

PLANNING APPLICATION

PROPOSED RETENTION OF SUBTERRANEAN GROUND STRENGTHENING WORKS ADJACENT TO ACCESS TRACK, AND CHANGE OF SURFACE MATERIAL TO AREA TO THE EAST OF EXISTING BUILDING FOR TEMPORARY STORAGE IN CONNECTION WITH ESTATE-WIDE ACTIVITIES.

Please find attached a planning application in respect of the above proposal comprising of the following:

- This covering letter prepared by Spratley & Partners
- Location plan at 1:1250 scale – drawing 18.732.PL.10
- Site plan at 1:200 scale – drawing 18.732.PL.13
- Section at 1:200 scale and technical information – drawing 18.732.PL.15
- Flood Risk Assessment prepared by Innervision Design

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

Woodlands House comprises a large country estate that is located on rising land towards the north-western edge of Remenham. The estate lies between White Hill (to the north) and Wargrave Road (to the south) and it is from Wargrave Road that the principal entrance to the site is located. There is also a secondary entrance further to the south-east that serves an area known as 'The Burrows'.

The site subject to this application does not fall within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty but it is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt. Additionally, there are no group or individual TPOs relating to the Woodland House estate.

Although there are no listed buildings on the site, it is noted that the estate comprises the western-most section of the Grade II* Park Place and Temple Combe Registered Park and Garden.

Planning permission was granted in 2021 for the redevelopment of the existing buildings at The Burrow under application **210519**. The application granted permission for the erection of three new buildings for woodland management purposes and associated parking and manoeuvring space specifically in relation to these activities. The works have been implemented.

THE PROPOSAL

This application seeks planning permission for two areas within the red line boundary:

- **Area adjacent to access track**

This application seeks planning permission for subterranean ground-strengthening works that were undertaken in the past to provide a stable surface for temporary contractors parking and storage. The works undertaken were in response to the fact that the land in question – which comprises an area of meadow grassland of approximately 690 sq. m - was becoming churned up due to heavy rain and tractor movement.

Specifically, the works undertaken involved the removal of the existing muddy topsoil, the laying of a geotextile membrane with a drainage layer, the laying of a Bodpave 85 reinforced grid and the replacement of a clean topsoil layer (improved with agricultural grit and sharp sand) sown with grass seed.

Therefore, the physical works which have been undertaken are all at, or below, ground level and, thus, cannot reasonably be assessed to have an adverse impact upon Green Belt 'openness'.

The main objection on application **211635** was the use of this area for parking purposes. The comments from Built Heritage read: '*It is considered the while the physical works have been undertaken with minimal harm to the existing character, setting and views from the Wargrave Road of the Park Place and Temple Combe Registered Park and Garden the new parking use has the potential to create a level of visual harm in an otherwise open aspect area adjoining an existing access.*'

Now that application **210519** has been implemented, there is sufficient area for parking and material storage within 'The Burrow' which means the land subject to this application is **no longer required for parking purposes**.

Our client wishes to obtain permission to retain the ground strengthening works to **avoid further unnecessary disruption of the soil**.

The images below show the current state of this particular area and provide evidence that grass has grown and settled in this area. Removing the Bodpave would result in disruption of the soil and change on the appearance until it grows again.



Photo taken on the 18th March 2025 of area adjacent to access where BodPave is installed.



Photo taken on the 18th March 2025 of area adjacent to access where BodPave is installed.



Close up photo taken on the 18th March 2025 of area adjacent to access where BodPave is installed. Bodpave is partially visible in some areas but it has generally been covered by grass.

In this regard, the ground strengthening works that have been undertaken are evidently visually discrete and now the grass has established, are undetectable beyond the site boundaries.

It is therefore considered that the physical works subject of this application would not appear in any way conspicuous from public vantage points nearby and would not impact adversely upon the extremely attractive parkland character of the surrounding land.

- **Land to east of existing structure**

The area to the east of the existing building, approved under application 211635, is currently used for log storage. Open-sided temporary timber structures have been installed behind the building to provide essential shelter for the logs, ensuring their proper seasoning and usability while maintaining a minimal visual impact on the surroundings.

To facilitate safe and efficient access, the path along the side of the building has been widened to accommodate a tractor. This is necessary for both the effective management of the log storage area and the servicing of the adjacent field at the rear, ensuring continued agricultural or land maintenance activities.

To mitigate any potential visual impact, a perimeter hedge has now been planted. Once mature, this natural screening will blend seamlessly with the surrounding landscape, preserving the rural character of the area. The hedge will also enhance biodiversity, providing habitat and shelter for local wildlife while reinforcing the area's green and natural aesthetic.

The storage area and associated improvements are designed to be practical and in keeping with the setting, ensuring no adverse impact on the landscape or public views. By integrating natural screening and maintaining a sympathetic approach to land use, this development supports the long-term sustainability of the site without detriment to its surroundings.



Photo taken on the 18th March 2025 of widened path at The Burrow to facilitate access to storage area.



Photo taken on the 18th March 2025 of area to the east of The Burrow development currently used for storage purposes.

ARBORICULTURE

The impact on existing trees has been carefully considered for both areas covered by this application.

A single mature parkland tree is located adjacent to the area where ground strengthening works have been undertaken. The system has been employed outside the canopy line of the London Plane tree (T2, Category A1 quality) and it does not encroach on the root zone of this tree.

There are no trees adjacent to the storage area to the east of the building.

An overlay of the area of proposed work and the tree constraints plan has been provided for ease. Refer to drawing 18.732.PL.13

FLOOD RISK

Due to its proximity to the River Thames, the area by the access track falls within Flood Zone 3 and the storage area falls partially within Flood Zone 2&3.

The proposal does not include changes on ground levels therefore the works do not displace flood water and there is no loss of flood plain.

Similarly, this development should not increase flood risk at site or any neighbouring sites.

A Flood Risk Assessment has been submitted for this application.

ECOLOGY

The site was originally amenity grassland associated with the floodplain paddocks of Woodlands House. Any ecological significance has since been lost as a result of the works already being undertaken.

HIGHWAYS

It is considered that the proposal has no impact on highways.

NEIGHBOUR AMENITY

The development does not project above existing ground level such that there is unlikely to be any impact upon neighbour amenity.

The storage area to the east of the existing building is well screened by the building itself and hedgerows to the south and east.

DRAINAGE

The surfaces are all permeable, and they remain at existing ground level such that there are no likely drainage implications arising from the continued use.

CONCLUSION

In the context that this application has explained more fully the rationale for the undertaking of the ground strengthening works and the intended use of the land to the east of the existing building, it is hoped that Officers will be minded to support the application and recommend that planning permission is duly granted.

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ASSOCIATE