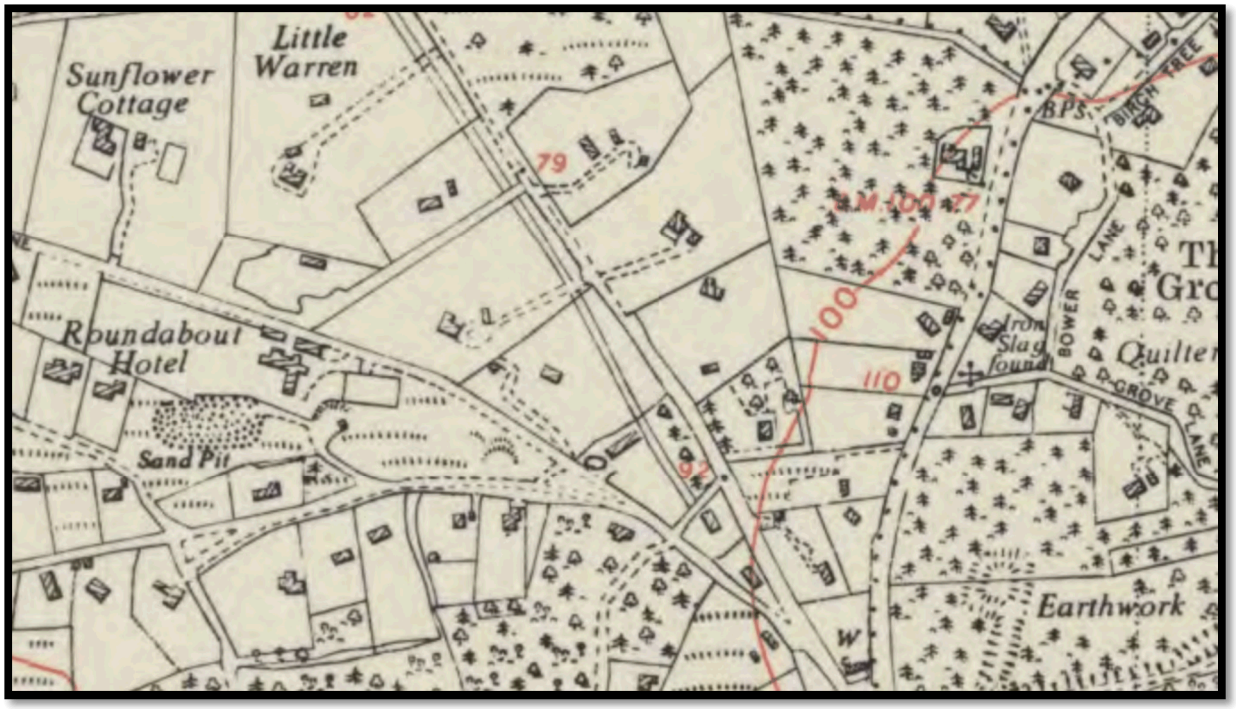


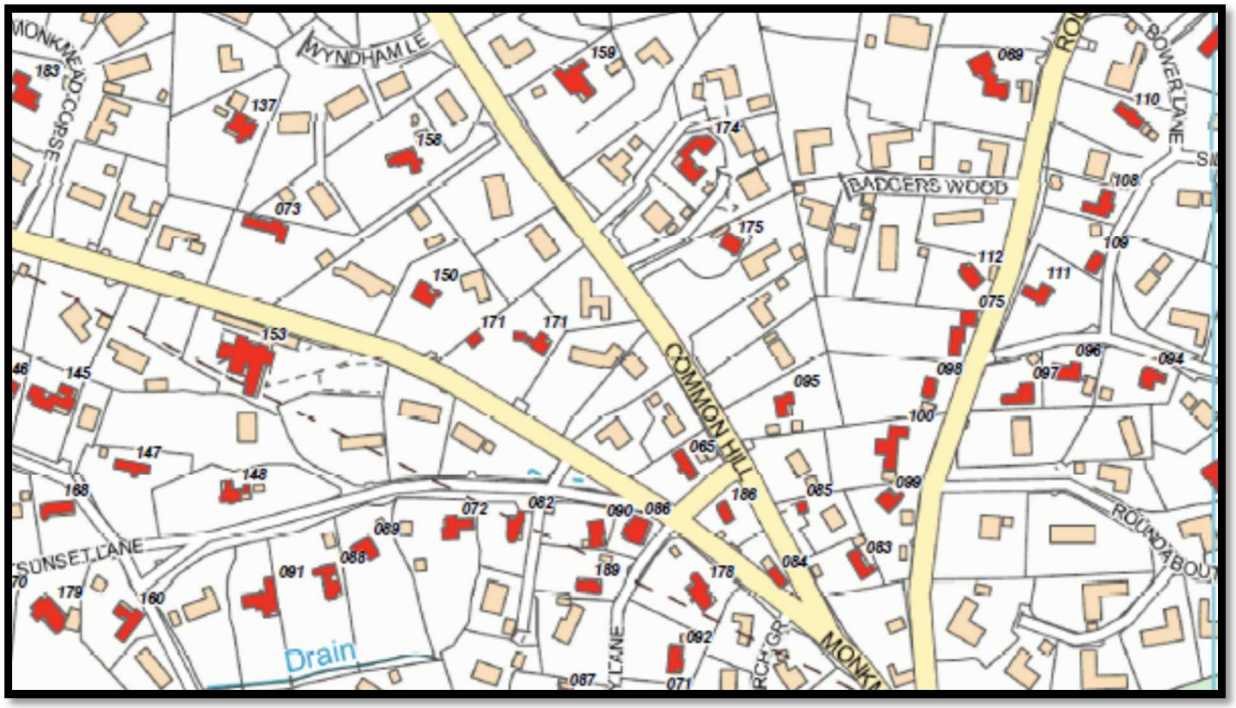
By the 1970s, the original plot of land had been divided and Melbury was built, followed by the remaining plot, containing Roundabout Cottage, further divided some time later to build Roundabout Place:





