



woolf bond
planning

Planning Statement

Land at Sonning Golf Club, Duffield Road, Sonning, Reading, RG4 6GJ

Phase 1 Reserved Matters application for improvements to Sonning Golf Club approved in application 223458 (as amended by applications 242641 and 250553).

Prepared for:
Sonning Golf Club Ltd

Prepared by:
Graham Ritchie
Woolf Bond Planning Ltd

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Woolf Bond Planning Ltd (trading as Woolf Bond Planning)
Registered office: Agriculture House, Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth CV8 2TZ
Registered in England No. 15596600



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Contents

1. Introduction and Summary.....2

2. The Site and Surrounding Area.....6

3. The Proposal8

4. Planning Policy Context 15

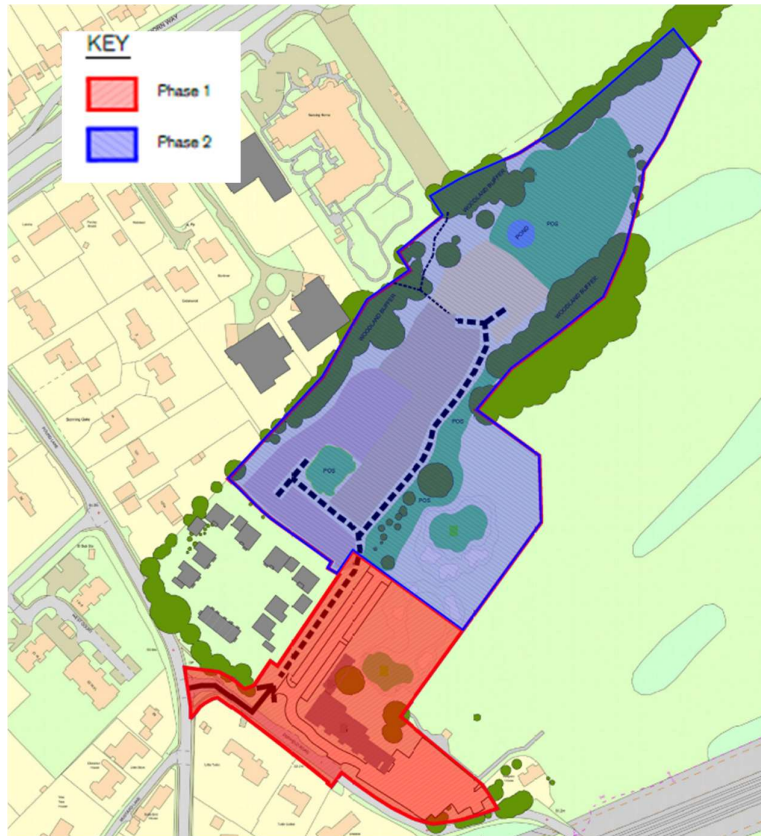
5. Conclusions..... 19

1. Introduction and Summary

- 1.1 This Statement has been prepared in support of the reserved matters application for the improvements works agreed as phase 1 of the overall development approved on 30th November 2023 in outline application 223458 at Sonning Golf Club, Duffield Road, Sonning, Reading, RG4 6GJ. The outline application (223458) approved included the following as the description of development.

Outline planning permission for the proposed erection of up to 50 no. dwellings with public open space and revised access off Duffield Road, plus associated modifications to Sonning Golf Club including reconfiguration of golf club car parking areas and relocation of the 18th green, addition of a practice putting green, new driving nets, new short game chipping area and conversion of the west wing of the existing clubhouse to accommodate a new golf simulator practice facility, including removal of external staircase and changes to fenestration. (All matters reserved except for access.)

- 1.2 Through application 242641 approved on 20th November 2024, the phasing of the overall permission was agreed by the Council which entailed the splitting of the scheme into two phases. Phase one relates to the works for improving the Golf Club with the erection of dwellings to be phase two of the overall scheme. The extent of the agreed extent of the phased areas of the overall scheme at the Golf Club is shown in the drawing below (Drawing ref 24.017 PL.001 which is included in amended condition 3).



