

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	250478
Site Address:	Glebelands, Woolf Drive, Wokingham, RG40 1DU
Expiry Date:	26 September 2025
Site Visit Date:	24/03/2025
Proposal: Full application for the proposed installation of a new passenger lift, partial demolition of the existing Link Wing and construction of new ground and lower ground floor link accommodation, plus external alterations including repairs, installation of roof level PV panels and changes to fenestration.	

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
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction CC05 – Renewable Energy and Decentralised Energy Networks CC06 – Noise CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB09 – Residential Accommodation for Vulnerable Groups TB21 – Landscape Character TB23 – Biodiversity and Development TB24 – Designated Heritage Assets TB26 – Buildings of Traditional Local Character and Areas of Special Character
Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (JMWP)	DM1 - Sustainable Development DM2 - Climate Change – Mitigation and Adaptation
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List

PLANNING HISTORY		
Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
250479	Application for Listed Building consent for the proposed installation of a new passenger lift, partial demolition of the existing Link Wing and construction of new ground and lower ground floor link accommodation, plus internal and external alterations including repairs, installation of roof level PV panels and changes to fenestration.	Awaiting decision.
250426	Application for Listed Building consent for the proposed demolition of existing conservatory.	Approved, 15/04/2025
182697	Listed Building consent for replacement of casement windows in Cottage and reinstatement of Conservatory framing/glazing (Incorporate double glazed units).	Approved 12/12/18
130640	Application for Listed Building Consent for the proposed erection of a extension to house a new lift shaft and associated lobbies to the 1957 wing of the Care Home.	Approved 18/12/2013
121060	Listed building application for the proposed erection of 3 storey extension to provide new lift shaft and associated lobbies to the 1957 wing	Approved 20/09/2012
052273	Proposed erection of 3 storey block comprising 27 extra care flats with connecting corridor to Glebelands House (phase 1), extension to main building and internal alterations to form of 41 en-suite bedrooms with supporting facilities (phase 2), plus the erection of 41 retirement flats (phase 3).	Approved 20/09/2005
052630	Listed building application for the adaptation of existing house into en-suite bedrooms plus demolition of existing single storey extension and erection of new two storey extension to provide en-suite bedrooms (41 in total) and support facilities. (Amendment to consent LB/2003/9897)	Approved, 14/12/2005
031859	Proposed adaptation of listed building to provide 35 en suite bedrooms and support facilities. Demolition of curtilage buildings and addition of 27 flats with link to listed building.	Approved, 18/02/2004
031858	Proposed erection of 3 storey building comprising 27 one & two bedroom flats with connecting corridor to Glebelands House and 2/3 storey building comprising 41 flats for	Approved, 18/02/2004

	continued use of site as a care home with associated vehicular and pedestrian access, parking and servicing areas with landscaping. Demolition of The Garden Cottage, part of Stable Court and 1 - 10 Memorial Bungalows.	
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CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Drainage – No objections, subject to a condition.
WBC Highways – Further information requested.
WBC Landscape and Trees – No objections, subject to conditions.
WBC Health and Wellbeing – No comments received.
WBC Adult Social Care – No comments received.
WBC Built Heritage Officer – No objections, subject to conditions.
WBC CIL – No comments received.
WBC Ecology Newts – No objections, subject to an informative.
WBC Ecology – No comments received.

External

Thames Water Utilities Ltd – No comments received.
South East Water – No comments received.

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	No comments received
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	No comments received

APPRAISAL

Site Description and Proposed Development:

Glebelands House is a substantial, three storey historic building located within its own landscaped grounds closely related to Wokingham Town Centre. It currently accommodates a residential care home owned and operated by Greensleeves Homes Trust.

The application proposes the demolition of a modern link building which connects the 1950s wing of Glebelands to the Broccoli Cloister and subsequent replacement as facilitate additional bedrooms for the care home. Also proposed as part of the application is the creation of a lift tower, the installation of PV solar panels to the flat roof of the 1950s wing and additional related changes, such as windows and doors.

It should be noted that amended plans were received during the course of the application, reducing the scale of the link wing extension and incorporating other design-related changes. The proposals now provide a net increase of 7 additional bedrooms, rather than the 8 originally proposed. The application will be assessed in

accordance with these amended details.

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 and as such the development should be acceptable providing that it complies with the principles stated in the Core Strategy.

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.

Policy CP2 of the Core Strategy seeks to ensure that that new development contributes to the provision of sustainable and inclusive communities (including the provision of community facilities) to meet long term needs, planning permission will be granted for proposals that address the requirements of:

- Children, young people and families, including the co-ordination of services to meet their needs;
- People with special needs, including those with a physical, sensory or learning disability or problems accessing services.

