

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	252405
Site Address:	2 Riverside, Wargrave Road, Remenham, Wokingham, RG9 3JD
Expiry Date:	23 January 2026
Site Visit Date:	5 November 2025
Proposal: Householder application for the proposed installation of a pitched roof with rooflights to replace the existing flat roof and canopy and changes to fenestration.	

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 CP7 – Biodiversity CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals CP11 – Proposals Outside Development Limits CP12 – Green Belt
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 – Development Limits CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB01 – Development within the Green Belt TB21 – Landscape Character TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU) (N.B. the LPU is deemed to hold overall limited weight at this time).	SS1 – Sustainable development principles SS2 – Spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy SS5 – Development in the countryside SS6 – Development in the Green Belt C4 – Green and blue infrastructure and public rights of way C5 – Parking and electric vehicle charging FD1 – Development and flood risk (from all sources) FD2 – Sustainable drainage NE1 – Biodiversity and geodiversity NE5 – Landscape and design DH1 – Place making and quality design DH2 – Safeguarding amenity
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List

PLANNING HISTORY		
Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
242859	Householder application for the proposed installation of a pitched roof with rooflights to replace the existing flat roof and canopy, plus changes to fenestration.	Refused – 23/05/2025
Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/C/2 1/3283127	Enforcement Notice to demolish an extension to the main cabin building, a veranda and raised platform, erected without planning permission.	Appeal Allowed & Notice Quashed 29/12/2021
211385	Certificate of Lawful Existing Use or Development for the erection of the main cabin building and its use as a residential dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) and use of the gazebo being incidental to the residential use of the main cabin.	Approved 06/07/2021
203596	Certificate of lawful existing development for operational development comprising erection of a single cabin marked in the approximate position outlined in red on the attached plan, storage building in the approximate position outlined in blue on the attached plan and gazebo/raised decking marked in the approximate position outlined in green on the attached plan.	Approved 10/03/2021
200737	Full planning application for the Extension to existing cabin including the enclosure of the previously existing veranda, extension of cabin over decking and extension of decking. (part-retrospective).	Refused 29/07/2020
001175	Proposed erection of single storey store and changing facility.	Approved 22/03/2000
24061	Siting of a building for use as a garden and boat store Plot 4 Wargrave Road. Appeal Ref: 110330/A/90/168/295	Refused & Appeal Dismissed Feb 1991

CONSULTATION RESPONSES
Internal
WBC Drainage: No objection WBC Highways: No comment WBC Landscape and Trees: No objection WBC Ecology: No objection subject to condition
External
None consulted

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	Remenham Parish Council raised concern with the tight-packing of properties in this thin riverside strip and access for emergency vehicles, and the inclusion of 'Annexe (TBC)' on the submitted plans.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	No comments received

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site comprises a single storey detached cabin sited on a parcel of land to the southwest of Wargrave Road abutting the River Thames. The site vehicular access is shared with three other properties/leisure plots. The existing flat roofed cabin sits on lower ground than the highway and is well screened by the circa. 1.8m high boundary fence. The cabin benefits from a deep river frontage which slopes downwards towards the river and enclosed by mature hedgerows on either side, a gazebo sited forward of the cabin and 2no. outbuildings to the rear of the site adjoining the highway.



Figure 1: View of application site from the riverbank.

Site History & Preamble:

The site has a fairly complex recent planning and enforcement history (see summary above). **Figure 2** below shows the alterations that have been implemented since 2010. A part retrospective application to enclose the veranda, extend the cabin was refused in 2020. An Enforcement Notice was then served requiring the removal of these works, the notice was quashed in 2021 with this development allowed at appeal. A CLUED application (ref 211385) was also issued in 2021 which confirmed the lawful use of the cabin building as a residential dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) plus the use of the gazebo as incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling.

When applying the definition of ‘previously developed land’ in the NPPF and *Dartford BC v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government [2017] EWCA Civ141*, the existing dwelling constitutes previously developed land.



Figure 2: Alterations to the ground floor layout at 2 Riverside between 2010 and 2024 (no changes since 2024).

It is acknowledged that some of the submitted plans include an annotation to refer to the larger outbuilding to the rear of the site, known as the ‘Back Cabin’ in previous applications, as ‘Annexe TBC’. The erection of this building was confirmed as lawful under CLUED application ref 203596. However, the LPA was not satisfied that, on the balance of probabilities, that this building had been in continuous use as ancillary accommodation associated with the residential dwelling, i.e., an annexe, for at least 10 years in determining CLUED application ref 211385.

