

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	252912
Site Address:	Wokingham Family Golf, Finchampstead Road, Wokingham, RG40 3HG
Expiry Date:	20 January 2026
Site Visit Date:	16/12/2025
Proposal: Prior approval submission for the proposed installation of 184 no. 510W roof-mounted Photovoltaic panels (93.84kW capacity) on the existing main driving range and clubhouse building.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

- Designated Countryside
- Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area
- Minerals consultation zone
- Wind turbine safeguarding zone
- South East Water consultation zone
- Farnborough Aerodrome consultation zone
- Flood Zone 1

PLANNING POLICY/LEGISLATION

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

Section 55	Provides that 'development' includes the carrying out of building operations on land, and 'building operations' includes structural alterations or additions to buildings.
Section 57	Planning permission is needed for all development of land.
Section 187a	Enforcement for breach of conditions

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended)

Section 7	Prior approval applications: time periods for decision
Article 3	In conjunction with Schedule 2, Part 14 Class J grants planning permission for installation or alteration etc of solar equipment on non-domestic premises
Article 4	Provides that the planning authority may give direction to restrict the effect of Article 3

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
F/1999/70590	Erection of clubhouse	Approved 29 November 1999

172979	Outline application for the proposed construction of a clubhouse, pro shop (480m) and greenkeeping facility (144m). Construction of a Driving Range, football pitch and running track. Construction of a Tennis Centre, outdoor court and car parking. Construction of 3 detached dwellings and 28 flats (including 20 affordable key worker units).	Refused 12 November 2003
132099	Proposed erection of Golf Driving Range Structure with Roof Mounted Flood Lighting. Provision of Security Gate on Access Driveway.	Approved 26 September 2013
181557	Application for a certificate of lawfulness for the use of existing building as a self contained residential dwelling house.	Approved 10 September 2018
	Full application for the proposed erection of a single storey extension to existing driving range building to provide catering/bar and toilet facilities, erection of covered bike store and alterations to existing parking layout	Approved 24 November 2017
200475	Application to vary conditions 2, 6 and 9 and remove conditions 3 and 7 of planning consent 172979 for the full application for the proposed erection of a single storey extension to existing driving range building to provide catering/bar and toilet facilities, erection of covered bike store and alterations to existing parking layout. Condition 2 (approved details) is varied to include an enlarged southern terrace, new lighting and changes to the building, car park and cycle parking (retrospective); Condition 6 (landscaping) is varied to discharge landscaping details; Conditions 3 (drainage) and 7 (protection of trees during construction) are removed and Condition 9 (opening hours) is varied allow extended trading hours between 07:30 to 23:30 Mon to Sat and 08:00 to 22:30 Sun and Bank Holidays and until 22:00 within external terrace areas, 7 days a week between the months of April and September inclusive.	Approved 21 May 2021
211134	Full application for the proposed erection of 1no. two storey, 3 bedroom dwelling, following demolition of existing single storey dwelling, with associated parking, amenity space provision and extensive new landscaping and biodiversity enhancements.	Refusal 21 May 2021.

213001	Full application for the retention of a 12 hole adventure golf course (Jurassic Golf) with model dinosaurs, associated features and kiosk. (Retrospective).	Approval 25 October 2021
213310	Full application for erection of a covered 10No bay driving range with 3No x 600LED roof mounted floodlights and proposed replacement of 5No existing 2KW floodlights on the original driving range building, with 5No 1.2KW LED floodlights (PART RETROSPECTIVE).	Approval, 17 November 2021
220472	Full application for the proposed extension and re-design of existing 12-hole Adventure Golf course layout. The erection of a new entrance Kiosk and signage, themed sculptures, and cave waterfall feature. New 18 holes Golf course boundary fencing, bollard lighting, planting, landscaping and pathways.	Approval, 30 March 2022

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

None consulted.

External

None consulted.

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	No comments received
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	No comments received

PART J.1.2.3 APPRAISAL

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)			Yes	No
1	s.55	Does it constitute development?	✓	
2	s.191	Would it be contrary to an enforcement notice?		✓
3	s.187a Art.3 (4)	Would it be contrary to any condition imposed by any planning permission granted or deemed to be granted?		✓
The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended)			Yes	No
4	Art.3 (5)	Are the building operations involved in the construction of the original building lawful?	✓	
5	Art.4	Is there an 'Article 4 Direction' in effect for the site?		✓
6	Sch.2 Pt. 14	Does it consist of the installation, alteration or replacement of— (a) microgeneration solar thermal equipment on a building; (b) microgeneration solar PV equipment on a building; or	✓	

