

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	250787
Site Address:	Secundus, Wargrave Road, Remenham, Wokingham, RG9 3JD
Expiry Date:	29 May 2026
Site Visit Date:	7 May 2025
Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of replacement study outbuilding. (Retrospective)	

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 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
Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (JMWP)	The JMWP does not apply to the scale of development proposed.
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 C2 – Mitigation of transport impacts and highway safety and design C5 – Parking and electric vehicle charging NE5 – Landscape and design NE6 – Valued landscapes DH1 – Place making and quality design DH2 – Safeguarding amenity

Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List
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PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
260070	Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for the use of land as residential dwellinghouse (Use Class C3).	Approved – 10/03/2026
250786	Full application for the proposed erection of 1.8m electric entrance gate. (Retrospective)	Conditionally Approved – 02/04/2026
211004	Full application for the proposed erection of 1no. dwelling, following demolition of the existing buildings and reconstruction of part of the original dwelling.	Withdrawn – 07/07/2021
201306	Full planning application for the erection of a dwelling. Following demolition of the existing buildings and reconstruction of part of the original dwelling.	Withdrawn – 28/08/2020
F/2012/1846	Change of use of existing leisure mooring to residential use (retrospective application)	Conditionally Approved – 01/02/2013

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Drainage: Request further information before determination
WBC Enforcement: No comment
WBC Highways: No objection

External

None consulted

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	Remenham Parish Council (26/06/2025) raised the following queries: - Can the residential use of the site be clarified. - Can the total volume of all buildings/structures on site be confirmed. <i>Officer's Comment: This is discussed in the Site Description and Principle of Development sections of the report.</i> A previous comment (24/04/2025) discusses the separate application for an electric gate and is not relevant to this application. This comment and other representations received on 30/04/2025 are considered in the Officer's
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	Report for application ref 250786.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	Two comments received in support of the application.

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site is a plot of land located on the southern side of Wargrave Road (A321) abutting the north-eastern bank of the River Thames to the west of Henley-on-Thames. The site comprises a raised chalet style building sited above a wet dock, as well as a parking area and a cluster of smaller buildings located towards it's north-eastern boundary.

Following an initial review of the application and the site's planning history, Officers concluded that while the mooring immediately fronting the site benefits from planning consent for residential use, the residential use of the site as a whole did not appear to be regularised. The applicant subsequently submitted an existing Lawful Development Certificate application for the use of the land and buildings, ref 260070, which was approved on 10/03/2026. This decision confirms that the residential use of the site is immune from enforcement action and has become lawful over the passage of time. Therefore, the proposed outbuilding subject to this application has been treated as incidental to the residential use of the dwellinghouse on the site.

Proposal:

This application proposes the erection of a replacement single storey outbuilding incidental to the use of the main dwellinghouse. The proposed outbuilding has a total width of approximately 4.5m and depth of 3.35m with a total ridge height of approximately 2.55m. The outbuilding is sited to the rear of the raised chalet style building on a grassed area fronting the drive in a similar position to the previous outbuilding it replaces. The proposed development has already been carried out, hence the retrospective nature of the proposal.

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.

Development within the Green Belt and Countryside

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 5 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. In this case, paragraph 154(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"* and paragraph 154(d) *"the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces"*, could be viewed as relevant exceptions.

Policy TB01 clarifies that ancillary outbuildings should not result in disproportionate additions to the original building(s) or cause a detrimental alteration to the scale of the dwelling or to the scale of the site. To be considered a proportionate addition to the original dwelling, the scale of the proposed outbuilding should not result in a cumulative increase of more than 35% in volume over and above the original dwelling. If the proposed development fails this test, it would not be considered acceptable in principle.

In this case, the original dwelling is considered to comprise the raised chalet style building which was constructed following the approval of planning consent ref 467/55 dated 11/10/1955 and contains the main habitable accommodation on the site. For the purposes of Green Belt assessment, this building is taken to represent the 'original building' as defined in national and local policy, based on the earliest available planning records and its established lawful residential use. The lawful use of this building as a residential dwelling was confirmed under application ref 260070. The site's planning history indicates that the previous outbuilding did not benefit from planning consent. As such, its external dimensions should not directly inform the assessment.

