

9th April 2026

Wokingham Borough Council
Civic Offices
Shute End
Wokingham
Berkshire
RG40 1BN

Our Ref: 4686
Planning Portal Ref: PP-14291343

Dear Sir / Madam,

Removal of existing conservatory; repair and reinstatement of curtilage-listed wall; construction of new boathouse and attached store/workshop; reinstatement of the historic wet dock and associated riverbank works.

Bird Place, Henley, Henley-On-Thames, RG9 2LN

The application comprises the following:

- Application forms, duly completed;
- This covering letter;
- CIL Form 1: Additional Information, duly completed;
- Design and Access Statement, prepared by The Shack Group (March 2026);
- Site Location Plan (ref. PA-01-PL1);
- Existing Site and Roof Plan (ref. PA-02-PL2);
- Proposed Site and Roof Plan (ref: PA-03-PL1);
- Proposed Plans and Elevations (ref. PA-04-PL1);
- Proposed Site Elevations (ref. PA-06-PL1);
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment, prepared by Sylva Consultancy (March 2026);
- Extended Phase 1 Ecological Assessment, prepared by Phillips Ecology (June 2025);
- Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Drainage Strategy, prepared by Create Consulting (April 2026); and
- Heritage Statement, prepared by Smith Jenkins Planning & Heritage (March 2026).

The required application fee of £272.00 has been paid via the Planning Portal.

Site and Context

The site comprises Bird Place which is a Grade II listed residential dwelling located to the east the River Thames and south-east of Henley Bridge. The site is located within the Parish of Remenham and within the Local Planning Authority (LPA) of Wokingham Borough Council.

Bird Place comprises a 10-bedroom dwelling with associated landscaping, a swimming pool, an attached annexe known as Rose Cottage and an area to the east which in the past been used for commercial parking. This use has been confirmed as lawful by way of an approved Certificate of Lawfulness application (203127).

Bird Place was designated as a Grade II listed building in 1983. It is located to the east of, and adjoins, Bird Place Cottage which is also Grade II Listed. The Site is located within the Remenham Henley Bridge Conservation Area, and within close proximity to a number of other listed buildings, including the Grade I listed Henley Bridge and the Grade II listed Henley Royal Regatta Headquarters.

There is a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) to the north of Bird Place within the site's curtilage (TPO reference TPO-1843-2022), and another TPO within the locality of Bird Place Cottage to the west (TPO reference TPO-1106-2006). It is noted that all trees within a conservation area are protected by the provisions in Section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

The site is within Flood Zone 3 but at a very low risk of surface water flooding.

The site is located within the Green Belt.



Figure 1: Site Location Plan (drawing ref. PA-01-PL1)

Planning History

The planning history for Bird Place is set out in **Table 1** below.

Reference	Description	Decision
252335	Application for Listed Building Consent for the proposed erection of single storey rear extension with basement following demolition of existing rear lean-to extension, rear roof terrace, lowering of basement floor and changes to fenestration.	Refused 30/01/2026
252334	Householder application for the proposed erection of single storey rear extension with basement following demolition of existing rear lean-to extension, rear roof terrace, lowering of basement floor and changes to fenestration.	Refused 30/01/2026
203127	Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for both the stationing of motor vehicles incidental to the enjoyment of residential dwelling(s) and the stationing of motor vehicles for uses other than incidental to the enjoyment of residential use, consisting a mixed use.	Approved 10/02/2021
202203	Application for Listed Building consent for demolition of the existing coach house following partial collapse of the building (retrospective).	Approved 13/10/2020
201423	Householder application for the proposed erection of a carport and store with first floor accommodation to form an artist's studio, to replace existing (collapsed) coach house.	Approved 21/09/2020
201424	Application for Listed Building consent for the proposed erection of a carport and store with first floor accommodation to form an artist's studio, to replace existing (collapsed) coach house.	Withdrawn 15/07/2020
181402	Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for use of the land for the stationing of motor vehicles other than those incidental to the enjoyment of residential use.	Refused 16/08/2018
44599	Conservatory	Approved 31/07/1995
R/73/68	Conversion of integral wing to separate cottage at Bird Place (Rose Cottage)	Approved 19/04/1968

Pre-application Advice

Pre-application advice was sought in respect of these proposals (and other development at Bird Place) in March 2025 (under reference 250789). A written response was received from Wokingham Borough Council on 12th May 2025, following a site meeting on 24th April 2025.

Officers confirmed that when assessing the reinstatement of the boathouse, attention should be given to Paragraph 154 of the NPPF which provides a list for exceptions for development that can be considered appropriate in the Green Belt, with particular attention to be given to criterion g relating to limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land.