No further applications have been submitted relating to the use of this building and its current use(s) is not known. Nonetheless, as this current proposal consists of alterations to the residential dwelling only, the determination of this application does not relate to this separate building and as such would not inadvertently approve any current use(s) or indicate its future acceptability as an annexe. An informative drawing the applicant’s attention to this matter is recommended.

Proposal:

This application proposes the replacement of the existing flat roof and canopy with a pitched roof comprising grey slate tiles and 4no. rooflights on the southwestern elevation; plus, the insertion of an additional window on the northeastern elevation. The replacement roof would have a gable roof form with infill timber cladding proposed on the gable ends. The total ridge height from ground level would be circa. 5.95m.

This application follows a recent application for a similar scheme, ref 242859, which

was refused for the following reason:

By virtue of its excessive volume, the proposal would result in a disproportionate increase to the size of the original dwellinghouse, which would be inappropriate development within the Green Belt and, by definition, harmful to its openness. Therefore, the proposed development is unacceptable in principle and no very special circumstances have been identified that would warrant a different decision being taken contrary to Policies CP12 of the Core Strategy; Policies CC01 and TB01 of the MDD Local Plan and guidance contained within Section 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The main material differences between the refused scheme and the current proposal comprise the retention of part of the existing flat roof on the front and rear elevations as well as the omission of the gable protrusions on the southwestern elevation, see **Figure 3** below.



**Figure 3: LHS: Proposed SW elevation (242859)
RHS: Proposed SW elevation (current scheme).**

Principle of Development (Development within the Green Belt and Countryside):

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 application site is located within designated Green Belt and outside of settlement limits in the open 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 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Paragraph 142 of the NPPF states that, “*The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence*”. Paragraph 143 of the NPPF states that the Green Belt serves five purposes, 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. ‘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. These principles are reflected in Core Strategy policy CP12 and MDD Local Plan policy TB01.

Paragraph 154 of the NPPF states that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless one of eight exceptions applies, including: “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*”. This is reflected in Core Strategy policies CP11 & CP12 and MDD Local Plan policy TB01, with policy CP11 stating that residential extensions will normally only be permitted where it does not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building. Policy TB01 defines a “limited” increase in scale to an existing dwelling as a cumulative increase of generally no more than 35% in volume over and above the size of the original dwelling.

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 development where they meet other exception criteria. In this case, the proposal comprises an addition to the existing residential dwelling and would not fall within the exceptions set out in paragraph 155. They are therefore not relevant to this application.

The NPPF clarifies that the original building is considered as it existed on 1st July 1948 when the Town and Country Planning Act 1947 came into effect, or if constructed after this date, as it was built originally. In this case the original building is considered as it existed following the building works carried out in 2012. This was the interpretation of the original building accepted by the Inspector in the Enforcement Notice appeal (ref: APP/X0360/C/21/3283127) and should therefore be applied to the assessment of the current proposal.

It is acknowledged that this interpretation differs from the assessment carried out within the Officer's Report for the previous application (ref 242859) which did not exclude later additions, carried out in 2019, from the volume calculation for the original dwelling. The previous enlargements include building on top of the existing raised decking area and the forward extension of the pergola and raised decking area. Upon scrutinising the submitted plans and the site's planning history, the volume calculations are set out below. These have been agreed with the applicant in order to alleviate any concerns regarding any differences between the previous application.

	Volume (cubic metres)	Cumulative Increase (%)
Original Dwelling (2012)	256.46	
Existing Additions	74.81	+ 29.2%
Existing Dwelling (as it stands today)	331.27	
Total volume increase proposed to the dwelling	77.277	+ 59.3%
Total volume of proposed scheme	408.547	

The agreed calculations indicate that the volume of the original dwelling is 256.46m³ and that the proposal would result in a total volume of 408.547, concluding that the development would constitute approximately a **59.3%** increase in volume over and

above the size of the original dwelling. It is therefore clear that the proposal would lead to the dwellinghouse being extended above the tolerances of 35% of the original dwelling as set out in policy TB01 of the MDD Local Plan, which is considered excessive and, by definition, harmful.

The proposed development does not fall within any exception listed in the NPPF. Therefore, it is considered inappropriate development within the Green Belt by definition.

