

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Application Number:	252055
Site Address:	Lindisfarne, Wargrave Road, Remenham, Wokingham, RG10 8PE
Expiry Date:	18 December 2025
Site Visit Date:	29 April 2025
Proposal: Full application for erection of 1no. five-bedroom detached self-build dwelling, pool house, open-sided car port and vehicle gate following demolition of existing dwelling with associated landscaping and car parking.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS

Green Routes and Riverside Paths
 Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
 Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone – Green Risk Zone
 Green Belt
 Ground Water Zones
 Radon Affected Area
 Within 8m of River Thames
 Landscape Character Assessment Area
 SSSI Impact Risk Zones
 Green Routes and Riverside Paths Consultation Zone
 Main Rivers DRN Consultation Zone
 Ordinary Watercourses Consultation Zone
 Listed Building Buffer Zone
 Flood Zones 2 and 3

PLANNING POLICY

National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
Core Strategy (CS)	CP1 – Sustainable Development CP2 – Inclusive Communities CP3 – General Principles for Development CP4 – Infrastructure Requirements CP5 – Housing Mix, Density and Affordability CP6 – Managing Travel Demand 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

	CC05 – Renewable Energy and Decentralised Energy Networks CC06 – Noise CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB01 – Development within the Green Belt TB07 – Internal Space Standards TB21 – Landscape Character TB22 – Sites of Urban Landscape Value TB23 – Biodiversity and Development TB24 – Designated Heritage Assets
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 SS16 – Safeguarded routes CE1 – Design principles for efficient buildings CE3 – Environmental standards for residential development CE4 – Supporting a circular economy CE5 – Embodies carbon CE7 – Low carbon and renewable energy generation CE8 – Protecting renewable energy generation C2 – Mitigation of transport impacts and highway safety and design C4 – Green and blue infrastructure and public rights of way C5 – Parking and electric vehicle charging H6 – Self-build and custom build 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 DH1 – Place making and quality design DH2 – Safeguarding amenity DH5 – The historic environment HC5 – Environmental protection HC6 – Air pollution and air quality HC7 – Light pollution HC8 – Noise pollution HC9 – Contaminated land and water HC10 – Odor, fumes and dust
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
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10762	Two storey extension and garage	Approved 08/06/1979
29966	Extension and alterations to provide an annexe and addition of kitchen cloakroom and ensuite bathroom to master bedroom.	Approved 06/07/1988
31591	Extension and alteration to provide an annexe	Approved 23/12/1988

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Environmental Health – No comments received
WBC Drainage – No objections
WBC Highways – No objections subject to condition(s)
WBC Landscape and Trees – No objections subject to condition(s)
WBC Built Heritage Officer – No objections subject to condition(s)
WBC CIL – Development is CIL liable, but acknowledge self build nature of the scheme
WBC Ecology – No objections subject to condition(s)
WBC Waste Services – No comments received

External

Environment Agency – No objections subject to condition(s)

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	Wargrave Parish Council objects to the application due to the disproportionate development in the Green Belt.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	No comments received

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site consists of a large, detached dwelling presumed to be of mid-20th century construction. The dwelling is sited relatively centrally in the plot and is accessed via a long, winding driveway from Henley Road to the east which dramatically slopes westwards into the site.

As mentioned above, the site's topography experiences significant changes in levels as you head westwards. In particular, the rear elevation of the dwelling faces onto the garden which drastically drops in levels westwards towards the Hennerton Backwater. On the opposite site of the bank lies Wargrave Marsh, a Local Wildlife Site.

The site is located within the designated Green Belt/Countryside and consequently the character of the locale is comprised of a limited number of large, detached dwellings located within generous plots. The site's natural surroundings are both dense and verdant in nature, with the Hennerton backwater providing a tranquil, rural

feel to the site's character. Further to this, the site lies adjacent to the Grade II* Listed Park Place Historic Park and Garden.

The application site is almost completely obscured from view from Henley Road to the east due to the changes in ground levels. However, due to the changes in levels to the west, the dwellinghouse is very visually prominent from the Hennerton Backwater which attracts a variety of users such as boats, kayaks/canoes and paddleboarders.

