

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	260479
Site Address:	Ye Olde Leathern Bottel, 221 Barkham Road, Wokingham, RG41 4BY
Expiry Date:	27 April 2026
Site Visit Date:	17/03/2026
Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of 1 no. pergola to replace 4 no. existing huts, plus installation of new fixed raised planters, additional external lighting, replacement paving and new estate fencing with associated landscaping, plus an increase in the height of existing fencing.	

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 CP6 – Managing Travel Demand CP7 – Biodiversity CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (JMWP)	DM1 - Sustainable Development DM2 - Climate Change – Mitigation and Adaptation
Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU)	SS1 – Sustainable development principles SS3 – Development within or adjacent to major and modest settlements C1 – Active and sustainable transport and accessibility C2 – Mitigation of transport impacts and highway safety and design NE1 – Biodiversity and geodiversity NE4 – Trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows NE5 – Landscape and design DH1 – Place making and quality design DH2 – Safeguarding amenity
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List

PLANNING HISTORY		
Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
001111	Proposed installation of lighting to front of building and rear car park security lighting.	Refused, 02/01/2001
011287	Proposed erection of various illuminated and non-illuminated public house signs.	Approved, 18/02/2002
012263	Proposed alterations to external lighting at public house (Lanterns and Lamp Posts).	Approved, 18/02/2002
231990	Full application for the proposed creation of a site access to serve the existing Public House and the Equestrian centre along with clearance of the former access.	Refused, 09/10/2023
241556	Full application for the proposed extension to the existing public house to include remodelled pub/kitchen at ground floor, loss of staff accommodation, and introduction of 5 no. rooms of accommodation at first floor. Additionally, the erection of a ancillary building to provide a further 8 no. rooms; together with associated changes to access, parking, landscaping and other ancillary works.	Refused, 14/08/2024
242654	Full application for the proposed erection of a single storey extension to the existing public house to include remodelled pub/kitchen, first floor extension and loft conversion to create 5no. rooms of accommodation along with changes to fenestration and installation of additional roof lights plus associated changes to access, parking and other ancillary works.	Refused, 26/12/2024

CONSULTATION RESPONSES
Internal
WBC Landscape and Trees – No objections, subject to a condition. WBC Ecology – No objections, subject to a condition. WBC Ecology – No objections, subject to a condition.
External
None consulted.

REPRESENTATIONS	
Parish/Town Council	No comments received

Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	No comments received

APPRAISAL

Site Description and Proposed Development:

The application site comprises of Ye Olde Leathern Bottel, a large public house situated north of Barkham Road and west of Limmerhill Road. The site is bordered to the north by open agricultural land, to the east by residential dwellings, to the south by Barkham Road, and to the west by the Bottel Farm building and its access road.

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 application site lies at the interface between the Major Development Location of Wokingham to the east and designated countryside to the west. The public house itself is located within the defined settlement limits and, as such, development is considered acceptable in principle, provided that it accords with the relevant policies and principles set out in the Core Strategy.

Character of the Area:

Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area in which it is located and must be of high-quality design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land uses and occupiers.

The proposal comprises of the following works:

- The installation of a new pergola to provide outdoor seating, replacing four existing huts.
- New fixed raised planters and posts with lanterns within the outdoor amenity area of the public house.
- The raising of a section of existing enclosed rear boundary fencing from 1.8 metres to 2.4 metres in height.

The proposed works are considered to be of a modest nature. The pergola would be a lightweight structure of limited scale, replacing existing outbuildings and therefore representing a slight visual improvement in terms of form and openness. The proposed raised planters and associated posts with lanterns are typical features within public house garden areas and would be appropriate in this context.

The increase in height of a section of rear boundary fencing by 0.6 metres would not appear incongruous within the site. Whilst the resulting fence would exceed standard residential boundary heights, it is located towards the rear of the site, adjacent to the car park and service areas, and is not readily visible from the wider public realm. In this context, and when viewed alongside existing boundary treatments, the adjoining raised patio area, and the established commercial character of the site, the fencing would not appear unduly prominent.

Overall, the proposed development would not result in any adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Due to the modest nature of the proposals, sited well away from neighbouring amenities, there are no loss of light, overlooking or overbearing concerns.

Landscape and Trees:

A number of trees within and around the site are protected by a TPO (1933/2023).

The Council's Trees and Landscape Officer has reviewed the application and raises no objection to the proposed changes within the external areas of the public house. The proposals are not considered to result in any additional harm to the adjacent protected trees. However, the Trees and Landscape Officer has requested that further details of the proposed planting within the outdoor amenity area be secured by condition.

The Case Officer considers this requirement to be unnecessary in this instance, given the modest nature and limited scope of the proposed works. The planting forming part of the proposal includes new raised planters, with the submitted site plan also indicating areas of turf reinstatement and limited additional soft landscaping, including small areas of hedging and planting beds. The proposed built form, including the pergola, lighting posts and the increased boundary fencing, is minor in scale and does not give rise to any substantive landscape concerns, nor does it require detailed specification in order for the development to be acceptable in principle. In addition, much of this type of soft landscaping could be carried out without the need for planning permission. On this basis, it is not considered that the imposition of a condition is necessary or reasonable.

Ecology:

The site is located in habitat which matches where bat roosts have previously been found in the borough

The Council's Ecology Officer has reviewed this application and advises that, based on the available planning history, no bat survey has been undertaken for the site and the presence or absence of bats has not been confirmed. All species of British bat are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under this legislation, it is an offence to deliberately or recklessly disturb bats, or to damage or destroy a roost, with

a roost defined as any structure or place used for shelter or protection, whether or not bats are present at the time.

The Ecology Officer also notes that bats, along with other nocturnal species such as birds, can be sensitive to increases in artificial lighting. Additional external lighting has the potential to disturb commuting, foraging, or roosting activity and may result in the avoidance of otherwise suitable habitat, which in some circumstances could give rise to offences under wildlife legislation.

Notwithstanding the above, the Ecology Officer confirms that the development is exempt from the statutory Biodiversity Net Gain condition. Subject to the imposition of an appropriate external lighting condition requiring that no external lighting shall be installed on the site or affixed to any buildings on the site without the prior written approval of the local planning.

However, the Case Officer notes that the site already contains a number of external lighting features within the outdoor patio area, and the proposal includes additional posts with lanterns. In this context, it is considered more appropriate to control the use of external lighting rather than its provision. Accordingly, a condition will be imposed requiring that all external lighting is operated only during the opening hours of the premises.

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:	Not required
Recommendation:	Approval
Date:	15 April 2026
Earliest date for	23 March 2026

decision:	
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Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	<i>MC</i>
Date:	20.04.2026