

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	252672
Site Address:	Sindlesham Farm House, Mill Lane, Earley, Wokingham, RG41 5DQ
Expiry Date:	23 rd January 2026
Site Visit Date:	5 th December 2025
Proposal: Householder application for the proposed demolition of curtilage listed wall with erection of a new brick boundary wall with open railings above, a pedestrian gate and an electric vehicle gate, following the removal of the existing white picket fence.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

- Scale and Location of Development Proposals – Major Development Location – Earley
- Listed Building
- Bat Roost Habitat Suitability

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
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC07 – Parking R23 – Alterations and Extensions
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
14463	New dormer windows to extend room in roof space	Approve 20 th November 1980
12874	4 car open frame garage	Approve 10 th April 1980

CONSULTATION RESPONSES	
Internal	
WBC Highways – No Objection Subject to Condition WBC Built Heritage – No Objection	
External	
N/A	

REPRESENTATIONS	
Parish/Town Council	ETC raises objection to this application and recommends that WBC refuses the application as the proposed 1.8m high wall would increase the visual enclosure of Mill Lane, to the detriment of the character of the area and impact the view of the listed building, contrary to Policy CP3, and to Policy TB24, in that the proposal would fail to conserve or enhance the setting of a designated heritage asset. <i>Officer comment: Following the consultation period, the applicant amended the original proposal and submitted revised plans to show a reduced height and materials more in keeping with the character of the area.</i>
Ward Member(s)	No comments received.
Neighbours	One comment received: Has the applicant confirmed that verge at the front of the existing fence is in their ownership and not part of the highway, as the line hedgerow to the north might suggest? Also, that new wall does not impede any visibility of vehicles entering or leaving. Can the applicant add the elevation of the existing house behind the elevation of the proposed wall? <i>Officer comment: Following the consultation period, the applicant amended the original proposal and submitted revised plans to show the height and materials in keeping with the character of the area. Figure 1 shows that part of the grass verge and slope is on highway land. The proposed gates would be set back 3m from the highway and within residential curtilage. The amended plans show a wall with railings that would not further restrict views of the dwelling. The Highways Officer was consulted and is satisfied that the proposal will not have a negative impact on retaining existing visibility splays, given the proposed 'new planting to</i>

	<i>front' does not obstruct visibility exceeding 0.6m in height."</i>  <i>Figure 1: Aerial image of Sindlesham Farm House and adopted highway shown unshaded in grey and green.</i>
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APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The site is a Grade II listed building in Earley known as Sindlesham Farmhouse. The front boundary is a historic wall and white painted picket fence and has five-bar vehicular/pedestrian gates to the north-west of the site.

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 within settlement limits and as such the development should be acceptable providing that it complies with the principles stated in the Core Strategy. 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.

Proposal: Following demolition of existing wall and gates, the erection of a red brick front boundary wall with open metal railings above, brick pillars and electric gates.

The western aspect of the front boundary is directly forward of the house and will be approximately 14.5m in length and have a single gate for pedestrian access; it will measure approximately 2.3m in height and comprise a red brick wall measuring approximately 1.3m in height and black open spaced metal railings above measuring approximately 1m in height. To the east of the house there is a grass slope adjacent to the highway, the front boundary is set back slightly extends for a further 19m. The overall maximum height will be maintained and to take account of the change in ground levels, the wall will measure approximately 0.7m in height. The 3 no. brick

pillars will measure approximately 1.6m in height and the pair of electric gates will measure approximately 4.3m in width and comprise black spaced metal rods.

Procedural Matters

A revised site plan and elevations plan were received by the Council on 12th January 2026, and after the consultation date had ended. However, the revised proposed plans show a design using materials that better match the character of the area, and it would appear less dominant in the street scene. Therefore, the amendment was not considered to have a significant impact on neighbour amenity to warrant extending the consultation period.

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.

The Borough Design Guide (BDG) states that relationships between public and private space and the transition between them should relate to the existing character of the area. Furthermore, the BDG states that boundary treatments should be designed to contribute positively to the character of the area and to the quality of the public realm.

In this case, Sindlesham Farmhouse is located on a single-track section of Mill Lane. The immediate street scene is verdant, and the application site faces onto a row of trees and vegetation that border countryside on the opposite side of the road. The strip of grass verge forward of the front wall that is nearest to the highway is adopted. The site is within Flood Zone 2. The proposal would be of a similar scale and height as the existing boundary; the wall would be red brick and the same height as existing; and the open metal rods would retain a sense of openness. The electric gates would be set back 3m from the highway. Therefore, the proposal would not harm the character of the area and would maintain an acceptable transition between private and public space.

