

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	252795
Site Address:	Holme Farm, Aston Lane, Aston, Wokingham, RG9 3DJ
Expiry Date:	23 January 2026
Site Visit Date:	12 January 2026
Proposal: Householder application for the proposed erection of 1 no. outbuilding for a games room.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Scale and Location of Development Proposals - Countryside
Green Belt
Listed Building Buffer Zone
Area of Special Character
Bat Roost Habitat Suitability

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 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 TB01 – Development within the Green Belt TB23 – Biodiversity and Development TB24 – Designated Heritage Assets TB26 – Buildings of Traditional Local Character and Areas of Special Character
Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU)	SS1 – Sustainable development principles SS5 – Development in the countryside SS6 – Development in the Green Belt NE4 – Trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document

PLANNING HISTORY		
Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
111/55	Conversion and improvements	Approve 14 August 1955
01944	Extensions and additions	Approve 23 January 1975
BR2042	Single storey extension	4 February 1975
221786	Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for a tennis court and swimming pool.	Approve 19 July 2022
251500	Application for a certificate of lawfulness for the proposed erection of tennis court and enclosure following demolition of the existing tennis court.	*Split Decision 01 August 2025
251674	Application for a certificate of lawfulness for the proposed erection of a detached outbuilding.	Approve 10 September 2025
251905	Application for a certificate of lawfulness for the proposed erection of a tennis court with enclosure following demolition of existing tennis court.	Approve 01 October 2025
252160	Application for a certificate of lawfulness for the proposed installation of 5no roof lights on the studio outbuilding.	Approve 24 October 2025

**The proposed removal of the existing tennis court does not constitute development and does not requiring planning permission. The proposed erection of a tennis court constitutes development requiring planning permission by virtue of the associated engineering operations required. Permission is not available under Article 3 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015, Schedule 2 (Part 1) (Class [E] of the Order.*

CONSULTATION RESPONSES
Internal
WBC Landscape and Trees – No Objection WBC Built Heritage Officer – No Objection Subject to Condition WBC CIL
External
N/A

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	Remenham Parish Council (RPC) is happy to leave the matter with WBC Planning, asking only that there be no excessive light pollution or % volume increase in the new replacement building over that for the original building. <i>Officer Comment: The impact on the openness of the Green Belt is discussed in the main body of the report. External lighting is not shown on the proposed elevations plan. The proposal is set down from the public footpath and trees at the rear, and the nearest neighbour is located approximately 130m away at Colt Cottage. Therefore, there would be no significant harm caused by light pollution.</i>
Ward Member(s)	No comments received.
Neighbours	No comments received.

APPRAISAL

Site Description: The site is accessed via Aston Lane in Remenham; the west boundary is adjacent to a playing field and is approximately 300m from the River Thames; and the south boundary abuts the curtilage of a Listed Building known as Culham Court, the site comprises approximately 3 acres of land. The main dwelling house is primarily a 1950s building that is an infill extension between 2 no. 19th century worker's cottages. An additional single storey side extension was added in 1975. Within the site there is also a 19th century threshing barn, 2 no. historical outbuildings, a swimming pool and a tennis court. The 2 no. existing outbuildings adjacent to the proposed development are within a Listed Building Buffer Zone and facilitate an office and studio.

In November 2025, the Council received a request for service related to Holme Farm and the alleged conversion of an outbuilding to an annexe without planning permission. A Planning Enforcement investigation ref RFS/2025/ 090849 found that the three outbuildings were being used for storage purposes. The investigation was closed as no breach of planning control had occurred. Nevertheless, it is noted that permission has not been sought to date for the conversion of the 2 no. outbuildings subsequently shown as a Studio and an Annex/Home Office on the submitted Floor Plan and Site Plan.

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 located outside defined settlement limits (which are defined by policy CP9 of the Core Strategy). As such, the site is defined as being located within the Wokingham Countryside. It is also located within the Green Belt. As such, any development is ordinarily resisted. The principle of development is only acceptable subject to meeting exceptions in Green Belt and Countryside policy.

Proposal: To reinstate a former outbuilding constructed between 1898 and 1911 (from historic OS maps) and demolished sometime between 1948 and 1980 (from historic images and OS maps). The outbuilding would provide a games room, bar facilities and a WC. It will measure 5.2m in height to the top of the pitch roof and chimney, 14m in length, 4.5m in depth and the separation distance with the side boundary will be approx. 1.3m. The roof will have clay tiles; the external walls will be brick and timber cladding; and the front elevation will have 4 no. windows and a single door.

Location within the Green Belt: The application site is located within designated Green Belt and outside of settlement limits in the Countryside. The government attaches great importance to Green Belts with national policies for the protection of Green Belt land covered by Chapter 13 of the NPPF. Paragraph 142 of the NPPF states that, "The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence". Paragraph 143 of the NPPF states that the Green Belt serves 5 purposes, the one most relevant to this proposal is, "(c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment".

