

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	251618
Site Address:	Land Next to 236 Reading Road, Winnersh, RG41 5AA
Expiry Date:	9 February 2026
Site Visit Date:	19 February 2025
Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of 1no. two storey dwelling, with associated parking and landscaping, following demolition of existing double garage and part demolition of the existing brick shed.	

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 CP5 – Housing Mix, Density and Affordability CP6 – Managing Travel Demand CP7 – Biodiversity CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals CP17 – Housing Delivery
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 – Development Limits CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC06 – Noise CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB05 – Housing Mix TB06 – Development of Private Residential Gardens TB07 – Internal Space Standards TB21 – Landscape Character TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List

NO RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Environmental Health – No objection
WBC Drainage – No objection subject to a condition
WBC Highways – No objection subject to conditions
WBC Landscape and Trees – No objection subject to conditions

WBC CIL – CIL liable development
WBC Ecology Newts – No objection subject to a condition
WBC Ecology – No objection subject to conditions
WBC Waste Services – No comments
WBC Cleaner and Greener – No comments

External

Thames Water Utilities Ltd – No comments

REPRESENTATIONS

Winnersh Parish Council	No objection but raise concerns on highway related matters
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	9 objection letters received, raising concerns on the following principal grounds: • Impact on Trees • Impact on Neighbouring Amenity • Drainage / Flood Risk • Impact on Character and Appearance of the Area • Highway Safety / Suitability of Access • Parking Provision • Noise Pollution • Contrary to Policy • Impact on Boundary Treatments • Disruption caused by Construction Process <i>(Officer note: Objections from local residents have been duly noted and given appropriate weight in the following appraisal. As many of the issues raised relate to fundamental planning considerations assessed as part of any development of this nature, they may not be referenced individually within every section of this report. However, all comments have been fully taken into account.)</i>

APPRAISAL

Context: This application seeks planning permission for the erection of a detached dwelling on a parcel of land situated to the rear of No. 242 Reading Road. The plot is

unusual in that, while positioned behind No. 242, it is not functionally related to that property. Instead, the land, currently unused amenity space within the ownership of No. 236, would be accessed via the existing shared driveway serving Nos. 236 and 240, a semi-detached pair of dwellings set back from the highway. The proposed dwelling would form part of a small cul-de-sac-style cluster, with all properties lacking direct roadside frontage and reliant on the same private access road.

The proposed dwelling itself, while comprising first floor accommodation, appears as a chalet style bungalow of traditional and unobtrusive design.

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, in the Major Development Location of Winnersh, and as such, development in this location is acceptable providing that it complies with wider principles contained within the development plan. The Councils Core Strategy divides each of the borough's settlements into one of the three categories identified in policy CP9. Major Development Locations are listed as those with the greatest range of facilities and services which also allow residents the greatest choice in modes to access them. The Council's spatial strategy for development seeks to focus new development within these locations.

Housing Land Supply Position

Paragraph 78 of the NPPF requires local authorities to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies, or against their local housing need where the strategic policies are more than 5 years old.

The supply of specific deliverable sites should include a buffer (moved forward from later in the plan period) of 5% to ensure choice and competition in the market; or 20% where delivery was below 85% of the housing requirement over the previous three years.

As of March 2025, the council can only demonstrate a deliverable housing land supply of 2.5 years against a Local Housing Need (LHN), which refers to the number of homes required in a specific local authority area to meet the projected demand for housing.

Paragraph 11 of the NPPF state that where policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless:

- the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or
- any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a

whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.

Firstly, in considering i), it must be recognised that the proposed site is not located within any protected areas or assets of particular importance. Officers must therefore consider the application under ii) and determine whether there are any adverse impacts generated by the development that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes.

This is referred to as the 'tilted balance', as harm and benefits are not weighed equally, but tilted in favour of approval where the above applies. In acknowledging the requirements of paragraph 11(d)(ii) and the tilted balance being engaged, it is necessary to consider whether there are any circumstances which affect the weight that can be given to the supply of additional housing.