Approved phasing plan (drawing 24.017 PL.001)

- 1.3 In application 250553 granted on 25th April 2025, the Council agreed that the description of the development would now read:

Outline planning permission for the proposed erection of up to 50 no. dwellings with public open space and revised access off Duffield Road, plus associated modifications to Sonning Golf Club including reconfiguration of golf club car parking areas and conversion of the west wing of the existing clubhouse to accommodate a new golf simulator practice facility, including removal of external staircase and changes to fenestration. (All matters reserved except for access. As shown on plan PL 002 dated March 2025).

- 1.4 The additional plan referenced in the agreed revised description of development is shown below (drawing PL.002).



Copy of drawing PL.002

- 1.5 This application therefore seeks approval of the reserved matters for the phase 1 scheme, taking account of the permissions granted by the Council in applications 223458, 242641 and 250553. Taking account of the approval of these applications, the scheme as submitted therefore seeks approved for the improvements works to the Golf Cub (refurbishment of the Club House and reconfiguration of the access and car parking arrangements) which are covered by the phase 1 permission. The principle of these various works is therefore confirmed through application 223458 (as amended by 242641 and 250553) and through this scheme, the necessary reserved matters are supplied to enable the approved phased development to be implemented.
- 1.6 Taking account of the permissions granted on the site, the description of development for phase 1 is therefore:

Revised access off Duffield Road plus associated modifications to Sonning Golf Club including reconfiguration of the golf club parking areas and conversion of the west wing of the existing clubhouse to accommodate a new golf simulator practice facility, including removal of external staircase and changes to fenestration.

- 1.7 A future application will be submitted to seek approval of the reserved matters for the phase 2 element of the overall permission i.e. the erection of up to 50 dwellings with associated public open space.
- 1.8 Alongside the submission of the reserved matters for phase 1 of the wider scheme at Sonning Golf Club, a separate application has been made to discharge the conditions associated with the phase 1 scheme.
- 1.9 This Statement sets out the characteristics of the site and surrounding area, provides information on the planning history for the site, and sets out an analysis of the proposal against the relevant planning policy context.
- 1.10 The reserved matters application is accompanied by a number of additional supporting reports including a Design and Access Statement and a CIL information form. The full list of supporting documents is set out in the covering letter accompanying this planning application. Other relevant documents are provided in the separate application which seeks to discharge the conditions imposed on the outline application.
- 1.11 This Planning Statement considers the merits of the reserved matters proposal, and relevant national and Local Planning Policy, and in this context, concludes that reserved matters consent should be granted without delay, especially given the principle of development has already been established by the extant planning permission.

2. The Site and Surrounding Area

- 2.1 The wider site with extant planning permission is located adjoining the settlement of Sonning, east of Reading, as shown on the extract from the Site Location Plan below and extends to 4.76ha. The phase 1 element (refurbishment of the Club House and reconfiguration of the access and parking arrangements) covers around 0.9ha. The phase 1 element is focused on the existing Club House and car parking area is located to the south-east of existing residential development along Bath Road and Pound Lane and is part of the wider Golf Course.



Extract from the Site Location Plan for the original application together with that for the phase 1 element

