

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	260652
Site Address:	Eastheath House, Eastheath Avenue, Wokingham, RG41 2PR
Expiry Date:	22 May 2026
Site Visit Date:	13 April 2026
Proposal: Full application for Temporary (3-year) planning permission for Change of Use of part of the existing buildings on site from E(g), B2 & B8 to Class E(d) Indoor Sport.	

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 CP6 – Managing Travel Demand CP7 – Biodiversity CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals CP15 – Employment Development
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 TB08 – Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities Standards TB11 – Core Employment Areas TB12 – Employment Skills Plan TB21 – Landscape Character TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (JMWP)	DM1 - Sustainable Development DM2 - Climate Change – Mitigation and Adaptation DM9 - Protecting Health, Safety and Amenity DM10 - Flood Risk DM12 - Sustainable Transport Movements DM15 - Site History
Wokingham Borough Local Plan	SS1 – Sustainable development principles SS2 – Spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy SS3 – Development within or adjacent to major and modest settlements SS8 – Meeting our employment needs CE1 – Design principles for efficient buildings CE2 – Environmental standards for non-residential development

Update (LPU)	CE6 – Reducing energy consumption in existing buildings C1 – Active and sustainable transport and accessibility C5 – Parking and electric vehicle charging ER1 – Core Employment Areas FD1 – Development and flood risk NE1 – Biodiversity and geodiversity NE2 – Biodiversity net gain NE5 – Landscape and design DH1 – Place making and quality design DH2 – Safeguarding amenity HC1 – Promoting healthy communities HC2 – Community infrastructure HC4 – Open spaces, sports, recreation and play facilities HC5 – Environmental protection HC7 – Light pollution HC8 – Noise pollution
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
36772	Refurbishment of offices including construction of a new roof.	Approved (date illegible)
37066	Refurbishment of offices including construction of new roof and dormers	Approved 12/03/1991
43943	Variation of condition 6 on approval 37066 to allow separate occupation of office space.	Approved 13/04/1995
990602	Proposed Formation Of Additional (B8) Storage Area in Form Of Mezzanine Floor	Approved 30/03/1999

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Environmental Health – No comments received
WBC Drainage – No objection
WBC Highways – No objection subject to conditions
WBC Growth & Delivery – No comments received
WBC Economic Prosperity & Place – No comments received
WBC Landscape and Trees – No objection
WBC Ecology – No comments received
WBC Waste Services – No comments received
WBC Cleaner and Greener – No comments received

External

Natural England – No comments received
Thames Water Utilities Ltd – No comments received
Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust – No comments received

Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks – No comments received

REPRESENTATIONS

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

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site features a large commercial unit located on the western side of Eastheath Avenue. The site forms part of the wider Molly Millars Industrial Estate which is a Core Employment Area. The site has been vacant since January 2023.

Description of Development:

This application seeks a 3-year temporary permission for the proposed change of use from Class E, B2 and B8 to Class E(d) Indoor Sport. The proposal seeks to reconfigure the building to create an indoor sports facility comprising 3 no. padel courts (2x double, 1x single), with an associated reception, changing and toilet/washing facilities. The proposed works are internal and do not require alterations to the external appearance of the building.

Principle of Development:

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning decisions to be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The adopted Development Plan for Wokingham Borough comprises the Core Strategy (2010) and the Managing Development Delivery (MDD) Local Plan (2014), with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the emerging Local Plan Update (LPU) 2023–2040 being material considerations. The site lies within settlement limits, forms part of the Molly Millars Industrial Estate Core Employment Area, and is located within the Wokingham Major Development Location.

The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the local Development Plan. Policy CC01 of the MDD Local Plan 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.

Core Strategy Policy CP2, Inclusive Communities, supports development which contributes to health, wellbeing and access to leisure and recreational facilities. Indoor sports facilities represent a recognised form of community infrastructure which can deliver social and health benefits. In this case, the proposed padel courts would provide an additional indoor leisure facility available to the local community, promoting participation in sport and physical activity and thereby supporting the creation of healthy and inclusive communities in accordance with Policy CP2.