PART J.1.2.3 APPRAISAL

		(c) other solar PV equipment on the roof of a building		
7	J.1(a)	Would the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment be installed on a pitched roof and would protrude more than 0.2 metres beyond the plane of the roof slope when measured from the perpendicular with the external surface of the roof slope?		✓
8	J.1(b)	Would the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment be installed on a flat roof, where the highest part of the solar PV equipment would be higher than 1 metre above the highest part of the roof (excluding any chimney)?		✓
9	J.1(c)	Would the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment be installed within 1 metre of the external edge of that roof?		✓
10	J.1(d)	In the case of a building on article 2(3) land, would the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment would be installed on a roof slope which fronts a highway?		✓
11	J.1(e)	Would the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment be installed on a site designated as a scheduled monument?		✓
12	J.1(f)	Would the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment be installed on a listed building or on a building within the curtilage of a listed building?		✓
13	J.2(a)	Would the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment be installed on a wall and protrude more than 0.2 metres beyond the plane of the wall when measured from the perpendicular with the external surface of the wall?		✓
14	J.2(b)	Would the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment be installed on a wall and be within 1 metre of a junction of that wall with another wall or with the roof of the building?		✓
15	J.2(c)	In the case of a building on article 2(3) land, would the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment be installed on a wall which fronts a highway?		✓
16	J.3	In the case of Class J (c) development would the capacity of the solar PV equipment installed (together with any solar PV equipment installed under Class J (b)) exceed 1 megawatt?		✓

PART J.4 APPRAISAL

Development under Class J is permitted subject to the developer applying to the local planning authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required as to:

The design or external appearance of the development

The application site relates to Wokingham Family Golf complex, which comprises a golf course, driving range, and associated golf-related facilities. The site also includes an adjacent clubhouse with a large car park located immediately to the east. Access is provided via a driveway from Finchampstead Road, which is shared with two residential properties adjoining the site to the west. The site lies within the countryside.

The proposal seeks prior approval for the installation of 184 roof-mounted photovoltaic panels across the existing main driving range and clubhouse buildings. Given the location and scale of the development, and the fact that the site is accessed via a private driveway with limited public vantage points, other than from within the main car park to the north-west, views of the solar panels would be largely confined to within the golf complex itself.

The panels proposed on the flat-roofed building would not be readily visible from ground level and would be read in conjunction with existing rooftop features, such as ventilation equipment. Panels installed on the mono-pitched roof, particularly along the northern wing, would be perceptible from the main car park; however, they would be arranged in a regular and symmetrical layout that follows the roof form. The use of matt-black panels would allow them to blend with the existing dark grey mono-pitched roof, thereby limiting their visual prominence.

In accordance with the provisions of Class J of Part 14 of the General Permitted Development Order, the siting, design, and appearance of the panels would minimise the visual impact.

The impact of glare on occupiers of neighbouring land

Three dwellings are located to the west of the application site, namely The Fairways, Woodcray Manor, and Woodcray House. The panels proposed on the flat-roofed building would be tilted from north to south and would therefore face away from these dwellings. Panels installed on the mono-pitched roof section would be positioned at a significant distance from the residential properties, ranging from approximately 71 metres at the closest point to around 103 metres at the furthest.

In addition, each of the dwellings is screened from the site by tall, mature vegetation, which limits visibility of the development. Having regard to the orientation, separation distances, and existing screening, the proposed solar panels would not give rise to an unacceptable level of glare or result in adverse impacts on the amenities of neighbouring occupiers.

And the provisions of paragraph J.4 (prior approval process)

The application must be accompanied by-

- (a) a written description of the proposed development;*
- (b) a plan indicating the site and showing the proposed development;*
- (c) the developers contact address; and,*
- (d) the developer's email address if the developer is content to receive communications electronically;*

Together with and fee required to be paid.

A written description as contained in the application form and supporting statement along with the relevant plans, fee and contact details.

The local planning authority may refuse an application where, in the opinion of the authority—

*(a) the proposed development does not comply with, or
(b) the developer has provided insufficient information to enable the authority to establish whether the proposed development complies with the conditions, limitations or restrictions applicable to the development in question.*

There is no reason to conclude that the proposal would not comply with the relevant conditions, limitations and restrictions under Part 14 (Class J).

The local planning authority must give notice of the proposed development by site display in at least one place on or near the land to which the application relates for not less than 21 days of a notice which describes the proposed development; provides the address of the proposed development; specifies the date by which representations are to be received by the local planning authority; or by serving a notice in that form on any adjoining owner or occupier.

The application site does not adjoin any neighbouring residential properties. A site notice was displayed at the application site on 26 November 2025.

The local planning authority may require the developer to submit such information as the authority may reasonably require in order to determine the application, which may include assessments of impacts or risks, statements setting out how impacts or risks are to be mitigated; or details of proposed building or other operations.

No further information is required.

The local planning authority must, when determining an application, take into account any representations made to them as a result of any consultation under sub-paragraphs (5) or (6) and any notice given under sub-paragraph (8); b) have regard to the National Planning Policy Framework, so far as relevant to the subject matter of the prior approval, as if the application were a planning application; and in relation to the contamination risks on the site, determine whether, as a result of the proposed change of use, taking into account any proposed mitigation, the site will be contaminated land as described in Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, and in doing so have regard to the Contaminated Land Statutory Guidance issued by the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in April 2012⁵⁶, and if they determine that the site will be contaminated land, refuse to give prior approval.

Not applicable.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010):

In determining this application the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that persons with protected characteristics as identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

RECOMMENDATION	
Recommendation:	Prior Approval Not Required
Date:	7 January 2026
Earliest date for decision:	18 December 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	<i>MC</i>
Date:	07.01.2026