

JPPC ref: HV/9402
Portal ref: hv PP-14854933
LPA ref: tbc

Wokingham Borough Council

Via planning portal

16 April 2026

Dear WBC Planning Registration

**Application for planning permission
Garage/car port at Owl End, Willow Lane, Wargrave**

1. This is an application for a garage/car port at the above dwelling. This is a house which does not have a garage and this is considered useful to the homeowners.
2. The smallest structure that is actually useful for its intended purpose is proposed and we trust that this helps to make the proposal acceptable. We set out below why the development should be considered acceptable in planning terms.
3. The house is an old one which has been altered over the years. When planning permission for extensions to the house was granted in 2007 a condition was applied to mean that planning permission would be needed for any further forms of development; i.e. permitted development rights for householder development were removed. Irrespective of this condition planning permission would be needed for what is proposed as the structure would sit forward of the house's principle elevation, meaning permitted development rights are not available.
4. Most often permitted development rights can be used to provide small outbuildings at dwellings and thus no application is needed. The permitted development right is- we infer- removed for buildings forward of the principle elevation because in many situations such buildings may sit oddly in the local environment and thus be deserving of the scrutiny of a planning application.
5. That this position/siting needs planning permission does not make it automatically problematic or unacceptable. Rather the application process is there to determine whether such siting is suitable, alongside design considerations. In this case we consider it is suitable siting, as well as suitable design.
6. Owl End sits to the northern side of Willow Lane, which is a private residential road on the outskirts of Wargrave (but also a public footpath). Most buildings on the road lie on the southern or western side of the road as this provides them with river or creek frontage for boating, which is locally very popular as there is quite a long stretch of the River Thames available for boating.



7. Although north of the road, the site still reads as part of the built up part of this part of the settlement, particularly given the tall wall to the site frontage which provides intimacy to this stretch of the road on the site frontage, but is in effect an obvious sign of the area being built up and developed land. The location plan shows that this is clearly a developed area.
8. The dwelling is accessed via an arcing approach drive with gates in the southeastern corner of the plot, some 85m or so from the front door of the house. Alternatively for pedestrians there is a small gate in the Lane-side wall closer to the house. A circular turning head is provided for cars in front of the house. The house is at an angle to the road but has an almost perfectly south facing façade, which 'traps' the turning head between the house and the roadside tall boundary wall. This wall provides privacy from users of the Lane and houses on the far side of the Lane.
9. It is proposed to provide the garage/car port at the back of the turning head (western side) for convenience for access to the front door. The drawings show a basic two-bay building with low monopitch roof to keep water/weather from the parked cars and/or bicycles/motorbikes. It is considered reasonable for a home of this nature to have such a facility. Although the home has a large outbuilding to the east this serves as amenity/leisure rooms and an annexe and it not suitable for a garage- not least due to the absence of an approach road to it.
10. The proposal makes the least change possible to meet the needs, which are wholly reasonable needs.
11. Due to the Lane-side wall the proposal will not be easily discerned, if seen at all from the public realm, nor from ground floor level at neighbours' homes. From first floor level there could be glimpsed views of the garage but it would only be seen against the backdrop of the host house. The proposal would not be in anyway unneighbourly.
12. The site sits in the metropolitan Green Belt. The Council's policies for this area are some way out of date. Therefore, it is considered that the guidance of the National Planning Policy Framework should be preferred. This allows for development in this area. We understand that the Council might perceive this site to be outside the main built up part of Wargrave. Local Policy CP5 (from the 2011 Core Strategy) allows for modest development in the 'defined' part of Wargrave- in its 'development limits'. However, this is designed for development meeting 'general' needs and is not helpful to meeting homeowner needs who will want their facilities at home. Rather CP5 is part of the spatial strategy for the district not individual's needs.
13. To this end Local Policy CP11 may be of some relevance as this considered proposal outside of development limits, but such a policy cannot make a site which is in a village outside of a village¹. In our view the garage site is surrounded

¹ *Julian Wood v The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and Gravesham Borough Council [Supreme Court February 2015]* found that the identification of a village boundary is a matter of planning judgement. The judgement further noted that whilst a village boundary as defined within a Local Plan is a relevant consideration, it is not necessarily determinative, with assessment of the extent of the village on the ground also being material

by buildings, albeit in a loose arrangement and comprises land within the settlement of Wargrave, albeit an outlying part². Given this the allowance of national Green Belt policy for 'limited infilling', may apply- paragraph 154e. There is no definition in the Framework of what constitutes 'limited infilling' and no definition that might be found in local planning policies is evident.

