

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	261177
Site Address:	Land off, Baird Road, Arborfield, Berkshire
Expiry Date:	15 July 2026
Site Visit Date:	3 June 2026
Proposal: Full application for the creation of new agricultural vehicular access, including proposed timber access gate.	

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 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 CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB21 – Landscape Character
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
202303	Outline application with Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and scale reserved for the proposed erection of a two storey building providing ten 1 - 2 & 3 bedroom apartments with consideration of means of access to be determined.	Refused, 03/12/2020 Dismissed at appeal on 31/03/2022 under ref: APP/X0360/W/ 1/3276169
242783	Pre-application advice for proposed car park development on a 2500 square meter plot owned by applicant, where the proposed 200 square meter car park will occupy less than 10% of the land.	Replied 14/01/25

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Environmental Health: No comments received

WBC Drainage: No objection

WBC Highways: No objection subject to conditions

WBC Landscape and Trees: Object

WBC Ecology: No comments received

External

None consulted

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	Arborfield & Newland Parish Council: Refuse on the basis Fails to demonstrate safe and suitable access •Creates highway safety risks •Harms residential character •Damages landscape and vegetation •Fails to assess cumulative impacts •Undermines the plan led strategy •Appears to be an enabling access for future unallocated development For these reasons, the application is contrary to: •NPPF: 110, 111, 112, 174 •Core Strategy: CS1, CP3, CP6 & CP11 •MDD Local Plan: TB21, CC07 (access standards) •Arborfield & Newland Neighbourhood Plan: Transport & Character policies
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	8 Bramshill Close: Object as the site lies within an area protected by a Tree Preservation Order and works may result in potential harm to protected trees and their root protection areas, with no arboricultural assessment.

APPRAISAL

Site Description: The application site forms part of a wider landscape strip of open and land which lies between Baird Road to the south and Eversley Road (the A327) to the north.

Baird Road forms a roundabout junction with Eversley Road (W)/ Eversley Road (N) and Langley Common Road. Baird Road is primarily used for access to residential

properties. The wider area is characterised by the main residential settlement of Arborfield.

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 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.

Countryside: The site is located in the countryside and therefore must be assessed against Policy CP11. The policy states that 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.

For the purpose of the current proposal, criterion 1 is the most relevant. The proposal seeks permission for the formation of a new vehicular access from Baird Road, together with a timber five-bar gate, 1.1m post-and-rail fencing and associated highway works, to provide access for the maintenance and management of the application land. As referenced in the Briefing Note-Transport, the proposal seeks access “for agricultural use” to the site “for maintaining of the application land only.” (Ref: Entran, May 2026, page 6).

The proposal does not involve built development unrelated to the countryside and instead for management for the land within a rural location. As such, the development is considered to support a countryside-based activity and would assist in the maintenance and stewardship of the land. Given the limited scale and functional nature of the works, it is considered that the proposal promotes and supports an appropriate countryside use in accordance with criterion 1 of Policy CP11.

Furthermore, the development comprises only a modest area of hardstanding, approximately 22.9m², together with a timber 5 bar gate and a 1.1m high post-and-rail fencing, positioned along the existing road frontage. The proposal would not result in excessive encroachment into the countryside nor introduce substantial built form within the rural landscape. Accordingly, the proposal is considered to comply with the objectives of Policy CP11.

Character of the Area: The timber 1.27m height gate and the 1.1m height post and rail fencing are traditional rural features that are appropriate to the countryside setting. Their open and permeable design would allow views through the site and maintaining the open and verdant character of the roadside frontage. Furthermore, the low height and permeable appearance of the proposed fencing and gate would ensure that the development appears visually unobtrusive within the street scene and would not materially detract from the role of the adjoining vegetation as a green buffer. There is a limited amount of hardstanding (tarmac) adjoining the highway and the rest of the area to pull off the road will remain grassed. The proposal would result in only limited urbanisation of the site and would not materially harm the rural character or appearance of the surrounding countryside. Therefore, it's considered the proposal would integrate satisfactorily into the rural landscape and would not result in significant harm to the character or appearance of the countryside.

Neighbouring Amenity: Due to the nature of the proposals, which would be sited well away from any neighbouring amenities, there are no loss of light, overlooking or overbearing concerns.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

General

The proposal is for a new vehicular access off Baird Road. Highways have prepared this response on the basis that the access will be *“solely for the use of vehicles associated with the maintaining of the application land,”* as set out in the Transport Briefing Note.

Access and Gate Setback

The LHA have no objection to the proposed vehicle access. The amended site plan now shows a gate which is setback 20m from the carriageway edge. This would allow the longest legal agricultural vehicles to pull clear of the carriageway without blocking the flow of traffic on Baird Road.

