

FULL PLANNING APPROVAL **DRAFT DECISION NOTICE**



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Expiry Date: 11 September 2026

Application Number: 261216

Location: Elmlands, Little Hill Road, Hurst, Wokingham, RG10 0TG

Proposal: Full application for the proposed change of use of part of the existing paddock to residential curtilage, erection of a detached leisure outbuilding, plus installation of ground-mounted PV panels.

Recommendation: Refused

Reasons

1. The proposed development would represent an unjustified expansion of residential development into the countryside. The proposal does not fall within any of the forms of development supported by Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy or Policy S5 of the NPPF and would result in excessive encroachment and expansion of development away from the original buildings. Accordingly, the proposal is unacceptable in principle and contrary to Policies CP1 and CP11 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy, Policy CC01 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan.

2. The proposed development associated domestic features, would urbanise an area of open countryside that currently contributes to the spacious rural character of Little Hill Road. The development would erode the distinction between the established residential plot and the surrounding paddocks, extend the domestic envelope beyond the existing group of buildings, and undermine the prevailing pattern of development within the area. As a result, the proposal would cause unacceptable harm to the character, appearance and landscape quality of the countryside, contrary to Policies CP1, CP3 and CP11 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy, Policy C2: Hurst River Terrace Landscape Character Area as identified in the Council's Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2019), Policy TB21 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan, NPPF and the guidance contained within Sections 4 and 8 of the Borough Design Guide.

3. Insufficient information has been submitted to enable the Local Planning Authority to properly assess the impact of the proposed development on existing trees, hedgerows and landscape features within and adjoining the site. In the absence of an Arboricultural Impact Assessment and associated tree protection details, the Local Planning Authority cannot be satisfied that the development would protect and retain existing trees and landscape features which contribute to the character and appearance of the rural area. The proposal is contrary to Policy CC03 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan and Policy CP3 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy.

4. Insufficient ecological information has been submitted to demonstrate the existing biodiversity value of the site or the ecological effects of the proposed development. The submitted Biodiversity Metric, habitat classifications and baseline habitat assessments contain inconsistencies and have not been adequately justified. The proposal is contrary to Policies CP7 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy, Policy TB23 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan, the Environment Act 2021 and Conserving and enhancing the environment chapter of National Planning Policy Framework.

5. Insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate compliance with the statutory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements or to secure the necessary habitat management and monitoring measures. As such, the Local Planning Authority cannot conclude that the proposal would conserve and enhance biodiversity or comply with the statutory biodiversity gain requirements. The proposal is contrary to Policies CP7 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy, Policy TB23 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan, the Environment Act 2021 and Conserving and enhancing the environment chapter of National Planning Policy Framework.

6. Insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate that the proposed development would not adversely affect Great Crested Newts and their supporting habitats. The site lies within an identified Great Crested Newt impact risk zone and suitable terrestrial habitat is present within and adjacent to the application site. In the absence of a suitable Reasonable Avoidance Measures Strategy or evidence of participation in the NatureSpace District Licensing Scheme, the Local Planning Authority cannot be satisfied that protected species would be adequately safeguarded during construction works. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy CP7 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy, Policy TB23 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and Chapter 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Informatives

1. This decision is in respect of the drawings and plans numbered 26/05/01 A, 25/05/02 D, 25/05/02 B, Location Plan & Ground Mount With Dims (photo) received by the Local Planning Authority on 18/05/26 & 04/08/26.

2. The Council engages with all applicants in a positive and proactive way through specific pre-application enquiries and the detailed advice available on the Council's website. On this particular application, no pre-application advice was sought before the application was submitted. As the proposal was clearly contrary to the provisions of the Development Plan, it was considered that further discussions would be unnecessary and costly for all parties.

Recommendation and conditions/reasons agreed:

Date:

REMEMBER - The earliest date for a decision on this application is: **24 June 2026**