Two options for the proposed boathouse were presented to officers, whereby both schemes were considered to be of scale proportionate to the scale of the house and would not cause substantial harm to the spatial openness of the Green Belt, particularly as its scale would be offset by the removal of the existing conservatory and provides little aesthetic value to the site. Officers advised of their

preference for one of the options as it would be visually more appropriate, aided by its glazed gables that would allow views through its form to the east.

Officers also confirmed that the proposed boathouse was unlikely to raise any concerns with regards to Core Strategy Policy CP11 criterion 4 which provides exceptions to development outside of the settlement confines.

Officers advised that tree and hedge planting around the proposed boathouse is encouraged to mitigate the removal of two trees necessary for the proposals and help assimilate the boathouse into its verdant surroundings.

With regards to flooding, officers advised that any reinstatement of the boathouse should include flood protection measures such as flood barriers or raised floors.

Separate advice was later received from the Council's Built Heritage Officer on 26th June 2025 which confirmed that the principle of a well-designed modern boathouse of an appropriate scale was acceptable, with the option that was predominantly glazed would be more favourable. Officers also highlighted that they would raise no objection to the removal of the existing conservatory.

Proposed Development

The proposals include the reinstatement of the boathouse, wet dock and the riverbank to provide a formal mooring. This would involve removing the existing poor-quality conservatory allowing for the repair and reinstatement of the curtilage listed boundary wall. The conservatory will be replaced with a new boathouse and store/workshop, allowing the reinstatement of the historic riverside structure. This will be accompanied by the reinstatement of the original wet dock and associated riverbank works. This will require a single tree removal as identified in the accompanying plans, with new soft landscaping proposed to mitigate.



Figure 2: Proposed Site Layout (Extract from Design and Access Statement, Page 10)

For further details of the proposals, please see the accompanying plans and supporting Design and Access Statement, prepared by The Shack Group (March 2026).

Planning Policy

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This section of the report sets out the planning policy relevant to the proposed development.

The Development plan for the site comprises of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010), Managing Development Delivery Plan (MDDP) (2014) and a Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (2023).

The Council submitted the Local Plan Update (LPU) (Regulation 22) to the Secretary of State for independent examination. Examination hearings of the plan took place in March 2026. The Council has advised that initial commentary from the Planning Inspectorate has raised several queries and concerns about the 'soundness' of the LPU and, as such, the Council will only apply limited weight to its proposed policies.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024), Planning Practice Guidance (2024) and Supplementary Planning Documents are also material considerations. There is no made or emerging neighbourhood plan relevant to the site.

Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010)

- Policy CP1: Sustainable development
- Policy CP3: General Principles for Development
- Policy CP11: Proposals outside Development Limits (including countryside)
- Policy CP12: Green Belt

Wokingham Borough Managing Development Delivery (MDD) (2014)

- Policy CC01: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- Policy CC03: Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping
- Policy CC04: Sustainable Design and Construction
- Policy CC09: Development and Flood Risk (from all sources)
- Policy CC10: Sustainable Drainage
- Policy TB01: Development within the Green Belt
- Policy TB21: Landscape Character
- Policy TB24: Designated Heritage Assets (Listed Buildings, Historic Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Conservation Areas)

Local Plan Update (Reg 22) (emerging)

- Policy SS5: Development in the Countryside
- Policy SS6: Development in the Green Belt
- Policy NE5: Landscape and Design

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

- Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2010) and Companion Document to the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2010)
- Wokingham Borough Council Borough Design Guide (2012)

Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

Officers advised at pre-application that the proposed boathouse was unlikely to raise any concerns with regards to Core Strategy Policy CP11 criterion 4 which permits development in the countryside in exceptional circumstances (such as, in the case of the boathouse) contributes and promotes recreation in, and enjoyment of, the countryside, and where it does not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building.

Core Strategy Policy CP12 (Green Belt) states that planning permission will not be granted for inappropriate development within the Metropolitan Green Belt, as defined in Planning Practice Guidance 2, which now relates to national policy within the NPPF.

MDD Policy TB01 (Development within the Green Belt) also refers to national policy which seeks for development to maintain the openness of, and to not conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt. Policy TB01 adds that the construction, alteration or extension of buildings ancillary to a dwelling in the Green Belt over and above the size of the original building(s) shall be limited in scale.

Local planning policy as such requires development in the Green Belt to be consistent with the aims of national policy. As such, section 13 of the NPPF is relevant.