Policy CP9 of the Core Strategy identifies Wokingham as a Major Development Location, where significant development is directed in order to promote sustainable

patterns of growth. Development in such locations is supported by existing infrastructure, accessibility to the strategic road network and public transport, and proximity to services and employment areas. In this respect, the site's location within an established business park, with existing utilities, transport connections and servicing arrangements, represents a sustainable location for redevelopment, consistent with the spatial strategy of the Core Strategy and the NPPF's emphasis on directing development to accessible and well-connected locations.

Policy CP15 identifies Molly Millars Industrial Estate as a Core Employment Area and safeguards it for employment-generating uses, including business, industrial and warehousing (Use Class B8), while supporting the expansion or intensification of such uses. Policy CP15 also states that changes of use should not result in a net loss of floorspace in B Use within the Borough. The proposal would involve an internal reconfiguration of the site for an indoor sports use, which would not be classed as an alternative employment use given the full-time staff equivalent would be two.

However, the application seeks a temporary planning permission for a period of three years only. The temporary nature of the proposal means that it would not result in the permanent loss of employment land, and would allow the local planning authority to reassess the use of the premises at the end of the temporary period. Additionally, the proposal involves no structural or external works, meaning that the building would remain readily capable of reverting to the previous B2 and B8 uses in the future. It must also be noted that whilst the full-time staff equivalent would be two, the proposed use would generate a level of employment, thereby continuing to contribute to economic activity within the Core Employment Area, albeit in a different form.

In addition, the continued vacancy of part of the site is a relevant material consideration. The applicant has also demonstrated, via a letter from Hicks Baker, the commercial agent, that there have been difficulties with finding an industrial occupier. Therefore, the temporary reuse of the premises for an indoor sport use would avoid the harms associated with long-term vacancy and would not prejudice the longer-term employment function of the Molly Millars Industrial Area.

Taking these matters together, it is considered that, on balance, the conflict with Policy CP15 is limited and acceptable, having regard to the temporary and reversible nature of the proposal and the absence of any permanent loss of employment land. Accordingly, the proposal is considered acceptable in principle, subject to the temporary 3-year nature.

Character of the Area:

The site is located within settlement limits 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 proposed temporary change of use will see the existing office/industrial use being replaced with an indoor sports facility for 3 no. padel courts. Given the surrounding area is predominantly industrial, an indoor sports use poses no material harm to the

wider character of the area. Additionally, no external changes are proposed to the building. As such, the proposed temporary change of use poses no harm to the character of the area.

Neighbouring Amenity:

No concerns are raised on neighbouring amenity grounds with regards to loss of light, overbearing or overlooking.

The nearest residential properties on Eastheath Avenue are located 48 metres away from the application site. As such, the proposed temporary change of use does not raise significant concerns with regards to potential noise disturbance or light spill. A condition is recommended to restrict the hours of use to 07:00-23:00.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

The Council's Highways Officer has no objection to the proposal subject to a condition requiring a parking management strategy to be submitted. This is to ensure that there is an appropriate availability of parking spaces on site for customers and staff during potential booking overlaps and shift changes. Accordingly, this condition is recommended. Additionally, conditions are recommended to ensure parking spaces are provided in accordance with the approved plans, and to secure details of cycle parking.

Conclusion:

For the reasons stated above, the proposal is acceptable in local plan policy terms and therefore is recommended for approval.

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.

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.

