

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	252410
Site Address:	Wyse Hill Lodge, The Village, Finchampstead, Wokingham, RG40 4JR
Expiry Date:	22 December 2025
Site Visit Date:	1 December 2025
Proposal: Full application for the change of use of land to residential garden plus the associated erection of boundary fencing (Retrospective).	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Scale and Location of Development Proposals – Limited Development
Location/Countryside
Water Utility Consultation Zones
Contaminated Land Consultation Zone
Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone
Nuclear Consultation Zone
Tree Preservation Orders - TPO-1691-2019 and TPO-1910-2022
Landscape Character Assessment Area
PRoW

PLANNING POLICY

National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
Core Strategy (CS)	CP1 – Sustainable Development CP3 – General Principles for Development CP7 – Biodiversity CP8 – Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals CP11 – Proposals Outside Development Limits
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC07 – Parking TB21 – Landscape Character TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU)	SS1 – Sustainable development principles SS4 – Development within or adjacent to minor settlements SS5 – Development in the countryside SS6 – Development in the Green Belt C4 – Green and blue infrastructure and public rights of way C5 – Parking and electric vehicle charging NE1 – Biodiversity and geodiversity NE3 – Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area

	NE4 – Trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance

PLANNING HISTORY		
Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
250414	Householder application for the proposed creation of a new access and associated landscaping.	Refused 14/04/2025 Appeal Allowed 25/06/2025
RFS/2025/09069 1	Unauthorised Extension of Residential Curtilage into Countryside	Pending
222908	Full application for the proposed creation of a new access and associated hardstanding, including installation of a crossing point over an existing roadside ditch.	Refused 25/11/2022
080957	Proposed single storey side extension to provide garage and pitched roof to replace existing flat roof to utility room	Approved 24/11/2008
020981	Proposed single storey rear extension	Approved 11/06/2002
011537	Proposed single storey rear extension	Approved 10/01/2002
960938	Proposed single storey side extension to dwelling	Approved 04/07/1996

CONSULTATION RESPONSES
Internal
WBC Drainage – No Objection WBC Enforcement WBC Highways – Requested Further Information WBC Landscape and Trees – No Objection Subject to Condition
External
N/A

REPRESENTATIONS	
Parish/Town Council	No objection raised.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received.

Neighbours	No comments received.
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APPRAISAL

Site Description: The application site comprises a single storey dwelling situated on the southern side of Fleet Hill Road in The Village, Finchampstead.

Principle of Development: The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the local Development Plan. The Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy CC01 states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for Wokingham Borough will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The site is in Countryside where Core Strategy Policy CP11 applies and states that proposals outside of development limits will only be permitted that do not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings. Furthermore, proposals outside development limits will not normally be permitted except where it contributes to and/or promotes recreation in, and enjoyment of, the countryside.

Proposal: Retrospective change of use of a land to residential garden within the curtilage of Wyse Hill Lodge. The existing land within the residential curtilage is approximately 825 m². The land associated with this application measures approximately 55m in length and 4.4m in width, and the footprint covers approximately 190m². No planning record of any previous authorised use but it is noted it falls within Countryside designation. The side boundary is a closed board fence approximately 1.8m in height and reducing to approximately 1.2m close to the highway. The applicant has advised that the entire site falls within their ownership.

Planning Enforcement History

RFS/2025/090691: In 2023, Planning Enforcement investigated an alleged breach of planning control related to the unauthorised change of use of land adjacent Wyse Hill Lodge and removal of a hedge. The owners confirmed to the visiting Officer that they had purchased the strip of a land adjacent to their south boundary. In September 2025, the owner was informed that the area of land constitutes a change of use of the land from non-residential use to residential use and requires planning permission.

Location in Countryside

The site is in Countryside and Core Strategy Policy CP11 states that to protect the separate identity of settlements and maintain the quality of the environment, proposals outside of development limits will not normally be permitted except where:

1. It contributes to diverse and sustainable rural enterprises within the borough, or in the case of other countryside-based enterprises and activities, it contributes and/or promotes recreation in, and enjoyment of, the countryside; and
2. It does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings; and
3. It is contained within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for

conversion, or in the case of replacement buildings would bring about environmental improvement; or

4. In the case of residential extensions, does not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building.
5. In the case of replacement dwellings, the proposal must: i) Bring about environmental improvements; or ii) Not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building.
6. Essential community facilities cannot be accommodated within development limits or through the re-use/replacement of an existing building.
7. Affordable housing on rural exception sites in line with CP9.

The 2019 Landscape Character Assessment defines the land as Finchampstead Pastoral Sandy Lowland of high landscape quality. In this case exception 2 applies in that the development has not led to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original dwelling house. In this sense, the proposed inclusion of the strip of land (approx. 190m²), boundary fencing and the resultant increase in the curtilage of the host dwelling would not be so significant as conflict with exemption 2 of CP11.

