

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	251091
Site Address:	Willow Marina, Willow Lane, Wargrave, RG10 8LH
Expiry Date:	26 June 2026
Site Visit Date:	28 May 2025
Proposal: Full application for the proposed installation of 3 no. additional moorings on the East riverbank consisting of 3 no. pontoons to replace the three current linear berths with six parallel berths.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Conservation Area
Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
Scale and Location of Development Proposals
Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone – Amber
Green Belt
Ground Water Zones
Radon Affected Area
Within 8m of River Thames
Landscape Character Assessment
Complete PRow
SSSI Impact Risk Zones
Main Rivers DRN Consultation Zone
Historic Flooding Points Consultation Zone
Flood Zone 3

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 CP7 – Biodiversity CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals CP11 – Proposals Outside Development Limits CP12 – Green Belt
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 – Development Limits CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction CC06 – Noise CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB01 – Development within the Green Belt TB21 – Landscape Character

	TB22 – Sites of Urban Landscape Value TB23 – Biodiversity and Development TB24 – Designated Heritage Assets
Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (JMWP)	DM1 - Sustainable Development DM2 - Climate Change – Mitigation and Adaptation DM3 - Protection of Habitats and Species DM4 - Protection of Designated Landscape DM5 - Protection of the Countryside DM6 - Green Belt DM7 - Conserving the Historic Environment DM9 - Protecting Health, Safety and Amenity DM10 - Flood Risk DM11 - Water Resources DM15 - Site History
Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU)	SS1 – Sustainable development principles SS2 – Spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy SS5 – Development in the countryside SS6 – Development in the Green Belt CE1 – Design principles for efficient buildings CE2 – Environmental standards for non-residential development FD1 – Development and flood risk (from all sources) FD2 – Sustainable drainage FD3 – River corridors and watercourses NE1 – Biodiversity and geodiversity NE2 – Biodiversity net gain NE4 – Trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows NE5 – Landscape and design NE6 – Valued landscapes NE7 – Sites of Urban Landscape Value DH1 – Place making and quality design DH5 – The historic environment HC5 – Environmental protection HC9 – Contaminated land and water
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document Wargrave Parish Design Statement

PLANNING HISTORY		
Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
07107	Storage and repairs... repair to existing roof and walls replacing corrugated iron wall with brick	Approved 11/11/1977
130005	Proposed excavation of 123m x 9.15m area and installation of new fixed jetties to create 17 additional moorings	Approved 15/01/2014
181450	Full application for the proposed change of use of ground and first floor marina building along with	Approved 11/09/2018

	outdoor seating and parking areas to a mixed use as marina and cafe.	
190430	Application for submission of details to comply with the following conditions of planning consent 181450 (Dated 11/09/2018) 3. Accessibility details 4. Cycle parking details 5. Waste storage details	Approved 19/03/2019
191092	Advertisement consent application for 1no. non-illuminated fascia sign, 1no. non-illuminated projecting sign, and 2no. non-illuminated oak framed blackboard A-boards.	Approved 12/07/2019
210538	Full application for the proposed erection of a marquee on a temporary basis for 6 months each year (1st October to 31st March) for storage and repair of boats. (Retrospective)	Approved 27/04/2021
251040	Full application for proposed works at Willow Marina including installation of PV panels and replacement uPVC fenestration, re-cladding of existing buildings and replacement of wall and roof sheeting, plus resurfacing of existing hardstanding and installation of a filtration system.	Approved 18/09/2025
252565	Full planning application for the erection of a temporary marquee, to be sited between 1st October and 31st March in each calendar year, for the purposes of ancillary boat storage and repair.	Approved 10/06/2026

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Environmental Health – No objection
WBC Drainage – No objection subject to conditions
WBC Economic Prosperity & Place – No comments received
WBC Built Heritage Officer – No objection
WBC Ecology – No objection

External

South Oxfordshire District Council – No comments received
The Environment Agency – No objection

REPRESENTATIONS

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

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site is located adjacent to the River Thames, in close proximity to the settlement of Wargrave, which is located just to the south of the site. To the east of the site is Hennerton Backwater, and to the north-west of the site is Lower Shiplake. The site is located within the Wargrave Conservation Area and within land designated as Countryside.

Description of Development:

This application seeks permission for the replacement of three linear berths with six parallel berths. This will extend the current line of moorings by adding three new fingers on the site's eastern bank.

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 outside of settlement limits and as such the development should be acceptable providing that it complies with the principles stated in the Core Strategy. Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy states that proposals outside of development limits will not normally be permitted except where it does not result in an inappropriate increase in scale, form or footprint of the original building. 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.

Given the nature of the proposal as operational works associated with an existing marina use, the principal policy issues are whether the proposal is acceptable in countryside and Green Belt terms, and whether its scale and design would preserve openness and avoid harm to character, amenity, heritage, ecology and flood risk.

Development within the Green Belt:

The application site is located within designated Green Belt and outside of settlement limits in the open Countryside. The government attaches great importance to Green Belts with national policies for the protection of Green Belt land covered by Chapter 13 of NPPF. Paragraph 142 of the NPPF states that, "The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence". Paragraph 143 of the NPPF states that the Green Belt serves 5 purposes, the one most relevant to this proposal is, "c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment".

Paragraph 153 of the NPPF states that, "Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances". When considering any planning application, LPAs must ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its

openness. Paragraph 153 further states that, “Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of its inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.”

Paragraph 154 of the NPPF states that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless one of eight exceptions applies. In this case, the most relevant exception is “b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use), including buildings, for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it”.

