

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	260186
Site Address:	Wargrave Pavilion, Recreation Road, Wargrave, Wokingham, RG10 8BG
Expiry Date:	8 April 2026
Site Visit Date:	20 March 2026
Proposal: Full application for the proposed reconfiguration of the existing padel court and installation of a second pop-up padel court with associated hardstanding, repositioning of existing floodlights and gates, and erection of 2 no. single storey extensions and a front canopy roof to the existing clubhouse.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Scale and Location of Development Proposals - Countryside
Green Belt
Public Open Space

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 CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals - Countryside CP11 – Proposals Outside Development Limits CP12 – Green Belt
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping TB01 – Development within the Green Belt
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Wargrave Parish Design Statement

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date	Relevant Conditions
	Changing Facilities and Storage	Approved 1975	
20105	Erection of 4 columns, each 12m high with floodlights, for 2 tennis courts.	Approve 23 rd September 1983	Condition 2: Floodlights shall be designed and shielded so as not

			to shine on adjacent land to the satisfaction of the District Planning Authority.
31414	Erection of 4 floodlights.	Approve 15 th September 1988	Condition 2 (as above). Condition 3: The floodlights hereby approved shall not be used after 10 p.m. on any day and shall be controlled accordingly by installation of a master time switch to the satisfaction of the District Planning Authority.
35449	Proposed Extension to existing club building for storage and recreational purposes	Approve 24 th April 1990	
001918	Two acrylic courts.	Approve July 2001	Condition 7: Floodlights shall be constructed in accordance with details submitted to the Local Planning Authority on 26/09/2000 as indicated on data sheet 11.
030554	Extension and resurfacing of two existing tennis courts and repositioning of two floodlights	Approve 22 nd August 2003	Condition 2: The perimeter fencing hereby permitted shall be to a maximum height of 2.75m and shall match the existing perimeter fencing. Condition 3: The floodlights that are existing on site shall be relocated and reused as shown on the

			drawings hereby approved unless any variation is agreed by the Local Planning Authority in writing.
090489	Proposed erection of single storey timber club room	Approve 27 th January 2009	Condition 4: The Use hereby permitted shall not operate other than between the hours of 07:00 – 23:00 Monday to Sunday.
160457	Practice wall between Courts 6 and 8.	Approve May 2016	
250276	The proposed provision of one uncovered pop-up padel court.	Approve 24 th March 2025	

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Environmental Health – No comments received.
WBC Drainage – Objection raised due to insufficient information.
WBC Highways – Requested further information.
WBC Landscape and Trees – Requested further information.
WBC Sports Development (Places and Neighbourhoods) – No comments received.
WBC Green Infrastructure – No objection subject to conditions.

External

N/A

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	No objection.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	No comments received

APPRAISAL

Site Description: Woodclyffe Recreation Ground, East View Road, in Wargrave is located within the borough's Green Belt and Countryside. Wargrave Tennis Club is sited in the southwest corner of the Recreation Ground and adjacent to the Pavilion. It has a Club House, no. 7 hard surface tennis courts, 1 no. Pickleball court and 1 no. Padel court enclosed by chain link fencing approximately 2.8m in height, and floodlight columns approximately 10m in height. To the south, the tennis courts are screened by trees, and to the west they overlook allotments. There are no residential dwellings within the immediate vicinity. There is a single lime tree protected by TPO-

1709-2020 close to the Padel Court in the southwest corner of the recreation ground.

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 outside any defined settlement limits (which are defined by policy CP11 of the Core Strategy). As such, the site is defined as being located within the Wokingham Countryside. It is also located within the Green Belt where any development is ordinarily resisted. The principle of development is only acceptable subject to meeting exceptions in Green Belt and Countryside policy.

Procedural Matters

Revised Proposed Site Plan was received by the Council on 1st April and after the consultation date had ended. However, the revised proposed plans showed a minor amendment to a bike storage area. Therefore, the amendment was not considered to have a significant impact on neighbour amenity to warrant extending the consultation period.

