

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	252726
Site Address:	Chilterns, Thames Drive, Charvil, Wokingham, RG10 9TP
Expiry Date:	6 January 2026
Site Visit Date:	27 November 2025
Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of a self-build dwelling with annexe, attached two bay carport and associated landscaping works following demolition of existing dwelling and outbuilding.	

PLANNING POLICY

National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
Core Strategy (CS)	CP1 – Sustainable Development CP2 – Inclusive Communities 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 CC02 – Development Limits CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction CC06 – Noise CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB07 – Internal Space Standards TB21 – Landscape Character TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (JMWP)	DM1 - Sustainable Development DM2 - Climate Change – Mitigation and Adaptation DM3 - Protection of Habitats and Species DM4 - Protection of Designated Landscape DM5 - Protection of the Countryside DM7 - Conserving the Historic Environment DM9 - Protecting Health, Safety and Amenity DM10 - Flood Risk DM11 - Water Resources DM14 - Ancillary development DM15 - Site History
Wokingham Borough Local	C4 – Green and blue infrastructure and public rights of way C5 – Parking and electric vehicle charging NE7 – Sites of Urban Landscape Value DH2 – Safeguarding amenity

Plan Update (LPU)	HC5 – Environmental protection HC7 – Light pollution
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
232977	Full application for the proposed erection of 1no. Two storey dwelling with annexe and attached two bay carport following demolition of existing dwelling and garage.	Application Withdrawn 29/10/2024
28163	Rear single storey extension to form boathouse/workshop for owners personal use.	Approved 18/09/1987
24336	Ground floor front and rear extensions to provide playroom, lounge and breakfast room; Also conversion of roof space to provide bedroom, bathroom accommodation with dormer windows in all elevations.	Approved 11/10/1985

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Environmental Health – No comments received.
WBC Drainage – No objection, subject to condition.
WBC Highways – No objection subject to further information and conditions.
WBC Landscape and Trees - No objection subject to further information and conditions.
WBC Public Rights Of Way – No comments received.
WBC CIL – CIL liable.
WBC Ecology Newts – No objection.
WBC Ecology – No comments received.
WBC Waste Services – No comments received.
WBC Cleaner and Greener – No comments received.

External

Thames Water Utilities Ltd – No comments received.
The Environment Agency – No objection, subject to condition.

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	No objection, subject to neighbour concerns and site vehicle movements being considered.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received.
Neighbours	Two third party letters received. One letter in support of the proposed dwelling and annexe.

	One letter of concern relating to: - A replacement fence along the shared boundary with Island Cottage when the existing detached garage is removed. Officer comment: A condition will be applied to secure hard and soft landscaping details (including boundary treatments) prior to commencement of the development (other than demolition works). - Adverse overlooking impacts to the neighbouring amenity of Island Cottage from the first-floor side facing windows. Officer comment: The first-floor side facing windows in the main dwelling will be conditioned to be obscurely glazed and non-opening below 1.7m. - Overlooking from the proposed raised terrace. Officer comment: A condition will be applied to secure details of a privacy screen to be installed to enclose the southern elevation of the proposed pergola. - Confirmation that the Environment Agency have reviewed the proposal. Officer comment: The Environment Agency were consulted and responded on 27 November 2025. They raised no objection to the proposal and submitted Flood Risk Assessment, subject to a condition to secure the mitigation set out in the report.
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APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site consists of a large plot at the end of Thames Drive, Charvil. The site comprises a detached chalet-style bungalow, gatehouse structure, detached garage and stores, detached pavilion and greenhouse. The site benefits from a riparian outlook as it sits on the River Thames on the northern side of Thames Drive. The site lies within an area identified by the Environment Agency as a functional floodplain in Flood Zone 3 and thus requiring specific design responses.

Thames Drive is a private no through road single-track that serves eight residential properties in a linear development pattern. The application site is located outside of settlement limits within designated countryside.

There is a Public Right of Way (CHAR6) that runs along Thames Drive and extends northwards into the countryside towards St Patrick's Stream. There is one adjoining

neighbour to the south: 'Island Cottage' and open countryside and water meadows to the north, east and west.

