

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	251635
Site Address:	Beech Court, Wokingham Road, Hurst, Wokingham, RG10 0RQ
Expiry Date:	5 September 2025
Site Visit Date:	See 242200
Proposal: Application to vary condition 2 of planning consent 242200 for the proposed erection of 1 no. single storey storage building in association with the existing use of Beech Court, plus changes to parking layout and landscaping. Condition 2 refers to the approved details, and the variation is to raise the ridge height of the building, relocate the central bay and change fenestration.	

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 CP11 – Proposals Outside Development Limits
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction CC05 – Renewable Energy and Decentralised Energy Networks CC06 – Noise CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage 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)	S1 – Sustainable development principles SS5 – Development in the countryside CE7 – Low carbon and renewable energy generation CE8 – Protecting renewable energy generation C2 – Mitigation of transport impacts and highway safety and design FD2 – Sustainable drainage NE5 – Landscape and design

	NE6 – Valued landscapes DH1 – Place making and quality design
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
251541	Application for submission of details to comply with the following condition of planning consent 242200 dated 31.10.2024. Condition 3 relates to Great Crested Newts; 4 to Landscaping.	Approved, 251541
251541	Application for submission of details to comply with the following condition of planning consent 242200 dated 31.10.2024. Condition 3 relates to Great Crested Newts; 4 to Landscaping.	Approved, 22/08/2025
250820	Full application for the proposed erection of a 1.5 storey extension to the existing building to provide additional office space (Use Class E), plus changes to fenestration and landscaping.	Approved, 02/06/2025
242200	Full application for the proposed erection of 1 no. single storey storage building in association with the existing use of Beech Court, plus changes to parking layout and landscaping.	Approved, 31/10/2024
072978	Proposed change of use of land - 1 from Class B1 to Agricultural and 2 from Agricultural to Class B1. Formation of hardstanding to access paddock.	Approved, 10/05/2007
031548	Proposed erection of building for B1 office use. Demolition of existing building.	Refused, 10/09/2003 Allowed at appeal on 25/06/2004
970355	Proposed Demolition Of Existing Temporary Buildings And Erection Of Replacement To Accommodate Office restroom toilets and showroom	Refused, 31/10/1997
970609	Proposed Change Of Use From Garden Centre To Manufacture Of Storage And Distribution Of Garden Ornaments and retention of 2 temporary buildings (retrospective)	Approved, 21/07/1997
961475	Erection Of 32 Houses, Garages And Access.	Refused, 13/04/1996

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Environmental Health – No comments received.
WBC Drainage – No objections.
WBC Highways – No objections.
WBC Landscape and Trees – No objections.
WBC Built Heritage Officer – No objections.
WBC Ecology Newts – No comments received.
WBC Ecology – No comments received.
WBC Waste Services – No comments received.

External

Thames Water Utilities Ltd – No comments received.
SSE Power Distribution – No comments received.

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	t Nicholas Hurst Parish Council – No comments.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	No comments received

APPRAISAL

Site Description and Proposed development:

Beech Court is situated to the east of Wokingham Road, south of central Hurst. The site is positioned within a triangular area bounded by Wokingham Road to the west, Islandstone Lane approximately 0.3 km to the south, and an unnamed lane to the east that provides access to nearby small farms. The subject site consists of a triangular-shaped parcel of undeveloped land currently utilized for overflow parking.

This application seeks to vary condition 2 of permission 242200. Condition 2 relates to the approved details and plans and the variations propose the following changes:

- Raise the ridge height of the building from approximately 5.3 metres to 6.9 metres.
- Relocate the central entrance bay.
- Fenestration changes, including the installation of additional windows and the repositioning of openings.

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.

Policy CP11 of the Borough Core Strategy states that, in order to protect the distinct identity of settlements and maintain environmental quality, proposals outside development limits will not normally be permitted, except where, inter alia:

- 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.

According to the supporting covering letter, proposed raising of the buildings ridge height is to allow for a more efficient and future proof vertical storage capacity serviced by a small forklift truck while the fenestration changes will be realigned to allow for this more efficient storage.

As established under the approved scheme 242200, the storage building is intended to accommodate garden maintenance and property cleaning equipment used off-site in support of the operations of an established property management company based at Beech Court, which in turn contributes to the social and economic vitality of the rural area.

The functional improvements proposed would help secure the long-term operational efficiency of the business and support its ongoing activities, and in doing so, would broadly accord with criterion 1 of Policy CP11, as it contributes to the sustainability and diversity of rural enterprises within the borough.