Proposal:

1. Additional hardstanding, second pop-up padel court with integrated floodlights, and repositioning of existing floodlights and gates

The proposed hardstanding extension would measure 24.5m in length and project from the existing hard standing by 4m. The existing padel court would be rotated by 90 degrees to an east–west orientation to enable the installation of a second adjacent padel court. The proposed padel court will have integrated LED floodlighting on 4 no. 6 metre columns, the same as existing. The existing 10 metre tennis floodlight columns adjacent to the former tennis court will be retained: the north-east and north-west 10 metre columns will not be used and will remain switched off; the south-east and south-west 10 metre columns will remain operational only to illuminate the pickleball court.

2. The proposal to extend the existing clubhouse

Overall, the proposed clubhouse would measure approximately 30m in length, a maximum of 5.25m in depth and 4m to the top of the pitch roof.

- The proposed single storey extension to the south of the existing clubhouse would measure 6.6m in length and 4.6m in depth.
- A roof canopy is proposed to link the existing clubhouse with the proposed extension to the south. It would measure approximately 6.2m in length, 5.25m in depth and have 6 no. rooflights. The east facing aspect would be open.
- The proposed single storey extension to the north of the existing clubhouse would facilitate a room measuring 4.3m in length and 3.9m in depth. The roof would be approximately 5.25m in depth and provide shelter for the terrace.

Location within the Green Belt

The application site is located within designated Green Belt and outside of settlement limits in the Countryside. The government attaches great importance to Green Belts

with national policies for the protection of Green Belt land covered by Chapter 13 of the NPPF. Paragraph 143 of the NPPF states that the Green Belt serves 5 purposes:

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

The one most relevant to this proposal is, “(c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment”.

Paragraph 153 of the NPPF states that, “Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.” When considering any planning application, LPAs must ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness. Paragraph 153 further states that, “Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of its inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.”

In this case, no very special circumstances have been identified.

Paragraph 154 of the NPPF states that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless one of eight exceptions applies:

- a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;
- b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use), including buildings, for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
- c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;
- d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
- e) limited infilling in villages;
- f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and
- g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land (including a material change of use to residential or mixed use including residential), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.
- h) Other forms of development provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:

In this case, the most relevant exception is “the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use), including buildings, for outdoor sport.”

Paragraph 155 of the NPPF states that, “The development of homes, commercial and other development in the Green Belt should also not be regarded as inappropriate

where:

- a) The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan.
- b) There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed.
- c) The development would be in a sustainable location.
- d) Where applicable the development proposed meets the ‘Golden Rules’ requirements”

In returning to the assessment of paragraph 154, similar principles over proportionate increases are reflected in Core Strategy policy CP12 and MDD Local Plan policy TB01. The NPPF does not define what can be considered a “disproportionate addition” in size. Policy TB01 defines a “limited” addition as one that is cumulatively 35% or less in volume compared to the original building, and as such could be viewed as not “disproportionate” in size. Although the supporting text to Policy TB01 is specifically directed towards proposal for residential extensions, it remains a useful comparative tool to assist in assessing harm to the Green Belt. Policy TB01 further clarifies that regarding the construction, alteration or extension of buildings ancillary to a dwelling, changes should not result in disproportionate additions to the original building(s) or cause a detrimental to the scale of the dwelling or to the scale of development on the site.

Therefore, in volumetric terms, Table 1 below shows that the proposed clubhouse extensions would amount to ‘inappropriate’ development in the Green Belt when assessed under Policy TB01 and Paragraph 153 of the NPPF.

Comparison between existing and proposed submitted volumes

Existing Clubhouse	129m ³
Proposed (South)	+68m ³
Proposed covered canopy	62m ³
Proposed (North)	+39m ³
Total Volume Increase	+221m ³
Percentage Volume Increase	+131%

Policy CP12 states that within the borough’s Green Belt, any proposal that harms the open character of the area or entails inappropriate development will not be acceptable.