An important underlying reason in the context of Wokingham Borough is the historic oversupply of housing against both the requirement set in the Core Strategy local plan and the scale of local housing need as calculated by the previous standard method which remains a key contributing factor to the current lack of the required deliverable housing land supply and this must be considered in the planning balance section in any report.

Development of Private Residential Gardens

The application site is part of a residential garden and paragraph 75 of the NPPF states that *'local planning authorities should consider the case for setting out policies to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens, for example where development would cause harm to the local area'*.

Policy TB06 – Development of Private Residential gardens – of the MDD Local Plan states that proposals for new residential development that includes land within the curtilage of private residential gardens will only be granted planning permission where:

- a) The proposal makes a positive contribution to the character of the area in terms of:
 - i. The relationship of the existing built form and spaces around buildings within the surrounding area;
 - ii. A layout which integrates with the surrounding area with regard to the built up coverage of each plot, building line(s), rhythm of plot frontages, parking areas, and
 - iii. Existing pattern of openings and boundary treatments on the site frontage
 - iv. Providing appropriate hard and soft landscaping, particularly at site boundaries.
 - v. Compatibility with the general building height within the surrounding area
 - vi. The materials and elevational detail are of high quality, and where appropriate distinctive and/ or complementary
- b) The application site provides a site of adequate size and dimensions to accommodate the development proposed in terms of the setting and spacing around buildings, amenity space, landscaping and space for access roads and parking
- c) The proposal includes access, which meets appropriate highway standards
- d) The proposal does not lead to unacceptable tandem development

e) The design and layout minimises exposure of existing private boundaries to public areas and avoids the need for additional physical security measures

A number of the above criteria also relate to other material considerations. An assessment of TB06 will take place within the 'Impact on Character' section of this letter.

Sustainability of Location

Policies CP1, CP4, CP6, CP9 and CP11 of the CS permit development where it is based on sustainable credentials in terms of access to local facilities and services and the promotion of sustainable transport. Expanding on this, paragraph 4.57 in the Core Strategy aims to prevent the proliferation of development in areas away from existing development limits as they are not generally well located for facilities and services and would lead to the increase in use of the private car.

The NPPF seeks to ensure the growth of sustainable transport in managing development and approval of planning applications. More specifically, it seeks to promote sustainable travel in decisions.

The site is located within a Major Development Location and is in close proximity to facilities, services, and public transport. From a sustainability perspective, it is within a suitable location and is acceptable in terms of the principles stated in the Core Strategy.

Summary of Principle

The principle of residential development is accepted in this major development location. However, this is on the provision that the proposal complies with policy TB06 of the MDD which outlines the criteria for suitable residential development in private residential gardens. These considerations alongside the tilted balance will be considered at the end of this report.

Character of the Area: Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for development proposals that 'maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment'. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states planning permission will be granted if development is 'of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area, 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'.

R1 of the Borough Design Guide (BDG) requires that development contribute positively towards and be compatible with the historic or underlying character and quality of the local area.

R7 of the BDG requires a consistent building line relative to existing buildings.

R9 and NR5 of the BDG note that height, bulk and massing should respond to the local context and the prevailing heights in the area.

R22 of the Borough Design Guide SPD also notes that back-land development must not harm the existing character of the local area, relate positively to the existing layout

and urban form, maintain the quality of environment for existing residents and create a satisfactory living environment.

Siting, Design & Street Scene

The proposed dwelling would be positioned centrally within the plot, with its principal elevation facing north-east towards Reading Road. As a result of this placement, the visual impact from public vantage points would be minimal. Views of the dwelling would be effectively screened by the existing roadside properties, as well as by the established hard and soft landscaping along the highway. Consequently, the proposal's effect on the character of Reading Road would be limited in this respect.

The surrounding street scene displays a relatively consistent rhythm, particularly in respect of the spacing between dwellings. Although the proposed unit is not bound by this pattern to the same degree as the frontage properties, it would nonetheless contribute to the established rhythm through the substantial separation maintained from the neighbouring dwellings around it. The separation distance of approximately 8.2 metres to No.240 would preserve a sense of openness between the plots and ensure the development does not appear cramped.

