

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	260417
Site Address:	299 Wokingham Road, Earley, Wokingham, RG6 7DU
Expiry Date:	23 April 2026
Site Visit Date:	20 March 2026
Proposal: Full application for the change of use of land for the temporary siting of a caravan for residential use for a period of up to five years. (Retrospective)	

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 CP5 – Housing Mix, Density and Affordability CP7 – Biodiversity CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals 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 CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB05 – Housing Mix TB21 – Landscape Character TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU)	C5 – Parking and electric vehicle charging
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
-----------------	-------------	-----------------

250467	Full application for the proposed change of use of the land to allow installation of caravan for residential use, demolition of existing house, construction of front wall and gates and extension of existing dropped kerb. (part-retrospective)	Refused 16/04/2025
250464	Full application for the proposed demolition of existing house, construction of front wall and gates, extension of existing dropped kerb. (part-retrospective)	Refused 28/04/2026

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Environmental Health – No comments received.
WBC Drainage – Request further information. This will be sought via condition.
WBC Highways – No objection in principle to the siting of the caravan. They note that planning permission is required for the front boundary walls and gates.
WBC Landscape and Trees – Objection.

External

Thames Water Utilities Ltd – No comments received.

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	Objection: - The siting of the caravan is unjustified. - The caravan is out of character. - Five-year temporary permission is excessive.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received.
Neighbours	Two letters of objection. Concerns relate to: - Why the caravan is required. - Five years is excessive for temporary. - Ground level on site has been lowered undermining the stability of boundary fence with no. 5 Station Road. - The removal of trees (prior to the submission of the application) has resulted in areas of the garden of no. 5 Station Road being more exposed to sunlight. The Trustees of the Estate of Roderick Mackie raise objection: - They are in the process of registering the land. - The occupant has illegally gained ownership of the site.

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site consists of a plot of land on the northern side of Wokingham Road, Earley. Wokingham Road is identified as a Green Route Enhancement Area.

Wokingham Road boasts a range of property types which include detached, semi-detached, terraced, bungalows and flats. Dwellings vary in age, size and appearance. The section of Wokingham Road surrounding the application site consists of residential properties, including an adjoining block of flats, commercial units, including a dentist, a care home, and Earley Train Station approximately 70m to the north.

Proposal:

This application seeks retrospective approval for the siting of a caravan for a temporary period of five years.

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 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.

Character of the Area:

The local Parish and a third party have raised objection to the proposal in relation to the detrimental impact the caravan would have on local character. Please see the officer assessment below.

The application site is located within a Major Development Location on Wokingham Road, Earley, which is characterised by a diverse and evolving built form. The surrounding section of Wokingham Road contains a wide range of land uses, including residential, commercial and retail development. The residential properties along the road are varied in type, including detached and semi-detached dwellings, bungalows, terraced properties and blocks of flats. These buildings differ significantly in age, architectural style, form, scale and appearance, and there is no consistent or uniform character to the street scene. Many properties have also been extended or altered over time in a variety of designs and configurations, further contributing to the eclectic character of the area.

Historically, the application site contained a single detached dwelling which was set significantly back from the road and positioned well behind the established building line. The site was previously densely covered with trees and vegetation and had become overgrown. In recent years, the site has been cleared and the former dwelling, which had fallen into a derelict condition, was assessed by the Council's Building Control Team and deemed to be an unsafe structure. A demolition notice was subsequently issued, and the building was demolished in March 2025.

The caravan is positioned towards the rear of the plot and is single-storey in form. Given its siting, limited height and modest scale, it does not present as an overly dominant or visually intrusive feature within the site or the wider street scene. In the context of the surrounding development, including a two-storey detached dwelling to the west and a block of flats to the east, the caravan remains visually subordinate and does not interrupt key views along Wokingham Road or appear prominent when viewed from the public realm.