The existing six-bedroom dwelling is set back from the road behind close boarded fencing, mature hedging and several trees. The trees on site are of various species and maturity, none of which are protected. There is a large, paved driveway to the front and the existing detached garage and stores are sited along the shared boundary with Island Cottage. The rear garden is significant in length and is lined on both sides by a variety of trees and hedgerows.

There are scant views of the existing dwelling from Thames Drive and the public footpath. In the Summer months, views of the dwelling from these locations would be more restricted by the dense hedging and the tree lined northern boundary. The dwelling is more visible from the river, directly to the rear of the property. However, views are still restricted from this position owing to the no.2 large, ever-green Cedar trees located in the rear garden.

Dwellings along Thames Drive comprise detached, two-storey properties set within generous plots. The properties are arranged in a linear pattern, running parallel to the river. Each property is set back from the road behind large front gardens and driveways. Properties vary in style, age, scale and material palette.

Several of the properties along the road have already undergone alterations and renovation works and over recent years, a number of replacement dwellings have been constructed. These include, The Cottage, Windrush, Herons Creek, Island Reach and Thatcher's Mead. The rebuilt dwellings have adopted bespoke design approaches and have addressed flood risk. This adds to the variety of architectural styles found along the road.

Proposal:

This application seeks approval for the erection of a replacement five-bedroom dwelling, plus detached annexe and attached two vehicle carport which would be linked to the main house via an entrance walkway with canopy. The existing dwelling, detached garage/stores, gateway structure would be demolished to facilitate the construction of the proposal.

The proposed dwelling would be sited more centrally on the site than the existing dwelling which abuts the southern site boundary. The proposed dwelling would be of a contemporary design and would comprise a flat roof to the main dwelling with PV solar panels, a flat roof to the annexe and carport which would incorporate a green roof. To the rear of the main dwelling would be a raised terrace with a steel pergola and external steps leading to the rear garden. The proposed central position of the dwelling would be more in-keeping with other properties along the road which are generally sited in central positions within the large plots.

There would be a concrete chimney stack protruding from the flat roof towards the northern side of the property with solar panels arranged across the full width of the main roof. The main dwelling and first-floor of the annexe would be finished with vertical timber cladding and stone gabion walls erected to finish the ground floor of the annexe, carport columns and walls of the main house below ground floor level.

The replacement dwelling would occupy a similar footprint to the existing building and incorporates modern flood resilient construction, improved energy performance and raised floor levels to comply with flood risk requirements.

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.

Impact on the Countryside:

The site is located outside of settlement limits within designated Countryside. Core Strategy policy CP11 states that in order 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

(In this instance, criterion 1 does not apply as the proposal does not constitute a rural enterprise, therefore, criteria 2 and 3 also do not apply).

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;

(The proposal does not relate to a residential extension, therefore, criteria 4 does not apply).

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.

(Criterion 5 does apply as the proposal relates to a replacement dwelling within the countryside).

6) Essential community facilities cannot be accommodated within development limits or through the re-use/replacement of an existing building;

(Criterion 6 does not apply as the proposal does not relate to a community facility).

7) Affordable housing on rural exception sites in line with CP9.

(Criterion 7 does not apply as the proposal relates to a replacement dwelling not a new dwelling).

The existing dwelling is lawful and established, therefore, the principle of a replacement dwelling is acceptable, subject to design and environmental considerations.

The proposed dwelling would result in a dwelling with a marginally smaller footprint than the existing and would therefore, not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere. The existing property, detached garage and gate house would be demolished to facilitate the erection of the replacement dwelling, carport and annexe. As existing, the total area of buildings measures approximately 321.7m². The combined footprint of the replacement structures would be approximately 321.01m². Therefore, an overall reduction of approximately 0.69m² which would retain a marginally larger area of undeveloped land on the site.

Also proposed is a landscaping scheme which would introduce additional soft landscaping features, a green roof and two green walls. Other features are also proposed to support and enhance biodiversity, this includes bat boxes, bird boxes and hedgehog houses. Solar panels and air source heat pumps are also proposed to support sustainable sources of energy. Therefore, the proposed development would bring about environmental improvements and would result in a property that would be more flood resilient within the setting.