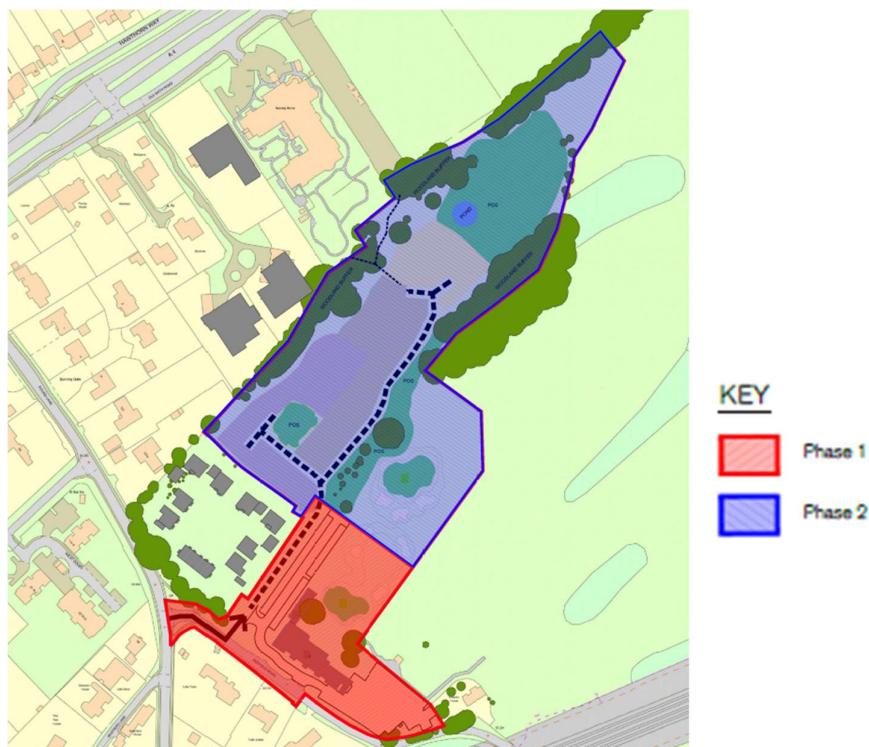
- 2.2 The land to the west of the phase 1 reserved matters site and the dwellings north-east of Pound Lane has an extant permission for the erection of 13 dwellings. The wider land to the south and west of the phase 1 application site forms part of the village of Sonning as defined in the current Development Plan.
- 2.3 As indicated in the description of development, this reserved matter submission relates to phase 1 of the overall proposal. It comprises the southern part of the site where the existing car park is located which is to be reconfigured to maintain a similar number of spaces alongside the provision of an access road to serve the dwellings consented in phase 2. The section of the Club House included within the application will be refurbished to enable the installation of golf practice simulators as a replacement and enhancement of the existing Golf Driving Range. These matters are discussed further in this statement.
- 2.4 In terms of land use designations, the application site is not subject to any constraints; it is not designated for any landscape value; it is not identified as a strategic or local gap between settlements; it does not fall within the Green Belt, or in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (now known as National Landscapes); there are no local landscape designations applicable to

the site. It does not therefore fall to be considered as a 'valued landscape' within the definitions as set out in paragraph 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 2.5 The site is not located near any Conservation Areas or Listed Buildings. It is not identified as falling within any Historic Parks and Gardens designation, nor having any archaeological potential. It does not fall within either Flood Zone 2 or 3.
- 2.6 The principal of the reconfiguration of the car park to enable the access road for the proposed residential development together with the refurbishment of the Club House was confirmed through Council's approval of application 223458. The information in the application therefore seeks approval of the relevant details so that construction of the improvements can commence.

3. The Proposal

- 3.1 The reserved matters submission as indicated relates to phase 1 of the overall works to the Golf Club, specifically the refurbishment of the Club House and the reconfiguration of the site access and car parking arrangements. As explained, this phase 1 application will be followed in due course by a phase 2 which will seek approval of the up to 50 dwellings approved on the site.
- 3.2 Further details on the Club House refurbishment alongside the reconfiguration of the access and parking arrangements for this phase 1 proposal are set out in the technical reports submitted in support of this planning application, including the Design and Access Statement. A summary of the matters that have influenced the proposal is set out below. However, the full suite of supporting technical reports should be referred to in the consideration of the application.
- 3.3 Consistent with the approved phasing in application 242641, this proposal relates to the submission of reserved matters associated with phase 1 of the overall scheme. The extent of the approved phase 1 area is shown below within the wider context of development at the site.