Character of the Area:

Fleet Hill is mainly characterised by a linear pattern of development, with detached and semi-detached housing set on medium sized but deep plots and considerably set back from the street frontage. To the west of the application site is countryside and farmland, with some isolated dwellings further west. Properties boundaries especially towards the west of The Village are characterised by mature trees and hedges. There is a well-maintained ditch to the north of the site hedge and a narrow verge between the ditch and the road itself. The northern part of the site is bounded by protected trees (TPO-1691-2019 and TPO-1910-2022) including a veteran/TPO protected Oak on the north-west corner of the site.

In this case, to incorporate the land within residential curtilage of Wyse Hill Lodge, a hedge has been removed from the existing south side boundary, and a closed board wooden fence erected in a new location. The fence measures a maximum of approximately 1.8m in height, and the panel nearest the highway measures approximately 1.2m in height. The fence is visible from the public realm and introduces an urban feature next to the public footpath, impacting the character of the area and views of the countryside. However, if an application were to be approved, the harm could be mitigated by reinstating native hedgerow along the new garden boundary with the footpath. The proposed increase in the size of the cartilage of the host property would not be uncharacteristic given the variety of sized residential plots in the vicinity of the application site.

Overall, if the planting of a native hedgerow along the south facing aspect of the fence were to be a condition of planning approval, it would not cause significant harm to the character of the area and would comply with Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Due to the location of the development and position of the fence away from shared boundaries with neighbouring properties, there are no concerns relating to potential impact on neighbour amenity in terms of overbearing, overlooking or overshadowing.

Highway Access and Parking Provision: The Highways Officer has requested further information and commented: *“The site is subject to an allowed appeal (Planning Application Ref: 250414) for creation of a new access onto the B3348. The applicant proposes to extend the existing residential garden and erect a boundary fencing. The proposal will not affect the existing parking provision. However, the applicant is expected to clarify if the existing access along the eastern boundary will be retained for vehicular access. If so, the applicant is expected to assess no part of the proposed fencing and landscaping within the stopping sight visibility envelope. Any obstruction within the visibility splays would need to be maintained to be less than 0.6m. If not, the applicant is advised to confirm the access will be stopped up for vehicle movements.”*

Officer comment: The applicant has confirmed that existing access along the eastern boundary will be retained for vehicular access. Furthermore, the applicant has confirmed that the occupiers cannot go past their property boundary to turn cars around, and vehicles are required to reverse out of the property onto the access way and then continue to reverse onto Fleet Hill. Therefore, the fencing and landscaping will not impact the stopping sight visibility envelope.

Flooding and Drainage: The Flooding and Drainage officer raises no objection and has commented: *“LLFA has no objection to the retrospective application for the change of use of land to residential garden and erection of boundary fencing, as submitted. The proposal is considered to pose no significant flood risk and is acceptable from a surface water management perspective.”*

Landscape and Trees: The Tree and Landscape Officer raises no objection subject to condition and has commented: *“The site is located where ‘The Village’ becomes Fleet Hill and in the countryside. It is adjacent to PRow FINC 12. The northern site boundary consists of native hedges with fencing behind it within the rear garden. Native hedges are a feature of the countryside and contribute to the character of the road and the village. Policy CC03 2/d requires that trees, hedges and other landscape features are retained and protected through development. I note that a 1.83, close boarded fence has been erected on the south side of the extended garden, and it appears the hedge boundary has been removed. Blank fences facing into the countryside are an urban feature and the visual impact of this urban style fence next to the footpath is not ideal. If an application was submitted before the work happened there would have been an opportunity to discuss mitigation in order for Policy CC03 and TB21 to be met. Despite this being retrospective I request a Condition to reinstate the native hedgerow along the new garden boundary against the fence to restore the character of the land and the footpath.*

Condition CL4 – Soft Landscape Scheme as per the condition but specifically to include the following: *Plant a native hedge to southern boundary of garden consisting of the following species; *Crateagus monogyna*, *Prunus spinosa*, *Euonymus europaeus*, *Ligustrum vulgare*, *Corylus avellana*, *Malus sylvestris*, *Lonicera periclymenum*, *Rosa canina*. Bare root plants to be planted is a double line offset by 50cm, plants to be offset by 40cm. Biodegradable animal guards to be included.”*

Officer comment: Overall, subject to planning permission being granted, if native hedgerow planting along the fence were to be a condition of approval, the development would not cause significant harm to the countryside location; and would

comply with Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy and TB21 of the Adopted Local Plan.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): When planning permission is granted for a development that is CIL liable, the Council will issue a liability notice as soon as practicable after the day on which the planning permission first permits development. Completing the assumption of liability notice is a statutory requirement to be completed for all CIL liable applications.

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 reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. 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	
Conditions agreed:	Yes
Recommendation:	Approve
Date:	22 December 2025
Earliest date for decision:	17 November 2025

Recommendation agreed by:	
(Authorised Officer)	
Date:	22/12/25