Lastly, due to the site's immediate proximity to the Hennerton Backwater, the site's western garden is located within Flood Zone 3, with small areas of the rear patio within Flood Zone 2. The eastern side of the site where the dwelling is located is within Flood Zone 1 due to the substantial change in levels between it and the backwater.

Proposal Description:

This application seeks approval for the proposed demolition of the existing dwelling and the erection of a replacement, self-build detached dwelling. Other elements of the proposals include the erection of a pool house building and an open-ended car port.

Principle of Development:

Policy Context:

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.

Local Plan Update (LPU):

The Council are progressing with their Local Plan Update (LPU) which has progressed beyond the Proposed Submission Plan (Regulation 19) stage, with representations received on the plan's legal compliance and soundness between 30 September and 13 November 2024.

The Proposed Submission Plan (Regulation 19) consultation has now closed and the Council have now analysed the representations received. The Regulation 22 plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination in February 2025, and two Planning Inspectors have been appointed to examine (EiP) the plan. The examination of the local plan is ongoing, with the formal hearings with the Inspector scheduled for November 2025.

As seen in High Court judgements, even when an emerging plan is at an advanced stage, it may still attract limited weight if further consultation and modifications are required, and the Inspector has yet to issue a final report. Wokingham's LPU has several stages yet to be completed, including and the examination hearings and main modifications stages, which restricts the weight that can currently be afforded to non-substantive.

The Council however acknowledge that there are unresolved objections on

substantive grounds pursuant on the majority of relevant policies listed below in appendix 1, meaning weight attracted to these policies is limited.

Green Belt:

Policy CP12 of the Core Strategy refers to national policy to enforce its aims, therefore attention turns to the 2024 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

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 153 of the NPPF states that when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness. 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 provides a list for exceptions for development that can be considered appropriate in the Green Belt. Of particular relevance to the replacement of the dwelling is section d), which reads:

- d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;

With regards to the swimming pool and car port, section g) is applicable which reads as follows:

- g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land (including a material change of use to residential or mixed use including residential), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

Each relevant section will be addressed in turn below.

Replacement Dwelling (Section d):

The proposed replacement dwelling would be sited on a very similar footprint to the existing dwelling, reducing the encroachment of buildings eastwards but ultimately increasing the massing at ground and first floor levels. The dwelling would have a hip/crown roof form, with the central section characterised by gable roof forms and an array of fenestration to the rear. The two 'wings' are proposed to be set down from the central element and include two balconies to the rear of the property.

The applicant has provided a breakdown of the comparisons between the existing and proposed dwellings in terms of footprint, volume, floorspace and ridge height.

	Existing	Pre-application submission 250917	Proposed
Footprint (GIA)	255.15m ²	281.82m ² 10.4% increase	272.25m ² 6.7% increase
Volume	1457m ³	2089m ³ 43.4% increase	2051m ³ 40.8% increase (Pool house and car port amount to a total of 552.25m ³)
Floorspace (GIA)	404.65m ²	563.64m ² 39.3% increase	522.4m ² 29.1% increase (Pool house and car port amount to a total of 177.25m ²)
Ridge Height	7.85m	8.6m (side elements) and 9m (main ridge)	7.7m (side elements) and 8.1m (main ridge) (Pool house and car port are 3m high)

The important assessment here is whether the replacement dwelling is ‘materially’ larger than the existing. What is considered material is not defined by local or national policy and it is ultimately assessed based on the context of the relevant site.

With regards to the replacement dwelling’s footprint, the 6.7% increase is considered negligible in the context of the site as the proposals would concentrate the development more centrally within the site and thus reduces the footprint of development eastwards and across the site generally. Therefore, the footprint increase would not be considered materially larger.

Turning to the volume and floorspace increases, 40.8% and 29.1% increases are relatively significant in the context of the application site but as outlined above, the increases are a result of a concentration of development more centrally within the site, largely facilitated by the increase in massing at first floor level. Overall, the replacement dwelling would remain within the original development envelope. The spatial harm to the openness of the Green Belt would be minor as a result and visually views of the dwelling from Wargrave Road are completely obscured by the vegetated boundaries and dramatic changes in ground levels.