This application is seeking permission to provide three additional boat moorings. The additional boat moorings are directly tied in with the existing use of the land, and they would facilitate further outdoor recreation. Therefore, the proposal demonstrates that it complies with exception ‘b)’ of Paragraph 154 of the NPPF and this means that the development can be considered as appropriate. Additionally, the proposal would not limit the Green Belt’s ability to serve the five purposes laid out within Paragraph 143 of the NPPF, and in particular there would be no risk to the countryside from encroachment.

Overall, the application poses no harm to the countryside and Green Belt setting and the proposal therefore complies with Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy.

Character of the Area:

The proposed installation of three new finger moorings will extend the existing line of moorings by replacing three linear berths with six parallel berths. Given the location of the new moorings, it is not deemed that they would cause any harm to the character of the area as they are well contained within the site and would only be visible from limited views from the public realm.

Neighbouring Amenity:

The proposed works are well contained within the site, and they would not adversely impact upon neighbours. Additionally, it is not deemed that an additional 3 moorings would result in any noticeable increase in noise or other disturbances. As such, there is no concerns with regards to neighbouring amenity.

Built Heritage:

The application site lies within the Wargrave Conservation area and the wider setting of the Grade II listed buildings Chapel House and Woodclyffe Cottage, which are slightly further up the Henley Road.

The Council’s Built Heritage Officer was consulted on this application and they find that given the extant and long-established nature of the marina, the re-arrangement of berths would have a negligible impact upon the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Similarly, whilst there may be slight intervisibility between Chapel House and the berths, the change is negligible to the setting and thus it would result in no impact to the significance of the designated heritage asset.

Flooding and Drainage:

The Council's Drainage Officer was consulted on this application. They have stated that the proposal is for works along the riverbank of a main river, which falls within the Environment Agency's remit. An Environment Agency permit, EPR/RB3399JC, dated 18/10/2024, was issued on 22/10/2024.

Section 11 of the Environmental Risk Assessment report states that the works will be carried out from a barge/boat and that waste from the work will be disposed of using a licensed facility. Based on this, the Council's Drainage Officer has no objection to the principle of the development but have suggested a condition that the works are carried out in accordance with the Environment Agency permit referred to above. Accordingly, this condition is recommended.

Having regard to the limited nature of the works, their location within an existing marina, the submitted Environmental Risk Assessment, and the Environment Agency's no-objection response, officers are satisfied that the proposal would not give rise to unacceptable flood risk, drainage or river corridor impacts in planning terms.

Ecology and BNG:

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal report was submitted in support of this application. The Council's Ecology Officer was consulted on this application, and they are satisfied that sufficient survey information has been submitted for the local planning authority to consider the impact of the proposal on protected species and habitats. Following their review, they are happy to recommend that the proposal is unlikely to cause harm to protected species or habitats.

The initial comments provided by the Ecology Officer identified that a revised BNG baseline assessment was required prior to determination of the application. A revised BNG baseline assessment was received by the LPA on 16th October 2025, and this provided a baseline assessment of watercourse units and only includes assessment details of the area proposed for works, as opposed to the entire site.

The revised BNG metric indicates that the biodiversity net gain percentage has decreased from a -2.24% net loss in habitat units to a -70% net loss of habitat units and a -8% loss of watercourse units. The increase in net loss is due to the area of the application site being reduced to show only the area of works. The applicant's ecologist has shown that the off-site creation of units will require unfeasible commitments and as such they have suggested the purchase of BNG units. This aligns with the gain hierarchy as watercourse habitat is of medium distinctiveness, half of the watercourse area is to be retained, the enhancement and creation of habitat would be difficult due to the location of the application site and the use of the land, and as such it is deemed that justification has been provided for the purchase of the units.

The applicant will need to submit evidence of purchase of BNG units in order to comply with the Statutory Biodiversity Net Gain obligation. For the avoidance of doubt, the proposal will need to comply with the statutory biodiversity gain condition (unless exempt), and no development may lawfully commence until the biodiversity gain requirements have been satisfied through the approved post-permission process.

WBC Environmental Health:

The Council's Environmental Health Officer initially commented on this application stating that they had no objection to the proposal subject to a condition requiring the submission of a construction method statement. The applicant decided to submit the information upfront as part of the application. The Environmental Health Officer reviewed the submitted CMS and as such they now have no objection to the proposal. A condition is recommended to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the measures contained within the CMS.

Environment Agency:

The Environment Agency were consulted on this application and they have stated that the ecological enhancements proposed will require a management plan to be in place to ensure the landscape provides a maximum benefit to people and the environment. Therefore, the EA deem that the proposed development is only acceptable subject to a planning condition require a landscape management scheme to be submitted.

Following receipt of further information to address the EA's suggested condition, which included a Revised Environment Risk Assessment, Landscape Detailed drawing, and detail of the proposed species mix, the EA confirmed that they can withdraw their request for the recommended condition.

Conclusion:

In the planning balance, officers attach significant weight to the proposal being ancillary to an established marina use and acceptable in Green Belt terms, and note that the identified impacts on character, amenity and heritage are limited/negligible and can be appropriately controlled through the recommended conditions and statutory biodiversity gain requirements. Hence, for the reasons stated above, the proposal is acceptable in local plan policy terms and therefore is recommended for approval.

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.

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.

RECOMMENDATION

Conditions agreed:	Not Required
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Recommendation:	Approve
Date:	24 June 2026
Earliest date for decision:	29 July 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	24/06/26

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS
(see above in report)