

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	242440
Site Address:	Penny Wood, Hollybush Ride, Finchampstead, Wokingham, RG40 3QP
Expiry Date:	23 May 2025
Site Visit Date:	1 November 2024 & 10 April 2025
Proposal: Application to vary condition 2 of planning consent 183064 for the proposed erection of a replacement two storey dwelling, to include a detached garage, associated ancillary works and new gates and retention and reuse of existing vehicular access onto Hollybush Ride following demolition of existing dwelling. Condition 2 refers to the approved details and the variation is for changes to gates, fencing, driveway and landscaping, addition of pergolas and a patio, plus changes to the fenestration and external appearance of the dwelling and garage including an additional dormer and external staircase to the garage. (Retrospective)	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Scale and Location of Development Proposals – Countryside
Landscape Character Assessment Area – Finchampstead Forested and Settled Sands
Flood Zone 1
Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone Minor
Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
SSSI Impact Risk Zones
Thames Basin Heaths SPA Mitigation Zones – 5km Zone
Adjacent to Restricted Byway FINC27A (Hollybush Ride)

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 CP8 – Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals CP11 – Proposals Outside Development Limits
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 CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk

	CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB07 – Internal Space Standards TB21 – Landscape Character TB23 – Biodiversity and Development TB24 – Designated Heritage Assets
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
195263	Application for submission of details to comply with the following condition of planning consent 183064 dated 18/01/2019. Condition 5. Surface Water Drainage.	Approved – 05/12/2019
191015	Application for submission of details to comply with the following condition of planning consent 183064 dated 18th January 2019. Condition 4a - arboricultural method statement.	Approved – 03/06/2019
183064	Full application for the proposed erection of a replacement two storey dwelling, to include a detached garage, associated ancillary works and new gates and retention and reuse of existing vehicular access onto Hollybush Ride following demolition of existing dwelling.	Conditionally Approved – 21/01/2019
181232 (not implemented)	Full application for proposed erection of 1no. replacement dwelling and detached garage, associated works and new gates following demolition of existing dwelling.	Conditionally Approved – 17/09/2018

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Drainage: No objection
WBC Enforcement: No comment
WBC Highways: No objection
WBC Landscape and Trees: Object on the following grounds – The increased extent of hardstanding has had an urbanising impact on the character of the countryside.
WBC CIL: Not CIL Liable

External

None consulted

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	Finchampstead Parish Council object on the following grounds:
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	- The previous planning condition for a permeable drive has not been met, surface water running off the impermeable tarmac drive is causing flooding issues to neighbouring properties. <i>Officer's Note: This is discussed in the 'Flooding and Drainage' section of the report.</i> - The tarmac surface and metal railings has an urbanising effect on the surrounding area contrary to FNDP policy D3. <i>Officer's Note: This is discussed in the 'Design and Character of the Area' section of the report.</i>
Ward Member(s)	Cllr Charles Margetts listed this application to Planning Committee in the event the application is recommended for approval and the Drainage Team's objection has not been overcome. <i>Officer's Note: Following discussions and the submission of a revised scheme, the initial holding objection from the Council's Flood Risk and Drainage Officers has been withdrawn. The application can therefore be determined under delegated powers.</i>
Neighbours	Three comments (including duplicates) received objecting on the following grounds: - Surface water flow from the tarmac drive which has been laid is causing flooding on the street and damage to neighbouring properties. This is contrary to the original permission and remedial works must be secured to stop further flooding. <i>Officer's Note: This is discussed in the 'Flooding and Drainage' section of the report.</i> - The height and appearance of the proposed railings would detract from the visual amenity of the street scene and have a harmful impact on the rural character of the area. <i>Officer's Note: This is discussed in the 'Design and Character of the Area' section of the report.</i> - The potential use of the first floor above the detached garage, e.g. for leisure purposes or as separate habitable accommodation, could have a detrimental impact on neighbouring amenity. There is sufficient space within the main house. <i>Officer's Note: This is discussed in the 'Neighbouring Amenity' section of the report.</i> 1 comment received which raised no objection, subject to the use of the accommodation within the detached garage not changing to a separate residential dwelling. <i>Officer's Note: This is secured by a recommended condition (9).</i>

