

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	242654
Site Address:	Ye Olde Leathern Bottel 221 Barkham Road Wokingham RG41 4BY
Expiry Date:	30 December 2024
Site Visit Date:	15/07/2024 – See PA: 241556
Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of a single storey extension to the existing public house to include remodelled pub/kitchen, first floor extension and loft conversion to create 5no. rooms of accommodation along with changes to fenestration and installation of additional roof lights plus associated changes to access, parking and other ancillary works.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

- Contaminated Land Consultation Zone
- Green Routes and Riverside Paths
- Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
- Scale and Location of Development Proposals – Countryside/Major Development Location
- Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone
- Public Open Space
- Landscape Character Assessment Area (J1 'Wokingham and Winnersh Settled and Farm Clay')
- Local Plan Update Submitted Sites
- SSSI Impact Risk Zones
- Thames Basin Heaths SPA Mitigation Zones
- Green Routes and Riverside Paths Consultation Zone

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 CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC06 – Noise CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB21 – Landscape Character TB22 – Sites of Urban Landscape Value TB23 – Biodiversity and Development TB24 – Designated Heritage Assets TB25 – Archaeology
Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (JMWP)	DM1 - Sustainable Development DM2 - Climate Change – Mitigation and Adaptation DM4 - Protection of Designated Landscape DM5 - Protection of the Countryside
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List

PLANNING HISTORY		
Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
001111	Proposed installation of lighting to front of building and rear car park security lighting.	Refused, 02/01/2001
011287	Proposed erection of various illuminated and non-illuminated public house signs.	Approved, 18/02/2002
012263	Proposed alterations to external lighting at public house (Lanterns and Lamp Posts).	Approved, 18/02/2002
231990	Full application for the proposed creation of a site access to serve the existing Public House and the Equestrian centre along with clearance of the former access.	Refused, 09/10/2023
241556	Full application for the proposed extension to the existing public house to include remodelled pub/kitchen at ground floor, loss of staff accommodation, and introduction of 5 no. rooms of accommodation at first floor. Additionally, the	Refused, 14/08/2024

	erection of a ancillary building to provide a further 8 no. rooms; together with associated changes to access, parking, landscaping and other ancillary works.	
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CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Environmental Health – No objections.
WBC Drainage – Further information requested.
WBC Highways – Further information requested.
WBC Landscape and Trees – Objects to proposed development.
WBC Cleaner and Greener – No comments received.
WBC Ecology – Further information requested.

External

Thames Water Utilities Ltd – No comments received.

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	<u>The Wokingham Town Council P&T Committee</u> - <i>There are no issues with the addition of rooms for the pub but there is an unnecessary road being added to the side of the pub development. This is seen to be access for another development.</i> <u>Barkham Parish Council</u> - The proposed application, similar to previously refused schemes (PA 231990 and PA 241556), includes a new access road to the field behind the pub, which extends beyond settlement limits and encroaches on the countryside, contrary to Policy CP11. The access road, designed as a two-way structure with footpaths, appears as an adopted road and alters the rural character of the sensitive Barkham Road frontage. Additionally, it reduces parking bays without benefiting the pub's operation and raises concerns about impacts on trees, echoing issues highlighted in earlier applications. Barkham Parish Council therefore requests the refusal of this application.
Ward Member(s)	<u>Councillor Lou Timlin</u> - The application includes an access road to the field behind the pub, previously refused under application 231990 (refused 9 October 2023) due to its detrimental impact on the area, existing functional access to the field, and loss of vegetation. The proposed access road is unnecessary for the pub's extension and remodelling and remains contrary to policies CP1, CP3, and CP11 of the Core Strategy.