MDD Local Plan policy TB01 refers to the NPPF and reiterates the requirements to ensure that development maintain the openness of the Green Belt.

The NPPF defines an ‘original building’ as “*A building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally.*” In this case, the original hut was constructed in the 1970s and later extended before being destroyed in a fire. The current building was constructed in 2009. The proposed extensions are inappropriate development in the Green Belt because the volume increase would be approximately 131% compared to the volume of the existing building. Therefore, by definition, the proposal would cause harm to the openness of the Green Belt and would normally be resisted. Substantial weight is given to this perceived harm.

Substantial weight must be attributed to the harm to the openness of the Green Belt that would occur as a result of the proposal being defined as 'inappropriate development'. Nevertheless, although in volumetric terms, the proposal would amount to 'inappropriate' development in the Green Belt, there are other significant material considerations. For example, the current proposal would have a very limited impact on the visual and spatial openness of the Green Belt given that the proposed extensions would be single storey and their height would create minimal vertical encroachment on the openness. Also, the extensions would be contained behind the tennis courts and partially screened from public view by the 2.8m high chain link fence. At the rear, the proposed extensions would face onto the turning area of the overflow car park and the allotments (shown in Figure 1). Therefore, in spatial and visual terms, the height mass and bulk of the proposal would not significantly harm the openness of the Green Belt and would comply with Policy CP12.



North-west view showing current clubhouse

Figure 1 Ariel view of the existing clubhouse

Overall, despite the proposed extensions to the clubhouse being 'inappropriate development' due to the resulting volumetric increases, the proposal would not result in demonstrable harm to the openness of the Green Belt in a visual or spatial sense.

The proposed additional Padel Court would comply with Para 154 of the NPPF because it would relate to the existing use of the land for tennis and outdoor sport. Therefore, it complies with the NPPF in the sense that it is not inappropriate development and broadly complies with CP12 and TB01 in that there would be minimal impact on the openness of the Green Belt given it would be set within an existing tennis facility.

Location within Countryside

The site is in Countryside and Core Strategy Policy CP11 states that 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

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.
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.
6. Essential community facilities cannot be accommodated within development limits or through the re-use/replacement of an existing building.
7. Affordable housing on rural exception sites in line with CP9.

In this case, the proposal would not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion away from the original building and would not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building. Therefore, it would not cause significant harm to the Countryside and would comply with Policy CP11.

Character of the Area: Core Strategy Policy CP3 states that planning permission will be granted for proposals that are of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials, and character, together with a high quality of design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users, including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life. Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy requires developments to maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment.

In this case, the location is Wargrave Recreation Ground is approximately 9 acres of open grassland. It has a play area, Pavillion, and provides facilities for tennis, football, bowling and cricket. Access is via a tarmac drive off Recreation Road.

The proposed hardstanding would extend a 24.5m section of the tennis court forward 4m onto existing grass. It would retain a separation distance of approximately 10 metres between the tennis courts and the football pitch. The extensions to the club house would be partially screened at the front by the tennis courts and 2.8m high mesh fencing. At the rear the single storey building would face onto the overflow carpark turning area and the allotments beyond.

Therefore, the proposal would comply with Policy CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy and the proposal would not cause significant harm to the character of the area.

Neighbouring Amenity:

There are no residential properties in the immediate vicinity and there are no concerns about overlooking, loss of light or overbearing.

The proposed padel court would have its own external illumination which would be in addition to the existing illuminations. No response has been received from the Council's Environmental Health Officer on this application, but it is considered the illumination proposed would not have any significant impact on neighbouring amenity given the establish use of similar external lighting in the vicinity and considering the

nearest residential receptors are a significant distance away from the application site.