In relation to the wider spatial context, the application site lies behind a row of properties (Nos.230–262) that largely follow a linear building line, with backland development typically limited to residential outbuildings. However, as outlined in the context section above, Nos.236 and 240 form a clear exception. This semi-detached pair is positioned significantly further back from the highway, accessed via a private drive, and oriented north-west rather than towards Reading Road. It was evident from the site visit that these dwellings have little influence on the wider character and instead form their own self-contained enclave. The proposed dwelling would relate well to this small cluster, occupying a position that forms a natural continuation of this cul-de-sac-style arrangement. It would not read as a typical form of tandem development, generally resisted in such locations, but as a layout that integrates successfully with its immediate context.

With regard to design, the chalet-style bungalow appearance would be in keeping with the varied architectural character of the surrounding area, which features a broad mix of dwelling styles and forms. The proposed building presents well-proportioned elements, an appropriate fenestration pattern, and a materials palette that reflects those commonly found within the street scene. It ultimately represents an unobtrusive and modest design, in keeping with its suburban setting.

Scale and Massing

The footprint of the proposed dwelling would be approximately 108 square metres, which would be similar to that of neighbouring properties. The height of the dwelling would be approximately 7 metres, which is sympathetic to its context as a modest, back land site.

It is acknowledged that the proposed built-form would result in a greater level of site coverage than many neighbouring plots and would therefore differ from the established pattern of deep rear gardens along Reading Road. However, in this specific context, the absence of a considerable rear garden is not considered to result in any material harm to the character of the area, nor does it outweigh the positive aspects of the

proposed siting. Any alternative positioning or orientation of the building would create a less appropriate and more visually discordant form of development than the current proposal.

Overall, the scale of the development is not overly out of keeping with surroundings.

Summary of Character

Overall, the proposal is of an appropriate scale and design which would not appear as incongruous addition to the suburban setting of the site. The proposal would make a positive contribution to the street scene and the wider residential area in accordance with policies CP1, CP3 & TB06 of the Development Plan.

Residential Amenity:

Internal Amenity

Policy TB07 of the MDD and R17 of the SPD require adequate internal space to ensure the layout and size achieves good internal amenity. The 'Technical housing standards – nationally described space standards' defines that a two storey, three-bedroom dwelling should have a minimum gross internal area of 84 to 102 sqm. A dwelling should also accommodate for a minimum combined floor area of living, dining and kitchen space; 31sqm is advised for large dwellings according to the Borough Design Guide.

The proposed dwelling would have a living, dining and kitchen space of approximately 40m², which would exceed the minimum standard.

All the three bedrooms meet the minimum recommended floor space for twin/double bedrooms (11.5 sqm) as set out in the nationally described internal space standards.

All the habitable rooms would be served by appropriately sized fenestration and there is internal storage space, which is welcomed.

Overall, the internal living environment for the proposed dwelling is acceptable and accord with policy TB07 of the MDD Local Plan and the Nationally Described Space Standards.

External Amenity

R16 of the SPD requires a minimum depth of 11m for rear gardens and a 1m setback from the site boundary to allow access thereto. It should receive direct sunlight and be capable of accommodating play, clothes drying and storage.

As noted above, the rear garden would be shorter than those of neighbouring properties, with an approximate depth of 10.5 metres, representing a minor shortfall against the recommended standard. However, the garden would remain proportionate to the scale of the proposed dwelling and would provide a functional and usable outdoor space. As such, the reduced depth is not considered to materially diminish the overall quality, usability, or enjoyment of the amenity area available to future occupants.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Overlooking

The first-floor windows on the front and rear elevations would allow only oblique views toward neighbouring rear gardens and would not result in any direct overlooking. Although the front elevation of the proposed dwelling would be positioned relatively close to the projecting gable of No.240, the separation distance between the two properties would remain in excess of the 10-metre standard typically required to prevent overlooking.

The majority of habitable rooms are located at ground-floor level, with first-floor rooflights positioned to serve as secondary side-facing openings. Rooflights primarily function to provide daylight rather than serve as outlooks, and their use in this location does not raise any concerns. Nevertheless, a condition will be imposed requiring these rooflights to be fitted with obscure glazing, ensuring an additional level of protection for neighbouring privacy.