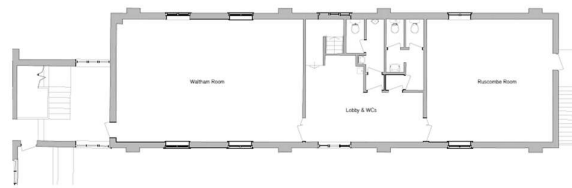
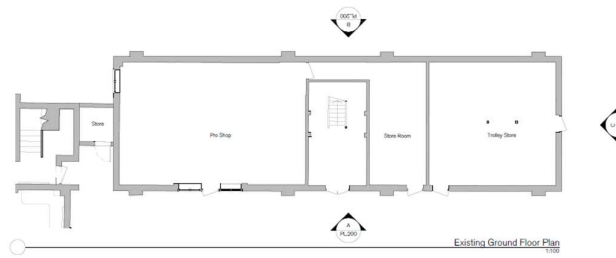


Approved phasing plan (drawing 24.017 PL.001)

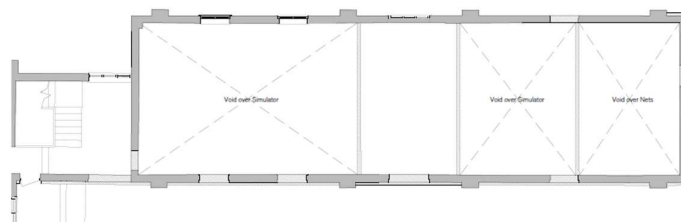
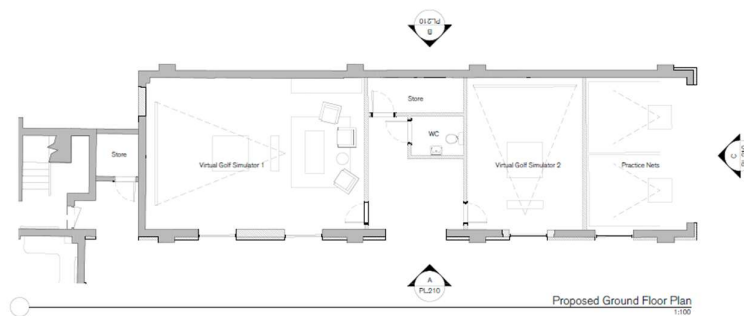
- 3.4 The detail submitted in this reserved matter application is therefore summarised below with respect to the refurbishment works to the Club House, the reconfiguration of the site access together with the related works to the car parks. These are covered in turn.

Refurbishment of Club House

- 3.5 The refurbishment of the Club House as detailed in this application enables the provision of the relocated practice nets and the associated golf simulators within the eastern wing of the building. The pro shop currently operating from the ground floor is to be relocated on the site as detailed in application 251381. The function rooms as part of the Club House on the first floor will not be replaced as the operations and activities of the Club do not require the retention of this accommodation. The changes to the Club House are shown below.



Extracts of existing ground and first floor plans of the Club House west wing (Drawing Ref 24.017.PL.200)



Extracts of the proposed ground and first floor plans of the Club House west wing (Drawing ref 24.017.PL.2110 Rev B)

- 3.6 As indicated in the drawings, the refurbishment works to the west wing of the Club House include changes to the internal layout, especially the removal of the first floor thereby providing area with sufficient height to accommodate the simulators and relocated practice nets. For both enhancements, the extra height from removal of the first floor is essential to enable golfers to fully practice the shots, including the swing of clubs so that there is no obstruction to the movement of arms. The proposed refurbishment works include removal of the stairs on the exterior of the north western end of the building, given that this is superfluous. This is because the retained stairs where the west wing joins the main building provides sufficient access. The floor plans also illustrate the extent that the existing fenestration is proposed to change with adjustments to the various openings for doors and windows. The differences are further illustrated in the drawings of the existing and proposed elevations, extracts of which are included below.