Swept paths have been provided which demonstrate a car pulling a trailer (combined length 10.8m) can comfortably ingress/egress the site. Therefore, a car and trailer could ingress/egress the site; and there appears sufficient room for a larger vehicle to ingress/egress the site if required.

The proposed access is 4.0m in width. This width of access is suitable for agricultural access. However swept paths are required to demonstrate the corner radii are suitable.

The applicant has set out that the *“proposed dropped kerb to be carried out under*

appropriate consent and highways/street works license." The applicant should seek appropriate permission for such works.

Visibility

The applicant has undertaken an ATC survey along Baird Road in order to obtain speed and traffic volumes. The 85th percentile speed was recorded as 22mph.

The applicant has demonstrated sightlines of 2.4m x 28m are available from the proposed site access which meets the MfS requirements for a speed of 22mph. This is considered acceptable.

Highways recommend securing that the land within the visibility splays shall be cleared of any obstruction exceeding 0.6m in height and maintained clear of any obstruction exceeding 0.6m in height at all times.

The applicant has provided an indicative location of new fence. Highways acknowledge this is an indicative location but would not permit a fence or boundary treatment any closer to the public highway, as this would obstruct the visibility splays.

Trip Generation

The trip generation for the new access will be minimal and is unlikely to have a significant impact on the local highway network.

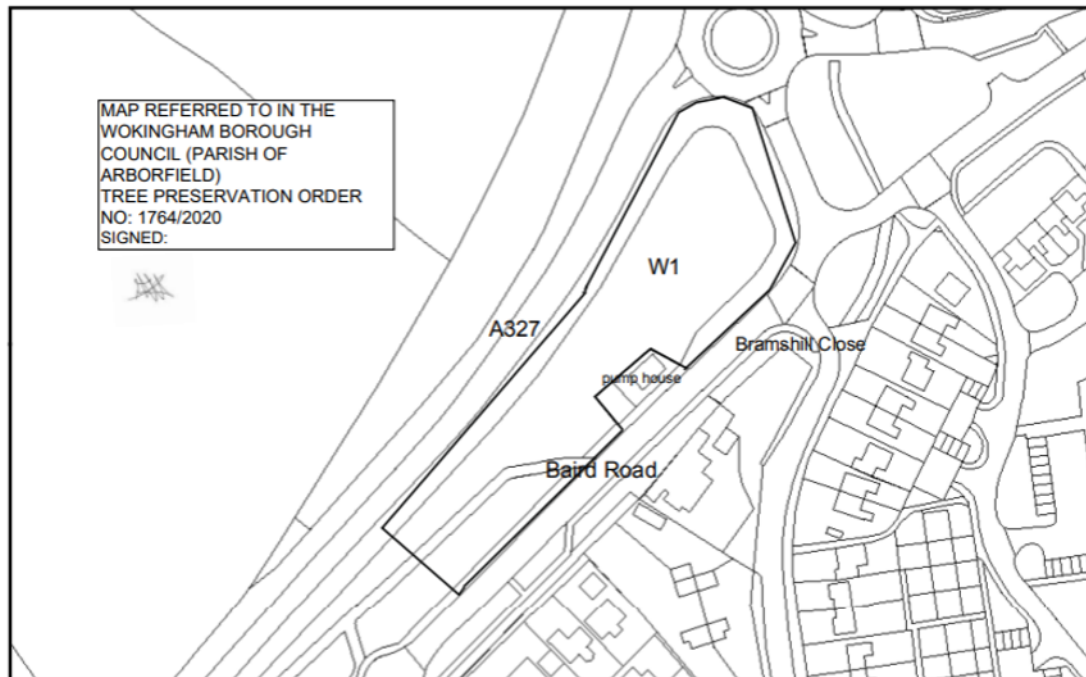
Flooding and Drainage: The site is within flood zone 1 and we would have no objection to the principle of the 22.9m² vehicular access, as represented by proposed site plan drawing 121 dated My 2026.

Landscape and Trees: The officer objects to the proposal on the basis that the site is covered by a Woodland TPO, which covers "trees of all species" as well as acting a green buffer to help transition between area of residential build-up and countryside. Whilst the site is covered by Woodland TPO 1764-2020 (see figure below) and the Tree and Landscape Officer expresses concern regarding impacts upon naturally regenerating seedlings and woodland vegetation, the submitted drawings identify only a limited section of hedge planting to be reduced in order to facilitate the access. There are no existing trees within this location and the extent of hard surfacing is limited. The established tree belt along the western boundary and the majority of the perimeter vegetation would be retained. There is no arboricultural evidence before the Council demonstrating that protected trees would be removed or significantly damaged as a consequence of the development. Any future works affecting protected trees within the woodland remain subject to separate statutory controls under the TPO regime. The potential for future harm to naturally regenerating vegetation is therefore speculative and attracts limited weight in considering the current proposal.

