

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Application Number:	261704
Site Address:	Former Bearwood Golf Course, Mole Road, Wokingham, RG41 5DB
Expiry Date:	21 August 2026
Proposal: Application for a Non-Material Amendment to planning permission F/2014/2119 dated 20 July 2015 for the redevelopment of Former Bearwood Golf Course to allow the dismantling and rebuilding of existing boundary walls serving Units 6, 7 and 8 and Units 15, 16 and 17 at the former Sawmill Site in the same approved locations using salvaged and matching materials.	

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date

APPRAISAL

Is the proposed change non-material?

Yes	☐
No	☒

The application seeks confirmation that the proposed works can be treated as a non-material amendment under Section 96A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The proposal seeks to allow the dismantling and reconstruction of walling serving Units 6, 7 and 8 and Units 15, 16 and 17 within the former Sawmill Site. Whilst described within the application as "boundary walls", the submitted plans indicate that the works relate to walls forming part of the approved buildings and the former sawmill complex rather than simple freestanding boundary enclosures. The submitted plan identifies extensive lengths of wall to be demolished and reconstructed in the same approved locations

The applicant advises that structural engineers have confirmed that the walls are in an advanced state of dilapidation and are incapable of supporting the increased structural loads associated with the approved residential conversion. It is therefore proposed that the walls be demolished and rebuilt using salvaged and matching materials. Whilst the structural justification advanced in support of the proposal is acknowledged, the existence of a structural need for the works does not in itself demonstrate that the proposed amendment is non-material. The relevant consideration is whether the proposed change would materially alter the development that was originally approved.

The submitted information confirms that the works comprise the demolition and reconstruction of substantial sections of existing building fabric rather than refurbishment/rebuilding works to those structures. The proposal therefore extends beyond minor alterations to individual elements of the approved development and

instead relates to demolition of a significant component of the approved buildings. Replacing substantial sections of a building is materially different from repairing existing fabric or replacing a boundary treatment.

The original planning permission was assessed and approved on the basis of the refurbishment, repair and selective rebuilding of the existing housing and farm/industrial buildings within the former sawmill complex. Significant weight was attached within the officer's assessment to the retention, restoration and long-term conservation of the historic structures as part of the heritage benefits arising from the scheme. The approved development was therefore predicated upon the reuse and repair of the existing built fabric

Whilst the supporting Heritage Technical Note concludes that rebuilding the walls using salvaged and matching materials would not result in harm to the significance of the heritage asset, the submission does not clearly identify the extent of historic fabric that would be retained in situ, dismantled, replaced, salvaged or reconstructed. Consequently, the Local Planning Authority is unable to properly assess the extent to which the approved restoration and refurbishment strategy would be altered. The application effectively seeks authority for the demolition and reconstruction of part of the approved buildings without clearly defining the extent of those works.

The proposed works must also be considered in the context of the heritage conditions imposed on the original permission. Conditions 33 to 40 sought to secure the repair, retention and reinstatement of historic fabric through detailed schedules of works and controls over replacement materials and brickwork. These conditions demonstrate that the treatment of the historic structures formed an important component of the approved scheme

Furthermore, the approved planning permission contains no mechanism to control the extent of demolition and reconstruction now proposed, nor can additional controls be imposed through the Section 96A process. In the absence of clear information identifying the extent of existing fabric to be retained and reconstructed, the Local Planning Authority is unable to secure or regulate the amount of historic fabric that would remain following implementation of the amendment. This uncertainty weighs significantly against a conclusion that the proposal is non-material.

Having regard to the scale and nature of the proposed works, proposal would introduce a materially different form of development to that originally approved and therefore falls outside the scope of Section 96A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

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, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. 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	
Recommendation:	Refuse – the change is material because (set reason in APP)
Date:	3 August 2026
Earliest date for decision:	

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	19/08/26