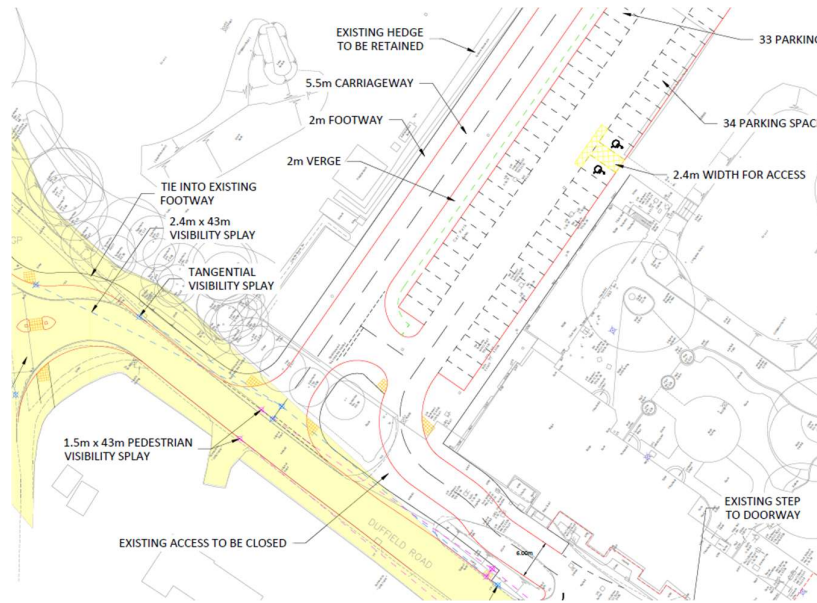
Existing elevations (Drawing Ref 24.017.PL.200)



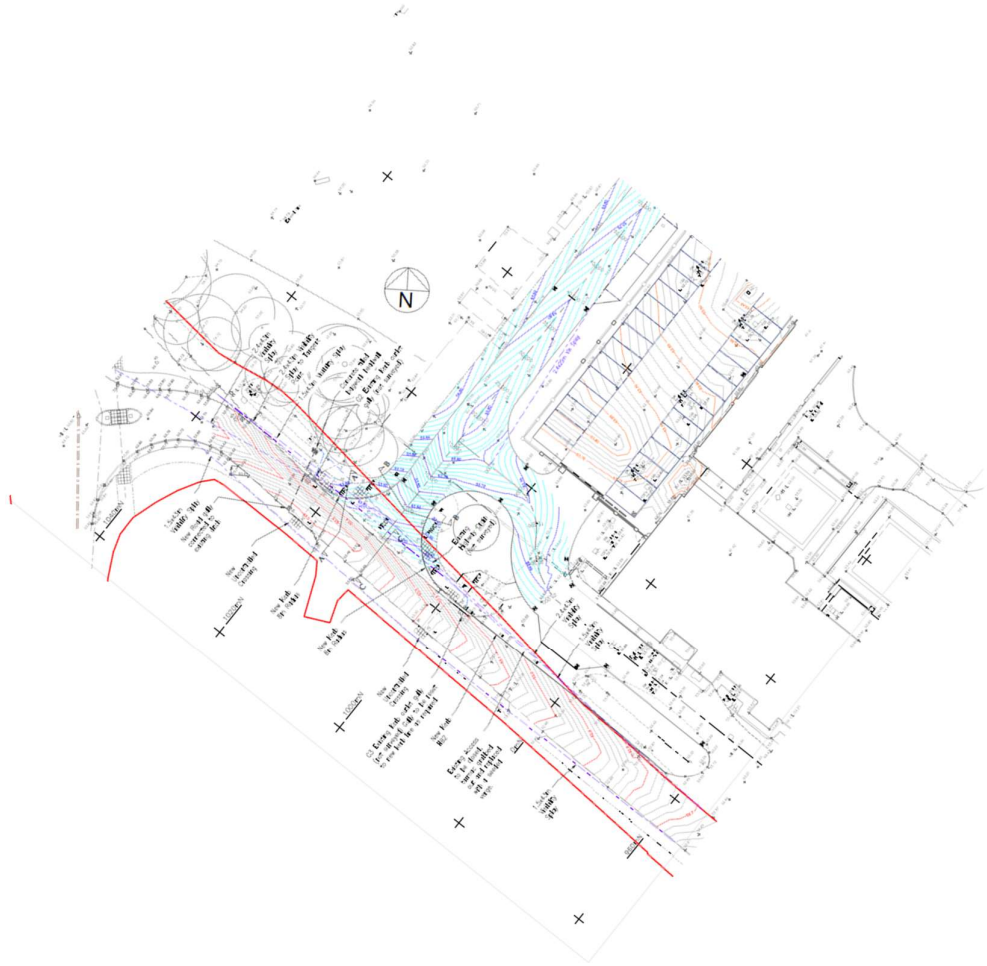
Proposed elevations (Drawing ref 24.017.PL.2110 Rev B)