Volume calculations for the previous outbuilding have not been submitted in support of the application, and the submitted plans only show approximate elevations and external dimensions. However, plans submitted in support of application ref 211004 clearly show the size and form of the previous outbuilding. Following a review of the submitted plans and the site's planning history, the following calculations have informed the assessment of this application:

	Original outbuilding (previous)	Proposed outbuilding (in situ)	Main Dwelling
Total Height (m)	2	2.55	5.2
Area (m2)	9.45	15	58
Volume (m3)	18.9	38.25	95

The above table indicates that the proposal would represent an increase in volume of approximately 102% over and above the size of the previous outbuilding it replaces. However, paragraph 154(c) is considered to be the relevant exception test in this case as the proposal constitutes an extension to the original dwelling rather than a like-for-like replacement of a lawful building.

The proposal would constitute approximately a 34.7% increase in volume over and above the original dwelling. The proposal therefore falls within the tolerances of 35% of the original dwelling, as set out in policy TB01 of the MDD Local Plan and can be viewed as a not “disproportionate” addition to the original dwelling. The proposal can therefore be considered as not inappropriate development within the Green Belt and acceptable in principle subject to its impact on openness.

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).

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 it is quantitatively larger in footprint and volume in comparison to the previous outbuilding, it is sited in a very similar position within the existing cluster of built forms towards the northern boundaries of the site. The proposal would therefore not constitute excessive encroachment into the countryside in accordance with Core Strategy policy CP11 in this respect.

The proposal retains a low profile due to its modest pitched roof form which marginally encroaches above the fencing adjacent to Wargrave Road. Moreover, the proposal is largely screened from public vantage points on the river and opposite

riverbank due to its position to the rear of the main dwelling. Therefore, it would have an acceptable visual impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

Overall, the proposal does not have an adverse spatial or visual impact on the openness of the Green Belt and countryside in accordance with the aims of MDD Local Plan policy TB01 and Core Strategy policy CP11. The proposed development is therefore acceptable in principle subject to other material considerations.

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.

The scale and form of the outbuilding is proportionate to the main dwelling and has a low profile in keeping with several neighbouring examples. Moreover, the proposed use of timber cladding with a black felt roof is in keeping with the appearance of the main dwelling and is appropriate within the site's riparian setting. The proposal also has no impact on any soft landscape features and does not have any adverse impact on the setting of the adjacent Green Route.

The proposal therefore has an acceptable impact on the character of the area with no adverse impact on the surrounding landscape in accordance with the aforementioned policies.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Due to the siting and fairly modest scale of the built development proposed there are no concerns relating to potential overbearing, overlooking or loss of light impact.

Flooding and Drainage:

Policy CC09 of the MDD Local Plan requires consideration of flood risk from historic flooding and policy CC10 requires sustainable drainage methods and the minimisation of surface water flow. Paragraph 181 of the NPPF states that when determining any planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere. Paragraph 176 of the NPPF states that applications for some minor development (which this proposal is classed as) should not be subject to the sequential or exception tests but should still meet the requirements for site-specific flood risk assessments.

The proposal relates to a small outbuilding within the residential curtilage of an existing dwellinghouse. The building is incidental to the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse, does not comprise ancillary accommodation, and is not capable of independent residential occupation. As such, it does not introduce a new dwelling or an intensified residential use within the floodplain.

The site lies within Flood Zone 3. Following discussions with the applicant, a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been submitted. While the FRA does not fully address every element of the Environment Agency's Standing Advice for minor extensions in full detail, Policy CC09 requires decision-makers to consider whether development would result in unacceptable flood risk or increased risk elsewhere, having regard to the scale and nature of the proposal.

In this case, the outbuilding is of very limited scale, is lightweight in construction, and is not fixed into the ground in a manner that would materially alter ground levels or floodplain behaviour. Based on the submitted information, the development would not be expected to materially impede flood flows, reduce floodplain storage, or worsen flooding conditions on or off the site. The use of the building is incidental and intermittent, with no sleeping accommodation, such that flooding would result in a temporary loss of use rather than an unacceptable risk to human safety. A condition is recommended to ensure that the outbuilding remains restricted to uses incidental to the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse only.