A site visit indicated that there are no substantive or mature existing trees in the location of the proposed access:



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Scale: 1:1,250
Date: 26/11/2020

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The Tree and Landscape Officer also raise concerns that the proposal would fragment an important green infrastructure corridor. However, the site frontage to Baird Road and Eversley Road is extensive and remains overwhelmingly undeveloped. The proposed opening represents only a narrow interruption within a substantial linear belt of vegetation, with woodland and hedge planting retained on either side of the access and across the vast majority of the site's boundaries. As shown on the submitted plans, the access would occupy a very small proportion of the overall 2,239m² site and would retain the majority of the existing greenery and still act as an important green buffer which helps the transition between area of residential build-up and the countryside. An agricultural gate and timber post and rail fencing is commonplace in a rural location or on agricultural land so would retain the rural character of the area and provide an access to the site for land management purposes.

The visual impact of the proposal would be limited. The access incorporates a simple timber five-bar gate and 1.1m high post-and-rail fencing, features commonly associated with rural landscapes, which would appear appropriate within the countryside setting. Furthermore, the majority of existing vegetation would remain in

place, ensuring that the site's role as a landscaped buffer between Arborfield Garrison and the surrounding countryside is largely preserved.

Notwithstanding the above, in order to ensure that any trees, woodland vegetation and naturally regenerating growth protected by Woodland TPO 1764-2020 are properly identified and safeguarded during construction, it is recommended that the permission be subject to a pre-commencement condition requiring the submission and approval of an Arboricultural Assessment, Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan in accordance with BS5837:2012. This will ensure that any trees or vegetation worthy of retention are appropriately protected throughout the construction process and that the development proceeds in a manner which avoids damage to protected trees and their rooting environments. The imposition of such a condition provides a robust mechanism to control potential impacts upon retained vegetation and further limits any risk of arboricultural harm arising from the development. Whilst no mature trees were observed on site during the officer's visit there remains uncertainty as to whether any younger trees, naturally regenerated growth or other protected vegetation would require removal or be affected by the proposed works. In these circumstances, it is considered reasonable and necessary to secure this information by condition to ensure that the development proceeds without unacceptable arboricultural harm.

Overall, whilst some localised vegetation loss would occur to facilitate the access and visibility splays, the scale of intervention is limited. The proposal would not result in the loss of the woodland belt, would not materially undermine the function of the wider green infrastructure network, and would not give rise to significant arboricultural or landscape harm. Furthermore, a pre-commencement arboricultural condition would secure the identification, retention and protection of any trees and vegetation requiring safeguarding during the construction period. The development is therefore considered to accord with the overarching objectives of Policies CP3 and CC03, which seek to protect important landscape features whilst allowing development that does not materially compromise their function or character.

Conclusion: The proposal represents a form of development that is appropriate to its rural setting and would support an agricultural activity in accordance with Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy.

The development would not result in excessive encroachment into the countryside, nor would it introduce built form that would materially harm the character or appearance of the area. The proposed timber gate and post-and-rail fencing are traditional rural features which would integrate appropriately within the landscape and result in only limited urbanisation of the site. Furthermore, the majority of existing vegetation and woodland planting would be retained, preserving the site's role as a green buffer between the built-up area and the wider countryside.

No objections have been raised by the drainage or highways officer. The proposed access has been demonstrated to provide a safe and suitable means of access from the public highway and would not give rise to unacceptable highway safety impacts. Whilst concerns have been raised regarding potential effects on protected trees and green infrastructure, the extent of vegetation loss is limited and ultimately would not result in significant harm.

Therefore, the application is recommended for approval, subject to the conditions.

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:	14 July 2026
Earliest date for decision:	13 June 2026