Overbearing and Loss of Light

The dwelling's design has been specifically developed to minimise impacts on neighbouring properties. The modest eaves height (approximately 2.75 metres), together with the separation distances maintained from adjoining boundaries, would prevent any unreasonable loss of light or overbearing effects. While some limited overshadowing of small sections of the adjacent gardens may occur at certain times of day, this would be minor in extent and would not materially diminish the overall usability or enjoyment of these private gardens.

Highway Access and Parking Provision: Significant concern has been raised by local residents regarding potential highway-related issues arising from the proposed development.

During the initial assessment of the scheme, the Highways Officer shared some of these concerns, although no in-principle objection was raised. This was primarily because the access is already established and currently serves two existing dwellings.

However, given the scale of the proposed development, the Highways Officer advised that the first 10 metres of the access road needed to be widened to achieve a minimum clearance width of 4.1 metres. This requirement is consistent with Table A1 of WBC's Highways Design Guide (2019), which specifies that shared driveways serving fewer than 10 dwellings must provide a minimum 4.1-metre width to accommodate two-way vehicle movements.

Further discussions subsequently took place between Officers and the Agent, taking into account the site-specific constraints, particularly the presence of protected TPO trees adjacent to the entrance. In response, the Agent submitted amended plans proposing the cutting back of hedging and landscaping along the first 10 metres of the access. This was considered an appropriate compromise that avoided harm to the TPO trees. WBC Highways now consider the proposed passing places, located at the first 6.3 metres and beyond the position of the second TPO tree relative to the edge of the carriageway, to be a reasonable alternative means of facilitating two-way traffic. On this basis, the access arrangements are deemed acceptable to serve the additional dwelling.

In addition, the applicant was asked to resubmit the initial swept-path analysis using a fire tender vehicle. The revised plan demonstrated that a fire tender would be able to enter and exit the site in forward gear and reach within 40 metres of the furthest point of the proposed dwelling, satisfying relevant fire access standards.

Taking all of the above into account, the Highways Officer raises no objection to the development. This is subject to conditions requiring the access improvements to be completed prior to the occupation of the dwelling, along with conditions securing the approved parking and cycle storage facilities.

Whilst the concerns of the neighbours have been duly noted, Officers seek to remind that the access intended to serve the proposed dwelling is well established. The one additional dwelling is not expected to generate a materially greater increase in vehicle movements or adversely affect the operation of the access.

Landscape and Trees: At the head of the access road there are 3 Oak trees protected by TPO 1844/2022. The rear of the site backs onto a substantial woodland protected by a woodland TPO 583/1995.

An Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement from AllArboriculture Ref. AAAIA236R dated 21.7.25 is submitted with the application. A Tree Survey Schedule and Tree Protection Plan – AATPP236R is submitted within the report. The report details the removal of G7 a group of Laurel and Cypress trees 5-7m high that are located within the canopy of T10.

The tree report details some pruning to the protected trees at the site entrance from Reading Road which is acceptable and will maintain the public amenity and character of the Green Route.

The proposed development is well set back from the general building line, although the existing pattern of development within this enclave does not follow the established building line and so the Trees & Landscape Officer raises no objection to the location of the dwelling.

The canopy of T8 is a long distance from the rear of the dwelling and the foundations do not encroach into the root protection area, such that there are no concerns regarding the proximity of the tree to development.

The patio space to the rear of the dwelling and the woodland TPO must be designed in a way that preserves the root protection area of protected trees, using a no dig construction as suggested in the submitted tree report and must be included in an Arboricultural Method Statement required as a condition of planning permission.

There will also be a scheme of landscaping condition to ensure adequate planting in accordance with Policy CC03 of the Local Plan.

Ecology:

Biodiversity Net Gain

This proposed development is exempt for the Statutory BNG, as it qualifies as a 'self-build, meeting all criteria; consist of no more than 9 dwellings, on a site no larger than 0.5ha and consist exclusively of self-build dwellings.