Reconfiguration of site accesses

- 3.7 Through the outline application, reconfiguration of the site access was agreed, including the relocation of the western entrance to an alternative location alongside its realignment thereby providing the new access route into the western car park and the dwellings approved as phase 2. This is shown in the plans below and reflects the revised parameter plan approved for the scheme (Drawing ref 24.017.PL.002)



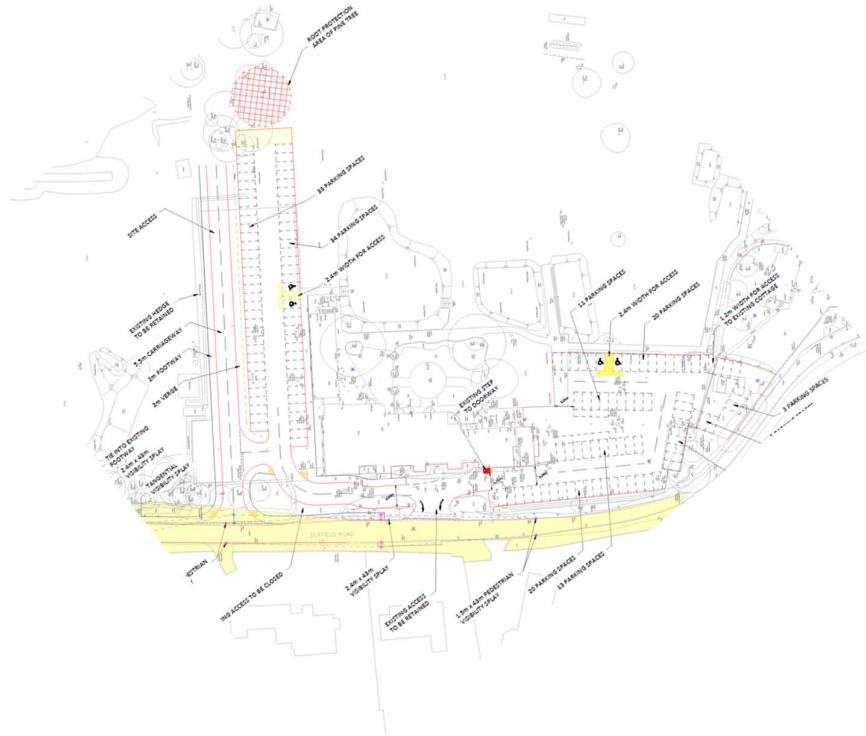
Proposed Reconfiguration of Duffield Road access (Extract of drawing ITB17442-GA-002 Rev E submitted with original application)



Updated Proposed Reconfiguration of Duffield Road access within this submission (Revised access drawing ref H1515-410 Rev G) (Orientated to reflect earlier access drawing).