Turning to the height of the property, the two wings would be 0.15 metres shorter than the original dwelling (7.7 metres), but the main central element would have a

ridge height of 8.1 metres, an increase of 0.25 metres. While the central element would be marginally larger than the original dwelling, the height increases are not considered to be materially impactful on the openness of the Green Belt. The only public views available of the property are from the Hennerton Backwater, where the changes in ground levels already make the existing property a visually prominent feature in the landscape, a level of prominence that would not be materially affected by the replacement dwelling.

In summary, the proposed dwelling is considered to comply with paragraph 154 of the NPPF, insofar that it is not considered materially larger than the existing dwelling it would replace.

Swimming Pool and Car Port (Section g):

With regards to the car port, it would be a modest flat roofed single storey structure that would be sited immediately adjacent to the dwelling's south-eastern elevation on an area of existing hardstanding.

The threshold for section g) is whether the development of previously developed land would cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt. Given the very modest scale of the car port, its open-ended nature and the fact it would share a close spatial relationship with the replacement, it is not considered that its erection would cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

With regards to the pool house, it is a rather elongated structure but would maintain the same height as the car port and would have a modest flat roof form, reducing its visual prominence. The pool house would be located on a historic external courtyard and is well screened from both the roadside and from the Hennerton Backwater. The footprint of the building is notable, but its close spatial relationship with the main dwelling would limit any excessive encroachment. Overall, it is not considered that the pool house's erection would cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

Countryside:

The site lies within the Countryside as designated in the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy. Core Strategy policy CP11 states, in order to protect the separate identity of settlements and maintain the quality of the environment, proposals outside of development limits will not normally be permitted except in certain circumstances. This criteria is as follows:

- 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; or
- 4) In the case of residential extensions, does not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building;
- 5) In the case of replacement dwellings the proposal must:

- i) Bring about environmental improvements;
- or ii) Not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building.
- 6) Essential community facilities cannot be accommodated within development limits or through the re-use/replacement of an existing building;
- 7) Affordable housing on rural exception sites in line with CP9.

Criterion 5 of CP11 is relevant to the replacement dwelling. As per the above assessment in relation to the Green Belt, it is not considered that the proposal would result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building. Environmental improvements will be appropriately secured via condition in the form of biodiversity enhancements and landscaping provision.

Criterion 4 of CP11 is relevant to the pool house and car port; due to their modest scale close spatial relationship with the main dwelling, they are not considered to result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original buildings on site.

As a result of the above, the development is considered compliant with CP11 of the Core Strategy.

Character of the Area/Heritage:

Policy Context:

Paragraph 187(b) of the NPPF requires that planning applications enhance the natural and local environment by 'recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.'

Policy CP11 supports development in the countryside only where it maintains the high quality of the rural environment. Policy CP1(1) similarly only supports development that maintains or enhances the high quality of the environment, with policy CP3 supporting development of an appropriate mass, layout, built form, height and character to the area CP3(a) and which makes a positive contribution to the sense of place contributes to the buildings and spaces themselves and in the way they integrate with their surroundings CP3(f).

The Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document provides further guidance for developers with general guidance that development should respond positively to its site and local context (G1) and respond positively to the local character of the area (G2).

The National Design Guide section B1, paragraph 67 also states that the built form of well-designed places should relate well to:

- the site, its context and the opportunities they present;
- the proposed identity and character for the development in the wider place;

Assessment:

The site lies with the setting of the Grade II listed Ivy Cottage, a Romantic Georgian sham ruin, Ford House (also known as Old Ford House) which is understood to be

formed from the Tea House for Hennerton House along the separately listed associated boathouse/bathing house. The site also lies within the setting of the Grade II* Registered Park & Garden of Park Place and Temple Combe – however, more specifically, the site, whilst outside the boundary of the RPG is likely to be associated with the setting of Temple Combe due to the proximity of Ivy Cottage (Lodge) which formed an eye-catcher for the estate.

Lindisfarne's original design, whilst relatively plain and simple, is – or more specifically was – uncontentious, a fairly typical post-war villa, modest in proportion and appearance. It has a fairly recessive character resulting in a relatively subtle contribution to the setting of the neighbouring heritage assets and the overall area's character.

The replacement dwelling would maintain a legibly linear and symmetrical design with a crown to roof form. Material choices vary between facing brick which primarily characterises the frontage (with the exception of two white rendered gable protrusions), whereas the rear elevation is characterised by an array of white render and expansive fenestration, akin with the appearance of boat houses when seen from the river. The front porch would be comprised of timber, with the windows designs on the frontage/side elevations consisting of Victorian style white sliding sash windows.

