

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	252376
Site Address:	Wargrave Manor, Wargrave Hill, Wargrave, Wokingham, RG10 8JL
Expiry Date:	9 January 2026
Site Visit Date:	8 December 2025
Proposal: Householder application for the proposed extension of garden room.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Conservation Area – Wargrave
Countryside
Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone - Amber
Green Belt

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 CP12 – Green Belt
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 – Development Limits CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction TB01 – Development within the Green Belt TB23 – Biodiversity and Development TB24 – Designated Heritage Assets
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document

PLANNING HISTORY

980887 Proposed Erection of Entrance Gates (Retrospective) Approve 09 December 1998
021310 Proposed new bridge from listed building to conservatories for disabled access, replacement balustrade on terrace and disabled lift within courtyard of dwelling. Retrospective. Approve 30 April 2003
030234 Proposed erection of external bridge from roof terrace to conservatories, replacement balustrade to terrace and disabled lift in courtyard of Manor House.

Retrospective. **Approve** 30 April 2003

240166 Householder application for the proposed erection of 2 no. garden structures (a pergola and a garden room). **Approve** 25 April 2024

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Highways – No Objection
WBC Landscape and Trees – No Objection
WBC Built Heritage Officer – No Objection Subject to Condition
WBC Ecology Newts – 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.

APPRAISAL

Site Description: The site is located within a Conservation Area and the Green Belt south of the Hennerton Golf Course and parallel to Wargrave Road. It comprises 19th century Grade II listed buildings including Wargrave Manor, an Estate Office and Staff Quarters. There is also an equestrian facility to the north of the estate as well as other buildings. The pergola, garden room and large pond to the east of the site are in proximity of the proposed development. The estate also has a swimming pool with pool house, a manicured garden area, and extensive unused and untouched land to the west, south and north of the site.

Proposal: The proposal will extend the existing garden room, creating a larger open-plan space for recreational purposes that are incidental to the main dwelling. It will be constructed as a continuation of the existing glazed elevations, incorporating the same materials. The full-height glazed façade will be framed in oak, matching the existing joinery. The roof will continue the original design, featuring a slanted slate-tiled profile and a central skylight. The extension will be single storey and be by approximately 4m in depth; 9.6m in width and have a maximum height of approximately 4.2m, including the 2 no. additional roof lanterns.

Procedural Matters

A revised Ecology Report were received by the Council on 6th January 2026 and after the consultation date had ended. However, the revised Ecology Report only confirms the conditions on site remain the same as previously assessed. Therefore, the revised report was not considered to have a significant impact on neighbour amenity to warrant extending the consultation period.

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 any 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.

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."

Paragraph 154 of the NPPF states that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless one of eight exceptions applies. In this case, the most relevant exception is "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."

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 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.

Therefore, in volumetric terms, Table 1 below shows that the proposal would amount to ‘inappropriate’ development in the Green Belt when assessed under Policy TB01 and Paragraph 153 of the NPPF.

Comparison between original, existing and proposed submitted volumes

	Original m ³	Existing additions m ³	Proposed addition m ³
Original Dwelling (Wargrave Manor)	6907		
Greenhouses		+2070	
Pool house		+220	
Garden Room		+181	+122
Pergola		+79	
Total	6907	+2549	+122
Percentage increase		37%	38.7%

The proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt because the volume increase would be approximately 38.7% compared to the volume of the original building. Therefore, by definition, the proposal would cause harm to the openness of the Green Belt and would normally be resisted despite this volume increase only being marginal. Substantial weight is given to this perceived harm. Furthermore, there are no ‘very special circumstances’ (VSCs) to justify inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Accordingly, the proposal cannot be considered a limited enlargement within the generally accepted 35% tolerance of the original dwelling and the scheme conflicts with Policy TB01 of the MDD Local Plan. Therefore, substantial weight must be attributed to the harm to the openness of the Green Belt that occurs by the proposal being defined as ‘inappropriate development’. However, the overarching aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by maintaining openness, an objective that cannot be fully assessed through volumetric figures alone.

In this case, the extension would project forward approximately 4.4m from the existing garden room and the floor area would increase by approximately 40m². However, following a site visit to assess the impact of the proposal, it was considered

that, from a visual and spatial perspective, given the proposals limited height, mass, and bulk relative to the site's scale and location, it would not significantly impact the openness of the Green Belt. Specifically, any vertical encroachment impacting the openness of the Green Belt would be minimal because the extension would be single storey and the maximum height would not exceed the height of the existing garden room. Furthermore, the garden room is hidden from public view and the separation distance from the tall vegetation and trees along the boundary is approximately 250m.

Also, the proposed extension has been sensitively designed to replicate the existing garden room and would remain subservient to the host dwelling in both scale and appearance. It would be adjacent to a hedge and trees in a discreet corner within the built form of the estate. It would overlook open space comprising residential garden with soft landscaping and offer views of the countryside beyond without detracting from the openness of the Green Belt. and it would not be a dominant feature of the site.