14. Where there is no NPPF nor Local Plan definition its normal meaning may be used; 'infilling' may suggest the development of land that is surrounded by existing development on at least 2 sides within reasonable proximity. This is the case as the garage would be between dwellings (on opposite sides of the Lane). Infilling does not only mean new houses. There is no reason why an outbuilding cannot also be infilling. Indeed, the Cambridge Dictionary suggests infilling may include the 'development of new houses, business, buildings etc on land between other buildings in already developed areas'.
15. The requirement for such infilling to be 'limited' requires consideration of both the development site and the scale and form of the proposed development. The proposed development would clearly be limited in scale.
16. Although this is a more spacious part of Wargrave with its looser arrangement of buildings, the small scale and low-key form of the development proposed, would amount to limited infilling within a village for the purposes of the NPPF, in our view.
17. Accordingly, one of the exceptions to the NPPF's requirement that new buildings should be considered as inappropriate in the Green Belt has been established. The proposed development would not amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt because it would constitute limited infilling within a village.
18. It follows that no assessment of the effects on Green Belt openness or whether very special circumstances exist is necessary.
19. Notwithstanding the foregoing, it is possible for development to fall in one or more of the categories of 'not appropriate' development. Additional to NPPF 154e is 154g. This provision has not existed for long and it is important to follow its rationale, which would seem to suit this case most appositely. Although we feel that the site lies within Wargrave, should it be thought that is not the case 154g clearly allows for infilling *outside* of settlements. If this site is outside the village of Wargrave then it must be previously developed land (see NPPF glossary definition- which includes homes and all their curtilage where outside a settlement).
20. The freshness of 154g should not be forgotten given that the Local Plan predates it and thus that means that NPPF paragraph 231 should be borne in mind- the LPA should have reviewed its policies. In the light of NPPF paragraph 232 the Core Strategy policies are no longer compatible with this version of the NPPF and lesser weight can be given to them as a result.
21. We feel that the allowance of 154g is extremely pertinent to this modest development for it allows for limited infilling (that is not in a village), which would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt. The discreet nature of this development and its relative small size when serving a larger home in generous grounds that is clearly not to extend the settlement nor cause sprawl must be one of the minor sorts of development that the government had in mind to

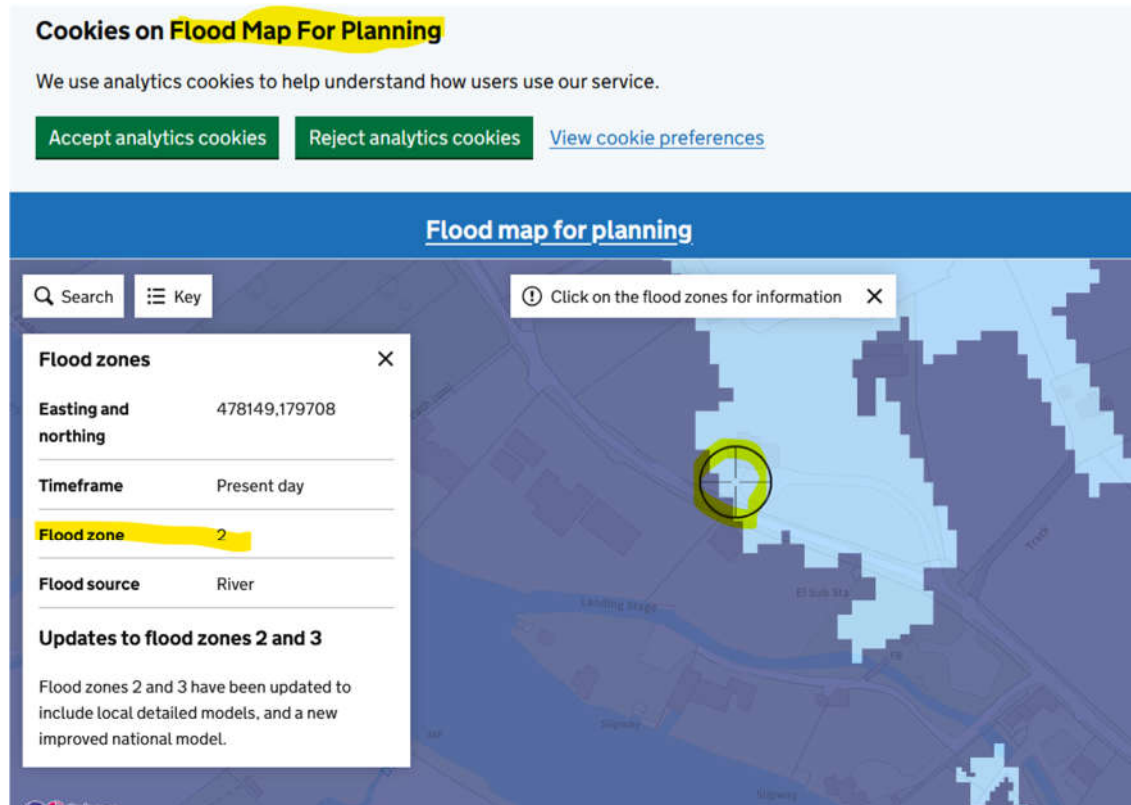
² In the appeal case APP/B5480/W/18/3200843 it was found that a small separation did not mean that a site would be beyond the settlement for infilling purposes.