Highway Access and Parking Provision: The Highways Officer requested further information:

1. **Access:** Current access is acceptable.
2. **Trip Generation:** Peak activity occurs outside typical peak hours. Overall trip generation remains minor and acceptable.
3. **Parking:** Applicant should confirm existing parking can meet extra demand. Car Park 3 (100-120 spaces) comprises grass/grasscrete, which may limit year-round use; further detail required. Parking survey requested to assess usage given multiple site users.
Officer comment: The applicant has provided additional information to demonstrate that parking can meet extra demand. Therefore, it would not be reasonable to add a condition for a parking survey should the application be approved.
4. **Cycle Storage:** Applicant should clarify provision Cycle storage.
Officer comment: The applicant has submitted a revised site plan showing an additional cycle storage unit measuring 4m by 2m.
5. **Construction:** Construction Method Statement received. Further information can be secured by condition. Activities will continue during construction, requiring careful management. Construction vehicles to use existing access; compound to be shown on plan. Banksman recommended for large vehicles. Contractor parking and deliveries to be managed. Applicant to provide details on worker numbers, parking needs, construction period, phasing, delivery frequency, vehicle routes, and largest vehicle (with swept path analysis). Temporary fencing/barriers and signage will be installed; wheel washing facility required to prevent debris transfer.
Officer comment: The Construction Management Plan will be secured by condition.

Flooding and Drainage: The Officer requested further information including a Surface Water Drainage Strategy, demonstrating compliance with the drainage hierarchy, hydraulic calculations for runoff and storage, infiltration testing in line with BRE 365, and plans for exceedance flow and asset maintenance. Furthermore, technical evidence is required to support proposals, ensuring no increased flood risk and adherence to national standards.

Officer comment: The applicant submitted a revised, dimensioned site plan confirming that the proposed hardstanding area is below 100m², along with the supporting product specifications and indicative permeability performance data. A drainage layout plan showing surface water flow routes and the discharge point was submitted.

Based on the information provided, the LLFA is satisfied that a proportionate drainage approach has been demonstrated and consider the proposals are unlikely to result in an increase in surface water runoff or flood risk, subject to the development being carried out in accordance with the submitted details. On this basis, the LLFA raises no objection to the application with condition

Recommended Condition:

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved drainage details, including the permeable surface construction, drainage layout plan, and supporting documentation as submitted. The approved drainage scheme shall be implemented in full prior to the first use of the development and thereafter retained and maintained for the lifetime of the development.

We would also recommend that the permeable surface is maintained in accordance with the submitted maintenance regime to ensure its long-term performance.

Landscape and Trees: The Officer raised no objection subject to further tree protection information as referenced in the Arboricultural Report.

There is a protected Lime tree (TPO 1709-2020) on the southern boundary. No tree mitigation is proposed; none of the root protection areas are affected. Tree protection measures are in place. Root protection areas for hedges H0001 and trees T001-T008 extend into the grassed access track along the southern boundary, which will be used for constructing the new courts. Historic changes to H001 allow safe passage without impacting retained trees. Extending the pavilion will require removing 4m from the northern end of hawthorn hedge H002, and up to 0.5m from H003 for construction.

Officer comment: *The Tree Officer has not provided further comments on the Tree Protection and Constraints Plan that shows temporary ground cover protection to the trees close to the south boundary.*

Green Infrastructure: The Officer raises no objection and commented that the proposal will provide improved sports facilities, and there will not be a negative impact of expanding the clubhouse facility. The Officer supports the request for further information made by WBC Highways relating to car and cycle parking provision, and construction, to avoid any negative impact or safety risks on users of the existing and other facilities on the site.

Officer comment: *The Highways Officer is satisfied with additional information submitted by the applicant for cycle storage and parking.*

Ecology: The application site is in an area suitable for bat roosting. The Ecology Officer has confirmed that a Bat Survey is not required for this application.

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:	9 April 2026
Earliest date for decision:	6 March 2026

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	<i>MC</i>
Date:	09.04.2026