Therefore, despite its status as 'inappropriate development' due to the resulting volumetric increases and no Very Special Circumstances having been outlined by the applicant, the proposal would not result in demonstrable harm to the openness of the Green Belt in a visual or spatial sense.

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, exceptions 2 and 4 apply in that the proposal would not lead to excessive expansion away from the original building and it would not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building.

Therefore, the proposal would comply with CP11 of the Core Strategy.

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.

In this case, the garden room extension would not be visible from the public realm; it would be single storey, of a high-quality design, and located approximately 250m from the highway and the river beyond. The front boundary is trees and vegetation several metres in height. Therefore, the proposal would not cause harm to the character of the area and would comply with 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 there would be no impact on neighbouring amenity in relation to loss of privacy, loss of light or overbearing.

Built Heritage: The Heritage Officer raises no objection subject to condition and has commented: *"The proposal is to enlarge the garden room structure, which was previously approved under 240166 in 2024, through the further addition in the same style to the front of the structure which would almost double the footprint of the originally permitted garden room. From a heritage stance the enlarged garden room structure is considered to have a neutral impact on the designated heritage assets."*

Requested Condition

External finishes to match the existing."

Highway Access and Parking Provision: The Highways officer raises no objection and has commented: *"The applicant proposes to extend the existing garden room for a larger open-plan space. There is no net increase in total number of habitable room. It is therefore expected that there will be no additional demand for car parking and no reduction in parking provisions."*

Landscape and Trees: The Tree and Landscape Officer raises no objection and has commented: *"The site is within the Wargrave Conservation Area. Proposals include extensions to the existing garden room, which was constructed last year. The existing garden room was constructed using above ground foundations to minimise the impact on the nearby trees. The previous development also included a maintenance path for the shrubbery using a No Dig construction. The development is detailed within an Arboricultural Report from Fiona Bradshaw of Sylvan Consultancy dated 29.1.24. This report has been resubmitted with an addendum from the architects Neil Tomlinson which concerns the extension to the garden room. He states that no trees will be affected by the proposals which is illustrated in a revised and updated Arboricultural Impact Assessment drawing (minus a revision number and date). I have no objection to the proposals."*

Ecology Bats: The application site is in an area suitable for bat roosting. However, given that the proposal does not involve modifications to the main roof of the dwelling, it would not be reasonable to request a bat survey in this instance. An informative will be added to the decision notice stating that:

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.

Ecology Newts: The Ecology Officer has requested further information and commented: *“The proposal has provided the following ecological report, Garden Structures at Wargrave Manor, Wargrave Hill, Wargrave, Berkshire RG10 8JL, Ecological Impact Assessment, January 2024, Windrush Ecology. This document currently is outdated, as it is more than 18 months old. Validity of ecological reports and surveys can become compromised overtime due to being out of date. CIEEM Advice note on the Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys (CIEEM, 2019) states, if the age of data is between 12-18 months, “the report authors should highlight whether they consider it likely to be necessary to update surveys”. If the age of the data is between 18 months to 3 years an updated survey and report will be required and anything more than 3 years old “The report is unlikely to still be valid and most, if not all, of the surveys are likely to need to be updated”. The applicant will need to provide updated walkover information to confirm that the survey is still valid and that habitat conditions remain the same. Please re-consult once updated habitat information has been provided.”*

Officer comment: The applicant has provided the following updated ecological report, Garden Structures at Wargrave Manor, Wargrave Hill, Wargrave, Berkshire RG10 8JL, Ecological Impact Assessment, January 2026, Windrush Ecology. The Ecology Officer has commented: *“This document confirms that the conditions on site remain the same as previously assessed and that Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) have been provided. If the development is to be permitted this document should be conditioned to ensure recommendations are followed.*

Conditions & Reasons

All works shall be carried out in strict accordance with Section 6 of Garden Structures at Wargrave Manor, Wargrave Hill, Wargrave, Berkshire RG10 8JL, Ecological Impact Assessment, January 2026, Windrush Ecology.

Reasons: To safeguard biodiversity as set out by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, NPPF Chapter 15, Circular 06/2005.

Planning Balance

The proposed development constitutes inappropriate development within the Green Belt as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and local policy. Substantial weight must therefore be given to this harm. However, the extension would be screened from public views; the scale and massing would not materially alter the character of the site or lead to encroachment beyond its established

curtilage. In assessing the overall impact, it is noted that the proposal would not result in demonstrable harm to the openness of the Green Belt in either a visual or spatial sense.

On balance, while the proposal is inappropriate development and VSC do not exist, the absence of harm to openness and the presence of compelling personal circumstances weigh in favour of the scheme. When considered against the development plan and the NPPF as a whole, these factors are sufficient to tip the balance in favour of approval.

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:	8 January 2026
Earliest date for decision:	29 October 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	08/01/26