The substantial overdevelopment that has occurred surrounding Roundabout Cottage is illustrated by comparing the 1938 map, published 1950, with the Wells cottages map in the West Chiltington Lanes Conservation Area management plan (Wells Cottages in red). Roundabout Cottage is marked '175'.





Following a joint visit by Horsham District Council and West Chiltington Parish Council to inspect the negative impact of infill development on the character of the West Chiltington Lanes area, including at Ling Heath (next to Roundabout Cottage), the decision was made to protect the Wells cottages from the adverse effects of further inappropriate development by the designation and management of a Conservation Area. This also recognised the Wells cottages, including Roundabout Cottage, as non-designated heritage assets. The importance of this is that all new proposed infill developments, including this one for Roundabout Place (DC/24/1881) not only should comply with the West Chiltington Lanes Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (April 2024), but also Policy 34 of the HDPF (2015) – Cultural and Heritage Assets.

Unfortunately, the agent for Roundabout Place (DC/24/1881) has failed to mention or reference Roundabout Cottage as a non-designated heritage asset, address the historic significance of Roundabout Cottage, or take into consideration the adverse effect on the setting (including views) of the heritage asset. The agent actually specifically excludes Policy 34 in his list of relevant HDPF (2015) policies. By failing to comply with Policy 34, this planning application for Roundabout Place (DC/24/1881) should be refused.

When Roundabout Place was developed in the plot of Roundabout Cottage, although the garden of Roundabout Place extended in front of Roundabout Cottage, the public street scene view of Roundabout Cottage was maintained. The proposed development (DC/24/1881) will dominate this view, which is the only view remaining following the overdevelopment surrounding Roundabout Cottage. The proposed development (DC/24/1881) will not 'retain and improve the setting' of the heritage asset, 'including views, public rights of way, trees and landscape features' and therefore does not comply with Policy 34. HDC will also note the unauthorised removal of trees on the proposed development site pre-application in June 2024.