The proposed design incorporates several traditional architectural features that are welcomed, namely the window designs, slate roof and the use of facing brick, broken up with white rendered elements that are reminiscent of the existing dwelling. The 'boat house' appearance to the rear is also a feature that is in-keeping with the site's surroundings and proximity to the river. Both the Case and Built Heritage Officers agree that the dwelling's architectural design and appearance is not out of keeping with dwellinghouses along Wargrave Road and further afield and would have an acceptable impact on the character of the area, as well as no notable impacts on nearby heritage assets.

The pool house would be a non-offensive feature within the landscape, assisted by its orientation which would mean that its length would be obscured by any notable public viewpoints. Similarly, the car port would be a modest structure that would not be visually prominent within the landscape, assisted by its open-ended nature. The use of red facing brick for the elevations of both buildings would provide a feeling of architectural continuity and symmetry with the host dwelling which is welcomed.

With regards to the vehicle gate, it would have a mixed infill design and a height of 2.1 metres, with the materials consisting of light oak. 2.1-metre-tall brick pillars would be located either side of the gate, utilising the same bricks that are proposed to be used for the replacement dwelling. The gate is well set back from the roadside and is reflective of similar vehicle gates seen along Wargrave Road. It would therefore have an acceptable impact on the character of the area.

The applicant has presented several choices for potential material choices (brick, render, window design etc) but has not decided on a specific approach. Therefore, a condition will be imposed requiring final details of the materials to be submitted prior to development proceeding above slab level.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Given the substantial separation distances between the site and neighbouring residential sites, there are no anticipated adverse neighbouring amenity impacts.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

The existing site access will be utilised and this is considered acceptable. The access is already surfaced with a hard bound material. The proposed gates are set back 6.0m from the edge of the carriageway and this enables vehicles to pull clear of the carriageway.

The level of parking also meets WBC parking standards and is acceptable.

Subject to conditions, WBC Highways have no objections to the proposals.

Amenity Space:

The proposals would not harm the usability of the site's external amenity space.

Flooding and Drainage:**Fluvial Flood Risk**

Whilst the rear garden of the site is located within Flood Zones 2 and 3 due to their proximity to the Hennerton Backwater, the dwelling itself is located within Flood Zone 1 due to the substantial change in land levels.

The Environment Agency were consulted on this application, having reviewed the submitted Flood Risk Assessment (Lanmor Consulting, August 2025, ref: 251966/FRA/IN/RS/01).

The Environment Agency raise no objections to the development of fluvial flooding grounds, subject to a condition which restricts any built development within the 1% AEP plus 35% climate change flood extent in accordance with section 6.2.1 and drawing ref 251966-FRA-01 of the submitted FRA.

Surface Water Drainage:

The application is supported by a surface water drainage strategy, which has been reviewed by WBC Drainage. WBC Drainage raise no objections to the approach, subject to compliance with the strategy secured via condition.

Landscape and Trees:

The application site is located within Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (WBLCA 2019) - Area D1 'Remenham Wooded Chalk Slopes' a high quality landscape with high sensitivity and the lowest capacity for change.

Key characteristics of D1 include dramatic chalk slopes and cliffs rising sharply from valley floodplain of the river Thames, heavily wooded character created by woodland blanketing the steepest slopes, sparse settlement pattern of hamlets and country houses, sense of peacefulness. Key issues affecting the D1 LCA include effects of climate change and management affecting trees and woodlands, hedgerow loss and fragmentation of species rich grassland. Pressure from residential development is also an issue.

The landscape Strategy of LCA D1 is to conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape and sense of place, key aspects to be conserved and actively managed are the extensive woodland, restore and strengthen the hedgerow network and manage / increase the extent of valuable chalk downland.

Based on the above assessment, the proposed development is considered to adequately align with the development strategy for the LCA, maintaining the distinctive landscape characteristics of its surroundings. Compliance with TB21 of the MDD Local Plan is therefore achieved.

There are no protected trees on the site, but there are woodland copses to the north-east and southern parts of the sites within which there are single mature tree specimens.

An Arboricultural statement has been provided with this application (Mark Welby Consulting Arborists, 8th August 2025).