Policy CP5 of the Core Strategy requires an appropriate mix of dwelling types, tenures and sizes so that the housing needs of the community are met. Policy TB05 of the MDD Local Plan requires an appropriate housing mix which reflects a balance between the underlying character of the area and both the current and projected needs of households.

Policy TB09 of the MDDL (Residential accommodation for vulnerable groups) states that the Council will in principle support proposals which provide for the following types of accommodation to provide for peoples' needs over a lifetime:

- Extra care homes
- Dementia extra care units
- Enhanced sheltered schemes
- Proposals that allow elderly and those with disabilities to remain in their own homes or purpose built accommodation.

Paragraph 98 of the NPPF states that to provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:

- take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community.

Assessment:

The site lies within the defined settlement limits, and the proposals would deliver a net increase of seven residential units for vulnerable adults. This is compliant with Policy CP2 of the Core Strategy and Policy TB09 of the MDD Local Plan. The development is therefore acceptable in principle.

Character of the Area and Built Heritage:

Glebelands is a grade II listed, former country house designed in a free-Tudor style completed in 1897, the building was subsequently altered and extended in the 20th century, notably by Harry Weedon in the 1950s with a large wing to the north, having been converted for use as a rest and convalescent home in the 1930s. The latter part of the 20th century saw further development with residential buildings of Acorn Drive built within the parkland, Academy House constructed immediately off the main drive and the Broccoli Cloister built and linked to the main house (via the 1950s element) to the north. In addition to the main listed building, the former stables and cottage as well as the lodge are all separately listed as Grade II. Despite all the 20th and 21st century development, Glebelands can still be read and appreciated as a large late Victorian country house set within a verdant and open setting.

Link Extension

The proposed link building would be of modest scale and would clearly read as a 'link', remaining subservient to the main building, Glebelands, as well as the 1950s wing and the Broccoli Cloister, which would continue to be perceived as a separate structure. The elevational treatment, comprising vertical timber cladding and a mansard roof, reflects the character of the host building and complements its context. The fenestration's size, style, and rhythm are well considered, with the mansard roof form providing the required accommodation while ensuring an appropriate design response in the historic setting. Specific architectural details, materials, and finishes can be secured by condition, should permission be granted, to safeguard the special architectural or historic interest of the building.

This element of the proposal would not harm the significance of the designated heritage asset, nor would it detract from the character or appearance of the immediate area. The Council's Built Heritage Officer has raised no objections.

Lift Tower extension

The proposed lift tower is of a scale and design that would sit comfortably against the varied massing and roofscape of the host building. It would not be readily visible within the wider grounds, except through a narrow vista between existing buildings at the far north-western end of the garden. Specific architectural details, materials, and finishes can be secured by condition, should permission be granted, to safeguard the special architectural or historic interest of the building.

This element of the proposal would not harm the significance of the designated heritage asset, nor would it detract from the character or appearance of the

immediate area. The Council's Built Heritage Officer has raised no objections.

Solar PV Panels

A series of solar panels are proposed to be installed on racking systems on the flat roof of the 1950s wing. While solar panels are not features of architectural or historic merit and would not contribute positively to the special interest of the designated heritage asset, their impact in this instance would be limited. The proposed siting, combined with partial screening by the existing parapet wall, would ensure that only minimal views are achievable from ground level. Furthermore, their placement on a later 1950s addition, rather than the historic core of the building, ensures that the integrity and legibility of the principal listed structure is preserved.

Moreover, any limited degree of harm identified would be outweighed by the wider public benefits of introducing an efficient and sustainable source of renewable energy, in line with the objectives of Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy and Policy CC05 of the MDD Local Plan, which seek to promote sustainable development and mitigate climate change.

On balance, the proposed solar panels are therefore considered acceptable and would not cause harm to the special architectural or historic interest of the listed building or its setting.

Overall, as the proposals are set well within the grounds and screened from the public realm, they would not impact the wider character of the area and would not adversely affect the immediate setting or the significance of the designated heritage asset.

Neighbouring Amenity:

The views afforded from the proposed fenestration would be comparable to those from the existing arrangement, with any additional outlook remaining contained within the grounds and well separated away from any neighbouring residential properties. As such, the development would not give rise to any unacceptable overlooking or loss of privacy beyond the current situation.

Given the modest scope of works, which are well away from any residential properties, there are no loss of light or overbearing concerns.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

The Council's Highways Officer has reviewed the application with reference to the WBC Car Parking Standards, which require one space per full-time equivalent staff member and one visitor space per three residents. Based on the proposed resident numbers, a minimum of 18 visitor spaces would be required.

The original plans indicated a total of 54 parking spaces, 11 of which are allocated to the neighbouring Broccoli Cloister development, leaving 43 available for the proposed use. Further clarification was sought regarding staff numbers and parking demand.

