

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	242229
Site Address:	Pinewood Leisure Centre, Old Wokingham Road, Crowthorne, Wokingham, RG40 3AQ
Expiry Date:	7 November 2024
Site Visit Date:	18 January 2024
Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of a new signal box following the removal of existing signal box.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Water Utility Consultation Zones
Local Authorities
Affordable Housing Thresholds
Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
Borough Parishes
Scale and Location of Development Proposals
Farnborough Aerodrome Consultation Zone
Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone
Nuclear Consultation Zone
Public Open Space
Borough Wards
Landscape Character Assessment Area
Land Terrier
Land Terrier Leasing
SSSI Impact Risk Zones
Thames Basin Heaths SPA Mitigation Zones
Assets of Community Value

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 CP4 – Infrastructure Requirements CP7 – Biodiversity CP8 – Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area 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 TB21 – Landscape Character

Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document Crowthorne Village Design Statement
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PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
233052	The existing signal box has now reached a stage in its life where a replacement is needed due to the condition of the fabric of the building and the need to improve the environment for the operators as well as increased storage. The new signal box would be a larger building than the existing going over the current footprint of the old signal box. It will be approximately 2.5 times the size, and it is designed to look like a signal box from the steam era on the railways (https://signalbox.org). The construction of the frame for the building will be with new wood, with where practical and obtainable, using good quality second materials for all of the other construction.	Replied 25/01/24

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Drainage: No objection

WBC Landscape and Trees: No objection subject to conditions

WBC Sports Development (Places and Neighbourhoods): No objection

External

None consulted

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	Wokingham Without Parish Council: No objection
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	No comments received

APPRAISAL

Site Description: The new signal box would be part of the Miniature Railway Society, which is located within the grounds of Pinewood Leisure Centre. Pinewood Leisure Centre hosts many clubs and societies.

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 within settlement limits and as such the development should be acceptable providing that it complies with the principles stated in the Core Strategy. 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.

Principle- Countryside: The site is located outside the settlement boundary and in the countryside.

Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy does not permit development outside of development limits 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.*

The proposal is for an existing countryside based activity and the development would not involve excessive encroachment. It will also replace an existing structure. Whilst the signal box will be larger in scale and size of the existing it is still considered to be an appropriate scale within the context of the site. The additional bulk from the proposed development will therefore have no impact on the character or appearance of the countryside. The proposal is therefore considered compliant with policy CP11 in this respect.

Character of the Area: The pitched roof replacement signal box will be approx. 2.6m in length, 2m in width and 2.5m in height. The signal box is to be stood on a level base of sharp sand covered with paving slabs. Whilst the replacement signal box will be larger in size and scale to the existing it is considered that the proposal would still be appropriate in size and scale. Therefore, not harming the character of the area. Furthermore, it is set back significantly from the road and would not be visible from the public realm.

As labelled on the proposed elevation, the signal box will be with tongue & groove/shiplake cladding in the side elevations and wood cladding in the front along with a green felt or red tiled roof as well as perspex windows in all elevations. Given the application site is located within a woodlands, the design compliments the woodland setting and thus would not result in any harm.

Neighbouring Amenity: The proposal would not have a negative impact upon neighbouring amenities.

Landscape and Trees: The site is located in countryside, in a mixed species woodland which features mature trees. WBC own and lease out the land. Pine grow adjacent to the existing signal box.

The AIA satisfactorily covers the tree aspects of the scheme. The replacement structure is similar in style and visual impact to the existing. The officer has suggested a condition to include the AIA in a planning consent.

Overall, the application appears to comply with the T&L parts of the policies and guidance listed above.

Ecology: The Increase in size of the signal station is minor and unlikely to have any ecological impact.

Drainage: Proposal is in flood zone 1 and since it's a replacement from old to new one so LLFA has no objection on this proposal.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): When planning permission is granted for a development that is CIL liable, the Council will issue a liability notice as soon as practicable after the day on which the planning permission first permits development. Completing the assumption of liability notice is a statutory requirement to be completed for all CIL liable applications.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010): In determining this application the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that persons with protected characteristics as identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

RECOMMENDATION	
Conditions agreed:	Not required
Recommendation:	Approve
Date:	5 November 2024
Earliest date for decision:	3 October 2024

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	MC
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Date:	05.11.2024
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