

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Application Number:	260738
Site Address:	Strowdes Estate, Culham Lane, Remenham, RG10 8NU
Expiry Date:	1 September 2026
Site Visit Date:	None undertaken
Proposal: Full application for the installation of a temporary prefabricated construction site office and gravel parking area for a period of three years. (Retrospective)	

PLANNING POLICY	
National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
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 CP17 – Housing Delivery
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 CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB01 – Development within the Green Belt TB07 – Internal Space Standards TB21 – Landscape Character TB23 – Biodiversity and Development TB24 – Designated Heritage Assets TB25 – Archaeology
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 DM8 - Restoration of Minerals and Waste Developments DM10 - Flood Risk DM14 - Ancillary development DM15 - Site History
Wokingham	SS1 – Sustainable development principles SS6 – Development in the Green Belt

Borough Local Plan Update (LPU)	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 DH5 – The historic environment DH6 – Archaeology HC10 – Odor, fumes and dust
Other	National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
O/2008/13 53	Outline application for the demolition of 8 dwellings and erection of 5 new dwellings. Change of use of 3 dwellings to form 2 boathouses and guest accommodation. Conversion of 2 dwellings to form 1 dwelling. Alterations to the barns and the bungalow to form a single residential unit plus alterations and extensions to existing buildings.	Approved 09.12.2008
RM/2010/1 237	Erection of one dwelling (Conway Park House)	Approved 04.08.2010
RM/2011/2 274	Erection of one dwelling (Bell House)	Approved 20.12.2011
153077	Erection of 3no estate buildings to serve as estate management, security offices and stores with associated parking and alterations to access (Hatchgate and Kentons, ancillary to Strowdes) S106 agreement for 173097 revoked this permission	Approved 16.12.2016
152499	Erection of 4no single storey staff residential units, together with a machinery shed / parking and associated estate management store / office, at Bell House, ancillary to Strowdes S106 for 173097 subsequently required that this only be occupied by staff employed on site	Approved 06.12.2016
160131	Erection of one dwelling (Strowdes) S106 agreement for 173097 revoked this permission	Approved 05.07.2016
173097	Erection of one dwelling (Strowdes) S106 required permissions 173098 and 173100 to be ancillary to 173097 and not sold off or disposed of separately to this dwelling	Approved 13.04.2018 Permission expired

173098	Erection of gatehouse with associated parking ancillary to Strowdes	Approved 13.04.2018 Permission expired
173100	Erection of estate management buildings including gardeners' accommodation and underground tunnel linking the estate buildings, ancillary to the main house on Strowdes estate	Approved 13.04.2018 Permission expired
213587	Proposed erection of 1no. detached dwelling with associated landscaping	Approved 15.09.2023
213588	Erection of a gatehouse ancillary to Strowdes	Approved 15.09.2023
213610	Erection of two-storey estate management buildings including gardeners accommodation and underground tunnel linking the estate buildings and ancillary to the main house on Strowdes estate, following demolition of 3No dwellings, 1No pool house, garages and outhouses, stables and hay barn	Approved 15.09.2023
250768	Application for submission of details to comply with the following conditions of planning approval dated 15.09.2023. Condition 5 relates to electric vehicle charging, 8 to detailed landscaping, 14 to tunnel details.	Split Decision 20.08.2025
250769	Application for submission of details to comply with the following conditions of planning approval 213610 dated 15.09.2023. Condition 8 relates to detailed landscaping, 10 to tunnel details.	Refused 20.08.2025
250770	Application for submission of details to comply with the following conditions of planning approval 213588 dated 15.09.2023. Condition 4 relates to landscaping.	Refused 20.08.2025
250782	Application for submission of details to comply with the following conditions of planning approval 240832 dated 06.08.2024. Condition 5 relates to dust, 6 to landscaping.	Approved 20.08.2025
250783	Application for submission of details to comply with the following conditions of planning approval 240847 dated 13.09.2024. Condition 5 relates to ground and building levels, 6 to works to garden wall.	Refused 08.08.2025
250919	Application for submission of details to comply with the following condition of planning consent 240847 dated 13/09/2024. Condition 3. Visibility Splays. 4. Construction Method Statement. 7. Protection of Trees.	Pending Consideration
250918	Application for submission of details to comply with the following condition of planning consent 213587 dated	Approved 25 November 2025