RECOMMENDATION	
Conditions agreed:	Yes
Recommendation:	Approve
Date:	20 May 2026

Earliest date for decision:	26 April 2026
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Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	21/05/26

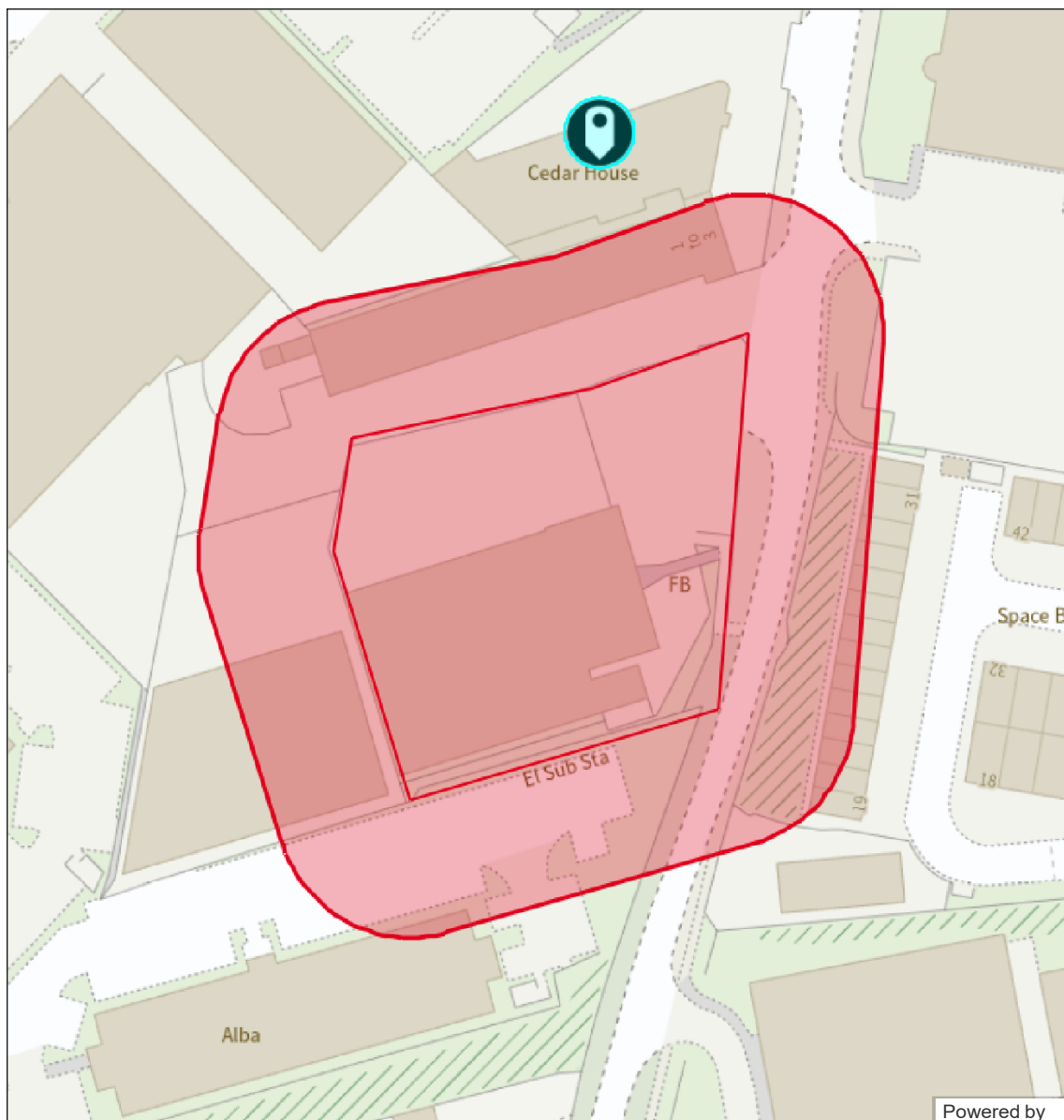
PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Near Me Report

Area of Interest (AOI) Information

Area: 8,530.86 m²

Date: Thu Apr 02 2026 21:33:42 GMT+0100 (British Summer Time)