While caravans are not a typical or established form of accommodation along this part of Wokingham Road, the surrounding area is not defined by a consistent architectural style or building typology. The varied nature of development along the road, combined with the temporary nature of the proposal, means that the presence of the caravan would not result in material harm to the character or appearance of the area. Furthermore, the temporary permission sought for a period of five years ensures that the siting of the caravan would not result in a permanent or irreversible change to the character of the site.

Taking these factors into account, it is considered that the temporary siting of the caravan would preserve the character and appearance of the area and would accord with Policies CP3 and CP9 of the CS and Policy CC01 of the MDD Local Plan, which seek to ensure that development is appropriate in scale, form and appearance relative to its surroundings.

Temporary Permission

The local Parish and a third party raised objection regarding the proposed five-year temporary permission being excessive.

Officer Response

Although a five-year period is recognised as a relatively long temporary duration, it is nevertheless considered acceptable and reasonable in the circumstances of this case.

As already stated in this report, the site previously accommodated a permanent residential dwelling which has since been demolished. The principle of residential use on the land has therefore already been established, and the temporary siting of a single caravan does not introduce a new or fundamentally different form of activity in land-use terms.

Notwithstanding that the siting of the caravan is considered acceptable in character and visual terms for the reasons set out above, it is recognised that a caravan does not represent a permanent or typical form of residential accommodation within this part of Wokingham Road.

The use of a temporary permission allows the Local Planning Authority to retain effective control over the longer-term use and redevelopment of the site. As the site forms part of a wider Major Development Location, the future redevelopment of the land may reasonably come forward in a different form over the longer term.

However, the temporary permission approach ensures that the acceptability of the use can be reassessed at the end of the temporary period, having regard to any changes

in site circumstances, policy context, or future development proposals. As such, the proposal represents a reversible and time-limited form of development.

In this context, a five-year period is considered proportionate. It provides sufficient certainty for the current occupier while avoiding the establishment of a permanent residential caravan use on the land.

Furthermore, the imposition of a personal occupancy condition is considered both necessary and reasonable. This ensures that the permission is tied specifically to the identified occupier and cannot be transferred or sold on with the benefit of a general caravan residential use. Should the named occupier vacate the site, the permission would cease to have effect, and the caravan would be required to be removed in accordance with the approved conditions.

Taken together, the temporary and personal nature of the permission ensures that the Local Planning Authority retains full control over the site in the longer term.

Land Ownership

An objection has been received from The Trustees of the Estate of Roderick Mackie raising concern that the ownership of the application site is disputed. This matter is noted.

However, it is well established that land ownership and private civil disputes are not material planning considerations.

Planning permission does not determine ownership or legal rights over land; ownership certificate D was completed, and any such disputes are civil matters to be resolved outside the planning process. The application has therefore been assessed and determined solely on its planning merits. In this case, the application has been assessed against the relevant development plan policies and other material planning considerations. The objection relating to land ownership, while acknowledged, does not carry weight in the planning balance and does not justify withholding planning permission where the proposal is otherwise acceptable in planning terms.

Accordingly, the application has been determined on its planning merits alone, and the existence of an alleged land ownership dispute does not alter the conclusion that the proposal is acceptable in planning terms.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Overlooking, Loss of Light & Overbearing:

The caravan is sited towards the rear of the plot and is more than 11m from no. 297 Wokingham Road to the west, and approximately 3.6m from flats 1 to 4 Aston Court to the east. Therefore, due to the location of the caravan and single-storey scale, there are no detrimental loss of privacy, loss of light or overbearing impacts that would be generated to neighbouring residential amenity.

Excess sunlight

A letter of objection was raised by the occupant of no. 5 Station Road to the rear of the site in relation to the trees and shrubs that have been removed from the site (prior to

the submission of this application). They raise concern that the garden of no. 5 is now exposed to more sunlight which may detrimentally impact an existing tree along the shared boundary. They request for a tree to be planted to provide shade to the existing tree.

While this is noted, the provision of additional planting solely to benefit vegetation within a neighbouring garden does not constitute a material planning consideration.