The principle of replacing the existing conservatory and reinstating a boathouse with wet dock is established by Paragraph 154d of the NPPF. This states that development of the following is not inappropriate within the Green Belt:

d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces.

The proposed boathouse would replace the existing conservatory and would remain in an ancillary use to the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse. Additionally, it would not be materially larger than the existing conservatory and therefore the principle can be deemed acceptable.

Notwithstanding the above, Officers advised at pre-application that Paragraph 154g of the NPPF was of relevance to the reinstatement of the boathouse, which states the following exception to development in the Green Belt:

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.

The proposed boathouse is to be located partly on the footprint of the existing conservatory and the historic wet dock and former boathouse and would be of a modest scale. It would be within the established residential curtilage and within the context of established built form. The proposed structure's scale along with its transparent structure are considered to be proportionate to the scale of the house and would not cause 'substantial harm' to the spatial openness of the Green Belt, as confirmed by Officers at pre-application. The removal of the existing conservatory would also contribute to a betterment in terms of views and protection to the openness of the Green Belt. As such, the proposal is considered to comply with Paragraph 154g of the NPPF.

Heritage Impacts

The Site comprises the Grade II listed 'Bird Place' and its associated grounds, within the town of Henley-on-Thames. The Site is also located within the Remenham Henley Bridge Conservation Area, and within proximity to a number of listed buildings, including the Grade I listed Henley Bridge and Bird Place Cottage (Grade II) adjacent to the site.

Paragraph 207 of the NPPF states that In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment.

Core Strategy Policy CP3c supports the granting of planning permission where there is no impact on heritage. MDD Policy TB24 states that designated heritage assets will be conserved and enhanced by requiring works to or affecting heritage assets or their setting to demonstrate that the proposals would at least conserve and, where possible enhance the important character and special architectural or historic interest of the building and Conservation Area including its setting and views. Proposals should retain and incorporate existing features or details of historic significance into the scheme.

The application is supported by a Heritage Statement, prepared by Smith Jenkins Planning & Heritage (March 2026) and provides a summary of the significance of heritage assets and an assessment of the proposals on how they may affect these heritage assets.

The Heritage Statement concludes that the proposals will cause no harm to the significance of the relevant heritage assets and will preserve the significance of Bird Place and the character and appearance of the Remenham Henley Bridge Conservation Area and the Henley Conservation Area will be enhanced. The significance of the other identified listed and locally listed buildings will be preserved. As such, the proposals are in accordance with the statutory duties as set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, national policy set out in the NPPF (2024), and local policy and guidance.

Design

MDD Policy CC04 sets out the principles for sustainable development through sustainable design and construction. The Borough Design Guide, Sustainable Design and Construction SPD and its companion document, and the Interactive Design Guide SPD are also material considerations.

Paragraph 8.5.3 of the Design Guide sets out the expectation that replacement buildings may be permissible within the countryside only where there is no inappropriate increase in scale, form or footprint; or they bring about environmental improvements. Whilst this guidance is steered towards replacement dwellings, the principles remain of relevance to a replacement building. As such, a replacement building is possible to relate the local character by adopting similar forms to the traditional patterns of development, rather than necessarily by copying the appearance or elevations of traditional buildings. The footprint of a building is an indication of its size. Generally the footprint of a replacement building should not be significantly larger than that of the existing building. In the Green Belt, any increase in footprints is likely to have an impact upon its openness.

The application is supported by a Design and Access Statement, prepared by The Shack Group (March 2026) which provides detail on how the proposals address sustainable design.

The Design and Access Statement states that the reinstatement of the boathouse was supported by Officers at pre-application stage as it would enhance the historic relationship between the site and the river. The proposed boathouse occupies the existing footprint of the previous boathouse structure. The boathouse adopts a slim steel frame with fully glazed (high performance glass) elevations and roof, maintaining visual permeability across the site. The attached store of the boathouse comprises a smaller, metal-clad element providing visual grounding and practical storage for boat paraphernalia and workshop space.

The choice of materials are durable, sustainable and compatible with the historic and flood plain setting, and as such, the proposed boathouse adheres to the principles set out in the Design Guide, as well as having regard to the SPDs, and in accordance with MDD Policy CC04.

Residential Amenity

The Borough Design Guide considers the impact of new development on amenity. The proposals will cause no detrimental impacts on the privacy or amenity of any neighbours and ample amenity space for the existing dwelling would be retained.

The nearest neighbouring dwelling (Bird Place Cottage) immediately adjoins to the west but the proposed boathouse would be set away from the common boundary such that it would not impact on light, privacy or outlook.