	15/09/2023. Condition 3. Archaeology. 4. Construction Method Statement. 7. CEMP (Biodiversity)	
250920	Application for submission of details to comply with the following condition of planning consent 213588 dated 15/09/2023. Condition 3. Archaeology.	Approved 08.08.2025
250947	Application for submission of details to comply with the following condition of planning consent 213610 dated 15/09/2023. Condition 3. Archaeology. 4. Construction Environmental Management Plan. 6. CEMP (Biodiversity). 7. Protection of Trees. 9. Site Lines.	Refused 19.01.2026
251563	Application for submission of details to comply with the following condition of planning consent 240832 dated 2/4/2024. Condition 4 relates to external materials.	Refused 18.08.2025
252086	Application for submission of details to comply with the following condition of planning consent 213587 dated 15/09/2023. Condition 5. Electric Vehicle Charging. 8. Detailed Landscaping	Approved 15.12.2025
251666	Application to vary condition 2 of planning consent 213587 for the proposed erection of 1 no. detached dwelling with associated landscaping. Condition 2 refers to Approved Details and the variation is to update the plans.	Approved 1 April 2026
251563	Application for submission of details to comply with the following condition of planning consent 240832 dated 2/4/2024. Condition 4 relates to external materials.	Approved 18.08.2025
252086	Application for submission of details to comply with the following condition of planning consent 213587 dated 15/09/2023. Condition 5. Electric Vehicle Charging. 8. Detailed Landscaping	Approved 15.12.2025
252489	Application to vary condition 2,3,4,5,7 and 8 of planning consent 213587 for the Full application for the proposed erection of 1 no. detached dwelling with associated landscaping. Conditions 2, 3, 4,5, 7 and 8 refers to Approved Plans, Archaeology, Construction Method Statement, Electric Vehicle Charging, CEMP Biodiversity and Detailed Landscaping and the variation is to Substitute drawings, Detailed Landscaping Condition proposed to be varied to for approval of details prior to development above slab level, and to ensure compliance with WSI and trench evaluation, CMS, EVC Strategy and CEMP.	Approved 30.6.2026
253132	Application to vary conditions 2, 3, 4, 6, 8 and 10 of planning consent 213610 for the erection of a 2 storey Estate management buildings including gardeners accommodation and underground tunnel linking the estate buildings and ancillary to the main house on Strowdes estate, following demolition of 3No dwellings, 1No pool house, garages and outhouses, stables and hay barn. Condition 2 refers to the	Pending Consideration

	approved details; 3 to archaeology; 4 to a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP); 6 to CEMP: Biodiversity; 8 to detailed landscaping and 10 to tunnel details, the variation is to propose a re-siting of the central and eastern buildings and to refine the architecture together with an update to the Estate-wide Landscape Masterplan, and to amend the wording of the specified conditions accordingly.	
261010	Application for submission of details to comply with the following condition of planning consent 240832 dated 06.08.2025. Condition 4 relates to external materials.	Approved 8 July 2026
261247	Application for submission of details to comply with Conditions 8 (Detailed Landscaping) and 10 (Tunnel Details) of planning permission 213610 dated 15 September 2023 for the erection of a two-storey estate management building including gardeners' accommodation and underground tunnel linking the estate buildings and ancillary to the main house on Strowdes Estate.	Pending consideration
260738	Full application for the installation of a temporary prefabricated construction site office and gravel parking area for a period of three years. (Retrospective)	Pending consideration
261579	Application for submission of details to comply with the following condition of planning consent 252489 dated 01.07.2026. Condition 6 relates to drainage details, 14 to tunnel details, 16 to excavated material management plan, 17 to radon protection measures.	Split Decision 11/9/2026
261568	Full application for the proposed erection of 3no. single storey staff residential units, together with ancillary structures, landscaping and access.	Pending consideration
261743	Application to vary conditions 2 and 9 of planning consent 240832 for the proposed erection of a Summerhouse, walkways and private tunnel from Strowdes Estate. Following demolition of the existing summerhouse. (Re-submission of ref 180351, amendment to ref 152813). Condition 2 refers to the approved details and condition 9 to protection of trees, and the variation is to make changes to the design of the tunnel portal structures and landscape treatments, together with an adjustment to the Pavilion to reflect updated flood levels.	Pending consideration
261707	Application for submission of details to comply with the following condition of planning consent 213610 dated 15/09/2023. Condition 7 Protection of Trees. Condition 9 Visibility Splays.	Refusal 15/9/2026

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Environmental Health – No objection. No details of external lighting have been provided as part of this application and therefore it is not considered to present a concern at this stage. Should lighting be proposed in the future, this can be assessed and controlled as necessary.