Paragraph 153 of the NPPF states that, "Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances." When considering any planning application, LPAs must ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness. Paragraph 153 further states that, "Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of its inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations."

In this case no very special circumstances have been identified.

Paragraph 154 of the NPPF states that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless one of eight exceptions applies:

- a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;
- b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use), including buildings, for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments;
- c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;
- d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
- e) limited infilling in villages;
- f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and
- g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land (including a material change of use to residential or mixed use including residential), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.
- h) Other forms of development provided they preserve its openness and do not

conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

In this case, the most relevant exception is “d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces.” However, the previous outbuilding in this location was demolished several years ago so the proposal cannot be assessed as direct replacement building.

Paragraph 155 of the NPPF states that, “The development of homes, commercial and other development in the Green Belt should also not be regarded as inappropriate where:

- a) The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan.
- b) There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed.
- c) The development would be in a sustainable location.
- d) Where applicable the development proposed meets the ‘Golden Rules’ requirements”

In this case, it is considered that the proposal, comprising a single storey outbuilding would not fall within the exceptions set out in paragraph 155 and therefore they are not relevant to this proposal.

In returning to the assessment of paragraph 154, similar principles over proportionate increases are reflected in Core Strategy policy CP12 and MDD Local Plan policy TB01. The NPPF does not define what can be considered a “disproportionate addition” in size. Policy TB01 defines a “limited” addition as one that is cumulatively 35% or less in volume compared to the original building, and as such could be viewed as not “disproportionate” in size. Although the supporting text to Policy TB01 is specifically directed towards proposal for residential extensions, it remains a useful comparative tool to assist in assessing harm to the Green Belt. Policy TB01 further clarifies that with regard to the construction, alteration or extension of buildings ancillary to a dwelling, changes should not result in disproportionate additions to the original building(s) or cause a detrimental to the scale of the dwelling or to the scale of development on the site.

Whether outbuildings fall within the definition of an extension, and, therefore, the calculations of the size of an original building, or existing dwelling, was considered in the case of *Sevenoaks DC v SoS & Dawe* 1997. The judge concluded the garage was part of the ‘dwelling’, in the sense that it was a normal domestic adjunct, and an extension of it. Also, the fact that it was physically separated from the main house should not prevent it from being part of the dwelling. In this case, outbuilding to facilitate a games room, bar and WC is considered a domestic adjunct to the main dwelling.

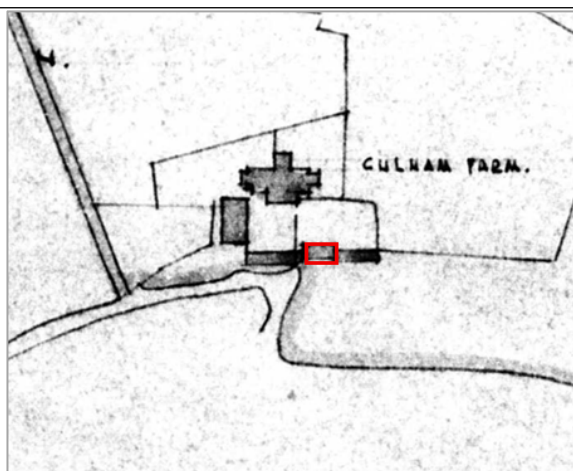


Figure 1 site plan 1955 (ref 111/55)

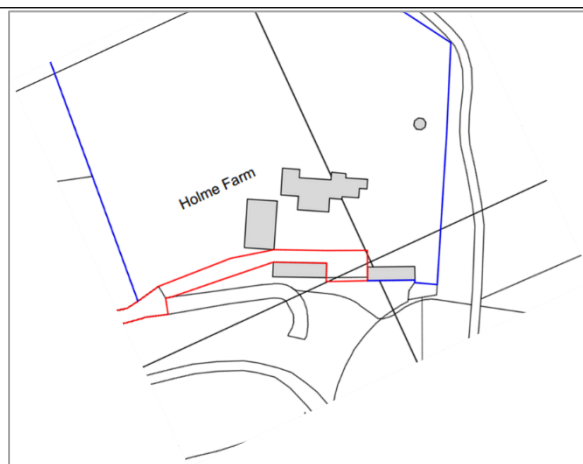


Figure 2 Location Plan current application



Figure 3 Image showing rear elevation of main dwelling

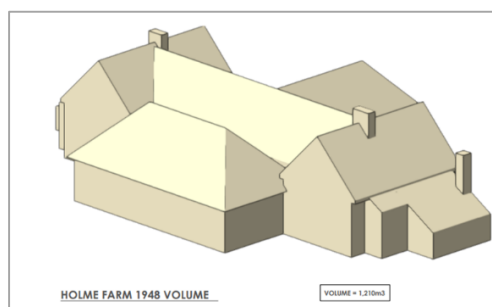


Figure 4 3D image of original main dwelling submitted by the applicant shaded brown and additions shown in yellow

The NPPF defines an 'original building' as "A building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally." In this case, the Heritage Officer has confirmed that the main dwelling house (shown shaded brown in Figure 4) has two flint and clunch 19th century elements (shown in Figure 3) with part of the roof structure on the rear pitches (circled in red in Figure 3) that suggest there was a 'linking' structure of a similar height: (shown as a green line in Figure 3). The metal framed windows appear to be of 1950s/60s style but may have been added later.