Heritage & Conservation

Conservation Areas



Listed Buildings



Listed Buildings Consultation Zone

Affordable Housing Thresholds | Total count: 3

#	NAME
1	Within Major Development Locations
2	Within Major Development Locations
3	Within All Development Locations

Core Employment Location | Total count: 1

#	TYPE	NAME
1	Core Employment Area	Molly Millars Industrial Area

Scale and Location of Development Proposals | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	NAME
1	Major Development Locations	Wokingham

Thames Basin Heath SPA Mitigation Zones | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME
1	Special Protection Area Linear Mitigation Zone	7km Linear Mitigation Zone

Preferred Waste Areas | Total count: 1

#	Site_Name	Land_Type	Class_Use
1	Molly Millars Lane Area	Industrial estate	B1, B2, B8 *

Major Nuclear Sites Consultation Zone | Total count: 2

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME	PLANNING_NOTE
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1	Consultation Zone - Major Nuclear Site	AWE: 12km Zone	This is the 12km Zone. A circular zone of 12km radius around all nuclear sites, for certain types of significant development due to the potential for such developments to pose an external hazard to sites.
2	Consultation Zone - Major Nuclear Site	AWE: Special Case Zone	ONR also requests to be consulted on planning applications, irrespective of distance from nuclear sites, for special cases. Developments that either introduce a new hazard or change the existing external hazards posed to nuclear sites.

Aerodrome Safeguarding: Gatwick Consultation Zone | Total count: 1

#	Description
1	Please consult London Gatwick on the following: All buildings, structures & works exceeding 300 m AGL.

Aerodrome Safeguarding: Heathrow Consultation Zone | Total count: 1

#	Height Band	Wind Turbine	Aviation
1	All works exceeding 150 metres (492.1 feet)	YES	YES

Submitted Sites Live | Total count: 1

#	SITE_REF	LUPP	ADDRESS
1	5WK055	Housing (C3 Planning Use Class)	Rubra I, Rubra II and Alba House, Mulberry Business Park, Fishponds Lane, Wokingham, RG41 2GY

Electricity Sub Station Consultation Zones | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	CONSULT
1	Electricity Sub Station Consultation Zone	SSE Power Distribution

Risk of Flooding from Surface Water | Total count: 5

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME
1	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 100 year risk extent
2	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 100 year risk extent
3	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 1000 year risk extent
4	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 1000 year risk extent
5	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 1000 year risk extent

Bat Roost Habitat Suitability | Total count: 11

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME	CONSULT
1	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	WT908	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team
2	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	WT910	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team
3	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	WU908	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team
4	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	WU909	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team
5	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	WU910	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team
6	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	WU911	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team
7	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	WV908	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team
8	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	WV909	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team

9	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	WV910	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team
10	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	WV911	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team
11	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	WV910	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team

Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zones | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME	CONSULT
1	Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zone	Green	Consult NatureSpace for Major developments only

Landfill Gas Consultation Zones | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	OBJECTID
1	Landfill Gas Consultation Zone	1

SSSI Impact Risk Zones | Total count: 1

#	SSSI Impact Risk Zone Advice Hyperlink
1	https://irz.geodata.org.uk/IRZ/step2.html?irzcode=0300000530000&notes=11404&location=475984,168857%20(IRZ%20polygon%20centre)

Potentially Contaminated Land Zones | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	OBJECTID
1	Potentially Contaminated Land Consultation Zone	1

Water Utility Consultation Zones | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME	CONSULT_WHEN
1	Water Utility Consultation Zone	South East Water Supply Area	New dwellings

Landscape Character Assessment 2019 | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	Name
1	Landscape Character Assessment 2019	Arborfield Cross and Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay

Wards | Total count: 1

#	Name of area	Closest Approximate Distance
1	Evendons Ward	0 m

Parishes | Total count: 1

#	Name of area	Closest Approximate Distance
1	Wokingham CP	0 m