WBC Highways – No objection

WBC Enforcement – Case closed until the outcome of the application. Note aerial September 2026 aerial imagery shows increased unauthorised parking area.

WBC Drainage – No objection.

WBC Landscape and Trees – No objection. Restoration and reinstatement of parkland required following cessation of use.

WBC Built Heritage Officer – No objection

WBC Ecology Newts – No objection

WBC Ecology – Additional information & Conditions recommended

WBC Waste Services – No comments received

WBC Cleaner and Greener – No comments received.

External

Historic England – No comments received.

Thames Water Utilities Ltd – No comments received

Historic Parks & Gardens – No comments received

Berkshire Archaeology – No objection

Berkshire Gardens Trust – No comments received

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	No objection subject to restoration following removal.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	No comments received

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site comprises approximately 2.4 ha of residential land and 10.6 ha of parkland. It lies within open Countryside within a Grade II* Registered Park and Garden ("RPG") listed by Historic England as "Park Place and Templecombe". It also lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt. The northern part of the site is predominantly level; the southern half falls steeply down towards the river. The overall site is bounded by Culham Lane, Kentons Lane, Wargrave Road, the River Thames and, along the western boundary, by other tree-lined Estates within the RPG.

Proposal:

This application arose from an enforcement investigation regarding unauthorised development in the Registered Park and Garden.

The application proposes retrospectively erection of a building and gravel parking area

in association with the construction of the extant permissions (see planning history) on the wider Estate.

The building which provides office and meeting space, a kitchenette, and toilet facilities, is approx. 30m long, and 10m wide with a flat roof level 3.4m above ground (giving a volume of 1,020m³). The elevations are clad in light grey panels. It is 250m south of the location of the approved Main House. A 35m x 15m gravelled area was provided immediately to the south of the parking area and east of the building.

The application form states the works commenced on 1.1.2018. they are visible in aerial imagery from 23.6.2018. However at this time no works were taking place on the site, it is understood that works relating to the extant planning permissions at the Stowdes estate commenced after March 2025 (when the pre-commencement conditions were fully discharged). On this basis, they could not have been erected under Part 4, Class A of the GPDO and are therefore unauthorised development requiring regularisation by this application.

The applicant states that the building and associated parking area are required for 15 employees to facilitate the implementation of the approved development. However, it is evident that substantial temporary construction infrastructure has already been established elsewhere within the site, including a significantly larger temporary parking and operational area associated with the ongoing works. In these circumstances, limited evidence has been provided to demonstrate why the retention of the application building and parking area is necessary to facilitate the approved development, or why the operational requirements of the construction project relies on this, relatively insignificant (in the below context) building and parking area.

Site at time of application 26.3.2026 (Image 2022)	Site on 7.31.2026
	

The existence of alternative construction and staff facilities on the site reduces the weight that can be afforded to the claimed operational need for the development. Consequently, this factor carries only limited weight in the Green Belt assessment.

Background:

There was an original masterplan for restoration of the Registered Park and Gardens comprising O/2008/1353 for:

Outline application for the demolition of 8 dwellings and erection of 5 new dwellings.
Change of use of 3 dwellings to form 2 boathouses and guest accommodation.
Conversion of 2 dwellings to form 1 dwelling. Alterations to the barns and the bungalow to form a single residential unit plus alterations and extensions to existing buildings.

There were significant very special circumstances to allow this development:

1. Restoration of main house (listed building)
2. Restore landscape setting of registered park and garden
3. Remove harmful buildings and hardstanding.
4. To remove major traffic generating issues in the Countryside
5. To safeguard long term management of the overall estate
6. Demolish 8 houses but construct 5 new ones

The permission established a comprehensive strategy for the restoration of the Estate in which new development was balanced against the removal of existing buildings and the delivery of significant heritage, landscape and Green Belt benefits despite some of the development being inappropriate development within the Green Belt. Those benefits were specific to that comprehensive scheme and have now been substantially realised through its implementation. They do not create an ongoing or transferable entitlement to further development elsewhere across the Estate.

The Council has undertaken a review of the historic volumetric schedules and remaining built form across the wider Park Place Estate. The significance of the 2008 permission is as a material planning consideration rather than as a continuing source of development rights or planning benefits capable of being reused.