The volume calculations for the proposed development have been submitted by the applicant as part of this application (see Table 1) and show the volume increase to be 1.3% above the size of the original dwelling.

Table 1 – Applicants submitted comparison of original and proposed volumes

Volume	Original m ³	Existing m ³	Proposed m ³	% increase
Main house	1,210.0	1,244.0	1,244.0	
Threshing Barn	690.8	690.8	690.8	
Studio	211.5	211.5	211.5	
Home Office	252.5	252.5	252.5	
Demolished Outbuilding	244.6			

Proposed Outbuilding			244.6	
Total	2,609.4	2,398.8	2,643.4	1.3%

However, given that **the main dwelling house was extended by more than 35% in the 1950's**, and the proposed outbuilding would be ancillary to Holme Farm (shown within the blue line in Figure 2), it would still significantly breach the 35% limit imposed under Policy TB01. Therefore, it would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt unless there are very special circumstances.

Nevertheless, although in volumetric terms, the proposal would amount to 'inappropriate' development in the Green Belt, there are other significant material considerations. For example, the applicant has provided evidence that the previous outbuilding was demolished between 1948 and 1980, and the current proposal would effectively represent a rebuild of the original structure. Also, there would be very limited impact on the visual and spatial openness of the Green Belt given that the proposed outbuilding would be contained within the footprint of the demolished outbuilding, and it would be set into the hill creating minimal vertical encroachment on the openness. In addition, the main dwellinghouse would restrict views of the outbuilding from the north. Therefore, in spatial and visual terms, the height mass and bulk of the proposal would not significantly harm the openness of the Green Belt and would comply with Policy CP12.

Location within 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.

In this case, the proposal would not promote recreation or facilitate the increase of rural enterprises. However, it would not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion away from the original building and would not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building. Therefore, although the scheme does not fully comply with CP11, it would not cause significant harm to the Countryside. Furthermore, this is not considered a robust basis to refuse the scheme given its

compliance with local policy in other respects and given the limited expansion of the original building.

Character of the Area:

Core Strategy Policy CP3 states that planning permission will be granted for proposals that are of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character, together with a high quality of design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users, including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life. Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy requires developments to maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment.

Holme Farm covers an area of approximately 3 acres; it is within the hamlet of Aston and approximately 3km to the north-east of Henley-on-Thames. The main dwelling and outbuildings are not visible from the public realm on Aston Lane, and the site is accessed via a track that is bordered by tall hedges and interspersed with trees along the route. A Public Right of Way footpath (PRoW REME12) runs approximately 10m south of the site and is adjacent to Culham Court, a Grade 2 Listed Building and gardens. There is also a single-track lane adjacent to the east boundary.

In this case, the proposed outbuilding would be located within the buffer zone of Culham Court. However, due to the change in ground levels and the historic brick and flint wall, only the roof of the outbuilding would be visible from the public footpath. Furthermore, there would only be limited distant views of the outbuilding from the track along the east boundary. Also, the outbuilding would be single storey, the maximum eaves height would be 3m and the height to the top of the eaves approximately 5.2m which is in line with roof of adjacent outbuildings and lower than the roof of the main dwelling house. The front elevation would be set forward of the adjacent outbuildings by 3m and create a staggered building line that would not be overly prominent.

Therefore, the proposal would not harm the character of the area and would comply with Policies CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Core Strategy Policy CP3 states that development proposals should not result in a detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life. In this case, the nearest neighbour at Colt Cottage would be located approximately 130m away and the development will not face onto neighbouring habitable rooms. Therefore, the development would not increase overlooking or loss of light to neighbouring amenity. Also, given that it would be single storey and set between 2 no. outbuildings of similar height, it would not be overbearing in appearance.

Overall, the proposal would comply with Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy in relation to neighbour amenity.

Highway Access and Parking Provision: The proposal will provide one additional habitable room. The WBC's adopted parking standards after development state that 3 or more spaces are required following development for 4 or more-bedroom dwellings.

In this case the courtyard forward of the main dwelling house provides parking for several vehicles.

Therefore, the proposal would comply with the Parking standards in Appendix 2 of the MDD Local Plan.