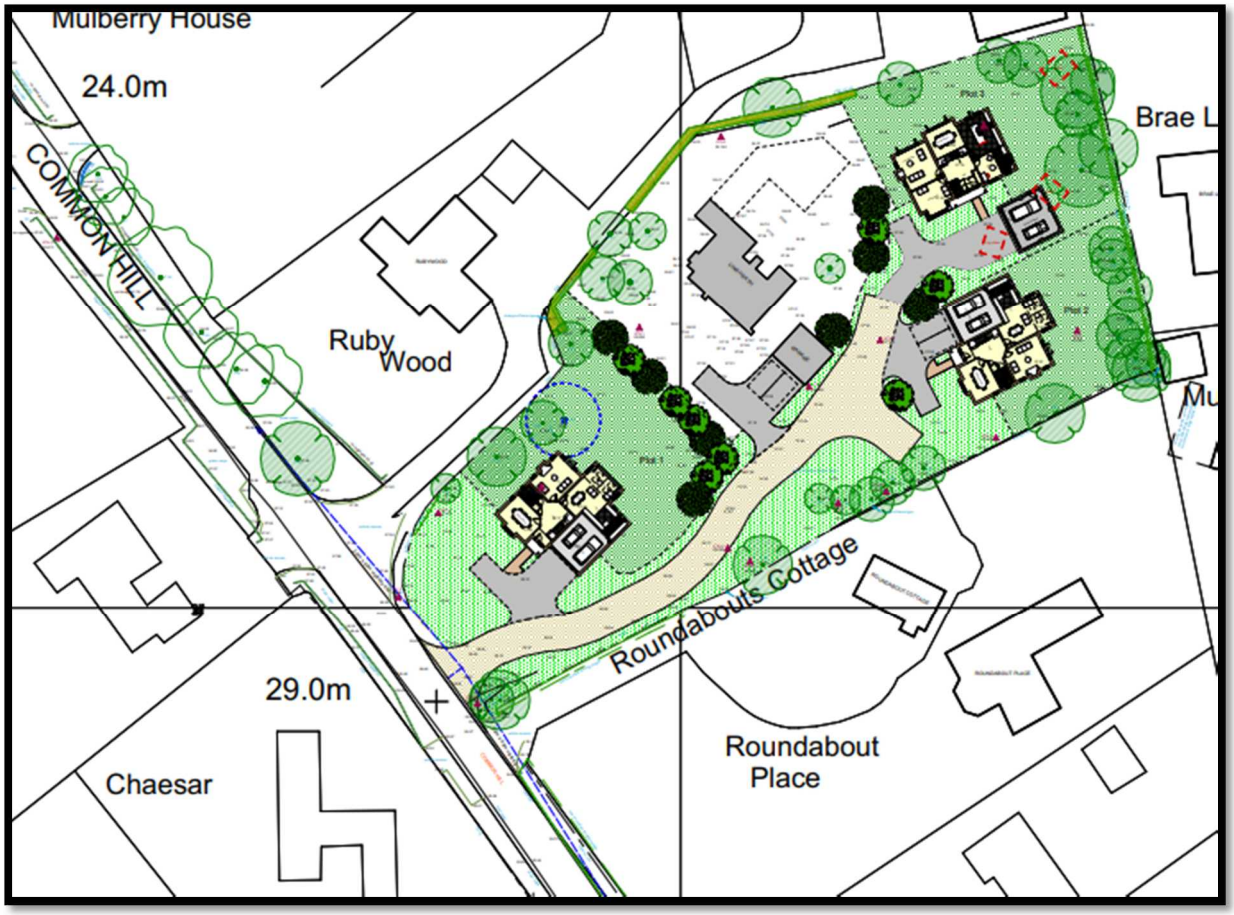
Planning Precedent

There have been a number of refused previous applications for an infill development for Roundabout Place in front of Roundabout Cottage. Although the agent for Roundabout place (DC/24/1881) overstates the importance of the development in front of Ling Place as a precedent, this fails to recognise that this pre-dates the designation of the West Chiltington Lanes Conservation Area, the Wells Cottages (including Roundabout Cottage) recognised as non-designated heritage assets, and the requirements of Policy 34.

Furthermore, the development in front of Ling Place is actually a strong reason for refusal of this application, even without taking into consideration the above new factors. The first planning application DC/16/0235 for developing in front of Ling Place was refused both by HDC and on appeal to the Planning Inspectorate. One of the main reasons cited was that the proposed building was in front of the building line and its close proximity to the road (Common Hill). It was only when the proposed building was moved further back from the road (and reduced in size) that the subsequent planning application DC/17/0093 was approved, and only then on appeal. The proposed new development at Roundabout Place (DC/24/1881) is positioned nearer the road than the first refused planning application in front of Ling Place (DC/16/0235). The proposed building at Roundabout Place cannot be positioned further back from the road because of the boundary with Roundabout Cottage. The precedent set by both HDC and the Planning Inspectorate, by DC/16/0235, is therefore to refuse this application for Roundabout Place (DC/24/1881).

The original position of the proposed infill development in front of Ling Place for the refused planning application DC/16/0235 is shown below, demonstrating the distance from the road

Common Hill, and also the distance between the boundary of Roundabout Cottage with the same road.



The important precedent for refusing the infill development for Roundabout Place (DC/24/1881) is the refused infill planning application for April Cottage DC/24/0660 as this was the first planning decision to be considered under the new West Chiltington Conservation Area Management Plan (April 2024), the Wells cottages as non-designated heritage assets, and Policy 34 of the HDPF (2015).

However, even prior to the adoption of the Conservation Area and the associated management plan, further precedents for the refusal of similar infill developments have occurred for planning applications for properties within the new conservation area. These include the three recent refused infill planning applications DC/18/0553 in Spinney Lane, DC/20/1999 in Westward Lane, and DC/22/2302 in Sunset Lane. Common contributing reasons for refusal (including on appeal) include as for this application overdevelopment of the site, adverse effect on character of the area, inappropriate modern design, proximity to the road, and out of alignment with neighbouring properties.

