

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	261900
Site Address:	Arkham Asylum, Heath Ride, Finchampstead, Wokingham, RG40 3QJ
Expiry Date:	28 October 2026
Site Visit Date:	2 September 2026
Proposal: Application to vary condition 2 of planning consent 251912 for the proposed erection of 1no. detached dwelling with 2no. carports, front wall and entrance gates and associated landscaping, following demolition of the existing dwelling and outbuildings. Variation is to remove the basement from the approved drawings.	

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 CC05 – Renewable Energy and Decentralised Energy Networks CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB07 – Internal Space Standards TB21 – Landscape Character TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU)	CE7 – Low carbon and renewable energy generation C4 – Green and blue infrastructure and public rights of way C5 – Parking and electric vehicle charging
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
261393	Application for submission of details to comply with the following condition of planning consent 251912 dated 12/01/2026. Condition 3 CMS & CMP Site plan. Condition 4 Construction Environmental Management Plan. Condition 5 Proposed Ecological Enhancements. Condition 6 DWLC Landscape Plan & Proposed Hard Landscaping. Condition 7 AMS & TPP. Condition 8 SuDS. Condition 9 Proposed Materials. Condition 10 Lighting Report.	Approved 01/09/2026
260144	Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for the use of the rear garden for residential purposes C3.	Refused 01/04/2026
251912	Full application for the proposed erection of 1 no. detached dwelling with 2 no. carports, front wall and entrance gates and associated landscaping, following demolition of the existing dwelling and outbuildings.	Approved 08/01/2026
251783	Householder application for the proposed erection of swimming pool and associated garden house.	Withdrawn 01/12/2025
250144	Application for a certificate of lawfulness for the proposed erection of a detached pool house including lower ground floor level, outdoor swimming pool and associated structures to rear.	Refused 21/03/2025
20582	Single storey rear extension to provide utility room and playroom/bedroom.	Approved 30/01/1984

CONSULTATION RESPONSES**Internal**

WBC CIL – The development will be CIL liable.

External

None.

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	Requested an extension for comments until 25th September (after Parish planning committee meeting), however, no comments were received after this date.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received.
Neighbours	No comments received.

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site consists of a detached bungalow, detached garage and detached outbuilding set within a large plot on the northern side of Heath Ride. There is also one recently erected outbuilding located to the rear of adjoining neighbour, Little Oak.

The site is located within countryside. The central section and rear edges of the site are covered by Woodland Tree Preservation Order (TPO) 874/1997. This covers all trees of whatever species. There is also a Single TPO - 289/1985, T4 (Turkey Oak) which is not within the site but close to the western shared boundary along with Group TPO - 0289-1985 which covers 11 Birch and 4 Oak trees.

Heath Ride is a classified Public Right of Way – Restricted Byway (FINC24). A public right of way is a highway over which the public have a right of access along the route.

The property is set back a substantial distance from the road and set back from the established building within the vicinity.

Proposal:

This application seeks to vary condition 2 of planning consent 251912.

Condition 2:

Condition2 relates to the approved plans. The amendment sought consists of the removal of the basement level. The revised plans supersede the original plans and omit the basement level from the approved scheme.

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 (MDD) 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.

In this instance, the site is located outside settlement limits within the countryside. Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy (CS) does not permit development outside of development limits except if in the case of residential development, it involves extensions to existing dwellings or replacement dwellings, does not lead to excessive expansion away from the original building, does not result in inappropriate increases in scale, form or footprint and would bring about environmental improvement.

A replacement dwelling in countryside is acceptable in principle. This application to vary the plans approved under condition 2 of permission 251912 does not alter the principle of development. For the reasons set out in this report, the proposed removal of the basement level from the replacement dwelling is considered acceptable in terms of scale and form, and the scheme would continue to bring about environmental improvements nor lead to excessive expansion away from the original building, thus, considered compliant with CS Policy CP11.

The Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan (FNP) was adopted in September 2023 and covers the area of Finchampstead Parish. Policy AHD1 only allows development outside of development locations where it is supported by national and borough planning policies. Supporting text at paragraph 5.5 in the FNP states that development outside development limits will be supported when considered against the criteria set by CS Policy CP11, or successor. The amended scheme is considered to remain acceptable in respect of FNP Policy AHD1.