With regard to criterion 2 of Policy CP11, the proposal would not result in excessive encroachment or expansion beyond the original buildings. The only change in scale relates to an increase in ridge height, with the building's footprint remaining effectively identical to that previously approved (aside from the repositioning of the entrance bay). The development therefore remains contained within the same built parameters, avoiding any spread of built form into the wider countryside. The scheme is therefore considered to comply with criterion 2 of Policy CP11.

Character of the Area and Built Heritage:

Whilst the proposed ridge height increase from approximately 5.3 metres to 6.9 metres would result in a higher eaves line and roof profile, this change would not cause material harm to the character or setting of the site. The resulting outbuilding would remain clearly subservient and sympathetic to the main office building, which stands at 7.4 metres in height, thereby preserving the established hierarchy of built form. Furthermore, the proposal would continue to respect the wider development pattern, which includes a mix of one-and-a-half and two-storey properties, ensuring the building does not appear incongruous in its context.

The relocation of the central entrance bay and the associated fenestration changes are modest in nature and read as functional alterations necessary to support the building's intended use. These changes do not detract from the overall design quality

or coherence of the scheme and would not result in any undue visual impact. Taken together, the proposals would not result in harm to either the setting of the listed building at Willow Cottage, the character and appearance of the Hurst or the Wokingham Road Area of Special Character.

A condition to restrict the creation of a first-floor level within the storage building will be attached to planning consent 242200. This is considered necessary and reasonable given that the approved variation increases the ridge height, which could otherwise accommodate an additional storey in the future. Such an intensification would alter the scale, character, and intended function of the development, potentially giving rise to unacceptable impacts on visual amenity and neighbouring residential amenity.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Overlooking:

The proposed east-side window would be positioned at first-floor height; however, as the building would not contain an upper floor, the window would not serve a usable internal space. Consequently, it would not give rise to any overlooking or adverse impacts on neighbouring residential amenity.

With regards to the new ground floor windows, the existing boundary hedgerow would be high enough to sufficiently mitigate any overlooking concerns towards neighbouring residential amenities.

Loss of Light and Overbearing:

Figure 4.25 within Section 4 of the Council's Borough Design Guide sets out the minimum privacy and amenity distances required to safeguard neighbouring living conditions and limit any undue sense of enclosure. For proposals of between 1 and 2 storeys in height, the guidance advises a minimum back-to-flank separation distance of 12 metres. Importantly, the guidance also emphasises that character and context are relevant considerations in the application of these standards.

In this case, the subject building is positioned approximately 2 metres from the western boundary, which adjoins the rear garden of the neighbouring property known as Questings. While the proposed increase in ridge height would result in the building becoming more perceptible from this neighbouring property, the relationship is considered acceptable. The western flank wall of the subject building would remain approximately 22 metres from the main rear elevation of Questings, which comfortably exceeds the Council's minimum separation distance and serves to mitigate any undue perception of enclosure or overbearing impact. Furthermore, the side elevation of the building – which presents a narrower profile – is the element facing towards the neighbour, rather than its longer length, thereby reducing its overall visual presence.

On this basis, it is considered that the proposal would not result in any unacceptable impact on loss of light, overbearing or sense of enclosure to any neighbouring amenities.

Noise impacts

It is considered that the proposed variations would not give rise to any additional noise or disturbance beyond that already assessed and approved under planning application 242200, as the authorised use of the building and the nature of its associated activities would remain unchanged.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

The Council's Highways Officer has reviewed this application and confirms that no adverse highways impacts are anticipated as a result of the proposed variation. The amendments would not affect the parking or access arrangements previously approved under permission 242200, and as such, the Highways Officer has raised no objections to the proposal.

Flooding and Drainage:

The proposed development is in Flood zone 1 according to the Environment Agency mapping with a low risk of surface water flooding. The Council's Drainage Officer has reviewed the application and has raised no objections to the proposed variations.

The Council's Drainage Officer notes that a drainage condition was originally recommended under planning application 242200 but was not subsequently included in the decision notice. As outlined on page 6 of the Case Officer's report for 242200, the recommended condition was considered disproportionate given the modest scale of the development and the minimal increase in hardstanding. It was concluded that the remaining permeable land within the site would provide sufficient capacity to avoid any adverse impacts on site-specific or wider flood risk.

In line with this reasoning, it is maintained that it would not be reasonable or necessary to impose a drainage condition on the current variation, as the scope of works remains modest and does not involve any increase in the building's footprint.

Landscape and Trees:

The Council's Trees and Landscape Officer have reviewed this application and given the modest scope of development proposed and the distances to any mature trees within the site, it is considered that no tree or landscape related impacts would arise from the proposed development.

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, 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	
Conditions agreed:	Not required
Recommendation:	Approval
Date:	1 September 2025
Earliest date for decision:	4 August 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	<i>MC</i>
Date:	03.09.2025