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site, formerly known as 'Kalevela', has recently been re-developed following the demolition of the existing dwelling and the erection of a replacement dwelling and detached garage. The new development, which is substantially complete, sits centrally within the large plot and set well back from the street scene (Hollybush Ride). Mature trees and planting line the site's boundaries, partially screening the new development from the street scene, and the site backs onto mature woodland. While the site is located outside of settlement limits within designated countryside it forms part of a linear form of residential development fronting Hollybush Ride, to the south of the defined settlement of Pinewood (Crowthorne).

Proposal:

This application seeks to vary condition 2 of planning consent 183064. Condition 2 relates to the approved details and the proposed variation is to allow various amendments to the approved site layout including additional hard landscaping, front boundary treatment, the design of the replacement dwelling and garage, as well as the erection of 2 pergolas to the rear of the main dwelling. This application seeks to regularise the development 'as built', hence the retrospective nature of the proposal. The changes to the approved scheme are summarised below:

Site Layout	Replacement Dwelling	Detached Garage
Increase in height and change to design of approved boundary gate and brick piers, including an additional pedestrian gate.	Fenestration changes including a change in materials from timber frames to aluminium frames and detailing of surrounds.	Additional dormer added to front elevation and rooflight added to rear elevation.
Change from post and rail timber fencing to 1.6m high black metal railings and 1.8m high green steel mesh fencing on front boundary.	Change from pitched to flat rear dormer roofs.	Amendment to roof form (from half hip to gable ended).
Change from impermeable hard surfacing to tarmac surfacing to the front/side of the main dwelling with an associated revised drainage strategy.	Change from brick detailing to fascia on front gable change to detailing of portico.	External staircase and door added to create a separate access to the approved first floor accommodation.
Increase in area of hardstanding to the front/side of the main dwelling.	Alteration to roof ridge and hip detailing (from half round to angled).	Change in position and enlargement of the approved garage door.
The creation of a patio to the rear of the main dwelling (paving slabs).	Approved rear parapet raised slightly to allow for flat roof falls.	
Two pergolas erected on the rear patio area.		

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 principle of a replacement dwelling on the site has already been established by the grant of permission 183064 dated 21/01/2019. The proposed amendments to the approved scheme are acceptable in principle subject to the following assessment of the relevant material planning considerations.

Design and Character of the Area:

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.

Policy D3 of the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan (FNDP) states that new residential development should make a positive contribution to the character of the area in terms of: b) a layout which integrates with existing landscape features including the built-up coverage of each plot and rhythm of plot frontages and parking areas, c) existing pattern of openings and boundary treatments on the site frontage, d) providing appropriate hard and soft landscaping particularly at site boundaries, and other factors.

Hollybush Ride transitions from the built-up settlement area to the north to the open countryside to the south. Within the southern section of the Ride, where the application site is located, the street scene has a sylvan, verdant quality characterised by large, detached properties set within large plots as well as mature trees on and adjacent to the boundaries. There are several examples of replacement dwellinghouses within the street scene which are more contemporary in style in comparison to the original bungalow style properties.

Changes to site layout including hard landscaping and boundary treatment

R12 of the Borough Design Guide SPD states that boundary treatments should be designed to contribute positively to the character of the area and to the quality of the public realm.

Objections have been received concerning the erected 1.6m high black metal railings. During the course of the application, the boundary treatment was erected without the Council's consent, the railings shown on the originally submitted plan were erected alongside 1.8m high green steel mesh fencing. A revised plan has been submitted which shows the development as carried out.