The proposed replacement dwelling would represent an approximate 46% increase in volume but would largely replicate the footprint of the original dwelling. The dwelling would also be sited in the centre of the plot and would appear more commensurate with the pattern of other dwellings on the street. Overall, the dwelling would not result in an inappropriate increase in the scale, form or footprint away from the original building. The existing site and area are characterised by large properties in spacious plots, and the development would be in keeping with this characteristic. There would be environmental improvements in the form of solar panel provisions, an air source heat pump system, a landscaping scheme and a flood risk resilient design.

In summary, the proposal is therefore compliant with Policy CP11 in respect of Criterion 5.

Character of the Area:

Design and flood risk

Thames Drive is a no-through road which boasts a small number of properties surrounded by open countryside. Properties are characterised by a mix of building ages and designs with no single prevailing architectural style. While some surrounding dwellings are traditional in form with pitched roofs, several of the original properties have been demolished and replaced with less traditional design approaches. This includes a contemporary style adopted at Thatchers Mead, a chalet-style architectural design adopted at Windrush and The Cottage, and a Neo-Georgian style evidenced at Herons Creek. All of which add and contribute to a varied local character with no dominating style.

The proposal includes the demolition of the existing dwelling and outbuildings and a replacement dwelling with annexe and carport. The Council's Borough Design Guide

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), adopted June 2012, identifies a 50% increase in volume as being acceptable for replacement dwellings in countryside. However, this guidance relates to single-storey development, which does not include the proposal. Nevertheless, the SPD generally seeks to minimise the impact of buildings on the countryside.

The proposal includes a taller two-storey building with a higher overall height resulting in a building with a larger and more dominant mass than the existing. The application site forms the end plot of a short linear row of dwellings positioned on the western side of Thames Drive. Properties are located between the road and the River Thames which runs from south to north to the rear of the properties. The existing dwelling is of limited architectural merit and appears dated within the context of surrounding properties.

The proposed replacement dwelling would read as a continuation of the existing built form. As it occupies the end plot, it does not introduce new development into an otherwise undeveloped area of countryside. When viewed from the wider public realm, the proposed dwelling will be seen against the backdrop of the existing row. This containment effect reduces the apparent mass and prevents the dwelling from appearing as an isolated or visually intrusive structure.

The proposed dwelling would be sited more centrally than the existing dwelling which abuts the southern shared boundary. By moving the development away from the side boundaries, it is more in-keeping with the positions of the other properties along the road which are predominantly sited centrally. Whilst this moves the built form slightly closer to the northern boundary, a gap of more than 4m would still be retained between the northern flank wall and the site boundary. Along the northern boundary is a mature hedgerow and established trees which would be further supplemented by additional planting. The soft landscaping helps soften the transition between the proposed built form and the countryside beyond.

The proposed dwelling is of high-quality design, reflecting a contemporary design style with a flat roof form. It would be taller than the existing in order to comply with flood risk requirements. The finished floor levels would be raised above predicted flood levels. As a result, the dwelling would sit higher on its foundations and the internal living spaces elevated. This necessarily increases the overall height compared with the outdated structure it replaces and would be approximately 0.6m taller than the existing dwelling to accommodate ceiling heights where rooms have now been raised.

RD5 of the BDG states that new development in the rural area should respond to the typical forms of buildings in the locality, which includes in terms of building heights. The proposed dwelling would have a maximum height of approximately 8.3m. However, the overall height would respond to the prevailing heights and degree of variation in height within the local context. Properties within the vicinity vary in height and range between (approximately):

Island Cottage – 7.7m
Thatchers Mead – 7.95m
Island Reach – 8.05m
Herons Creek – 9.1m

The dimensions show that the proposed height of the dwelling would not encroach the established roofline of the properties along Thames Drive and would respond sympathetically to the variation in heights. The proposed building would satisfy the flood resilient requirements set by the Environment Agency (they raise no objection) with an overall height that would not appear as visually obtrusive in the street scene or wider countryside setting.

RF5 of the BDG promotes opportunities for a building form to provide environmental sustainability by including active measures such as roof slopes suitable for solar panels. The contemporary design of the replacement dwelling prioritises sustainability through a range of measures including flood risk design, energy efficiency and landscape integration.