It is noted that there have been significant policy changes since 2008 including the introduction of the NPPF and the current Wokingham Borough Council Local Plan. Notwithstanding this, the 2008 application remains a material consideration and its weight is assessed accordingly.

The historic volumetric schedules remain relevant in understanding the evolution of development, but volume is not itself the determinative policy test.

The original masterplan was predicated upon achieving a substantial overall reduction in built form in order to restore the Registered Park and Garden, improve openness within the Green Belt and secure the long-term conservation of the Estate. These finite benefits formed part of the planning balance that justified the permission, including elements of inappropriate development within the Green Belt. The Council considers that those benefits have now been substantially realised and that the planning balance underpinning the 2008 permission has been largely exhausted. Historic reductions in volume, floorspace or built form cannot therefore be repeatedly relied upon to justify further phases of development across the Estate.

Consequently, any proposal resulting in additional built form, harm to openness, or harm to the significance of the Registered Park and Garden must demonstrate compliance with the development plan and the NPPF. Benefits secured and implemented through previous permissions cannot be counted again within the planning balance.

While the 2008 masterplan remains a material consideration, it does not create an ongoing or transferable entitlement to further development. There is no presumption in favour of additional development across the Estate and each proposal must be assessed on its own planning merits. Where development would result in Green Belt harm, harm to openness, or harm to the significance of the Registered Park and Garden, planning permission should be refused unless those harms are clearly outweighed in accordance with the relevant national and local planning policies.

The Stowdes Estate:

Since the 2008 permission, these objectives were implemented culminating in consent for a replacement mansion—initially known as Conway, now Stowdes (2017) —on the remaining estate, reflecting the historic concept of “an estate within an estate.” The other replacement dwelling exists at Templecombe, approved in 2023 to replace the 1960s Temple Combe House. Additional land has also been acquired and incorporated into the estate since 2008, with development continuing under the agreed IEMP.

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 principle of a replacement dwelling at the site has already been established through extant planning permission ref. 213587 and subsequently varied under permission ref. 251666, 252489 and 252721.

Policy CP12 of the Core Strategy seeks to protect the openness and permanence of the Green Belt, reflecting national policy in the NPPF, which identifies openness and the purposes of including land within the Green Belt as essential characteristics. Development is inappropriate unless it fall within one of the categories in policy GB7. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances, unless it falls within a category of development that is not regarded as inappropriate.

Policy GB7 identifies categories of development that are not inappropriate in the Green Belt, temporary development is not listed in the exceptions. The proposed development does not fall within any of the categories identified in Policy GB7 as not being inappropriate development. Whilst the development is proposed on a temporary basis, temporary development is not included within the exceptions listed under Policy GB7.

The temporary nature of the proposal does not therefore alter its status as inappropriate development.

No very special circumstances have been advanced that would clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness. Consequently, the proposal is unacceptable in principle and conflicts with Policy CP12 of the Core Strategy and national Green Belt policy. Whilst the fact that the development is temporary and capable of removal may reduce the weight afforded to certain aspects of the harm identified, it does not, in itself, constitute very special circumstances sufficient to justify inappropriate development in the Green Belt. In the absence of any other considerations that clearly outweigh the harm by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm identified, the proposal remains contrary to Green Belt policy.

Policy S5 for development outside settlements is also of relevance to the principle of development in this location. It states that, only certain forms of development should be approved outside settlements, as set out in the following list. However, S5(5) states *This policy does not apply to development proposals in the Green Belt or on land designated as Local Green Space, which should instead be determined in accordance with policies HC8, GB6, GB7 and/or GB8 (as appropriate). However, where development would not be inappropriate in these locations (through the application of policies HC8 and GB7), proposals should be approved unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in this Framework, and applying paragraph 2 of this policy.* Consequently, the proposal remains inappropriate development in the Green Belt and Policy S5 does not apply.

Notwithstanding the above, since the application was submitted, a material change in circumstances has occurred. The development authorised by the extant permissions on the wider Strowdes Estate has now commenced. Schedule 2, Part 4, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) permits the provision of buildings, moveable structures, works, plant or machinery where they are required temporarily in connection with, and for the duration of, operations being or to be carried out on the land or adjoining land. This is subject to the requirement that the relevant operations benefit from planning permission and that, once those operations have been carried out, the temporary development is removed and any adjoining land reinstated as soon as reasonably practicable.

