

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	260909
Site Address:	Mulberry House, Hatch Gate Lane, Cockpole Green, Wargrave, RG10 8NE
Expiry Date:	2 July 2026
Site Visit Date:	26 May 2026
Proposal: Householder application for the proposed erection of an outdoor pool and associated pool storage building following the demolition of an existing play house.	

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 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 TB01 – Development within the Green Belt
Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU)	SS1 – Sustainable development principles SS4 – Development within or adjacent to minor settlements SS5 – Development in the countryside SS6 – Development in the Green Belt
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
131851	Application for a certificate of lawfulness for the proposed erection of a single storey and two storey rear extensions to dwelling	Approve - 11 December 2013
121681	Application for a certificate of lawful existing use of the land to the rear of the land to the rear of the	Approve - 09 August 2012

	existing dwelling to be used as a recreational garden incidental to the residential property.	
182580	Application for non-material amendment for planning consent 171525 to allow contrast brickwork -comprising blue fired hand made headers which were a feature in the original dwelling now demolished, substitute drawings 1663.3F and 1633.4C with drawings SK15 and SK16.	Approve - 29 October 2018
181085	Application for the submission of details to comply with the following condition of planning consent (171525) 17/07/2017. 3. External Materials	Replied
180377	Application for the submission of details to comply with the following condition of planning consent (171525) 10/07/2017. 7. Drainage Details	Replied
171525	Application to vary condition 2 of planning consent 162149 for the erection of 1 no. replacement dwelling following demolition of the existing dwelling. Condition 2 relates to approved details, the new plans propose external and internal alterations plus a timber-framed construction.	Approve - 10 July 2017
162149	Full application for the proposed erection of 1 no replacement dwelling following the demolition of existing dwelling	Approve - 23 January 2017
160556	Application for the prior approval of the erection of a single storey rear extension, which would extend beyond the rear wall of the original house by 8.0m for which the maximum height would be 4.0m and the height of the eaves 2.4m.	Approve - 12 April 2016
160552	Application for a certificate of lawfulness for the proposed erection of single storey front, side and rear extensions following partial demolition of existing single storey extension. Erection of detached outbuilding to form gym/games room and detached gazebo.	Approve - 27 April 2016
150630	Application for a certificate of lawfulness for the proposed installation of a basement below dwelling.	Approve - 12 March 2015

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

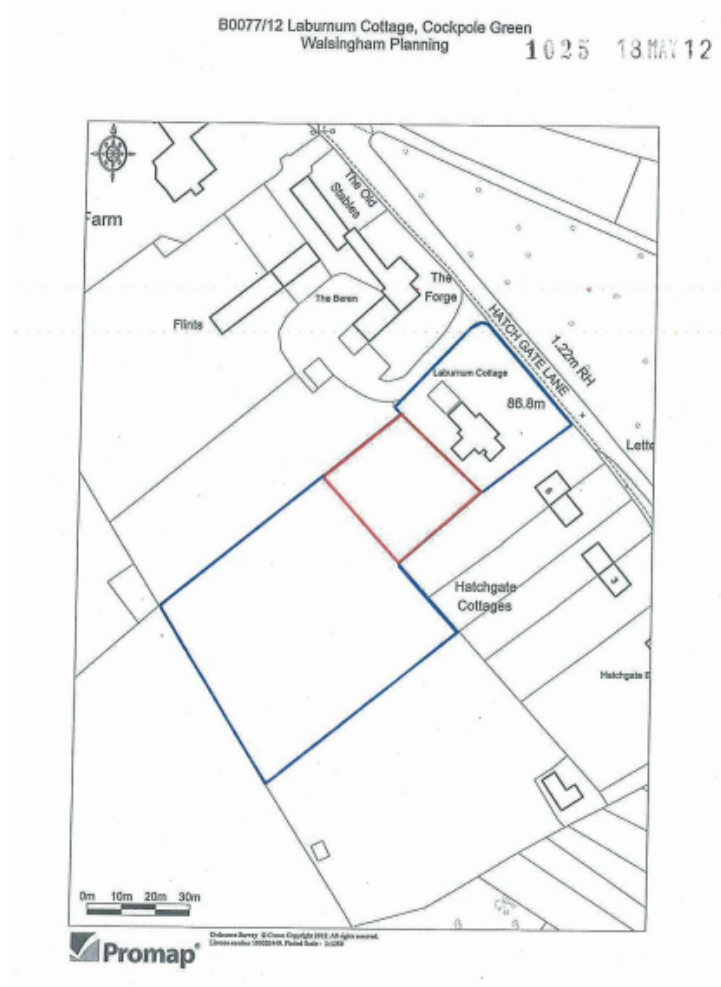
Internal
WBC Landscape and Trees – no objection
External
No comments received