Solar panels are proposed on the flat roof of the main house, and a living green roof on the carport. In addition, the flat roof design reduces any perceived height and massing, and in combination with the living roof and planting scheme, enables the dwelling to sit within an enhanced landscape. Furthermore, the separate annexe structure sits at a lower height to the main dwelling and incorporates a small courtyard area between the two buildings. This allows for additional planting to be integrated into the scheme which further immerses the built form into the landscape. By separating the annexe from the main house, this breaks up the built form which reduces the overall massing of one singular building.

The contemporary approach avoids a pastiche and instead provides a modern rural dwelling that enhances architectural diversity and fits with the evolving character of the area. It is noted that Section 8 of the BDG does not prohibit contemporary architecture in rural areas, instead, it requires that new development responds to its landscape character. RD6 of the BDG states that new buildings must be well composed, well-proportioned and well detailed. It also states that this does not necessarily mean that it must look the same as the other buildings. High quality contemporary design can be responsive to and enhance the character of the local area.

To complete the contemporary design approach, the main house and annexe would be finished in vertical timber cladding with timber/aluminium composite glazing. The materials would be sufficiently in-keeping with other properties along the road which also boast timber clad frontages. As a natural material, the timber cladding would help create a building with softer edges that visually belongs in the countryside setting. Over time, as the building weathers, the muted tones would further reduce its contrast against the surrounding vegetation and rural vernacular.

Furthermore, the NPPF also supports innovative design where it respects local character. Paragraph 139 states that significant weight should be given to:

'b) outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings'.

Sustainability forms a key part of the design approach which includes a comprehensive landscape strategy. Part of the strategy would be to enhance the existing boundary vegetation. This would not only improve onsite biodiversity habitat but would also

provide additional natural screening of the development from the road, river and long-distance views from the public footpath and wider landscape. The enhanced hedgerow would improve this existing natural feature which would respect the transition between the developed host site and plots to the south, and open countryside to the north. In addition, siting the dwelling more centrally within the plot opens up a gap along the southern side of the dwelling which would allow views into and beyond the site to the open countryside beyond the River Thames.

In summary, the proposal represents an appropriate and policy-compliant replacement dwelling within countryside. The design, scale and siting are acceptable, and the end of row location ensures limited visual impact by containing the development within an existing building envelop and preventing encroachment into open countryside.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Overlooking:

There is a raised terrace proposed to the rear of the property which would be approximately 1.68m above ground level with a steel pergola sited along the southern terrace edge. Due to the raised nature of the terrace, to mitigate any detrimental loss of privacy impacts to the occupants of Island Cottage, it will be necessary to condition that a privacy screen is installed to enclose the pergola on the southern side.

The proposal also includes three first floor side facing windows in the southern elevations of the main house and annexe. They serve an en-suite bathroom, master bedroom and annexe living room. To protect the amenity of the occupants at Island Cottage, it will be necessary to condition that the en-suite bathroom and bedroom window are obscurely glazed and non-opening below 1.7m.

It would not be reasonable to condition the annexe window, as the outlook from this window would be partially obstructed by the existing pitched roof of the neighbouring detached garage, as well as only holding views of the neighbouring front garden. As the neighbouring front garden is open to the road and public footpath, this would not constitute a loss of privacy to an enclosed, private area. Therefore, it would not be necessary or reasonable to condition the annexe window.

Loss of Light & Overbearing:

The proposed replacement dwelling would be sited approximately 6m from the southern shared boundary with Island Cottage with no neighbouring properties to the rear or north of the site. In addition, the proposed dwelling would be set back approximately 3m from Island Cottage at ground floor level and approximately 2.5m at first-floor level. Whilst the proposed built form along the northern side of the site would extend approximately 1.3m further to the rear than Island Cottage, this element of the scheme would be approximately 20m from the flank wall of the neighbouring property.

Due to the significant separation distance from the side boundary shared with Island Cottage and the proposed siting of the dwelling and annexe, there are no detrimental overshadowing or overbearing impacts that would arise from the proposed development.

In conclusion, the impact on adjoining neighbours has been considered in detail and informed by third party comments. Based on this assessment and the site-specific circumstances, it is concluded that the proposal would not cause any significant harm to the amenities of adjoining occupiers in accordance with Core Strategy policies CP1, and CP3 and local guidance set out in the BDG and can be suitably conditioned to address any concerns.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

The proposal includes changes to the existing site entrance and parking arrangements. The council's Highways officer was consulted and raised no objection to the proposal, subject to conditions and a revised site plan to show all private land required to access the site. However, this is not necessary as the submitted site plan clearly defines the site edge and road to access the site.

