

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	242895
Site Address:	Crendon Building, Hennerton Golf Club, Crazies Hill, Wargrave, RG10 8LT
Expiry Date:	24 January 2025
Site Visit Date:	9 January 2025
Proposal: Full application for proposed change of use of existing building to facilitate a training room, office, display room and a barber treatment room (Retrospective).	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Badger Setts Consultation Zones
Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
Scale and Location of Development Proposals - Countryside
Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone
Green Belt
Ground Water Zones
Radon Affected Area
Landscape Character Assessment Area
SSSI Impact Risk Zones
JCEB Mineral Safeguarding Areas

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 CP15 – Employment Development
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 – Development Limits CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction TB01 – Development within the Green Belt TB21 – Landscape Character TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (JMWP)	The JMWP does not apply to this scale of application.

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
35041	Change of use from farm lane to golf course *This was granted permission on appeal in May 1990	Refused 07/03/1990
031418	Proposed change of use of land from agricultural to form extension to existing 9 hole golf course to form 18 holes.	Approved 01/10/2003
041774	Proposed replacement of 6.5m high driving range fence with 10m high safety netting. Retrospective.	Approved 02/09/2004
071786	Proposed erection of extension to clubhouse, replacement green keeping facility and removal of 7 car parking spaces.	Refused 18/06/2007
082469	Proposed erection of single storey side extension to clubhouse and re-roofing of spike bar and conservatory	Refused 12/02/2009
092151	Proposed erection of single storey side extension to clubhouse and re-roofing of spike bar and conservatory.	Approved 31/03/2009

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Highways – No objection
WBC Ecology Newts – No objection
WBC Ecology – No comments received

External

Binfield Badger Group – No comments received

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	No comments received
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	One neighbour has objected to this application and their comments are summarised below: The window showroom is a breach of planning policy relating to the Green Belt.

	<i>Officer comments: The impact on the Green Belt will be assessed within the main report.</i> • The retail use does not support the local economy. <i>Officer comments: The retail spaces are used by local businesses, and it is deemed that this does support the local economy.</i> • The use has been in place since 2023. <i>Officer comments: This is noted. The application is identified as being retrospective.</i> • The indoor leisure use is a breach of planning policy and is an intensification of the use of the site. <i>Officer comments: The impacts of the uses will be assessed within the main report.</i> • There is no golf coaching taking place. <i>Officer comments: This is anecdotal evidence. Regardless, whether the building is currently being used for golf coaching or not is not consequential to assessment of the application. Hence, this is not a material planning consideration.</i> • Users of the gym can access the bar in the clubhouse, and this breaches the terms of the liquor licence. <i>Officer comments: This is not a material planning consideration.</i> • The submitted site definition and ownership details appear to be incorrect. <i>Officer comments: This has been raised with the agent/applicant, and it has been confirmed that the submitted information is correct.</i>
--	---

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

Hennerton Golf Club is located approximately 3km to the south-east of Henley on Thames and approximately 1km to the north of Wargrave. The golf club was established in 1992, and it received permission to expand from 9 holes to 18 in 2003. The site also features a driving range and a club house that was expanded on in 2009.

The building in question for this application is located on the northern edge of the site and is attached to the back of the driving range shelter, to the east of the car park. The applicant has advised opening hours would be variable between the three uses. The existing golf club has no restrictions to operating hours in planning terms.

Proposal:

This application seeks permission to change the use of the existing building located to the north-east of the car park for the golf club. The building was originally used as a golf shop, and as offices for the golf club. The building now currently serves three different uses. Firstly, a training room where a personal trainer carries out 1 to 1 tuitions and training regimes with their clients. Secondly, in the area previously used as offices, there is now an office and display area for a local firm of joiners/builders. This features an administrative desk and a number of full-scale models of their previous work. This

office is not manned daily, but people are able to enter the display area when the golf course is open. Thirdly, there is a small room on the northern side of the building that is set up as a barber and treatment room.

There is no change to the driving range shelter which is attached to the east of the building in question, and no external works have taken place to facilitate the new activities.

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.

Development within the Green Belt and Countryside:

The application site is located within designate Green Belt and is outside of settlement limits within 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 the National Planning Policy Framework (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 performance". 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. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of 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 the following exceptions applies:"

*h) Other forms of development provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.
These are:*

iv. The re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction

MDD Local Plan Policy TB01 states that development proposals will only be permitted where they maintain the openness of, and do not conflict the purposes of including land in, the Green Belt.

As the site is outside of settlement limits, Core Strategy Policy CP11 is also relevant which states that development will not normally be permitted unless it meets the following exceptions:

- 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 contained within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion, or in the case of replacement buildings would bring about environmental improvement*

Whilst there is no explicit definition of a 'rural enterprise' within planning policy, Paragraph 88 of the NPPF is useful in clarifying that planning policies and decision should enable "the sustainable growth and expansions of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed, new buildings". Therefore, it would be unreasonable to limit the interpretation of 'rural enterprise' to not include those which are located and operate in rural locations such as this. As such, it is not considered that the economic approach of the NPPF would directly conflict with the economic objectives of Policy CP11.

This application is seeking retrospective permission for the change of use of the existing building that was used as a golf shop and offices to three different uses that fall within the wide scoping of Use Class E. The proposed change of use is re-using a building of permanent and substantial construction and therefore the development proposed would not be considered inappropriate as it is aligned with Paragraph 154 h) iv. of the NPPF. Additionally, there is no expansion of development away from the original buildings, thus showing compliance with Policy CP11.

Overall, the proposed change of use would support the sustainable growth of businesses within rural areas through the conversion of an existing building. The proposal is not inappropriate development within the Green Belt by definition.

In visual and spatial terms, there would also be no impact on the openness of the Green Belt as no physical development works are proposed. Similarly, there would be no impact on the countryside in terms of encroachment away from existing built forms. Hence, the proposal complies with MDD Local Plan policy TB01, Core Strategy CP11 and with the relevant Green Belt guidance contained within the NPPF.

Character of the Area:

No external works are proposed to the existing building and the parking all already exists. It is therefore not considered that the proposed change of use of the existing building would have a negative impact upon the character of the area.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Due to the building's location on the site approx. 90m away from the nearest residential property (Coachmans Cottage), and as no physical changes are proposed to the building, there would be no detrimental impact on neighbouring amenities in terms of noise or other impacts.

Highways Access and Parking Provision:

The WBC Highways officer does not consider that the proposed change of use would have a significant impact on traffic or parking demand. They also deem that the existing access arrangements are acceptable. The application site is set well back along a private drive within the grounds of the golf club and as such there would be no adverse impact on the public highway.

The proposed uses include 1:1 personal trainer sessions, a barbers chair and an office/showroom. It is considered that some of these uses would be shared with trips already being made to the golf club. The existing golf club car park (106 spaces) is considered to have sufficient capacity to accommodate the relatively low level of use associated with the proposed uses.

Conclusion:

For the reasons stated above, the proposal is acceptable in local plan policy terms and therefore is recommended for 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:	Not required
Recommendation:	Approve
Date:	30 January 2025
Earliest date for decision:	23 December 2024

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
---	---

Date:	30/01/25
--------------	----------