Furthermore, given the temporary nature of the permission, such a requirement would not be proportionate or relate to the temporary use proposed and would risk failing the test of reasonableness, particularly where the development itself does not result in unacceptable visual harm.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

The Council's Highways team was consulted regarding the proposal. They raise no objection in principle to the temporary siting of a caravan. As the site previously accommodated a residential dwelling, on this basis, WBC Highways have no objection to the caravan on sustainability terms.

The Highways officer does however, state that '*Planning permission is required for the creation of the access onto a classified road*'. The officer also referenced the WBC Highways comments for refused application 250464 which still apply:

"The proposed site access on the plans is indicated as centralised and gated. The applicant should provide full details of the proposed site access. The applicant should obtain separate consent from WBC's Traffic Management (TM) team for any amendments to the dropped crossing. Initial enquiries with TM, conducted in March 2025, indicate a preference for the utilisation of the existing access and dropped crossing onto Wokingham Road. Highways request that the proposed boundary wall and gate details are revised to accommodate this".

It will therefore be necessary to attach a condition to any grant of approval in relation to the front boundary treatment and access. The condition will stipulate that within a set timeframe; revised details of the front boundary walls and gates are to be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, or the use ceases and the caravan is removed.

Full Highways officer comments will be available once the decision notice is issued.

Amenity Space:

The application site boasts a relatively large plot measuring over 52m in length. Following the siting of the caravan, there is still ample space within the site to accommodate adequate outdoor space to serve the development.

Flooding and Drainage:

The application site is located in flood zone 1 and the Council's Drainage officer was consulted. They raised no objection in principle to the temporary siting of a caravan on the site.

They commented:

“We note from the application form that surface water runoff will be managed via soakaway while foul water will be managed via a septic tank.

Please provide drainage details demonstrating that infiltration is achievable and provide a drainage strategy drawing for the development.

Also provide details of the septic tank maintenance to ensure that site contamination will be controlled”.

It will therefore be reasonable and necessary to condition the requested information to ensure that satisfactory provision is made for the disposal of surface water and foul water and to demonstrate that infiltration drainage is achievable.

Landscape and Trees:

While there are no protected trees within the application site, Wokingham Road is identified as a Green Route Enhancement Area. As defined by the MDD, these are stretches of road that have the potential to be green routes, particularly sections running between existing green routes. Green routes are identified as roads into settlements that are lined with trees and other vegetation which make a significant contribution to character and environment of the area and contribute to the Borough’s network of wildlife corridor. Therefore, the retention and addition of soft landscaping is something that is encouraged within these areas.

While the site previously had been densely covered by trees and other vegetation, at the time of submission, the site had been cleared of all trees and plants.

The council’s Landscape and Trees officer was consulted and raises objection to the proposal and commented:

“The proposed application is for the change of use for the siting of one caravan for up to 5 years, but the application does not include the retention of the other large static home, parking for multiple vehicles, two outbuildings (sheds) or the front boundary wall which were observed in photographs taken by the Planning Officer on 23 March 2026. It is unclear whether the other additional development—and the cumulative effect of all the built form within the Site—should be considered together within this application”.

While their comments are noted, the application has been determined on the description of development. As stated within the ‘Highway Access and Parking Provision’ section of this report, the front boundary gates and walls have been considered and will be dealt with via condition.

Conclusion:

For the reasons set out above and subject to conditions, the proposal is acceptable as it accords with local policy and guidance.

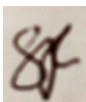
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): When planning permission is granted for a development that is CIL liable, the Council will issue a liability notice as soon as practicable after the day on which the planning permission first permits development.

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:	Yes
Recommendation:	Approve
Date:	16 April 2026
Earliest date for decision:	22 March 2026

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	22.4.26

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Major Development Location
Green Route Enhancement Area
Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
Landscape Character Assessment 2019 - Woodley-Earley Settled and Farmed Clay
Maiden Erleigh & Whitegates Ward
Earley Parish