For April Cottage DC/24/0660, the decision notice, which could equally be applied to DC/24/1881, stated in refusing the application:

''1. The proposed development would result in a plot size that would be out of character with the build pattern of the immediate surroundings and would contribute to the inappropriate suburbanisation of the wider locality. The proposal would subsequently detract from the spacious and open character that defines the historic locality, and would result in an intrusive form of development that would be out of keeping with the informal and semi-rural character of the area. The proposed development would therefore detract from the build pattern and historic character of the area, resulting in demonstrable harm to the spacious character and visual amenities of the locality, contrary to Policies 25, 32 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

2. The proposed development would create a dwellinghouse which fails to sufficiently incorporate and reflect locally distinctive features of existing development in the immediate locality, particularly to the front elevation. The development would represent an incongruous addition to the street scene which would appear out of character with the design and appearance of the area. The proposal is therefore contrary to policies 32,33 and 34 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).''

The planning statement for Roundabout Place DC/24/1881 suggests that the decision should be a presumption for development in the absence of the demonstration of a five-year housing supply by HDC. This is incorrect in a Conservation Area, with the juxtaposition of the proposed development with the non-designated heritage asset, and the requirements of Policy 34. In all the above refused infill planning applications the loss in character of the area has been considered more important than the addition of one house.

Property Design, overdevelopment of the site, adverse effect on character of the area, HDPF Policies 25,32,33,34



Roundabout Cottage (photograph above circa1928) has remained essentially unchanged today with the characteristic Wells design of ‘eyebrow’ windows, simple porch, intricately designed external chimney breast, and variation in the shape and size of windows, with some miniature windows. The original thatched roof has been changed to tiles (similar to other Wells cottages) but the distinct form of the roof remains the same. Roundabout Cottage is a non-heritage asset and it would be inappropriate to obscure the view from Common Hill road, and against the West Chiltington Conservation Area Management Plan and policy 34, by placing a large modern house immediately in front of it, as is planned by the one proposed below in DC/24/1881.



Despite the suggestion by the agent to the contrary, the modern design of the proposed building does not compliment the area, especially the non-designated heritage asset Roundabout Cottage, immediately behind it. There are no similarities at all to a Wells Cottage. It does not meet the requirements of the West Chiltington Conservation Area Management Plan. There is no justification for the residential garden of Roundabout Place, that is in front of, and which was once part of the garden of, Roundabout Cottage, that currently maintains the street view of the aesthetic (and characteristic Wells cottage design) South elevation of Roundabout Cottage, being replaced with a large modern house and garage; with additional large hardstanding for several more cars. This would create an over dominant effect, especially with the location set inappropriately close to the road, and the overdevelopment of the site.

R. F. Wells created a mixture of large and small plots to give the overall effect of a low building density. By filling in the larger plots with inappropriate infill developments such as the one proposed at Roundabout Place DC/24/1881, this overall effect is diminished and reduced. The character of the area would be adversely affected and contrary to the very purpose of the Conservation Area and the associated Management Plan.

(Roundabout Cottage circa 1928)



Additional Considerations:

1. On the application form it is stated that the vehicle access to the proposed infill development will be via the existing access to Roundabout Cottage. From the submitted plans, the Design and Access Statement, and the arboricultural report, it is suggesting that the access will be widened. However, because any widening will be on the new property access, and not the shared access, it represents a new access and should be considered so. In the landscaping plan (appendix V) of the Biodiversity net gain report (October 2024) a separate new access is shown from the site onto Common Hill. There has been no planning application for this.
2. The arboricultural report (September 2024) was undertaken after the unauthorised removal of trees and site clearance that took place on the proposed development site in June 2024. This invalidates the report and is therefore of limited value (Conservation Area, and Policy 31 and 34 HDPF)
3. The ecology report (August 2024) and biodiversity net gain report (October 2024) were undertaken after the unauthorised removal of trees and site clearance that took place on the proposed development site in June 2024. This invalidates the reports and they are therefore of limited value and should be discounted (Policy 31 HDPF).

Summary

The planning application for the new infill development at Roundabout Place DC/24/1881 should be refused because of the adverse effect on the character of the conservation area, failure to comply with the West Chiltington Conservation Area Management Plan, failure to comply with Policy 34 with respect to the non-designated heritage asset of Roundabout Cottage, inappropriate, incongruous, modern design, overdevelopment of the site, proximity to the road, and previous precedent with respect to the refusal of similar inappropriate infill developments by both HDC and on appeal to the Planning Inspectorate.

Broom Cottage

Sunset Lane, West Chiltington RH20 2NY

January 2025