Overall, the development would comply with Policy CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy in relation to character of the area.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Core Strategy Policy CP3 states that development proposals should not result in a detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life. There are no concerns related to overlooking, loss of light or overbearing to neighbouring occupants.

Overall, the development would comply with Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy in relation to neighbour amenity.

Heritage: The Heritage Officer raises no objection subject to conditions: *“The application proposes the alteration and extension of the brick boundary wall to Sindlesham Farm House, a Grade II listed 18th century building altered in the 19th and 20th centuries. The farmhouse, along with a (now lost) collection of barns forming a farmyard to the rear, once stood within its own land, in an isolated position. The urban sprawl of Earley sought to substantially erode the rural setting, leaving the farmhouse amongst the suburban dwellings of the 1980s.*

The extant front boundary to the farmhouse is a mixture of historic walling, of which a white painted picket fence has been installed to the top, along with further picket fencing and a five-bar vehicular/pedestrian gates to the north-west. By virtue of the walling’s age, ancillary purpose and associative ownership, it meets the test of being curtilage listed, as such listed building consent is required for its alteration. Listed buildings do not benefit from permitted development rights in the same way most dwellinghouses do, and thus planning permission is required for any means of enclosure to the listed building.

The extant white painted picket fencing was installed between 2012 and 2022. No planning permission or listed building consent can be found for this alteration, it therefore, may be considered unlawful. Given the lack of permission and consent for these works, they cannot form a precedent for further works for a similar nature as the principle of this form of enclosure has not been established. Whilst the farmhouse has an existing historic wall, this forms more of the purpose to delineate the front garden from the highway as opposed to being a type of livestock enclosure or indeed a security deterrent. Whilst the adjacent brick boundary wall to no. 152 Mill Lane is noted, this wall dates from the 1980s (as part of the construction of the dwellings), and does not form a precedent in terms of the impact upon the setting of the listed building.

If minded to approve, the following two conditions are advised as to be able to secure the appropriate details and materials:

Notwithstanding, and in addition to, the information shown on the approved drawings, no relevant works shall commence on site until details of materials and finishes have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing. The submitted details should include physical samples as applicable. The works shall then proceed in strict accordance with the approved details. These requirements include provision of information relating to:

- 1. If applicable, the lime mortar mix (to be a NHL3.5 in 3:1mix) and any bricks*

required to repair the extant walling;

- 2. As to match the extant boundary wall, the material, size, texture, colour, profile, and source of the proposed bricks which are to be laid in an English Bond with a brick-on-edge coping;*
- 3. In combination with the above, the proposed pointing mortar, to be a lime-based mix with slightly recessed, tamped back profile joint.*

Reason: In order to safeguard the special architectural or historic interest of the building. Relevant policy: National Planning Policy Framework Section 16 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment) and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy TB24.

Notwithstanding, and in addition to, the information shown on the approved drawings, no relevant works shall commence on site until full details of all railings, gates, and related fixtures and fittings (including opening mechanisms), hereby approved, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Details shall include annotated elevations, sections and plans which are referenced to the approved plans. These details shall illustrate the nature of materials, finishes and method of installation. Drawings shall be at a minimum scale of 1:10 and with details at 1:5. The works shall then proceed in strict accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In order to safeguard the special architectural or historic interest of the building. Relevant policy: National Planning Policy Framework Section 16 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment) and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy TB24.”

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

The brick pillars supporting the proposed double electric gates would be approximately 1.6m in height, set back approximately 3m from the single-track lane, and approximately 60m from the nearest junction with Kilnsea Drive. The Highways Officer raises no objection and has commented: “*The proposed boundary treatment will not have a negative impact on retaining existing visibility splays, given the proposed ‘new planting to front’ does not obstruct visibility exceeding 0.6m in height.*”

The Highways would recommend condition the following:

- 1. CG3 - Visibility Splays*
- 2. The proposed gates shall be designed to ensure they can be remotely operated and shall be retained as such thereafter. Should there be a failure to the automated system, the gates shall default to an ‘open position’.*

Reason: In the interests of highway safety to ensure vehicles can leave the highway in a safe and efficient manner.”

Flooding and Drainage:

The application site is in Flood Zone 2. The proposal would not create an additional hard surface and would not increase the risk of flooding from surface water run-off.

Ecology:

The application site is in an area whereby the habitat is suitable for bat roosting. The development would not involve works to a roof or structure that would likely disturb nesting bats.

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, 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

Conditions agreed:	Yes
Recommendation:	Approve
Date:	21 January 2026
Earliest date for decision:	

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	21/01/26