Although not a material consideration in the determination of this application. The planning history provides a useful context in assessing the cumulative scale of development and potential impact on openness of the Green Belt. It is evident from the planning history that the site and property have expanded incrementally over time through a series of certificates and planning permissions. Consequently, the site is considered to be at or near its capacity for further increases that would not result in harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

Impact on Openness:

MDD Local Plan policy TB01 states that development proposals will only be permitted where they maintain the openness of, and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in, the Green Belt. This is consistent with Section 13 of the NPPF. There is no definition of openness in the NPPF, however in Green Belt context it is generally held to refer to freedom from, or the absence of development. Development does not necessarily need to be visible in order to harm the openness of the Green Belt.

In *Turner v SSCLG [2016] EWCA Civ 466* it was established that the concept of 'openness' is capable of having both a spatial and visual dimension and that the decision maker should consider how the visual effect of the development would bear on whether the development would preserve the openness of the Green Belt. Furthermore, current Planning Practice Guidance sets out what factors can be taken into account when considering the impact on openness, including the visual impact of the proposal as well as its volume (Paragraph: 013 Reference ID: 64-013-20250225 Revision date: 27/02/2025).

It has already been established that the proposal is inappropriate development by definition due to the disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. The site, in particular the south-west elevation of the dwelling facing the river, is highly visible from the Thames Path which runs along the opposite riverbank as well as the river itself. The existing dwelling is also partly visible from vantage points on Wargrave Road but is largely screened by the existing boundary fence (see **Figure 4** below).



Figure 4: Google Street View image taken from Wargrave Road in 2021 with the existing dwelling outlined in red.

There is not a distinctive pattern of built form within this section of Wargrave Road, with no set rhythm of gaps between buildings, varying sizes of plots and buildings, as well as varying separation distances between buildings and the riverbank. While no increased footprint is proposed, and the proposal would not constitute excessive encroachment into the countryside in accordance with Core Strategy policy CP11 in this respect, the proposed replacement roof would have a clear visual and spatial impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

The current flat roof form contributes to the low profile of the existing building in comparison to its immediate neighbour No.3 Riverside. The height and mass of the proposed replacement pitched roof would add significant bulk to the existing dwelling and subsequently increase its visual prominence from public vantage points. As viewed from Wargrave Road, the existing dwelling is largely not visible due to the boundary fence creating a visual gap between No.3 Riverside adjacent to the north-west and the neighbouring development to the south-east. This gap contributes significantly to the visual and spatial openness of the Green Belt.

Following the proposed development the site would be highly visible, resulting in the partial loss of the existing visual gap between development within this section of Wargrave Road and subsequent adverse harm to the openness of the Green Belt. It is not considered that the identified harm would be mitigated by the site's relationship with neighbouring, taller built form.

The proposal would therefore have a detrimental impact on the openness of the Green Belt contrary to the aims of the NPPF and MDD Local Plan policy TB01.

Very Special Circumstances

The proposal is inappropriate development by definition. As set out in paragraph 153 of the NPPF the proposed development should not be approved except in 'very special circumstances'. These circumstances will not exist, except where potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

The applicant has not explicitly stated that there are any 'very special circumstances' which should be applied to the planning balance. During discussions with the applicant, a letter responding to feedback given by the Case Officer was submitted on 09/01/2026. The letter refers to examples of approved planning applications within the surrounding area and while these are noted, each planning application submitted to the LPA must be considered on its own merits and these consents for different proposals with different site-specific circumstances are not directly comparable to the current proposal.

It is acknowledged that the proposal includes the provision of solar roof tiles which would result in a more sustainable residential dwelling and contribute to the transition to a low carbon future supported by national and local planning policy. However, this could be achieved through an alternative design which is policy compliant. Notwithstanding this sustainability some measures may be introduced at dwellinghouses without the requirement for planning permission (permitted development - part 14). As such this does not amount to a 'very special circumstance'.

The applicant also refers to the examples of pitched roofs within the street scene which are visually more prominent than the proposed scheme. However, for the reasons discussed above it is not considered that the context of neighbouring examples would mitigate the identified harm to the openness of the Green Belt. Regardless of the impact on openness, precedent or the context of the area this does not amount to a very special circumstance.

While not claimed, it is also important to acknowledge that the site does not benefit from a potential Permitted Development (PD) fallback position as most householder PD rights were removed from the site in the Enforcement Notice appeal decision (ref: APP/X0360/C/21/3283127).

Overall, it is considered that no 'very special circumstances' have been demonstrated which would clearly outweigh the identified harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriate resulting from the proposed scheme. As such, the proposal would not comply with paragraph 153 and is unacceptable in principle.