Within the immediate street scene, front boundary treatments are relatively varied including open accesses, timber and metal gates as well as post and rail fencing, brick piers and walls and black metal railings. While the erected metal railings could be viewed as a more urban design feature than the approved post and rail fencing, they are not an inappropriate feature within the site's location due to the varying examples of boundary treatments visible including other metal railings. Moreover, the railings are very similar to the boundary treatment fronting Brackenwood, a recently re-built dwellinghouse to the north of the site which also falls within designated countryside.

The erected railings retain the permeability of the originally approved boundary treatment, and as such do not close off views of the mature trees and planting adjacent

to the site's boundaries which significantly contribute to the rural character of the immediate street scene. The submitted revised plan, and a site visit, also confirms that the railings have not been erected across the entire frontage of the site, with the erected green steel mesh fencing further softening the visual impact of the railings and being an appropriate boundary treatment in the countryside in itself.

While more prominent than the original approval due to its increased height, the erected brick piers and timber gate erected on the site's access from the highway remains in keeping with other neighbouring examples and as such does not have an adverse effect on the visual amenity of the development and local character.

Objections have also been received concerning the increase in hardstanding to the front and side of the main dwelling and the change from impermeable surfacing to tarmac. In addition to the enlarged parking area, block pavers have been laid to the immediate front of the main dwelling as well as a patio area to the rear.

While the increased area of hardstanding has resulted in a hard landscaped edge around the perimeter of the main dwelling, there has been no increase in size of the existing access drive. As such, the site's frontage remains dominated, in terms of area, by the large, grassed areas and mature trees and planting, with the enlarged parking area set back from the front boundary by approximately 26.5m.

The enlarged area of hardstanding is well screened by the intervening boundary treatment, further mitigating its visual impact. Nonetheless, other neighbouring dwellings benefit from large front drives and the proposal is not out of character in this respect. While the laid tarmac has a more prominent appearance than permeable hard surfaces, there are examples of bonded surfacing visible from the immediate street scene which are dark grey in colour and appear akin to tarmac. Moreover, the tarmac would weather over time resulting in a softer appearance that is in keeping with neighbouring examples.

Following discussions with the applicant, a revised site layout plan has been submitted which proposes replacing the tarmac laid between the site's entrance and the highway (Hollybush Ride) with permeable black stone chippings. While this would visually appear akin to tarmac, this would appropriately soften the visual appearance of the site's entrance and is an improvement to the existing arrangement.

The Council's Senior Landscape Officer has reviewed the proposal and raised an objection to the increased hardstanding and its urbanising impact on the countryside. While the increased hardstanding has a more urbanising effect compared to the original scheme, for the reasons above it is not considered that this amendment adversely harms the visual amenity of the site and the street scene, or the rural character of the area. Moreover, the enlarged area remains well contained and set in from the site's boundaries, and as such does not appear as visual encroachment of built form into the open countryside.

The proposed 2no. pergolas to the rear of the main dwelling are minor additions to the scheme as a whole due to their open sided-nature and appropriate siting. Moreover, they would not be visible from the street scene and do not add significant bulk to the overall footprint of built form on the site.

Overall, while these amendments to the approved scheme have resulted in a more urbanising effect on the countryside, they are not considered to have introduced adverse harm to the rural character of the area or the visual amenity of this residential site and the street scene for the reasons discussed above. Therefore, the site layout of the replacement dwelling as carried out has an acceptable impact in accordance with Core Strategy policies CP3 and CP11 and policy D3 of the FNDP.

Changes to the replacement dwelling

The proposed amendments to the replacement dwelling relate to its design and appearance only and has not resulted in an increase in footprint or scale over and above the original scheme. The changes to the fenestration, form of the rear dormers and detailing on the principal (front) elevation cumulatively result in a more contemporary appearance. However, these do not adversely detract from or alter the overall design of the replacement dwelling and this remains acceptable. The other amendments are de minimis and do materially change the approved scheme or introduce additional impact upon the street scene.