Neighbours	The application was consulted to neighbours from 04/11/2024 to 25/11/2024. 46 objections were received on the following grounds: Principle of Development: - The proposals are unnecessary as existing independent accesses are present. - Would lead to further encroachment, contrary to CP11. - Loss of green space. - Overdevelopment in a rural setting. - The proposed hotel use would be inappropriate within a countryside setting. Character of the area: - Proposal would adversely impact the character of the area/green landscape. - Proposal would adversely impact a green settlement gap. - The proposals would be detrimental to a green barrier. - Loss of visual amenity - Proposals would adversely impact open spaces. - Inappropriate increases in scale, form or footprint - Proposal would adversely impact the countryside. - Cultural heritage would be compromised Impact on neighbouring properties: - Loss of privacy impacts. - Overbearing impacts. Highway impact: - The proposals would cause further traffic/congestion. - The proposal would be potentially dangerous to pedestrians, motorists and cyclists. - The proposals would lead to a reduction of parking spaces. - Reduced visibility splays. - Increased potential for accidents involving slow-and fast-moving vehicles along Barkham Road. Trees and Landscape: - Proposals has resulted in the removal of Oak trees along Barkham Road. - Proposals would lead to the removal of vegetation. Ecology - The proposal would result in the loss of animal habitats e.g., bats, birds and deer. Environmental Health
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	- Increased noise from travel movements. - Light pollution. Built Heritage - Loss of historical value Other matters: - The proposals would facilitate the creation of a major residential housing scheme. - Further information required. - Inadequate information submitted. - The supporting The Biodiversity Net Gain report is inadequate. - The proposals would set a precedent for larger schemes in the future. - Proposals could impact wildlife. - No site notice was displayed. <i>Officer comment. A site notice is not statutorily required to be displayed.</i>
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APPRAISAL

Site Description and Proposed Development:

The application site is situated north of Barkham Road and west of Limmerhill Road. It is bordered to the north by open agricultural land, to the east by residential dwellings, to the south by Barkham Road, and to the west by the Bottel Farm building and its access road.

This planning application represents the latest in a series of applications at this site. The previous application (Ref: 231990) sought permission to create a new site access to serve the existing Public House and an equestrian centre to the north. This application was refused in October 2023, primarily on the grounds that the proposed access would harm the character and appearance of the countryside by introducing an unnecessary new road into an open field, disrupting the rural landscape, and eroding the rural gap between Barkham and Wokingham.

Another application (Ref: 241556) was submitted in June 2024, seeking permission for a new site access alongside the erection of a first-floor extension to the Public House and an annex building for habitable accommodation. This application was refused in August 2024 for four reasons: harm to the character and appearance of the area; insufficient highway-related information on on-site car parking; harm to a protected tree due to proposed hardstanding; and inadequate ecological information.

The proposed development is similar to previous applications, involving the erection of a first-floor extension, a single-storey infill extension, and a single-storey rear extension to the public house to create habitable accommodation. It also includes the internal reconfiguration of the ground floor and the formation of a new site access lane.

This revised scheme has omitted the previously proposed annex building, which would have provided eight double rooms, and now proposes five double rooms within the public house itself. Additionally, minor adjustments to the car parking layout and landscaping are included to support the reconfiguration and creation of the new access lane.

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.

Whilst the pub building is located within settlement limits, the grounds and car park surrounding it are not. Hence, the majority of the application site is located within the countryside (as indicated in Fig. 1 below) and therefore the proposal must be assessed against policy CP11.



Figure 1: Application site in context with Countryside (green) and Major Development Location (Mauve) designations (Core Strategy policies CP9 and CP11 refer).

The Core Strategy Policy CP11 states that proposals outside of development limits will not normally be permitted except where:

- 1) It contributes to diverse and sustainable rural enterprises within the borough, or in the case of other countryside based enterprises and activities, it contributes and/or promotes recreation in, and enjoyment of, the countryside; and*
- 2) It does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings; and*
- 3) It is contained within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion, or in the case of replacement buildings would bring about environmental improvement; or*
- 4) In the case of residential extensions, does not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building;*
- 5) In the case of replacement dwellings the proposal must: i) Bring about environmental improvements; or ii) Not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building.*
- 6) Essential community facilities cannot be accommodated within development limits or through the re-use/replacement of an existing building;*
- 7) Affordable housing on rural exception sites in line with CP9.*

For the purpose of the current proposal, criteria 1 and 2 are the most relevant.

