

PLANNING STATEMENT

FULL APPLICATION FOR THE SITING OF 2 NO. WOODEN CLAD SHIPPING CONTAINERS ON
EXISTING HARDSTANDING FOR ANCILLARY STORAGE BY TENANTS AT THE PINEWOOD SITE
(RETROSPECTIVE)



March 2025

SITE DESCRIPTION

Pinewood is a collection of long-established leisure related buildings set in a wooded area. Uses include a café, a day nursery, a judo club, a boxing club, a theatre and scouts. Wokingham Without Parish Council has its administrative headquarters located there. The site is accessed from the Old Wokingham Road which has a separate in and out arrangement.

DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

The application is for the retrospective siting of two wooden clad shipping containers on an existing hardstanding. This is to provide storage for the Pinewood site. The containers are each 6.1 metres by 2.4 metres with an overall height of 2.6 metres with a flat roof.

The containers are located to the rear of the Pinewood Judo Centre.

The containers are used for storage of items by Wokingham Without Parish Council and other occupiers of the existing buildings at the Pinewood site.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Planning permission for the siting of the two storage containers was granted on 1st June 2021.

Condition 1 requires the removal of the containers after a temporary period of 3 years ie. by or before 1st June 2024 and the land restored to its former condition in accordance with a scheme of work to be submitted and approved in writing. The reason given is that this is not one that the local planning authority is prepared to approve other than for a limited period, having regard to the materials and type of structure proposed.

Condition 3 is a personal type of condition limiting occupation to Wokingham Without Parish Council or tenants of Pinewood Leisure Centre. The condition reiterates the 3-year limited period. The reason acknowledges the special circumstances of the case.

PURPOSE OF APPLICATION

Notwithstanding the requirement for the containers to be removed they remain in situ. No enforcement action has been taken or indicated, and the current application seeks to regularise the position. The need for ancillary storage remains unchanged. The containers have been maintained and remain in good condition and are well-screened by the existing permanent buildings within the site.

POLICY BACKGROUND

The site is located outside the settlement boundary within the countryside. Policy CP11 of the adopted Core Strategy does not permit development outside development limits except where:

- 1) It contributes to diverse and sustainable rural enterprises within the Borough or in the case of other countryside-based enterprises and activities, it contributes and/ or promotes recreation in, and enjoyment of, the countryside; and
- 2) It does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings; and
- 3) It is located within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion, or in the case of replacement buildings would bring about environmental improvement.

The principle of this development is considered acceptable as it will continue to support the existing community/leisure facilities at the site.

The development is in woodland but on an existing concrete base and does not impact on existing tree roots. Clad in timber, the material has weathered down to a silver-grey appearance to assist in blending in with the woodland setting.

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

The Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update 2023-2040: Proposed Submission Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination by an independent Planning Inspector on Friday 28 February 2025. As the Local Plan is emerging it is for the Borough Council to consider what weight should be attached to the policies therein. Policy SS5 obviously replaces Core Strategy Policy CS11, and it is considered that the development does not conflict with this policy.

Policy SS5: Development in the countryside 1. The countryside, as shown on the Policies Map, will be recognised for its intrinsic character and beauty, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services, in accordance with national policy. 2. Development proposals in the countryside will in general only be supported for the types of development set out below: a) The construction of new dwellings which accord with Policy H4: Exceptions sites, Policy H5: Rural workers' dwellings and Policy H10: Traveller sites; b) Development proposals for which land is allocated; c) Development which supports the rural economy and equestrian uses in accordance with Policy ER3: Supporting the rural economy and Policy DH7: Equestrian development; d) Low carbon and renewable energy generation schemes in accordance with Policy CE7: Low carbon and renewable energy generation; e) The re-use or conversion of existing buildings of permanent and substantial construction which would not require extensive reconstruction; f) The replacement, extension or alteration (including sub-division) of existing buildings of permanent and substantial construction, and which do not lead to disproportionate increases in scale, form or footprint beyond the original building; g) Redevelopment or infilling of previously developed land that does not unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the surrounding countryside or the rural setting of the village; h) Agricultural and forestry development that is demonstrated to be reasonable and proportionate to the need; i) Outdoor sports, recreation, leisure and nature conservation development that is demonstrated to be necessary, reasonable and proportionate for the use; j) The provision of essential community facilities which cannot be located within settlement boundaries and are demonstrated to be necessary, reasonable and proportionate to the use; k) The provision of essential utilities and infrastructure (including development for strategic transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a countryside location), and cemeteries and burial grounds; or l)

Minerals and waste development in accordance with relevant policies in the minerals and waste local plan. 3. All development proposals within the countryside must take a landscape led approach to development in accordance with Policy NE5: Landscape and design and, where applicable: a) Contribute to and enhance the local, natural and historic environment; b) Be of a scale, nature and location within the countryside that is appropriate with regard to its use; c) Be sited and designed to minimise visual impact; d) Not lead to the physical, visual or perceived coalescence of existing settlements either individually or cumulatively; e) Not lead to isolated new dwellings; f) Not lead to the need for additional buildings; g) Maximise opportunities to make the location more sustainable; h) Have no unacceptable adverse impacts on highway safety or have a severe residual cumulative impact on network capacity; and i) Maximise opportunities to improve public access to the countryside.

In addition, paragraph 5.35 gives weight to the proposals.

5.35 It is recognised that land for certain types of outdoor sport and recreation development is more likely to be available in the countryside rather than within settlements. Where such uses are considered appropriate, some operational development, such as a club house or changing rooms, may be acceptable provided it is of a proportionate scale to the use and subject to there being no unacceptable harm as regards landscape and countryside character. Proposals for sport and recreation that would also be classified as a 'main town centre' use (as defined in relevant national planning policy) will not be considered an appropriate form of development in the countryside

NEIGHBOURING AMENITY

The containers are within the overall body of the site and have not resulted in any material overlooking, overbearing or overshadowing impacts since there are no residential properties and adjoining buildings are not considered to be sensitive

HIGHWAYS, PARKING AND ACCESS

Access to the site is via a pedestrian path in close proximity to the containers. No additional vehicular access is required and there is no additional parking requirement. The development has also reduced the potential need for off-site storage

ECOLOGY

The proposals did not involve the removal of any trees or vegetation and do not result in harm to protected species.

FLOODING AND DRAINAGE

The containers are located on any existing hard surface and no adverse flooding and drainage issues are considered to arise.

CONCLUSION

It is not considered that any adverse material planning issues have risen since the previous grant of planning permission. For the avoidance of doubt the applicant would have no objections to conditions framed on the similar basis to those imposed on the earlier consent and for the reasons given.