It is proposed to remove 1 tree to facilitate development and a further 6 'U' category trees for reasons of good arboricultural practice. Tree pruning to proposed to tree T48 to provide construction clearance, an area of ancillary parking to the SE of the house will be improved / widened using a No Dig style approach which is acceptable. A Tree Protection Plan is included at the end of the report – MW.2507.LWR.TPP which also is acceptable and complies with Policy CC03 of the MDD Local Plan.

An Arboricultural Method Statement will be required to ensure the works do not harm retained vegetation adjacent to or within the application site during the construction of the proposals. This will be imposed as a condition.

Similarly, to enhance the proposals' siting within its verdant/rural surroundings, a landscaping scheme will be conditioned and required prior to the commencement of development.

Ecology:

Biodiversity Net Gain

This application is exempt from 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.

As this is proposed development is exempts from Statutory Biodiversity Net Gain, it does not have to provide a 10% net gain of habitat and hedgerow units on site.

Protected Species

All other protected species referred to in the PEA are of no concern, except for Bats, Badgers, Reptiles and birds, all of which mitigation measures and conditions are discussed below.

Bats

The Bat Survey Report provide clear photographic evidence of the roosting potentially of the Application site and adheres to up-to-date guidelines. The Bat Survey Report indicates sufficient survey effort has been undertaken for the local planning authority

to be able to consider the impact of the proposed development on bats.

The residential building was confirmed to have a Day Roost for two soprano pipistrelle bats in the space between the roof tiles and the soffit on the south-eastern corner of the house. WBC Ecology agree with the classification of the roost based on the evidence provided.

The Residential building is proposed to be demolished with the resultant destruction of a soprano bat roost. A derogation licence will be required from Natural England. WBC Ecology recommend to the local planning authority that a licence is likely to be granted by Natural England.

WBC Ecology recommend that a CEMP condition is applied to demonstrate that a licence has been obtained and show the mitigation and compensation requirements of the licence in conjunction with other relevant mitigation measures during construction. The CEMP should include the Bat Mitigation Plan details as outlined within the section 6 of the Bat Survey Report.

Given that the building contains a day roost and that the Bat Survey Report provides clear evidence that the application site—including the wider landholding not proposed for development—offers important commuting and foraging habitat for a range of bat species, as well as being adjacent to further suitable habitat, and noting the applicant's ecologist's proposal to install bat boxes as an enhancement measure, WBC Ecology recommend that a condition in accordance with British Standard 42020:2013 be attached to secure external lighting mitigation for light-sensitive species. This will ensure the retention of dark corridors that allow bats to commute safely to and from their roosts. The sensitive lighting plan should be in accordance with Bat Conservation Trust and ILP guidance.

Birds

The PEA notes that evidence of nesting birds have been recorded within the boat house of the application Site. Although the boat house is not be demolished, this is an indicator that nesting birds are present within the application site. The PEA recognises that the extended ownership of the site offers nesting bird opportunities on the contrary to the Application Site, the area of demolishment, is described as negligible for nesting birds, and no mitigation for birds has been prescribed.

However, according to the Arboricultural Report, six trees are to be removed, all of which have the potential to offer suitable nesting habitat. Wild birds and their nests are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 making it illegal to damage or destroy wild birds nests while being used or built and cause any injury to the species.

As removal of trees has the potential to harm nesting birds, mitigation is required. Mitigation measures such as ensuring vegetation removal takes place outside of nesting bird season from March to September inclusive, although due to climate change, nesting periods can vary. Additionally, if works are to place within bird nesting season, an Ecological Clerk of Works will be required to assess the vegetation and check for nesting birds before vegetation removal. WBC Ecology recommend securing mitigation measures for birds with use of a planning condition, a

CEMP: Biodiversity, the mitigation measures should be described in detail to ensure birds and their nests are not injured, align with national legislation.

Reptiles

The PEA indicates that the Extended Ownership of the site provides sub-optimal habitat for a range of reptiles, including grass snake and slow worms. Both slow worm and grass snake are a national and Wokingham species of priority importance. The Application Site is considered of negligible importance according to the application ecologist as the site itself includes modified grassland and hardstanding, of which I agree.