New access lane

The purpose of the proposed access lane (as highlighted in yellow in Fig 2 below) is not explicitly detailed in the supporting Planning Statement. The statement suggests that the alterations to the existing access aim to improve highway safety by enhancing pedestrian movement and visibility splays. However, it does not clearly define the purpose of the access lane extending towards the field to the north. In the original application (ref: 231990), this segment of the access lane was proposed to serve an equestrian use to the north of the pub and the pub itself, ostensibly to improve road safety and convenience by reducing the dispersal of soil and aggregate onto the road network associated with the equestrian activity.



Figure 2: Area of proposed new access (highlighted in yellow)

In this revised scheme, the supporting Transport Statement indicates that the new access road is intended to facilitate future residential development on land to the north of the site, as proposed under planning application 232621, which was recently refused in August 2024. While each application is assessed on its own merits, and levels of acceptability may vary, the absence of information to the contrary suggests that this intended use does not contribute to fostering diverse and sustainable rural enterprises within the borough. Furthermore, it does not align with countryside-based enterprises, activities, or initiatives that promote recreation and enjoyment of the countryside. Consequently, the proposal would fail to comply with Criterion 1.

In terms of criterion 2 of CP11, the proposed access lane would lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings. The existing access to the pub is located close to the building, leaving the land to the west to remain open with trees vegetation and landscape. The new entry point would be re-positioned approximately 15 metres west from the existing access and would curve through the site before extending along the far western boundary up towards the north. The furthest segment of the new access lane would now be sited some 60 metres away from closest original building (Ye Olde Leathern Bottel).

The proposed access would have the appearance of an adoptable road, being a width (10m) and length (approx. 75m) that would be capable of accommodating foot traffic directly up to the field. Even though the existing pub access would be stopped up, the level of hardstanding would increase though the creation of a wider lane, connecting arm and area which extends further into the open countryside towards the rear, north side boundary. Collectively, this would result in excessive encroachment and expansion of development away from the original building contrary to policy CP11's criterion 2 and hence, the proposal is considered unacceptable. This consideration is also set out in the following section.

Impact on character and appearance of the area and countryside

Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for development proposals that *'maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment'*.

Policy CP3 states that planning permission will be granted for proposals that *'are of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area'*, *'maintain or enhance the ability of the site to support fauna and flora'* and *'maintain or enhance the ability of the site to support fauna and contribute to a sense of place in the buildings and spaces themselves and in the way they integrate with their surroundings'*.

Policy TB21 of the MDD Local Plan states proposals must demonstrate how they have addressed the requirements of the Council's Landscape Character Assessment.

The site is located on the southern edge of J1 'Wokingham and Winnersh Settled and Farm Clay' in the Council Landscape Character Assessment. Part of the Landscape Strategy for the area is *'to conserve the open character of the landscape between settlements and to enhance the existing urban/rural interface.'* The site is also adjacent to area J2 'Arborfield Cross Settled and Farmed Clay'.

As addressed in the previous section, the proposed development would have a detrimental impact by reason of the harmful encroachment and expansion of development into the countryside.

The proposed extensions to the public house would be fairly modest in the context of the site and would appear as subservient addition the existing building, therefore, would have an acceptable impact on the character of the area.

However, the layout, arrangement, and extent of hardstanding to form the proposed access lane closely resembles that proposed in the previously refused application ref: 231990. Notably, the current proposal is even more extensive, incorporating a two metre wide pedestrian footpath that runs along the entire south-western and western sides of the road and extends partially into the site on both sides from the entrance.