The building and gravel parking area were erected before the currently authorised construction operations commenced and, for the reasons set out above, did not benefit from Part 4, Class A permitted development rights at that time. This application is therefore required to regularise the existing development.

However, the commencement of the authorised development represents a new chapter in the planning history of the Strowdes Estate. Subject to satisfying the requirement that the facilities are genuinely required temporarily in connection with the construction operations, the applicant could now remove the existing development and provide a materially similar temporary office, welfare building and associated operational surfacing under Part 4, Class A. This constitutes a realistic fallback position.

In considering the weight to be afforded to that fallback, the Council has taken account of the scale of the wider construction project, the stated use of the building by approximately 15 employees, and its provision of office, meeting, kitchenette and toilet facilities associated with the implementation of the extant permissions. While substantial alternative construction infrastructure, staff facilities and parking have been provided elsewhere within the Estate, this does not necessarily remove the prospect of the Class A right being exercised. It does, however, limit the weight that can be given to the applicant's assertion that retention of this particular building and parking area is operationally essential. The statutory test is whether the development is "required temporarily" in connection with the operations, and not simply whether the facilities would be convenient.

Nevertheless, there is a genuine prospect that, if planning permission were refused, the applicant could remove the existing building and gravelled area and subsequently provide materially comparable temporary facilities under Part 4, Class A for the remaining duration of the authorised construction operations. Refusal would therefore be unlikely to prevent temporary built form and operational surfacing from occupying the site during the construction period. It could instead result in the removal and re-provision of substantially similar development, with the associated environmental effects and limited practical planning benefit.

The fallback does not retrospectively authorise the development or remove its status as inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Nor does it extinguish the identified harm to openness, landscape character or the significance and setting of designated heritage assets. However, it is a material consideration of significant weight when assessing the practical consequences of granting or withholding planning permission.

On balance, the Council considers that the realistic fallback position, the temporary and construction-related nature of the development, and the ability to secure its timely removal and restoration of the land collectively amount to a Very Special Circumstance to justify the inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Traded Volumes:

Although the proposed volume of the building is 1200cubic metres and there is associated operational development in the form of hardstanding within the Registered Park and Gardens, the proposed development is temporary in nature and the land would need to be restored to parkland following removal of the temporary development, thus although additional volumes are proposed, these cannot be considered to undermine the Very Special Circumstances relied upon to justify the Strowdes Estate Development.

Minerals & Waste:

The Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (hereafter 'Joint Plan') identifies site allocations and extensions to provide a future supply of sand and gravel extraction. However, despite these allocations, there remains a shortfall of supply during the plan period. The policy response to address the shortfall is the identification of a 'Minerals Safeguarding area' (MSA), where Policy M2 of the plan

applies, and also an 'Area of Search' where policy M4 applies. This approach is to demonstrate the potential for, in effect, windfall provision within the Plan area.

The site is not located within both an MSA and 'Area of Search'. Additionally, the site is within the Green Belt where mineral extraction is only permitted where it is not inappropriate development (DM6) and proposal that would cause substantial harm to, or loss of, designated heritage asset may provide clear and convincing justification why the harm is acceptable on the basis of achieving substantial public benefits (DM7)¹.

Emerging Local Plan

The Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update 2023-2040: Proposed Submission Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination by an independent Planning Inspector on Friday 28 February 2025 (Regulation 22 stage). Two independent Inspectors were appointed, with Part 1 examination hearings held in November 2025. It was then confirmed by the Inspectors that the examination could progress to Part 2 hearings, which commenced in March 2026 (Regulation 24 stage), and the post hearing letter has been received confirming that the plan could be made sound subject to main modifications.

DM4 states local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:

- a) the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);
- b) the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and
- c) the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to this Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).

As a whole, the LPU is still given limited weight, despite its advance stage of preparation. The proposed Inspector modifications have yet to be consulted upon and adopted, and objections remain outstanding in relation to a number of policies. Limited weight is afforded to the Emerging Plan as a whole, although greater weight may be attached to individual policies where they are consistent with the NPPF and are not the subject of main modifications.

Character of the Area:

Policy DP3 of the NPPF²⁶ requires development to respond to the history, character and features of its site and setting, integrate with and enhance its surroundings such

¹ These are references to the Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan Policies not NPPF²⁶ policies

as through the arrangement of development plots and buildings, the use of materials and architectural features.