The Highways officer recommends that two conditions be attached to any granted permission. This includes a condition relating to the annexe remaining ancillary to the host dwelling and a construction method statement. These conditions are noted and will be attached to any grant of planning permission.

It would be necessary to condition a construction method statement prior to commencement of the development as approving the routing of site vehicles would be necessary as access to the site is constrained by the bridge across the river which has an 18-tonne weight restriction. Therefore, in the interests of highway safety and neighbouring amenity, it will be relevant and reasonable to apply the condition.

Flooding and Drainage:

The application site is in flood zone 3b according to Environment Agency (EA) mapping. A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) (Waterco, September 2025) was submitted to support the application. The report states that the proposed development would cover a footprint with an overall reduction in building footprint by 0.69m². Therefore, the proposal would provide additional flood storage volume and provide a development that would be safe throughout its lifetime.

The site is identified as at risk of fluvial flooding with a flood level of 35.34m above Ordnance Datum (AOD) during the 1% annual exceedance probability (AEP) plus 35% climate change (CC) event. A flood level of 35.43m AOD is estimated during the 0.1% AEP event.

The FRA proposes to set finished floor levels at a minimum of 36.2m AOD. This would ensure that the building would be flood free internally during the 1% AEP plus 35% climate change event.

The Environment Agency were consulted and raised no objection to the proposal, subject to a condition to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the submitted FRA. They specifically highlight the requirement for the finished floor levels to be set no lower than 36.2m above AOD.

The council's Drainage officer was also consulted and raised no objection to the proposal, subject to a condition relating to drainage details. Whilst this is noted, a

separate condition for a drainage strategy will not be necessary as the FRA includes this.

Landscape and Trees:

The application site is in countryside and is adjacent to a public footpath. There are no protected trees on site, however, the existing mature trees and hedgerows contribute positively to the verdant nature of the local area.

The council's Landscape and Trees officer was consulted and raised no objection to the proposal, subject to a Tree Protection Plan and a revised Arboricultural Method Statement. They also recommend siting the dwelling further south to move the development further away from the northern boundary to minimise incursions into existing tree roots. Whilst this is noted, the siting of the proposed dwelling has been carefully considered in respect of flood risk and responds to neighbour impact concerns.

Therefore, it will be necessary to attach conditions to any grant of approval that relate to tree protection (to include an Arboricultural Method Statement and Scheme of Works), tree retention, and a scheme of hard and soft landscaping.

Ecology:

Bats are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended, and also receive additional protection via The Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations (2010) from intentional killing and injury and from intentional damage, destruction or obstruction of access to a place of shelter. It is an offence to kill or injure a bat or interfere with any roosting or resting site.

As the application site is in an area that supports bat roost habitat, a preliminary bat survey and further emergence surveys were submitted to support the application. The ecologist concluded that emergence surveys were required as the existing property has a high potential for bats.

Following the emergence surveys, the ecologist concluded that the property supports multiple day roosts of soprano pipistrelles. As such, 'a like for like mitigation strategy, alongside timings restrictions must be made'.

Following the ecologist conclusions, Bat Mitigation Strategy (Ecology Partnership, July 2025) was submitted. Bats are a protected species, and the report evidences that the existing dwelling supports bat roosts. As the proposed development will result in the destruction of these roosts, it is necessary, reasonable and relevant to the proposed development to condition the mitigation strategy set out in the report.

Conclusion:

For the reasons set out in this report and subject to conditions, the proposal is acceptable in principle as it complies with local policy, the NPPF, and local guidance and is recommended for approval.

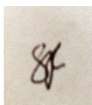
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): When planning permission is granted for a development that is CIL liable, the Council will issue a liability notice as soon as practicable after the day on which the planning permission first permits development.

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:	1 December 2025
Earliest date for decision:	3 December 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	12.12.25

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Outside Settlement Limits
Countryside
Public Rights of Way in Wokingham Borough
Flood Zone 3
Main River Consultation Area
Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
Landscape Character Assessment 2019 - Thames River Valley

Thames Ward
Charvil Parish