Great Crested Newts

Nature Space UK have been consulted on this application and agree with the supplied Great Crested Newt Statement (John Wenman Ecological Consultancy, July 2025) that the Reasonable Avoidance Measures detailed within would allow the proposed development to proceed without likely impacts to great crested newts and/or their habitat. Compliance with the Great Crested Newt Statement is to be secured via condition.

Other Measures

WBC Ecology have confirmed that the proposed development would not give rise to any adverse impacts on protected species. A condition requiring a biodiversity enhancement scheme has been recommended. However, when considering this request, regard has been given to the suburban context of the site, the absence of identifiable ecological constraints, and the modest scale of the development. In this case, the imposition of such a condition is considered disproportionate and therefore not justified.

Drainage & Flood Risk: Neighbouring residents have expressed concerns regarding potential flooding, asserting that the proposed dwelling could exacerbate drainage issues for surrounding sites. While the LPA acknowledges these concerns, it should be noted that the application site lies within Flood Zone 1 and is identified by Environment Agency mapping as being at low risk of surface water flooding. On this basis, the Drainage Officer has no in-principle objection to the development.

Nevertheless, to ensure the scheme does not give rise to any unacceptable drainage impacts, a condition has been imposed requiring the submission and approval of detailed drainage proposals prior to the commencement of development. The assessment and implementation of these details will help ensure that the development contributes to an overall reduction in flood risk.

Building Sustainability: Paragraph 162 of the NPPF requires local plans to “*take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change...*” which footnote 61 makes clear should be in line with the Climate Change Act 2008.

Policy CC04 of the MDD Local Plan and the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD require sustainable design and conservation, and R21 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires that new development contribute to environmental sustainability and the mitigation of climate change.

Overall, there exists a very strong legislative and policy basis for planning decisions to be taken with Climate Emergency considerations at their heart. WBC expects that any new dwelling should meet the requirements set out in the Climate Change Interim Policy Position Statement Wokingham Borough Council (December 2022).

An Energy Statement has been submitted in support of this application, explaining how the development seeks to address the carbon reduction and sustainability

requirements, with emphasis on specifications of materials, waste reduction, biodiversity and internal water use. Whilst it is not prudent to conditions such measures, this is a welcome aspect of the development. An ASHP is also referenced in the stamen as well as shown on the submitted plans. This weigh in favour of any proposal, with no forthcoming concerns raised by WBC Environmental Health.

Conclusion: Paragraph 8 of the NPPF states that achieving sustainable development requires consideration of three overarching objectives: economic, social and environmental.

The proposal would generate a modest level of employment during the construction phase, though this would be limited given the small scale of the development. Future occupants of the home would contribute to the local economy and help support nearby services. However, as the scheme comprises a single dwelling, the overall economic benefits would be limited.

Although the development would make only a modest contribution to the Council's overall housing supply, the creation of a single additional residential unit in an appropriate and sustainable location should nevertheless be afforded significant weight. This is particularly relevant in the context of the borough's acute shortfall in deliverable housing land. In this regard, the proposal would make a positive, albeit modest, contribution to meeting local housing needs.

Redevelopment of this currently unused amenity land within an established settlement boundary would not give rise to adverse environmental impacts. Furthermore, biodiversity enhancements and landscaping measures can be appropriately secured, and the proposal would achieve compliance with relevant sustainability, energy efficiency and drainage requirements through submitted details and Building Regulations. As such, the environmental benefits are limited but acceptable.

The dwelling, although representing backland development, would sit comfortably within the enclave of dwellings alongside Nos 236 & 240. It would not give rise to unacceptable impacts on neighbouring amenities and would utilise an existing access, with any highway safety issues being resolved through discussions with the Highways department and amended plans.

The site is also considered to be in a sustainable location for residential use, where future occupiers would not be overly dependent on the private car to meet day-to-day needs. This is afforded positive weight in the balance.

When considering the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, no adverse impacts have been identified that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the scheme's identified benefits as required by paragraph 11 of the NPPF. The proposal therefore represents sustainable development and is recommended for approval subject to a number of conditions.

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 reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. 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:	5 February 2026
Earliest date for decision:	11 October 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	06.02.26

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

- *Major Development Location of Winnersh*
- *Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zone (Amber)*
- *Green Route*