Given the incidental nature of the structure and its limited use, the absence of dry access during extreme flood events is not considered to result in unacceptable risk. The proposal would not place additional demands on emergency services beyond those already associated with the existing dwelling, nor would it introduce a requirement for emergency evacuation beyond the baseline situation associated with the lawful residential use of the site.

It is a material consideration that, were the outbuilding reduced in height by approximately 50mm, it would fall within the tolerances of permitted development under Schedule 2, Part 1 of the General Permitted Development Order 2015 (as amended). This represents a realistic fallback position which could be implemented

without the need for planning permission. Given the minor difference in scale above what could be permitted development, moderate weight is afforded to this fallback position, given that a similar form of development could reasonably be implemented under permitted development rights, subject to compliance with relevant limitations and conditions.

The Council's Flood Risk and Drainage Officer has queried why stilts have not been applied in this situation. However, given the site's sensitive location within the Green Belt, any additional increase in height and bulk would be likely to result in an adverse impact on visual openness. In this context, the suggested mitigation would risk introducing harm to other material considerations and is not considered proportionate to the limited flood risk implications of the proposal.

In terms of policy CC10, while the proposal would result in a modest increase in built footprint of approximately 5 square metres, this increase is very limited in scale and would not materially alter existing surface water drainage characteristics or result in a measurable increase in surface water runoff. The proposal does not involve the creation of extensive impermeable surfacing, changes to ground levels, or alterations to existing drainage arrangements. In these circumstances, the application of additional SuDS measures is not considered necessary or proportionate, and the proposal is therefore considered to accord with the objectives of Policy CC10.

Whilst the Council's Drainage Officer has requested further information, it is considered that, given the very limited scale, lightweight construction, and incidental use of the structure, sufficient information is available to demonstrate that the proposal would not give rise to unacceptable flood risk. The absence of further detail is not considered to materially affect the robustness of the assessment.

When assessed against Policies CC09 and CC10 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan, it is acknowledged that development within Flood Zone 3 should be carefully controlled. However, in this instance, the proposal is extremely limited in scale, incidental in use, and would not materially increase flood risk or place users at an unacceptable level of danger. Taking into account the absence of demonstrable harm and the realistic permitted development fallback position, it is concluded that the proposal complies with Policies CC09 and CC10 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan and the objectives of national policy when considered in the round.

Other:

The proposal would not impact the site's existing parking provision, as such the Council's Highways Officer has raised no objection. The outbuilding has been installed away from the site's boundaries and is not fixed into the ground, as such no additional impact on the adjacent boundary hedge and tree is anticipated. Due to its scale and siting the outbuilding will have no impact on the existing green infrastructure within and adjacent to the site or the surrounding biodiversity habitats.

Subject to conditions, the application is acceptable and is therefore recommended for approval.

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.

Conclusion:

The application proposes the erection of a replacement outbuilding within the residential curtilage of Secundus, Wargrave Road, located within the Green Belt and Flood Zone 3. These are the primary material considerations in the assessment of the proposal.

In Green Belt terms, the development is assessed as an extension to the original dwellinghouse and would result in an approximate 34.7% increase in volume. Even allowing for minor variances, this remains within the 35% guideline in Policy TB01 and therefore does not represent a disproportionate addition, falling within the exception in paragraph 154(c) of the NPPF. The proposal is not inappropriate development and, by virtue of its modest scale, siting within an established cluster, and limited visibility, would not result in material harm to the openness of the Green Belt or conflict with its purposes.

In flood risk terms, whilst the site lies within Flood Zone 3, the proposal is small in scale, incidental in use, and based on the submitted information would not materially affect floodplain behaviour or increase flood risk elsewhere; any residual risk is therefore afforded limited weight. Other material considerations, including design, landscape character, amenity, parking, and biodiversity, raise no material concerns. The fallback position for a similar structure under permitted development carries moderate weight and further reduces the significance of any limited harm.

RECOMMENDATION

Conditions agreed:	Not required
Recommendation:	Approve
Date:	28 May 2026

Earliest date for decision:	25 June 2025
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Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	29/05/26

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS
Insert where relevant