Following submission of an updated parking plan on 09/06/2025, the agent confirmed an estimated 25 staff members per shift plus two additional care staff (27 spaces), along with 17 visitor spaces based on the resident numbers, and 11 allocated to Broccoli Cloister. This equates to a total minimum requirement of 55 spaces. The updated plan demonstrates 54 designated spaces, resulting in a shortfall of one space.

It is considered that this minor shortfall would not result in harmful levels of on-street parking, particularly given that the site has capacity to accommodate up to 60 vehicles through the use of informal overflow areas within the wider grounds. In addition, the site's sustainable location close to the town centre provides good access to alternative modes of transport, thereby reducing reliance on private vehicles and overall parking demand.

On this basis, the proposed parking arrangements are considered to be acceptable.

Flooding and Drainage:

The proposed development is in Flood zone 1 according to the Environment Agency mapping with a low risk of surface water flooding.

The Council's Drainage Officer has reviewed the application and raises no objection in principle. However, it is noted that no proposed drainage details have been submitted and no reference has been made to the existing drainage arrangements. The Drainage Officer has subsequently recommended a condition be implemented which secures full details of the drainage system for the proposed development prior to the commencement of development. A suitable condition will be attached to any approval.

Landscape and Trees:

The site is accessed via Woolf Drive, a private road featuring Tree Preservation Order (TPO) 727/1995, T2 to T5, all lime and A1, on all trees alive in 1995. T2 is a veteran tree, number 66473 of the Ancient Tree Inventory (ATI). The cedar categorised as T001 on the arb submissions of this application is Notable, number 66476 of the ATI.

The Council's Trees and Landscape Officer have reviewed the proposal and notes that the tree impacted is the cedar adjacent to the buildings (T001 in the arboricultural submissions). The tree is not visible from public roads. The Officer highlights that the Root Protection Area (RPA) shown is inaccurate, as it does not account for the modern foundations of the adjacent building, the uneven site topography, or the retaining wall. Roots are largely confined to the soft landscaping of the site (see Sections 4.6.2 and 4.6.3 of BS 5837:2010).

The Officer notes that this proposal represents one of several extensions within T001's RPA over more than 80 years, contributing to the tree's decline and recent crown loss. Given the size of the main wound and the extent of root disturbance, continued decline is likely. This risk is heightened by proposed major canopy works, as cedar trees do not respond well to the removal of primary and secondary scaffold

branches. Ongoing branch management will also be required due to the tree's proximity to the buildings. As T001 is already stressed, the Officer does not recommend any changes to the design solely to protect this tree.

The Officer advises that there is adequate space on site for a replacement tree, which should be incorporated into a landscaping plan. A tree protection condition is also recommended to ensure T001 continues to provide local amenity in the short term. Suitable conditions will be attached to any approval.

Ecology:

Bats

The site is located in habitat which matches where bat roosts have previously been found in the borough.

The supporting Preliminary Roost Assessment (John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP , February 2025, ref: R2837_PRA_a) concluded that the development proposals will avoid directly impacting the older sections of the main house and associated buildings at the care home which offer more suitable features for bats. The section of roof to be impacted by the proposals possess no potential roosting opportunities for bats and therefore the removal of roof coverings, and soffits, is considered unlikely to contravene the legislation protecting bats and their roosts.

As such, the proposals are unlikely to adversely affect roosting bats or other protected species.

Great Crested Newts

The application site falls within a red impact risk zone for great crested newts, indicating highly suitable habitat for this species and increased risk of impacts.

A District Licensing Officer on behalf of Nature Space has reviewed this application and notes that there are six ponds within 500 metres of the site, most of which are located within Cantley Park to the north, with the nearest approximately 170 metres from the red line boundary, as shown on the Location Plan. There is a known population of great crested newts within 1 kilometre of the site.

The Officer notes that the submitted Great Crested Newt Statement contains some factual inaccuracies, including the location of ponds and the defined impact risk zone, and that some of the reasoning is questionable. However, the Officer agrees with the overall conclusion that the proposed development is unlikely to affect great crested newts and that no specific mitigation is required. This is due to the small scale of the works, which are confined to renovations within the existing built footprint, and the relative location of the site to relevant ecological features.

While impacts are considered unlikely, given the proximity of ponds and the unknown status of nearby populations, the Officer recommends an informative that reminds the applicant of their responsibility not to deliberately capture, disturb, injure or kill great crested newts. A suitable condition will be attached to any 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.

RECOMMENDATION

Conditions agreed:	Yes
Recommendation:	Approval
Date:	10 April 2025
Earliest date for decision:	26 June 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	22.09.25