Landscape and Character of the Area:

MDD Local Plan Policy TB21 requires consideration of the Council's Landscape Character Assessment. Proposals must retain or enhance the condition, character and features that contribute to the landscape. The site is located in Area A1 'Thames River Valley' of the Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (WBCLA) (2019), the landscape strategy includes to conserve and enhance the peaceful, natural character of the meandering river channel, distinctive willow pollards and other trees and picturesque floodplain edge settlements, and the aim of development is to conserve the sparse settlement pattern and maintain the low- density domestic character.

Wargrave Road to the immediate north of the site is defined as a Green Route under MDD Local Plan policy CC03. Development proposals within or adjacent to Green Routes should demonstrate how they would protect and enhance these Green Infrastructure networks including the need to mitigate potential impacts of new

development.

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. R1 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires that development contribute positively towards and be compatible with the historic or underlying character and quality of the local area.

While development along the riverbank is varied in terms of siting, bulk and massing, with a small number of exceptions existing buildings tend to be nestled in the corner of their respective plot adjacent to the highway and set well back from the river front contributing significantly to the spatial openness of the area. The area also has a verdant landscape character due to the mature trees and bushes bordering the highway as well as mature trees on the riverbank.

In comparison to the previous scheme, the bulk of the proposed replacement roof has been slightly reduced although its total height, circa. 5.9m from ground level, has not been amended. From a design perspective the gable roof form would be in keeping with similar examples within the street scene. The proposed use of natural slate tiles and timber cladding would also be in keeping and is appropriate within the site's riparian setting.

Although the proposal would be circa. 0.3m taller than No.3 Riverside adjacent, this marginal difference would likely not be discernible from wider views. The Council's Landscape Architect has reviewed the proposal and raised no objection, concluding that there would be no adverse impact on the surrounding soft landscape features.

Notwithstanding the detrimental impact on the openness of the Green Belt discussed above, the proposal would have an acceptable impact on the character of the area in terms of its design, with no adverse impact on the surrounding landscape features identified.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Overlooking: No windows are proposed on the side (flank) elevations on the dwelling facing the adjacent neighbours. The proposed rooflights would be appropriately positioned more than 1.7m above the internal floor level. As such, there are no overlooking concerns arising from the proposed development.

Loss of Light: The existing dwelling is set back from the rear building line of No.3 Riverside adjacent but is positioned marginally forward of its front elevation facing the north-east. Due to the proposal being contained above the existing footprint, 45 degree (horizontal) measurements taken on the submitted plans indicate that the proposal would not impact the north-east and south-west fenestration serving No.3 in line with BRE guidance.

Overbearing: Due to the proposal retaining the existing separation distances from the site's side boundaries, and the existing relationship with both immediate neighbouring plots, any potential overbearing impact would be sufficiently mitigated.

Overall, the proposal would not introduce adverse harm to the amenity of adjoining land users in compliance with Core Strategy policy CP3.

Flooding and Drainage:

The site is located within Flood Zone 3. However, the proposal would not increase the footprint of the existing dwelling and therefore not introduce any significant flood risk. As such, a Flood Risk Assessment is not required for the assessment of this application and the Council's Flood Risk and Drainage Officer has raised no objection.

Ecology:

The site falls within an identified Bat Roost Habitat Suitability area. Bat roost surveys were carried out in support of the application which conclude that the existing building has 'negligible' suitability for roosting bats. The Council's Ecology Officer has reviewed the report and has raised no concerns with the surveys carried out or the proposed development, subject to the recommended mitigations and enhancements being secured via condition if the application was to be approved.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

The proposal would not impact the site's existing highway access or parking provision.

Conclusion:

By reason of the excessive scale of the proposed extension, the proposal would result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building which would be inappropriate development within the Green Belt and, by definition, harmful to its openness. No very special circumstances have been identified which would clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness. The proposal is therefore contrary to policy CP12 of the Core Strategy (2010), and TB01 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014) and section 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

This application is therefore recommended for **refusal**.

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.
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RECOMMENDATION	
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Conditions agreed:	Not required
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Recommendation:	Refuse
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Date:	22 January 2026
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Earliest date for decision:	5 November 2025
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Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

- *Green Belt*
- *Scale and Location of Development Proposals – Countryside*
- *Flood Zones 2 and 3*
- *Green Route (Wargrave Road)*
- *Landscape Character Assessment Area – Thames River Valley*
- *Ground Water Zones*
- *Bat Roost Habitat Suitability Area*
- *Tree Preservation Order no. 2/1951*