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

APPRAISAL
Site Description: The application site relates to Mulberry House, formerly Laburnum Cottage, a detached dwelling located on the western side of Hatch Gate Lane, Cockpole Green, Wargrave. The property occupies a generous residential plot within a predominantly rural area characterised by detached dwellings, former farm buildings and associated residential conversions set within spacious plots and open countryside. The dwelling is positioned towards the eastern side of the site, with the residential curtilage extending south-westwards to the rear of the property, with a large area of grass/woodland beyond (refer to 'Proposal description' section of this report below). Access to the site is taken directly from Hatch Gate Lane via an existing driveway serving the dwelling. The surrounding area is rural in character, with neighbouring residential properties including The Forge and The Beren located to the north, and Hatchgate Cottages situated to the south-east. The site is generally enclosed by mature vegetation and domestic boundary treatments which provide a good degree of screening from neighbouring properties and the public realm. The site lies within the designated Green Belt and Countryside as identified within the Development Plan. The surrounding area is characterised by a mixture of residential properties and open agricultural land which collectively contribute towards the openness and rural character of the Green Belt. Proposal description: This householder application seeks planning permission for the erection of an outdoor swimming pool and associated pool storage building following the demolition of an existing playhouse. The pool house and swimming pool would be located within an area of the dwelling's rear garden, formally recognised as such via certificate application 121681 (refer to Fig. 1 below). It is however noted that the application red-line includes a large area of grass/woodland to the south-west (rear) of the formal garden space. It is important to note that the Local Planning Authority do not recognise this area of land as residential

curtilage, and should planning permission be issued in association with this application, it would not permit the residential use of this land.

Fig 1: Location plan from application 121681



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 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Development proposals should accord with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The application site is located within the Green Belt and Countryside. Consequently, consideration must be given to the relevant provisions of the NPPF together with Policies CP11 and CP12 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy.

Green belt:

Policy CP12 of the Core Strategy refers to national policy in respect of development within the Green Belt. Accordingly, the proposal has been assessed against the provisions of the 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 permanence.

Paragraph 154 of the NPPF provides a list for exceptions for development that can be considered appropriate in the Green Belt. With regards to the swimming pool and outbuilding, 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.

The proposal comprises the construction of an outdoor swimming pool and a small ancillary pool storage building following the demolition of an existing playhouse within the residential curtilage of the dwelling.

The swimming pool would be almost entirely subterranean in nature and would therefore result in no meaningful increase in built form above ground level. Consequently, the pool would not materially affect either the spatial or visual openness of the Green Belt.

The associated pool storage building would measure c.5m by c.2.5m, providing a footprint of c8.75 sqm. The structure would be modest in scale, ancillary to the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse and positioned within the established domestic curtilage. Furthermore, the proposal includes the removal of an existing playhouse from the site, thereby reducing the overall impact of the development on openness. Representing a reduction in volume of 10m³, from 1342m³ to 1332m³.

Given its very limited footprint, and spatial relationship with the host dwelling, the pool storage building would not appear visually intrusive within the wider landscape nor would it represent an encroachment into the surrounding countryside.

Taken together, the proposed development would preserve the openness of the Green Belt and would not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with the aims of Policy CP12 of the Core Strategy and the relevant provisions of the NPPF.

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. Relevant criteria is as follows:

4) In the case of residential extensions, does not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building;

Criterion 4 of CP11 is relevant to the proposal. Given the modest scale of the pool storage building and the largely subterranean nature of the swimming pool, the development would not result in an inappropriate increase in the scale, form or footprint of the existing dwelling.

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

Character of the Area:

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).

Assessment:

The proposed swimming pool would be located almost entirely below ground level within the rear garden and would therefore have a very limited visual presence within the site. As such, it would not appear as an intrusive feature within the landscape nor would it adversely affect the rural character of the area.

The associated pool storage building would be modest in scale, measuring c.3.5 metres by 2.5 metres with a maximum height of 2.5 metres. The building would remain subordinate to the host dwelling and would replace an existing playhouse of a marginally greater volume c10m³, resulting in a small overall reduction in built form within the site.

The development would be located within the rear garden and would be screened from Hatch Gate Lane by the existing dwelling and mature boundary vegetation. Consequently, the proposal would not be readily visible from the public realm and would have a negligible impact on the wider street scene.

Given its modest scale, limited visibility and ancillary residential function, the proposal is considered to represent a sympathetic form of development that would preserve the character and appearance of both the application site and the surrounding rural area. The proposal therefore complies with Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy.

Neighbouring Amenity:

The proposed swimming pool would be located below ground level and would therefore not give rise to any overlooking, loss of light or overbearing impacts. Similarly, the associated pool storage building would be modest in scale and would remain subordinate to the host dwelling.

Given the limited scale of the proposal, the separation distances to neighbouring properties and the mature boundary vegetation surrounding the site, it is not considered that the development would have any adverse impact on neighbouring residential amenity. The proposal therefore complies with Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

The proposed relates wholly to the introduction of a swimming pool and associated pool storage. There is no increase in habitable rooms. The existing parking arrangement would be unaffected.

Amenity Space:

The proposed swimming pool and associated pool storage building would be located within the established rear garden serving the dwelling. Notwithstanding the wider red-line application site, the Local Planning Authority only recognises the formal garden area associated with the dwelling as residential curtilage.

Furthermore, the garden would retain a depth of c.27.6m within the recognised residential curtilage following construction of the development. This is considered to provide an ample level of private amenity space for the occupants of the dwelling.

Landscape and Trees:

The application site is located within the Countryside, Green Belt and the Remenham Chalk Landscape Valued Landscape. Whilst there are no protected trees on the site, a tree survey and protection plan prepared by Venners Arboriculture, have been submitted along side the application, to which a WBCs Trees and Landscapes Officer has raised no objection.

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:	Not required
Recommendation:	Approve
Date:	24 June 2026
Earliest date for decision:	16 June 2026

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