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	15 July 2026

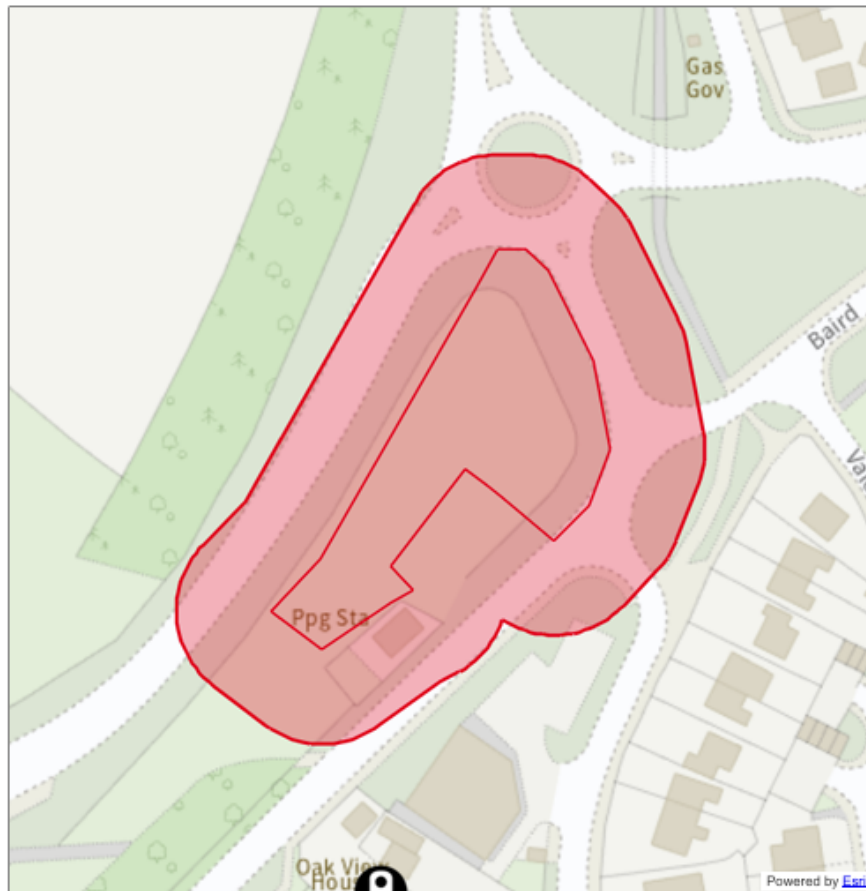
PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Near Me Report

Area of Interest (AOI) Information

Area: 8,690.78 m²

Date: Sun May 17 2026 18:19:32 GMT+0100 (British Summer Time)



No legend

Affordable Housing Thresholds | Total count: 1

#	NAME
1	Outside Development Locations

Scale and Location of Development Proposals | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	NAME
1	Countryside	Countryside

Thames Basin Heath SPA Mitigation Zones | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME
1	Special Protection Area Linear Mitigation Zone	5km Linear Mitigation Zone

Green Infrastructure Routes Consultation Zone | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE
1	Green Route Enhancement Areas

Major Nuclear Sites Consultation Zone | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME	PLANNING_NOTE
1	Consultation Zone - Major Nuclear Site	AWE: 12km Zone	This is the 12km Zone. A circular zone of 12km radius around all nuclear sites, for certain types of significant development due to the potential for such developments to pose an external hazard to sites.

Aerodrome Safeguarding: Heathrow Consultation Zone | Total count: 1

#	Height Band	Wind Turbine	Aviation
1	All works exceeding 150 metres (492.1 feet)	NO	YES

Submitted Sites Live | Total count: 1

#	SITE_REF	LUPP	ADDRESS
1	5AR026	Housing (C3 Planning Use Class). Residential Institutions (C2 Planning Use Class). Retail Units A1 and Sui Generis (Petrol Station).	Land at Baird Road

Wokingham Borough Council Owned Land | Total count: 1

#	Address	Tenure	Title_no
1	lying to the North West of Wokingham Lane	Absolute Freehold Estate in Land	BK80626

Risk of Flooding from Surface Water | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME
1	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 1000 year risk extent

Bat Roost Habitat Suitability | Total count: 2

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME	CONSULT
1	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	PC1000	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team
2	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	PD1000	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team

Badger Consultation Zones | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME	CONSULT
1	Badger Settl Consultation Zone	100 Metre Consultation Zone	Ecology Officer - Green Infrastructure Team

Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zones | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME	CONSULT
1	Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zone	Green	Consult NatureSpace for Major developments only

SSSI Impact Risk Zones | Total count: 1

#	SSSI Impact Risk Zone Advice Hyperlink
1	https://irz.geodata.org.uk/IRZ/step2.html?irzcode=0101000322302&notes=11401&location=479935,165401%20(IRZ%20polygon%20centre)

Potentially Contaminated Land Zones | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	OBJECTID
1	Potentially Contaminated Land Consultation Zone	1

Grounds Maintenance Boundaries | Total count: 1

#	PPG17 TYPOLOGY	OWNER
1	Amenity Greenspace	Wokingham Borough Council

Landscape Character Assessment 2019 | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	Name
1	Landscape Character Assessment 2019	Arborfield Cross and Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay

Tree Preservation Orders Served or Confirmed | Total count: 1

#	TPO_REFERENCE	TPO_TYPE	RECORD_STATUS
1	TPO-1764-2020	Woodland	Confirmed

Wards | Total count: 1

#	Name of area	Closest Approximate Distance
1	Barkham & Arborfield Ward	0 m

Parishes | Total count: 1

#	Name of area	Closest Approximate Distance
1	Arborfield and Newland CP	0 m