Reconfiguration of the car park

- 3.8 The Golf Club current has two parking areas, to the east and west of the Club House. As indicated in the plans, these are to be reconfigured to enable provision of the new access arrangements and road which will in due course serve the phase 2 development (erection of up to 50 dwellings).
- 3.9 A copy of the indicative masterplan submitted and approved in application 223458 for the reconfiguration of the car park is shown below. This is accompanied by the updated plans for the reconfiguration of the car parking as also shown.

[illegible]

Landscaping

- 3.10 The landscaping strategy for the phase 1 element of the site is shown on the respective drawings. These are "West Parking and Entrance" (Drawing ref SGC 001 Rev E) and "East Parking and Pro Shop" (Drawing ref SGC 002 Rev E).

Materials

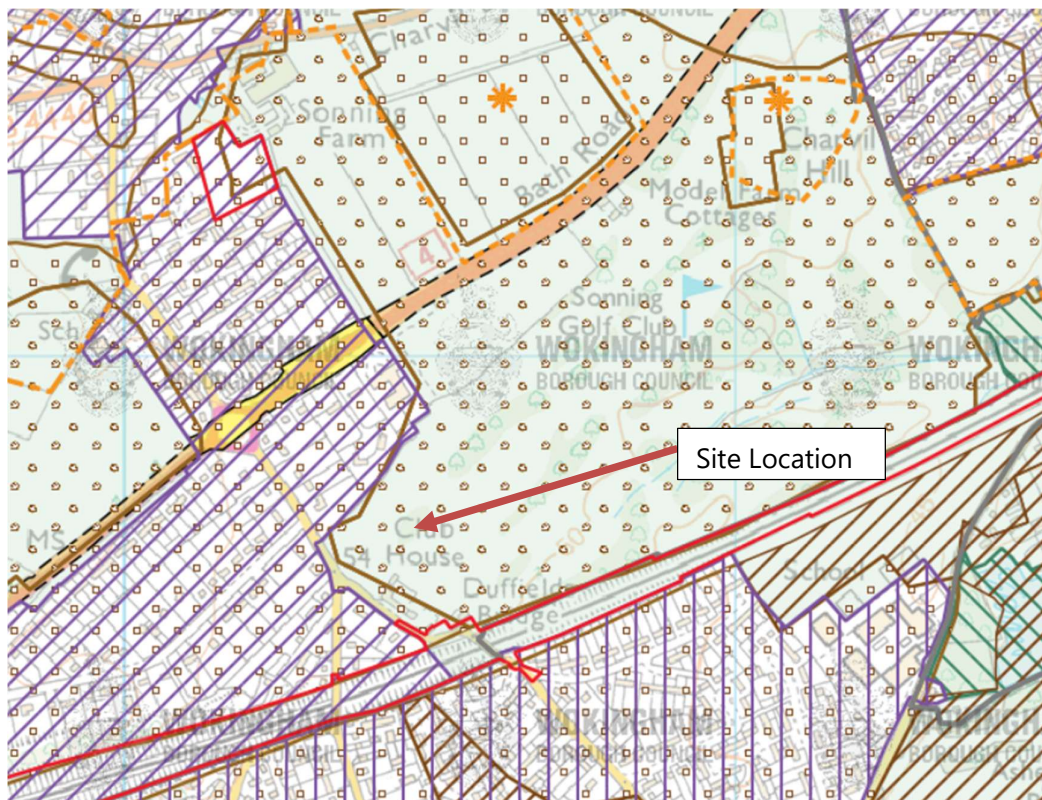
- 3.11 Details of the proposed material for the works are covered in the Design and Access Statement submitted with the reserved matters alongside the proposed elevational drawings.

4. Planning Policy Context

4.1 For the purposes of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the relevant development plan against which the application proposal will be determined, comprises:

- Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (CS) (January 2010);
- Wokingham Borough Managing Delivery Local Plan (MDD) (February 2014)

4.2 As shown on the Wokingham Borough Proposals Map, the application site is located on the edge of Sonning. It is undesignated countryside.