Changes to the detached garage

The siting of the detached garage, with habitable space within the roof space, remains in the same position at the front of the main dwelling as approved under the original scheme. While the change in its roof form to a full gable has increased its overall scale and form, the building remains well screened by the intervening boundary treatment and the building as a whole appears as a subservient addition to the main dwelling.

The change from 1no. to 2no. dormer windows on the front elevation has not added significant bulk to the building, while its overall appearance and form remains subservient to the main dwelling. The insertion of a rooflight of the rear elevation, and change in position and enlargement of the garage door, are de minimis changes which do not materially change the approved scheme or introduce additional impact upon the street scene or local character.

Ancillary accommodation within the roof space of the garage was approved under the original scheme as it was deemed to be compatible with the character of the area. Concern has been raised concerning the proposed floor plans showing this floor space for 'leisure', although it is noted that this was also shown on the originally approved plans and ancillary space within detached outbuilding for leisure uses is a common arrangement for larger dwellings. While the external access provides separate access to this accommodation, this arrangement remains acceptable subject to its ancillary use being tied to the main dwelling via condition to ensure that its use is not severed. This remains secured by recommended condition (9).

Neighbouring Amenity:

Given the siting of the main dwelling centrally within the plot, and the limited increase in scale resulting from the amended garage design and pergolas sited a minimum of 6.9m from the site's northern boundary, there are no additional concerns relating to overbearing or loss of light impact.

The only potential additional overlooking impact arises from the increased first floor fenestration on the detached garage. The front dormers would have the same outlook onto the site's frontage while the proposed rooflight on the rear elevation would have a limited outlook onto the site's northern boundary which is well screened from the neighbouring property by mature trees and planting. As such, there are no additional concerns relating to overlooking impact. Subject to the use of the garage remaining ancillary to the use of the main dwelling, secured via recommended condition (9), the amended scheme would introduce no additional impact over and above the original permission in accordance with Core Strategy policy CP3.

Flooding and Drainage:

Policy CC09 of the MDD Local Plan requires consideration of flood risk from historic flooding and policy CC10 requires sustainable drainage methods and the minimisation of surface water flow.

Condition 5 of the original permission required the submission of full surface water drainage works details to be submitted to and agreed with the Council prior to the commencement of development, with the works carried out in accordance with the approved details. This condition was discharged under application ref 195263. The development has not been carried out in accordance with these approved details, with impermeable tarmac laid instead of permeable hard surfacing as required covering a larger area of the site. As such, the development in its current form is in breach of condition 5.

Objections have been received concerning the increased surface water flow resulting from the laid tarmac and associated flooding onto the highway and neighbouring properties. This application has followed a Planning Enforcement investigation and a separate investigation by the Council's Flood Risk & Drainage Team on the flooding matters.

Following submission of this application, the Council's Flood Risk and Drainage Officer responded with a holding objection. It was established that the development as built, including the drainage works, could not accommodate the increased surface water flow from the tarmac and as such was unacceptable. There was particular concern with runoff from the front of the dwelling, which sits on higher ground than the site's entrance and the highway.

Discussion between Officers and the applicant have included negotiation to secure an appropriate remedial scheme to ensure that the site's drainage system can adequately accommodate the increased surface water flow from the tarmac and resolve the issues created by the unauthorised development. This resulted in the submission of a revised Existing Surface Water Assessment and Improved Drainage Strategy (D J Barton Associates, Rev: 23-04-2025). The remedial drainage strategy has been supported by hydraulic modelling and includes the following amendments:

- The removal of the channel drain at the rear of the patio area to allow surface water run off at the rear of the dwelling to drain directly onto the grassed area.

- The introduction of storage attenuation within the site, in the form of geocellular storage units with a volume of 54 cubic metres, to store run-off and control its discharge into the watercourse within the woodland part of the site.
- The installation of a new French drain on the northern side of the access drive, and an ACO drainage channel at the site's entrance (behind the gate) to pick up run off from the front of the site including the access drive.
- The replacement of the tarmac in the area between the highway and the site's entrance with a hard surface of porous (permeable) construction.