allow for in this provision. The government has clearly intentionally allowed for very minor development to happen under this provision.

22. Hence, even if another part of paragraph 154 were not to apply 154g read in the modestly generous way it was meant allows this development be granted.

Flooding

23. This site is located in flood zone 2. Flood zone 3 has the highest risk of flooding.



24. In flood zone 2 a risk of flooding exists but not with such serious consequences as in flood zone 3.
25. This property has land in both Flood zone 2 and 3. No part is in Flood zone 1 (that with least flood risk) By locating development in Flood zone 2 appreciation for flood risk has been shown in relation to this minor development.
26. In relation to flood risk, the PPG states 'Minor development' means:
- minor non-residential extensions (industrial/commercial/leisure etc): extensions with a floorspace not in excess of 250 square metres.
 - alterations: development that does not increase the size of buildings, e.g. alterations to external appearance.
 - **householder development**: for example, **sheds, garages**, games rooms etc. within the curtilage of the existing dwelling, in addition to physical extensions to the existing dwelling itself. This definition excludes any proposed development that would create a separate dwelling within the curtilage of the existing dwelling (e.g. subdivision of houses into flats) or any other development with a purpose not incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling.
27. The PPG states minor developments are unlikely to raise significant flood risk issues unless:

- they would have an adverse effect on a watercourse, floodplain or its flood defences;
 - they would impede access to flood defence and management facilities; or
 - where the cumulative impact of such developments would have a significant effect on local flood storage capacity or flood flows.
28. The PPG states a pragmatic approach should be taken to the scope and level of detail of minor development flood risk assessment – a shorter, simpler assessment is likely to be sufficient in most such cases. As a minimum, the assessment needs to show that the development will be safe for its users for the intended lifetime of the development, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and be sufficiently flood resistant and resilient to the level and nature of the flood risk.
29. In this case the proposal is for parking cars and bikes and motorbikes. Half of the garage is open, so clearly not impeding flooding- it is merely providing weather protection for the cars.
30. Given the garage door opening it will not be possible to keep water out, thus no impact on flood water storage will ensue. Half the building has no walls- again no impediment to flooding.
31. As the house exists no extra people will be affected by flooding. By ensuring security for bikes and cars the store element will provide a resource to assist people in the event of flooding. Stored items can be stored off the ground- e.g. on tables/shelves. The garage is behind a tall wall. The site will not impede the flow of flood waters accordingly- the existing wall is by far and away the greater 'impediment'.
32. Flood management will not be impeded by this development.
33. Only electricity is needed by way of services and that can all be ceiling mounted- well out of flood waters' reach. This is the only resilience such a building needs. Brick work walls will be provided (without plaster) to allow robustness against flood water, and ease of drying out. Various vents will also be provided at higher level to assist with drying out the building should flood waters enter.
34. In flood zone 2 residential development is allowed:

Flood Zones	Flood Risk Vulnerability Classification				
	Essential infrastructure	Highly vulnerable	More vulnerable	Less vulnerable	Water compatible
Zone 1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Zone 2	✓	Exception Test required	✓	✓	✓
Zone 3a †	Exception Test required †	X	Exception Test required	✓	✓
Zone 3b *	Exception Test required *	X	X	X	✓ *

Figure 1- able 2: Flood risk vulnerability and flood zone 'incompatibility' from PPG

35. Thus no special justification is needed in flooding terms; this brief FRA is proportionate to the likely issues that may arise.

Other issues

36. In relation to Biodiversity Net Gain as householder development the proposal is exempt from the need to provide the otherwise mandatory 10%+ gain in habitat units.
37. There are no other issues against this proposal.
38. Planning permission can therefore be granted.
39. If any reader of this application has any questions about this proposal please call or email me.

Yours sincerely

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