However, the application ecologist described the Extended Ownership land as sub-optimal, which WBC Ecology disagree with, the habitats provided on site such as the deciduous woodland and scrub margins, all of which are in close proximity to a Fen will make for optimal habitat for grass snakes and slow worms. As there is an increased likelihood for reptiles to be present across the site, although most likely within the extended ownership which is not to be demolished, WBC Ecology believe a tool-box talk will need to be provided on site. As an EcOW is required for vegetation removal with regards to bird and bat mitigation, a toolbox talk can be provided at the same time therefore should not be an inconvenience. Details of the toolbox talk should be secured as a part of the CEMP Condition.

Priority and Irreplaceable habitats

The deciduous woodland on site is a national and Wokingham priority habitat of principal importance. Construction of the proposed pool house could degrade this habitat through dust generation and deposition within the woodland. This issue was identified in the PEA, which recommended a Dust Strategy—a measure WBC Ecology support. The Dust Strategy should be secured through the CEMP condition and must take account of the River Thames along the western boundary and the adjacent fen. Fens are irreplaceable habitats protected under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 and the Irreplaceable Habitat Regulations 2024, which require developers to minimise adverse impacts. To comply with national legislation, the Dust Strategy must provide details of how run-off will be contained to avoid contaminating or degrading the river and habitat, if water is used for the dust strategy.

A sensitive lighting design has already been recommended through a planning condition to protect bat commuting and foraging routes. The fen, deciduous woodland, and river should also be designated as a dark corridor to ensure these habitats—and the species that depend on them—are not adversely affected by the development.

Invasive species

Himalayan balsam has been identified on site. This species is listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, making it an offence to cause its release or allow it to spread in the wild. Responsibility for its control lies with the landowner. Although the plants occur outside the demolition footprint, they remain within the extended ownership boundary and should therefore be removed as part of the development. WBC Ecology recommend securing the removal of this species through a CEMP condition, detailing the required eradication measures and procedures to prevent contamination or further spread. All works should be undertaken by a

licensed contractor.

Biodiversity Enhancements

The ecologist proposes for an installation of a Forticrete bat box, as shown in Appendix 7: Mitigation of the Bat Survey Plan. This is in addition to the 1FF Schwegler Bat Box or similar that is to be put onto a suitable tree within the site which is required for mitigation purposes for the soprano bat roost. The 1FF Schwegler and Forticrete Bat Box are to be inspected after construction and before occupancy to ensure the compensated bat roost is implemented correctly. WBC Ecology recommend securing the bat box enhancements with a Species Compensation and Enhancement condition to ensure the roost is correctly implemented and compensated for, in line with national legislation and Wokingham Core Strategy, policy CP7: Biodiversity.

In accordance with Wokingham Borough Development Plan, Policy TB23: Biodiversity and Development, paragraph a) the development should demonstrate provision of new opportunities and incorporation of new biodiversity features, of which this development will provide with the suggestion of implementing bat and bird boxes to be installed within suitable trees of the extended ownership area. In addition to this, the Bat Survey Plan Appendix 8: Biodiversity enhancements list the integration of sparrow terraces, open nest boxes and bee bricks to be installed into the dwellings on site. I recommend a further enhancement of insect hotels and creation of dead-wood piles within the deciduous woodland, as these enhancements will positively impact stag beetles, of which have been recorded within the vicinity of the site and are a specific invertebrate of principal importance according to the Wokingham Biodiversity Action Plan.

All biodiversity enhancements suggested within the PEA, Bat Survey Plan and recommended within this memo are to be secured via a Species Compensation and Enhancement Condition. This condition is to ensure biodiversity opportunities are increased by this development in line with Wokingham Borough Development Plan and Wokingham Biodiversity Action Plan.

Conclusion:

Overall, the proposed development complies with the development plan. Subject to conditions, this application is recommended for approval.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):

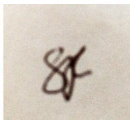
When planning permission is granted for a development that is CIL liable, the Council will issue a liability notice as soon as practicable after the day on which the planning permission first permits development. Completing the assumption of liability notice is a statutory requirement to be completed 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 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:	Approval
Date:	12 December 2025
Earliest date for decision:	28 October 2025

Conditions agreed:	Yes
Recommendation:	Approval
Date:	12 December 2025
Earliest date for decision:	28 October 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	12.12.25