Full details of these amendments are shown within the report alongside a management maintenance plan which must be adhered to throughout the lifetime of the development. The report concludes that subject to the remedial strategy being carried out, there will be no flooding for events up to and including the 1 in 100 flood event with a 40% allowance for climate change (the highest flood risk level). The applicant has also submitted a revised site layout plan showing the change to the hard surfacing between the highway and the site's entrance and confirmed that this area will be permeable and finished with black stone chippings, which is acceptable.

Following these discussions and a thorough review of the submitted drainage strategy the Council's Flood Risk & Drainage Officer have withdrawn their holding objection, concluding that the development is acceptable subject to the remedial drainage strategy being carried out in full. To ensure that the remedial drainage strategy and required resurfacing is carried out, it is recommended that the wording of condition 5 is varied to read as:

Within 5 months of the date of this decision, remedial surface water drainage works shall be carried out in accordance with the Existing Surface Water Assessment and Improved Drainage Strategy (D J Barton Associates, Rev: 23-04-2025), and the vehicular access shall be surfaced with a permeable and bonded material in accordance with the approved site layout plan (drawing no. 1277/P3/1 Rev.C). Within 1 month of completion of the aforementioned works, a written completion statement prepared by a suitably qualified professional shall be submitted to the local planning authority for approval in writing. The drainage scheme and vehicular access shall be maintained in the approved form for as long as the development remains on the site.

In addition, a new condition (10) is recommended which reads as:

If the remedial surface water drainage works and resurfacing in accordance with condition 5 is not carried out within 5 months, the occupation of the development hereby permitted shall cease until such time as the approved scheme is implemented, and this is confirmed in writing to the local planning authority.

In short, if the remedial scheme is not carried out as approved, planning permission for the site would fall away and the applicant (and other interested parties) would be subject to enforcement action until it is confirmed in writing that the required works have been carried out.

Subject to the recommended conditions, the proposed amendments to the scheme will resolve the flooding issues caused by the unauthorised development and ensure compliance with MDD Local Plan policies CC09 and CC10.

Landscape and Trees:

Policy CC03 of the MDD Local Plan aims to protect green infrastructure networks, promote linkages between public open space and the countryside, retain existing trees and establish appropriate landscaping. There are no protected trees within the site, however trees on and adjacent to the site's boundaries are important to the verdant setting and should be retained and protected in accordance with policy CC03.

The increased area of hardstanding to the southern edge of the main dwelling has encroached the identified Root Protection Areas (RPAs) of the mature trees adjacent to the southern boundary of the site. Following discussion with the applicant, their Arboriculturist re-visited the site to assess potential damage to these trees. A supplementary Arboricultural statement was submitted following this visit which concludes that although some root loss may have occurred during these works, this will not have any lasting impact on the health of the trees and that they will all be able to respond well and produce new roots to compensate. Furthermore, the removal of the hardstanding may place further stress on the trees.

The Council's Senior Landscape Officer has reviewed this statement and agrees with its conclusions. Therefore, although this amendment to the approved scheme has encroached into the RPAs of trees within the site, contrary to condition 4, no adverse harm has been identified and these trees will be retained in accordance with policy CC03. The continued protection and retention of the trees are secured via the recommended condition (3).

Other:

The proposed amendments do not impact any other material planning considerations relating to the approved development. In addition to the variation of condition 2 it is also recommended that the wording of condition 5 is varied, and an additional condition is attached (10), to ensure that the remedial drainage works are carried out in accordance with the approved details following the date of this decision. Condition 4 is also varied to reflect the details approved under the Discharge of Conditions application ref 191015.

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, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. 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:	20 May 2025
Earliest date for decision:	17 October 2024

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	21 May 2025