Officers confirmed at pre-application that they were satisfied that development proposals at the site were sited well away from the boundaries of Bird Place and therefore there were no anticipated neighbouring amenity impacts, nor would the proposals harm the usability of the dwelling's rear amenity space.

Ecology

MDD Policy CC03 relates to green infrastructure, trees and landscaping, and provides criteria that development proposals should demonstrate how they have considered and achieved these criteria. These criteria include seeking to protect green infrastructure, promote linkages between public open space and the countryside, retain existing trees and establish appropriate landscaping.

MDD Policy TB23 requires development proposals to provide opportunities, including through design, layout and landscaping to incorporate new biodiversity features or enhance existing ones.

The application is accompanied by an Extended Phase 1 Ecological Assessment (PEA), prepared by Phillips Ecology (June 2025) which confirms that the site supports opportunities for a range of protected species including bats, reptiles, dormice, hedgehogs and breeding birds.

The PEA confirmed that no further surveys were required for the conservatory building, and subject to the appropriate mitigation measures, the proposals will not result in any significant impacts on other species or habitats.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is now mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) and as such, developers must now deliver a BNG of 10% unless they qualify below the threshold and are exempt. Householder planning applications are exempt from the mandatory BNG requirements so the requirement is not applicable here.

Accordingly, the proposals are considered to accord with relevant local and national policy and legislation in respect of ecological considerations.

Trees

MDD Policy TB21 requires consideration of the landscape character, including retention or enhancement of the condition, character and features that contribute to the landscape.

The application is supported by an Arboricultural Report, prepared by Sylva Consultancy (March 2026) which confirms that one category C tree will be removed and therefore will not result in an adverse impact on the landscape character or arboricultural interest of the site.

The Arboricultural Report provides details on how the construction of the proposals must be carried out to ensure the protection of trees and their root protection areas.

Accordingly, the proposals are considered to accord with relevant local and national policy and legislation in respect of arboricultural considerations.

Flooding

MDD Policy CC09 states that development proposals in Flood Zones 2 or 3 must take into account the vulnerability of the proposed development on exacerbating the flood risk. A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is required for all proposals in areas of known historic flooding from all sources.

The site is within Flood Zone 3, land with a high probability of flooding from rivers or the sea.

The application is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment & Surface Water Drainage Strategy, prepared by Create Consulting Engineers (March 2026) which confirms that the Site lies within Flood Zone 3 and is at risk of fluvial flooding. Environment Agency (EA) data shows that, for the fluvial design event (1% AEP + 35% Climate Change), flood levels reach 33.30 m AOD. The boathouse and store are designed as water-compatible structures. The raised store sits above the typical River Thames water level and

flood protection measures will be included for the design event. The proposed development overall reduces surface water runoff compared with existing conditions.

It is further noted that the proposed riverbank works are supported by a formal licence issued by the Environment Agency under the Thames Conservancy Act 1932 (Licence No. 256034, Frontage No. 3200013) (included as Appendix 1 to the submitted DAS) and the licence confirms the acceptability in principle of: Bank protection works along the site frontage, The formation of a wet dock, and Controlled intervention within the river channel. The proposals have been designed in full accordance with the parameters of this licence, including limitations on encroachment and requirements for ongoing maintenance and management.

Accordingly, the proposed development is considered to suitably address flood risk and would accord with national and local planning policy in this respect.

Summary

The site comprises Bird Place which is a Grade II listed residential dwelling located to the east the River Thames and south-east of Henley Bridge. The site is within the Remenham Henley Bridge Conservation Area, and within close proximity to a number of other listed buildings, including the Grade I listed Henley Bridge and the Grade II listed Henley Royal Regatta Headquarters. There is a single TPO on site to the north of the dwelling. The site is within Flood Zone 3 but at a very low risk of surface water flooding. The site is within the Green Belt.

The proposals include the removal of an existing conservatory and reinstatement of the boathouse with a workshop space within the rear garden of the Bird Place along with reinstatement of the wet dock and river frontage. The proposed boathouse will be positioned on the existing footprint and is single storey in height, of a high quality and in keeping with the scale and complementary to the character of Bird Place and its surroundings. The design will be subservient and not detract from the setting of the listed building, nor the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The proposal would not materially harm the openness of the Green Belt.

The application is accompanied by supporting information in respect of flood risk/drainage, ecology/biodiversity and trees which confirm the absence of any policy conflicts.

Accordingly, the proposal is considered to accord with relevant local and national planning policies and is commended for your approval.

Should you have any queries in relation to the above please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Seth Williams MRTPI
Director
Smith Jenkins Ltd