

JPPC ref: 8354
LPA ref: Not yet known

Planning Registration
Wokingham Borough Council

SUBMITTED VIA PLANNING PORTAL

7th August 2026

Dear Sir or Madam,

Warren Crest Farm, Finchampstead- improvement to existing access

Please find enclosed an application for planning permission for the formation of an improved access to serve Warren Crest Farm.

This application proposes the same access to Wick Hill Lane already permitted under 242129 which remains extant, excluding the longer access track. With the works already approved by the Council we believe this application can be granted promptly.

We lodge this application following the Council's recent acknowledgement that a track from the farm buildings can be provided as permitted development (LPA ref. 261620). This application is for the works not possible as permitted development between the new track and highway, replicating works already allowed in this area by 242129.

Site and proposal

Warren Crest Farm is a long-established agricultural holding of around 70 acres set to the edge of Finchampstead. The farm mainly consists of grass with areas of woodland. The extent of the farm area is shown on the plan provided as **Attachment 1**.

The site is not washed over by the Green Belt or by any other specific policy designation (such as a National Landscape or a Conservation Area). None of the buildings on the site are listed. The site is not identified on Wokingham Borough Council's interactive GIS Map as being within an area where there is high archaeological potential.

This application relates to a small area to the southern part of the property where it meets Wick Hill Lane.

The application site is not ancient woodland and is well removed from any ancient woodland, the nearest being more than 100m away. None of the trees on the site are subject to Tree Preservation Orders.

The application site is in Flood Zone 1, the area of lowest risk, on the Environment Agency's online Flood Map for Planning.

The sole planning record in relation to the application site is for the access point allowed by the extant permission 242129 as part of a wider permission for the access and driveway. The permission remains extant.

More recently the Council have confirmed the applicant's right to construct a farm track to the north under 261620; this application connects with that track to provide access to the highway.

Principle of development

Support for the development in principle is confirmed by 242129. The permission is extant and a material consideration in this application.

Policy CP11 of the Wokingham Core Strategy supports development that contributes to rural enterprises and enjoyment of the countryside. Paragraph 88 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) supports the development of agricultural businesses. The proposed development to serve an agricultural need and will enhance peoples' enjoyment of the countryside encouraged by local and national planning policy.

Agricultural need

The agricultural need remains as when planning permission 242129 was granted.

Warren Crest Farm is a working farm with a need for safe and reliable access to allow efficient operation.

The new access is to remove need for the farm to rely on the existing access via Wick Hill Lane to the north which joins Nine Mile Ride with a narrow access point. Although the existing access is longstanding it is not well suited to modern machinery and associated vehicles that have outgrown the lane, particularly in view of its function as a public right of way.

The proposed (and already permitted) access point will connect with the access track to the north to offer a dedicated access for Warren Crest Farm. The route will be passable by all traffic necessary to serve the farmyard avoiding pinch points in the existing lane and, critically, removing potential for conflict with walkers, riders using the public byway. Safe and convenient access for essential farm traffic is clearly a development that contributes to the rural enterprise; thus it is supported by Core Strategy policy CP11.

Amenity impacts

The proposed access point has been found acceptable in all regards by the Council in granted extant permission 242129.

Impact on neighbours

The application site is well removed from all residential properties and so should not impact on any neighbours. The closest dwelling is The Old Police House at the corner of Jubilee Road. Considered in the context of traffic already passing along Jubilee Road the proposed relocation of the farm access should not have a discernible impact on amenity.

Landscape impact

The proposed access point is an improvement on an existing field gate; thus it will not be an additional opening in the hedge. The proposed planting is a continuation of the

native hedge, and the access is to be closed with a gate characteristic of a field entrance maintaining the rural character as required by policy TB21 of the Wokingham Managing Development Delivery Local Plan.

Highway and public right of way impact

As noted in discussion of the agricultural need (above) the proposal should offer benefits in terms of safety.

The existing access between Wick Hill Lane and B3430 is not well suited to large vehicles. It requires a sharp turn for vehicles approaching from the east and, as a narrow lane, presents risk of conflict when a large vehicle meets another vehicle (large or small) entering or leaving the lane.

Wick Hill Lane is also a restricted byway. The designation means vehicles are not permitted along the lane, save those properties with specific access rights, including Warren Crest Farm. The proposal which should remove the largest vehicles from the lane is desirable as it improves the safety and enjoyment of users of the public right of way.

The proposed access point allows farm traffic to join the road (Jubilee Road) directly without need to travel along another public right of way. The proposed access point has good visibility as shown on the submitted site plan and affords space for vehicles to wait out of the carriageway should this be necessary.

The proposed arrangement is identical to that allowed by 242129, confirmed as safe and suitable by the Highway Officer. This submission includes additional measures (signage, etc) agreed during that application.

Other impacts

The proposal should not give rise to any other impacts which would merit refusal of planning permission. The site is not in an area at risk of flooding, there should therefore be no concerns in this regard. The access will be constructed to avoid run-off to the highway.

The proposal site is exempt from requirements to provide a net gain in biodiversity being on a site less than 0.2Ha and so subject to a statutory exemption. The proposal improves the existing field entrance and does not impact any priority habitat as confirmed in 242129, the BNG assessment for which confirmed there was no loss on hedgerow units. Practice Guidance is clear that local policies seeking biodiversity net gains are also disengaged where development is exempted from statutory requirements (Paragraph: 020 Reference ID: 74-020-20240214).

The proposal is informed by arboricultural assessment to ensure works can be undertaken without loss of important trees. Proposed works avoid root protection areas and measures which will be protected throughout development in line with BS5837:2012 as shown in the submitted protection plan.

The works are well removed from heritage assets meaning there is no risk of harm to important features. The very small area of works means there should not be risk to archaeology, notwithstanding a watching brief is supplied with measures to ensure there is no harm.

The development is not of a type that gives rise to risk from land contamination or exposes persons to risk from contamination.

Summary

This application proposes a small part of the works already permitted by 242129 to improve access to Warren Crest Farm benefitting operation of the farm and local highway safety. There has been no change in circumstance that would justify refusal of this reduced proposal.

The proposal complies with relevant development plan policies, including policies CP11 of the Wokingham Core Strategy. Therefore, in line with the presumption in favour of sustainable development expressed at paragraph 11 of the NPPF we consider planning permission should be granted without delay.

We welcome your early acknowledgement of this application and trust the allocated Case Officer will contact us without delay should they require any clarification or need to discuss the proposals.

Yours faithfully,



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