Character of the Area:

The proposed variation seeks solely to remove the approved basement level from the previously approved scheme. The approved partially sunken ground floor level, which was designed in part to address neighbouring amenity considerations, would remain unchanged, as would the approved first-floor accommodation. Associated alterations are limited to the removal of the internal staircase providing access to the basement and the external fire escape stairs serving that level.

No changes are proposed to the overall scale, height, footprint, external dimensions, openings, or appearance of the dwelling as approved under the original permission. As the removal of the basement would not alter the external form of the building, the development would remain visually identical to the approved scheme when viewed from all elevations. Consequently, there would be no discernible change to the appearance of the development from the public realm or from neighbouring properties.

Given that the proposed amendments relate solely to the omission of below-ground accommodation, it is considered that the changes constitute relatively minor amendments to the approved development. The proposal would not result in any material harm to the character or appearance of the dwelling, nor would it adversely affect the visual qualities of the surrounding countryside. Accordingly, the amended scheme is considered acceptable in respect of its impact on the character and appearance of the area.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Overlooking, Loss of Light & Overbearing:

Regarding overlooking, overbearing impact and loss of light, the proposed amendment relates solely to the removal of the approved basement level and associated internal and external access arrangements. The approved size, scale, height, siting, form and fenestration of the dwelling would remain unchanged from that previously approved.

As such, the proposal would not alter the relationship between the development and neighbouring properties and would result in no greater impact on neighbouring residential amenity than that already considered acceptable under the original permission. Accordingly, there would be no additional harm in terms of overlooking, loss of privacy, overbearing or loss of light impact.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

The proposed amendment would retain the two approved sunken carports and the on-site parking provision within the approved driveway arrangement. The removal of the basement level would result in a reduction in the amount of habitable floorspace within

the dwelling, whilst retaining the parking provision previously assessed and accepted under the original permission.

As no changes are proposed to the approved access, parking layout or turning arrangements, it is considered that the existing parking provision would remain adequate to serve the amended development. Accordingly, the proposal would not give rise to any highway safety or parking concerns and is considered acceptable in this regard.

Flooding and Drainage:

The site is within flood zone 1, with the southern part of the site experiencing low risk of surface water flooding. Following the council's Drainage Officer recommendation, condition 8 was attached to the original permission to secure full details of the drainage system for the site. The required drainage information was submitted and approved under permission 261393.

Landscape and Trees:

The application site is in countryside and there are protected trees on site. Following the council's Trees and Landscape Officer recommendation, condition 6 (Hard and soft landscaping), condition 7 (Arboricultural Method Statement) and condition 13 (Protection of trees) were attached to the original permission. Under permission 261393, acceptable details were submitted to discharge conditions 6 and 7.

Ecology:

The application site is located in an area that contains bat roost suitable habitat, nesting potential for breeding birds and is connected to reptile suitable habitat. The council's Ecologist recommended for conditions to be attached to the original permission. Condition 4 relates to a construction environmental management plan, condition 5 relates to an ecological enhancement scheme and condition 10 relates to a lighting strategy to ensure that the onsite habitats are not adversely impacted by the development. Acceptable details have been submitted for the three conditions, and approved under permission 261393.

Other:

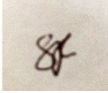
The proposal would not significantly impact the character of the host dwelling or local area. The proposed amendments do not impact any other material planning consideration related to the approved development and do not alter the Officer conclusions of the original application. The application is recommended 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:	Not required
Recommendation:	Approve
Date:	28 September 2026
Earliest date for decision:	23 September 2026

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	7.10.26

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Countryside

Public Rights of Way – Restricted Byway (FINC24)

Bat Roost Habitat Suitability

Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zone Red

Landscape Character Assessment 2019 - Finchampstead Forested and Settled Sands

Tree Preservation Orders Served –

- TPO-0289-1985 – Group
- TPO-0289-1985 – Single
- TPO-0874-1997 – Woodland

Finchampstead Ward

Finchampstead Parish