

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	253107
Site Address:	Sheeplands Farm, Wargrave Road, Wargrave, Wokingham, RG10 8DL
Expiry Date:	21 January 2026
Site Visit Date:	8 January 2026
Proposal: Prior approval submission for the proposed erection of an extension to the existing heat pump barn to form an agricultural plant building housing additional water-source heat pump equipment.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

- Countryside
- Adjacent to Right of Way (from Goffs Barn to River Loddon)
- Flood zone 2
- Radon affected area
- Groundwater zone 2
- Groundwater nitrate vulnerable zone
- Agricultural land classification grade 1
- Bat consultation zone
- Archaeological site
- Heathrow Aerodrome safeguarding zone
- Minerals consultation zone
- Sand and gravel consultation zone

PLANNING POLICY/LEGISLATION

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

Section 55	Provides that 'development' includes the carrying out of building operations on land, and 'building operations' includes structural alterations or additions to buildings.
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Section 57	Planning permission is needed for all development of land.
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Section 187a	Enforcement for breach of conditions
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The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended)

Section 7	Prior approval applications: time periods for decision
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Article 3	In conjunction with Schedule 2, Part 6, Class A grants planning permission for agricultural developments on units of 5 hectares or more
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Article 4	Provides that the planning authority may give direction to restrict the effect of Article 3
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PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
210639	Prior approval submission for the proposed extension of an agricultural building to house 2 no. additional heat pumps.	Prior approval not required – 23/03/21
201158	Prior approval submission for the proposed erection of an agricultural building to house heat pumps.	Prior approval not required – 08/06/20

CONSULTATION RESPONSES AND REPRESENTATIONS

None.

PROPOSAL

The application involves the extension of an agricultural building at Sheeplands Farm. The extension would measure a depth of 10m, width of 11.09m and a height of 4m. It would be constructed with a steel frame and metal cladding. The existing building is used to house 5 heat pumps for temperature control for nearby polytunnels that are used for fruit growing. A supporting statement of agricultural need has been submitted and states that the extension is required to house 2 additional heat pumps due to maintain consistent growing conditions across the expanded heated polytunnel area.

The application is made within the scope of a certificate of lawful use (prior approval) made under Class A of Part 6 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015. The factors for consideration when assessing this application is whether or not the proposed development would fall within the parameters and restrictions of Class A (agricultural development) of the Use Class Order and the provisions of paragraph A.2 of Schedule 2, Part 6 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.

SITE DESCRIPTION

Sheeplands Farm is an area of farmland between Mumbrey Hill in the east, the A4 and Twyford to the south, the River Loddon to the west and the township of Wargrave to the north. It comprises an area of 73 hectares and is used for the farming of strawberries within rows of polytunnels. Other land uses in the immediate area include a sewage treatment plant and Piggott Church of England School in the west.

PART A.1 APPRAISAL

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)			Yes	No
1	s.55	Does it constitute development?	✓	
2	s.191	Would it be contrary to an enforcement notice?		✓
3	s.187a Art.3 (4)	Would it be contrary to any condition imposed by any planning permission granted or deemed to be granted?		✓
The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended)			Yes	No

4	Art.3(5)	Are the building operations involved in the construction of the original building/use lawful?	✓	
5	Art.4	Is there an 'Article 4 Direction' in effect for the site?		✓
6	Sch.2 Pt. 6	Does it consist of the carrying out on agricultural land comprised in an agricultural unit of 5 hectares or more in area of: (a) works for the erection, extension or alteration of a building; (b) any excavation or engineering operations which are reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within that unit?	✓	
7	A.1(a)	Would the development be carried out on a separate parcel of land forming part of the unit which is less than 1 hectare in area?		✓
8	A.1(b)	Would it consist of the erection or extension of any agricultural building on an established agricultural unit (as defined in paragraph X of Part 3 of this Schedule) where development under Class Q or S of Part 3 (changes of use) of this Schedule has been carried out within a period of 10 years ending with the date on which development under Class A(a) begins?		✓
9	A.1(c)	Would it consist of, or include, the erection, extension or alteration of a dwelling?		✓
10	A.1(d)	Would it involve the provision of a building, structure or works not designed for agricultural purposes?		✓
11	A.1(e)	Would the ground area covered by: (i) any works or structure (other than a fence) for accommodating livestock or any plant or machinery arising from engineering operations exceed 1,000 square metres; (ii) any building erected or extended or altered by virtue of Class A would exceed 1,500 square metres; calculated as described in paragraph D.1(2)(a) of this Part?		✓
12	A.1(f)	Would it be within 3 kilometres of the perimeter of an aerodrome and the height of any part of any building, structure or works exceed 3 metres?		✓
13	A.1(g)	Would it be not within 3 kilometres of the perimeter of an aerodrome and the height of any part of any building, structure or works exceed 12 metres?		✓
14	A.1(h)	Would any part of the development be within 25 metres of a metalled part of a trunk road or classified road?		✓
15	A.1(i)	Would it consist of, or include, the erection or construction of, or the carrying out of any works to, a building, structure or an excavation used or to be used for the accommodation of livestock or for the storage of slurry or sewage sludge where the building, structure or excavation is, or would be, within 400 metres of the curtilage of a protected building?		✓
16	A.1(j)	Would it involve excavations or engineering operations on or over article 2(4) land which are connected with fish farming?		✓