Policy DP3 is supplemented by the wider objectives of Section 14 of the NPPF26, which seeks to secure well-designed places that are visually attractive, sympathetic to local character and history, establish or maintain a strong sense of place, and create developments that function well over their lifetime.

The National Design Guide remains relevant. Well-designed built form should respond to the site, its setting and the opportunities they present, while creating a coherent identity as part of the wider place.

The building and associated gravel parking area introduce a utilitarian form of development into an otherwise open area of the estate. By virtue of its scale, engineered appearance and associated hardstanding, the development has a more operational character than would typically be expected in this location.

However, the development is temporary in nature and is intended to facilitate the implementation of the approved development elsewhere on the estate. The building is modest in height, benefits from a degree of screening from existing vegetation and does not result in the permanent loss of open land. Subject to the removal of the structures and restoration of the land, the effects on the character and appearance of the area are limited in duration and reversible subject to suitable conditions.

Whilst some harm arises from the introduction of the temporary building and associated parking area, that harm attracts limited weight given the temporary nature of the development and the ability to restore the site to its former appearance upon completion of the wider works.

The proposal introduces a building and associated hardstanding into an area of open land, resulting in some harm to the character and appearance of the area and conflict with Policy CP3. However, the development is temporary in nature, with permission sought for a period of three years only, following which the building, hardstanding and associated infrastructure would be removed and the land restored. The resulting visual harm is therefore limited in duration and reversible.

Heritage:

Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special regard to be had to the desirability of preserving a listed building, its setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Policy HE5 of the NPPF26 requires development proposals affecting heritage assets to be accompanied by an assessment of the significance of the assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting, and an assessment of the likely effect of the proposal on that significance.

Policy HE6 requires substantial weight to be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets, with any harm to significance being a matter of considerable importance and weight. Development proposals which would result in harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset must therefore be carefully assessed

having regard to the degree of harm and any public benefits arising from the proposal. HE6(6) also states, within this context, development which would cause substantial harm to, or the total loss of, the significance of grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional; while development which would cause substantial harm to, or the total loss of, assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.

Policy TB24 of the MDD Local Plan requires the conservation and enhancement of Listed Buildings, Historic Parks and Gardens, Ancient Monuments and Conservation Areas, including their views and setting.

The Built Heritage Officer has raised no objections to the proposal and Historic England does not wish to offer any comments.

Having regard to the temporary nature of the development, its functional role in facilitating the implementation of the approved development elsewhere on the Estate, and the ability to restore the land following its removal, it is not considered that the proposal would result in harm to the significance, setting or appreciation of the Grade II* Registered Park and Garden. As such, the proposal accords with Policy TB24 of the MDD Local Plan.

Neighbouring Amenity:

There are no neighbours in close proximity to the site that would be impacted by the proposal in terms of privacy, overbearing issues, or loss of light.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

The application proposes the use of an existing access to the public highway and provides sufficient parking for the number of employees. There are no objections from the Highways Officer.

Archaeology:

As the proposal is retrospective, there is no objection from Berkshire Archaeology. Whilst any opportunity for archaeological investigation prior to development has passed, no evidence has been presented to demonstrate that archaeological remains have been harmed and the specialist consultee has raised no concerns. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in this regard. appropriate care should be taken during the eventual removal of the temporary development and restoration of the site to avoid unnecessary disturbance to any surviving archaeological remains.

Flooding and Drainage:

F8 states that development proposals which could affect drainage on or around the development site should incorporate sustainable drainage systems to control flow rates and reduce volumes of runoff, in ways which are proportionate to the nature and scale of the proposal.

There are no objections from the LLFA Officers.

Landscape and Trees:

N2 of the NPPF26 requires proposal to (amongst other things) consider the environmental qualities of land proposed for development, including habitats, landscape character and the natural beauty of the countryside, and identify opportunities for those qualities to be conserved or enhanced (including through requirements for biodiversity net gain where these apply) and conserve and enhance existing natural features of visual, historic or nature conservation value (such as established trees and hedgerows) where possible; and use appropriate landscaping to help create a well-designed place and integrate the development into its surroundings;.

The proposal comprises a temporary building and associated gravel parking area within an established part of the wider estate. The development introduces built form and hardstanding which has a degree of impact on the landscape character of the site and the openness of this area. However, the structure is relatively modest in height, benefits from a backdrop of existing vegetation and is associated with the implementation of the approved development elsewhere on the estate.