Extract from the Wokingham Borough Proposals Map

4.3 The key development plan policies against which this phase 1 reserved matters application should be considered are set out in the Table below.

Relevant Wokingham Borough Development Plan policies for the application

	Subject
CS	
CP1	Sustainable development
CP2	Inclusive communities
CP3	General principles for development
CP4	Infrastructure
CP6	Managing travel demand
CP7	Biodiversity
CP9	Scale and location of development
CP11	Proposals outside development limits
MDD	
CC01	Presumption in favour of sustainable development
CC02	Development limits
CC03	Green Infrastructure, trees and landscaping
CC04	Design and construction
CC05	Renewable energy
CC06	Noise
CC07	Parking
CC09	Flooding
CC10	Drainage
TB21	Landscape and character
TB23	Biodiversity and development
TB25	Archaeology

Supplementary Planning Document

4.4 The Council has published the following relevant SPD.

1) Wokingham Borough Design Guide

National Planning Policy

4.5 The National Planning Policy Framework is also a relevant material consideration in assessing the application. The NPPF is underpinned by a presumption in favour of sustainable development, with three overarching, but interlinked objectives. Paragraph 8 is relevant to the application as the proposal would help to deliver each of the strands of sustainable development:

- a) **An economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth...**
- b) **A social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, but ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations;**
- c) **An environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land...**

4.6 The proposal will help to deliver each of these objectives, thereby responding to the requirement in paragraph 10 of the NPPF that development is pursued in a positive way, reflecting the presumption in favour of sustainable development which sits at the heart of the Framework.

4.7 As indicated in this statement, the principle of the conversion works to the club house and reconfiguration of the accesses and car parking is established in the extant outline planning permission. This submission therefore seeks agreement of the specific details of the scheme thereby enabling the improvements envisaged and accepted to be delivered. These improvements facilitate the recreational offer of the site thereby supporting the wider social objectives as detailed in the NPPF.

4.8 The Golf Club alongside providing recreational opportunities is a local business. Paragraph 85 of the NPPF also makes it clear that:

“Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.”

4.9 The access and car park reconfiguration proposed in this application engages the advice in the NPPF regarding promotion of sustainable transport. Paragraph 116 of the NPPF states that:

“Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts of the road network would be severe.”

- 4.10 Whilst the principle of the works to the Club House, access and car park is established through the extant outline permission, its implementation and consequently wider fulfilment of the objectives in the NPPF concerning the presumption in favour of sustainable development is achieved by this scheme which delivers phase 1.

Emerging Development Plan

- 4.11 The Council has submitted a Local Plan Update for Examination by the Secretary of State. The Examination is ongoing with stage 2 Hearings Scheduled from 17th March until 10th July 2026. Pending the receipt of the Inspector's Report into the submission Local Plan Update, no further consideration of this is included in the planning statement having regard to the extent that there remain unresolved objections as per paragraph 49 of the NPPF.
- 4.12 A Neighbourhood Plan is in preparation for Sonning Parish. A consultation on this is underway until 16th March 2026. There is no information on the timetable or analysis of the future examiner on the draft Neighbourhood Plan.
- 4.13 Therefore very limited weight (if any) applies to the policies of the Submitted Local Plan Update and the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The principle of the works to the Golf Club were established through the outline permission. This scheme seeks approval of reserved matters for the phase 1 element. This Planning Statement and the accompanying plans and reports details the information necessary to enable the Council to approve the scheme.



woolf bond
planning

Correspondence address:

**The Mitfords
Basingstoke Road
Three Mile Cross
Reading
Berkshire
RG7 1AT**

The Vine
High Street
Stockbridge
Hampshire
SO20 6HF

Cheyenne House
West Street
Farnham
Surrey
GU9 7EQ

01189 884923 | office@woolfbond.co.uk | woolfbond.co.uk

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