Landscape and Trees: The Landscape and Tree Officer raises no objection to the proposal and has commented: *“According to the applicant’s submitted Outbuilding Design, Access, & Heritage Statement, the Site is also located within the Greenlands Restrictive Convent. This makes it subject to approval by the National Trust Regional Covenants Board, which according to the statement report has been granted to the applicant. The Site is located between two landscape character areas, according to the*

Wokingham Landscape Character Assessment, Nov 2019)

- *Wooded Chalk Slopes (D1 Remenham Wooded Chalk Slopes)*
- *A1 Thames River Valley*

The countryside, including views across the valley and Thames River, forms a significant backdrop to the farm complex, now single-family dwelling, of Holme Farm which can be seen from the public realm. Public access is provided by a promoted national footpath, the National Thames Path National Trail (PRoW REME12), which runs approximately 10m south of the site.

There are no protected trees within the application site boundary which would be detrimentally impact by this development.

This development makes a positive contribution to the property and local area, and therefore, I make no objection to the proposed outbuilding application.”

Heritage: The Heritage Officer raises no objection to the proposal and has commented: *“The proposed ancillary outbuilding at Holme Farm impacts upon the significance of*

Holme Farm and the Aston Area of Special Character (AoSC) both identified as non-designated heritage assets. The proposals also impact upon the wider setting of the Culham Court estate, of which Holme Farm was once part.

Historically known as Culham Farm, the complex is comprised of interesting collection of structures, primarily 19th century in origin. The main house – Holme Farm – is predominantly a building of the 1950s but formed of 19th century worker’s cottage, effectively forming wings to the main building. These 19th century elements are of decorative clunch and flint in a chequered pattern to the south and western elevations, with further rendering to the other flanks. A well-preserved early 19th century threshing barn sits perpendicular to the main house with further ancillary structures to the south. Whilst in a private setting, the complex is well-preserved and positively contributes the hamlet and indeed wider area. It is proposed to erect an ancillary outbuilding to the south of the main house, effectively ‘infilling’ a gap between existing stabling/barn buildings.

The proposed building would take the place of a previously demolished structure, understood to be late 19th century in date, subsequently demolished post-war. It is uncertain what the building’s appearance would have been; however, the proposed design would be a fair approximation of what the structure may have looked like – that of a simple brick and weather board, under clay tile single storey range. And

whilst this is not an academic recreation, the proposed design – on the same footprint – would be considered not only appropriate in design terms but seek to ‘restore’ the farmstead to a more historic appearance. Given this, no concerns are raised to the proposals as they are considered appropriate for the context and would not seek to adversely impact the setting and thus significance of the identified heritage assets.

Materials are important, however, and should be conditioned as such – the bricks should seek to match the other plinths on site, in either a lime-rich or pure lime mortar (using a course aggregate) – the photographs I have access to are not of high resolution enough to identify the bond of the neighbouring buildings – if in Flemish bond, the new building should seek to match this. Similarly, the new waterboarding should seek to match the planks of the neighbouring structures.

The roof tiles of the outbuilding adjacent to the proposed structure appears to have a barrel/Roman type of tile – slightly unusual, originally this building is likely to have a simple plain tile, as per the other buildings in the site/area. Either a well-matched reclaimed clay plain tile should be specified, or a high-quality new tile (such as from Tudor, Keymer, Heritage etc.).

Recommended Condition:

Notwithstanding, and in addition to, the information shown on the approved drawings, no relevant works, shall commence on site until details of materials and finishes have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing. The submitted details should include physical samples as applicable. The works shall then proceed in strict accordance with the approved details. These requirements include provision of information relating to:

- 1. The material, size, texture, colour, profile, and source of facing brickwork and jointing mortar, including bond.*
- 2. The material, size, texture, colour, profile, and source of weatherboarding.*
- 3. The material, size, texture, colour, profile, and source of roofing materials.*
- 4. Materials and finishes to be used in the detailing of gables, eaves and verges.*
- 5. The proposed rainwater goods.*
- 6. The proposed external windows and doors.*

Reason: In order to safeguard the special architectural or historic interest of the building. Relevant policy: National Planning Policy Framework Section 16 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment) and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy TB24.”

Ecology: The application site is designated as suitable habitat for bat roosting. The development would infill a gap between two existing outbuildings and be located at a lower ground level than the public footpath to the rear that is bordered by mature trees. Therefore, were the application to be approved, the following Informative will be added to the Decision Notice:

Informative

Bats are a protected species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Should any bats or evidence of bats be found prior to or during the development, all works must stop immediately, and an ecological

consultant contacted for further advice before works can proceed. All contractors working on site should be made aware of the advice and provided with the contact details of a relevant ecological consultant.

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:	28 January 2026
Earliest date for decision:	9 December 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	30/01/26