17	A.1(k)	Would any building for storing fuel for or waste from a biomass boiler or an anaerobic digestion system be: (i) used for storing waste not produced by that boiler or system or for storing fuel not produced within the unit (ii) within 400 metres of the curtilage of a protected building		✓
18	A.1(l)	Would the erection or extension of a building be carried out on land or a building that is, or is within the curtilage of, a scheduled monument?		✓

PART A.2 APPRAISAL

Development under Class A is permitted subject to the following requirements under Part A.2 (1):

- a) *where development is carried out within 400 metres of the curtilage of a protected building, any building, structure, excavation or works resulting from the development are not used for the accommodation of livestock except in the circumstances described in paragraph D.1(3) of this Part or for the storage of slurry or sewage sludge, for housing a biomass boiler or an anaerobic digestion system, for storage of fuel or waste from that boiler or system, or for housing a hydro-turbine;***

The buildings will be well in excess of 400m of residential properties (protected building) to the west and south but does not comprise the storage of livestock or slurry or sludge.

- (2) *Subject to sub-paragraph (3), development consisting of the erection, extension or alteration of a building...the developer must, before beginning the development, apply to the local planning authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required as to the siting, design and external appearance of the building...***

A cover letter and proposed floor plan have been submitted. Elevational drawings were requested from the applicant however these were not available, and it is not a requirement of this prior approval process to provide such drawings. The requirements of applicants are outlined in A.2(2)(ii) of Class A, Part 6, Schedule 2 of the GPDO.

In terms of siting, the extension is well removed from Bath Road or Wargrave Road and positioned in where it is largely obscured from view from most vantage points. It would see the slight diversion of the eastern track, however this track is not a formalised path or road, nor is it accessible for the public. It represents a miniscule amount relative to the overall operation and it is sited where it is to ensure that vehicular access along the western track alongside the River Loddon is unaffected. It is screened from view from the River Loddon by vegetation along the riverbank. It is therefore acceptable in terms of siting.

In terms of design, the building adopts a relatively standard agricultural form, with a steel frame with metal cladding and dual pitched steel sheeting roof, as can be seen on the proposed sectional drawings. It would not be out of place in the agricultural

environment and is acceptable., and in design terms would have a similar appearance and be of a comparable scale to the existing building.

(3) The conditions in sub-paragraph (2) do not apply to the extension or alteration of a building if the building is not on article 2(4) land except in the case of a significant extension or a significant alteration.

The application site is not on article 2(4) land and is deemed to constitute a significant extension. As such, sub-paragraph (2) (prior approval criteria) apply.

(4) Development consisting of the significant extension or the significant alteration of a building may only be carried out once by virtue of Class A(a).

As can be seen in the planning history, an extension to the building has been previously approved (ref. 210639), however has not been implemented (as could be seen on the site visit). That previous prior approval has to be completed before the expiration date of 23 February 2026. It appears unlikely that this previous approval would be completed now, in such a short timeframe. It will be reminded to the applicant via an informative that both this, and the previous prior approval, could not both be implemented otherwise they would be in breach of A.2(4) of Class A, Part 6, Schedule 2 of the GPDO.

(5) Where development consists of works for the erection, significant extension or significant alteration of a building and—

(a) the use of the building or extension for the purposes of agriculture within the unit permanently ceases within 10 years from the date on which the development was substantially completed; and

(b) planning permission has not been granted on an application, or has not been deemed to be granted under Part 3 of the Act, for development for purposes other than agriculture, within 3 years from the date on which the use of the building or extension for the purposes of agriculture within the unit permanently ceased, then, unless the local planning authority have otherwise agreed in writing, the building or, in the case of development consisting of an extension, the extension, must be removed from the land and the land must, so far as is practicable, be restored to its condition before the development took place, or to such condition as may have been agreed in writing between the local planning authority and the developer

The above would be secured via condition.

(6) Where an appeal has been made, under the Act, in relation to an application for development described in sub-paragraph (5)(b), within the period described in that paragraph, that period is extended until the appeal is finally determined or withdrawn.

Not applicable

(7) Where development is permitted by Class A(a), within 7 days of the date on which the development is substantially completed, the developer must notify the local planning authority in writing of that fact.

The above would be secured via condition.

On the basis of the above, **prior approval is required and given.**

NB: It should be noted that this prior approval process only considers works for the erection, extension or alteration of a building or excavation of engineering operations. As such, separate permission/ consents may be required for the heat pump equipment itself, as this is not considered under this prior approval process.

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:	Not required
Recommendation:	Prior approval required and given
Date:	12 January 2026

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	13/01/26