The Council's Landscape Officer and Tree Officer have raised no objection to the proposal, subject to the site being restored following the cessation of the temporary permission. Whilst the development is not without impact, those effects are limited by its temporary nature and are capable of being fully reversed through the removal of the building, hardstanding and associated infrastructure and the restoration of the land.

Subject to an appropriately worded condition requiring the removal of the temporary development and reinstatement of the site at the expiry of the permission, the proposal is considered acceptable in landscape and arboricultural terms and complies with Policy N2 of the NPPF26.

Ecology:

The Ecology Officer notes that the retrospective nature of the development means it is exempt from the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements. Whilst no ecological information has been submitted, it is recognised that the development has been in place for a number of years and permission is sought on a temporary basis only. In these circumstances, it would be neither reasonable nor necessary to require a biodiversity metric or detailed biodiversity enhancement strategy.

Nevertheless, Chapter 15 of the NPPF and Policy TB23 seek opportunities to secure biodiversity enhancements. Given the scale and temporary nature of the development, a modest enhancement in the form of a bird box and bat box is considered appropriate and proportionate. Subject to a suitably worded condition requiring their installation within a specified period following the grant of permission, the proposal is considered acceptable in biodiversity terms.

The GCN Officer notes that the site lies within an amber impact risk zone for Great Crested Newts, that records of the species exist within the wider Strowdes Estate and

that suitable habitat is present in the surrounding area. However, the application relates to development that has already been carried out and is therefore retrospective in nature. Whilst the presence of Great Crested Newts on the site at the time of construction cannot be ruled out, the officer has raised no objection to the application and has not recommended any mitigation or planning conditions. It is noted that the district licensing process is not available in respect of retrospective development. On this basis, no objection is raised on ecological grounds.

Retrospective development:

Substantial weight must be attributed against the proposal under Policy DM8(2). The building and associated hardstanding were erected without planning permission and have remained in place for a considerable period. The evidence indicates that the structures were installed and retained without the benefit of planning permission, notwithstanding the sensitivity of the site as Green Belt and part of a Grade II* Registered Park and Garden. The retrospective nature of the application and the prolonged unauthorised presence of the development weigh significantly against the proposal. Whilst the development is temporary in nature, this does not outweigh the fact that the unauthorised structures have remained on the site for a number of years. Accordingly, substantial weight is attributed against the grant of retrospective planning permission in accordance with Policy DM8(2).

The available evidence does not conclusively demonstrate that the unauthorised development was undertaken to circumvent the planning process. However, the development has remained in situ for a significant period without the benefit of planning permission. The retrospective nature of the proposal and the prolonged unauthorised use of the site attract substantial weight against the proposal under Policy DM8(2).

Planning Balance:

The proposal constitutes inappropriate development within the Green Belt and is therefore, by definition, harmful. In addition, the building and associated hardstanding result in a degree of harm to openness and to the character and appearance of this part of the Estate. Substantial weight is afforded to the Green Belt harm.

The development was also undertaken intentionally without planning permission and has remained in place for a considerable period. In accordance with Policy DM8(2), substantial weight is therefore attributed against the proposal by reason of its retrospective nature and prolonged unauthorised presence.

However, the development is temporary and its effects are reversible. The building, hardstanding and associated infrastructure can be removed and the land restored following completion of the authorised construction. In addition, there is a realistic fallback position based on the permitted development rights meaning that a materially similar development could be provided during the construction operations. When taking into account the substantial alternative construction infrastructure already provided elsewhere on the Estate. This limits the weight that can be afforded to the applicant's assertion that retention of these particular facilities is operationally essential. Nevertheless, it does not eliminate the realistic prospect of the fallback being realistic. Significant weight is afforded to this fallback position.

When considered together with the temporary and reversible nature of the development and the ability to secure its removal and restoration of the land by condition, the fallback clearly outweighs the identified Green Belt harm and the adverse weight arising under Policy DM8(2). These considerations therefore amount to Very Special Circumstances sufficient to justify the inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

The proposal therefore complies with the relevant policy requirements and is acceptable in the overall planning balance, subject to appropriate 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	
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Conditions agreed:	Not required
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Recommendation:	
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Date:	16 September 2026
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Earliest date for decision:	19 June 2026
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Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
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BJC

Date:	29.09.26
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