

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Application Number:	252624
Site Address:	The Rose Toop Boatyard, Wargrave Road, Henley-On-Thames, RG9 3JD
Expiry Date:	19 January 2026
Site Visit Date:	5 January 2026
Proposal: (Retrospective) Full application for retention of new internal surfaced track way.	

PLANNING POLICY	
National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
Core Strategy (CS)	CP1 – Sustainable Development CP3 – General Principles for Development CP4 – Infrastructure Requirements CP6 – Managing Travel Demand CP7 – Biodiversity CP8 – Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area CP11 – Proposals Outside Development Limits
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB21 – Landscape Character TB26 – Buildings of Traditional Local Character and Areas of Special Character
Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU)	SS1 – Sustainable development principles SS2 – Spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy SS3 – Development within or adjacent to major and modest settlements SS4 – Development within or adjacent to minor settlements SS5 – Development in the countryside SS6 – Development in the Green Belt C2 – Mitigation of transport impacts and highway safety and design FD1 – Development and flood risk (from all sources) NE1 – Biodiversity and geodiversity NE2 – Biodiversity net gain NE3 – Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area NE5 – Landscape and design DH1 – Place making and quality design HC5 – Environmental protection
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document

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PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
081132	Erection of single storey extension to boathouse to accommodate larger women's changing room, new gym room and disabled access ramp	Approve – 14/10/2008

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Drainage – Additional information required

WBC Highways – No objection

WBC Landscape and Trees – No objection

External

The Environment Agency – No objection subject to condition

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	No comments received
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	No comments received

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The site refers to an existing boatyard which is used for the storage and maintenance of boats. The site is located within the Green Belt.

Description of Development:

The application is for the retention of new internal surfaced track way.

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 site is located within the countryside and as such the development should be acceptable providing that it complies with the principles stated in the Core Strategy. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the

area in which it is located and must be of high-quality design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land uses and occupiers.

The site is located outside of settlement boundary and within the countryside. The NPPF lists 'Recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside" as one of its twelve planning principles.

Development is defined in section 55 of the TCPA and means the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operations in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any buildings or other land. The retention of the access and the gates is such development. The site is located outside the settlement boundary and in the Countryside although Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy does permit development outside of development limits where it involves a sustainable rural or recreational enterprise.

The site also lies within the Green Belt where Policy CP12 of the Core Strategy requires developments within the Green Belt to comply with national Green Belt policy. One exception to the general presumption that development within the Green Belt is inappropriate is set out at paragraph 154 (h) of the NPPF and includes: *Other forms of development provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:*

- i. mineral extraction;*
- ii. engineering operations*

It is considered that the access track would constitute an engineering operation to enable the continued use of the site for recreation purposes. Aside from the fence, gate and access track itself, the development would have a limited physical presence and so it is considered that the openness of the Green Belt would be preserved. Furthermore, such features are commonplace within the countryside and within an existing developed site and there would be no conflict with the Green Belt purposes of including land within it. As such and in this instance, the proposal would be considered appropriate development in the Green Belt.

Character of the Area:

Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale, mass, layout, built form, height and character of the area and must be of high-quality design.

The additional internal access track is not considered to cause detrimental harms to the character of the area. Whilst the access track and new gate maybe visible from the public highway which passes along the northern boundary of the site, given the commercial use and existing appearance of the yard, this internal track would not be harmful. The access gate is set back from the highway and would be of similar appearance to the existing situation at the site.

The size, scale and design of the replacement gate would not result in harm to the openness of the countryside; therefore, no objections are raised in this aspect.

Neighbouring Amenity:

The proposed hardstanding would not result in harm to the neighbouring properties due to the nature of the works including in terms of noise from traffic movements, as access to the boatyard is expected and the site is adequately separated from the nearest residential property.

The proposed gate would be located sufficiently far from the nearest residential occupiers; therefore, there would be no harm in terms of overlooking, overshadowing or overbearing effects.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

The access track is located within the application site and as such would not affect the public highway. The proposal would also not alter the parking arrangements or provision at the site. As such, no objections are raised in this regard.

Flooding and Drainage:

The site is located within Flood Zone 3b (Functional Floodplain). Within this zone, the Environment Agency (EA) is the primary approval body for flood risk matters, including assessment of impacts on floodplain storage, conveyance, and overall flood risk. The LLFA provides comments but is not the determining authority for development in Flood Zone 3b.

The applicant describes the development as “water-compatible”. This classification and its acceptability in FZ3b must be confirmed by the LPA with advice from the EA, rather than by the LLFA. While the applicant has referenced EA modelled flood levels, the information submitted does not provide sufficient evidence that the surfaced trackway has no adverse impact on:

- Floodplain storage; Floodwater conveyance; Overland flow routes and flood hazard to users in a functional floodplain.

A levels survey and construction detail have been provided to verify that the trackway does not raise ground levels or reduce permeability. As the EA is the approval body for development in Flood Zone 3b, the LLFA defers to the EA regarding acceptability in principle. The Environment Agency has not raised any objection to the proposal subject to a condition that the works remain in accordance with the submitted Flood Risk Assessment. Subject to this condition, it is considered that the trackway would not increase flood risk on-site or elsewhere.

Landscape and Trees:

The Council's Landscape Officer raises no objection to the provision of hardstanding in accordance with the submitted Site Plan. Whilst initial concerns were raised with regards to the construction of the access track and the impact it would have on site trees, additional information has been provided by the applicant to confirm that the works were carried out in accordance with the British Standards to avoid harm to the roots of the surrounding site trees. As such, the Landscape and Tree Officer has raised no objection to the proposal.

Ecology:

There is a negligible ecological risk arising from the proposal as it is confined to areas already disturbed by the use of the site as a boatyard. Given this, no objections are raised in this regard. Furthermore, as the application is retrospective the proposal is exempt from the Biodiversity Net Gain requirements.

Environmental Health:

No objections are raised on Environmental Health grounds.

Conclusion:

Overall, the proposed development complies with the development plan, would not result in any harms to the Green Belt, character of the area or neighbouring amenities. Subject to appropriate conditions, this application is recommended for approval.

Other:

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:	Agreed
Recommendation:	Approve
Date:	7 January 2026
Earliest date for decision:	16 December 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	<i>BJC</i>
Date:	12.01.26