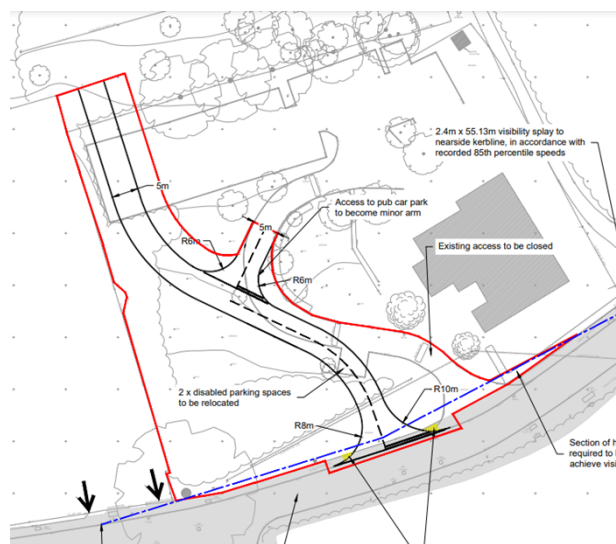


Figure 3 - Proposed site plan submitted under planning application ref: 231990.



Figure 4 - Proposed site plan submitted under this planning application.

The proposed access lane fails to maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment. The existing, single lane access meanders through the undulating landscape amid trees, hedgerow and small bushes, therefore, the central and rear-most segments of this lane are screened from the street scene. In contrast, the proposed, access lane would have a more expansive, engineered appearance due to the creation of a wider lane which spans the full length of site. The scheme of soft landscaping proposed would not sufficiently soften the urbanising effect of access lane and when paired with the loss of the existing vegetation, the majority of the access lane would be clearly visible from the public realm (particularly along Barkham Road on approaches from east to west).

In the absence of any sectional plans or drawings to the contrary, it is considered that the sites sloping gradient would require substantial engineering works to level the area of ground along the western boundary to facilitate the new access lane. This would result in a flattened area of land that would erode the sloping continuity of this natural feature.

A new access lane extending towards the open field to the north would also appear as an incongruous feature within the countryside and the character of the area. Its presence would be perceived as a disconnected road and pavements leading nowhere, detracting from the rural setting and clearly visible within the application site.

The area of land to the west of the pub is part of a small strip of countryside that separates Barkham and Wokingham and therefore the area is sensitive to further urbanising encroachment away from existing buildings and development. Whilst each application is considered on its individual merits, there have been four dismissed appeal decisions on land immediately to the west of the application site - all of the

Inspector's raised an objection to the increase of development in the countryside between Barkham and Wokingham.

APP/X0360/A/11/2163400

'I am mindful that the proposal would not merely infill a gap in an otherwise developed frontage but that the envisaged buildings and mobile units would span most of the width of the site and, despite their limited height, partially erode a valuable visual break. They would not round off an existing settlement but would consolidate development to the detriment of the visual distinction between town and village.'

APP/X0360/A/08/2081489

'It was apparent from my site visit that this gap is perceived as a visual break in the urban development along Barkham Road, which is important in providing some continuity with the countryside that separates the built areas in this locality.' [...] *'in my view, it would erode the narrow strip of countryside between the urban areas of Wokingham and Barkham, and so would adversely affect the setting of these settlements'.*

APP/X/0360/A/02/1089287

'It would not round off an existing settlement but would consolidate development to the detriment of the visual distinction and separation between two settlements. This would be harmful to the rural appearance if the setting of both settlements.'

APP/X0360/A/13/2196664

'Consequently, this rural area provides an important break between urban environments, thereby allowing Barkham to stay visually and physically separate from Wokingham.' [...] *'Nonetheless, if built out, it would encroach into open space and extend the development line on the south side of the road into the existing gap. In these circumstances it would be even more important to retain the remaining gap to avoid the two settlements coalescing.'*

Ultimately, the proposed development closely resembles the previously refused scheme under application 231990 but is now more extensive in scope. The proposed access lane would cause harm to a key settlement gap between Wokingham and Barkham though the urbanisation of the sites open and rural setting and would be detrimental to the sites valued landscape character and sense of place. This is contrary to Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024), policies CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy Development Plan (year), policies CC01 and CC03 of the Managing Development Delivery Document (Local Plan) and section 8 of the Borough Design Guide SPD.

Impact on Trees and Landscape:

The site is located along Barkham Road, which is a Green Route as per the Designations Map. Green Routes so named, apply to key routes in the borough that are mostly lined with significant trees, woodland and landscaping. Many of the trees

along the Green Routes are protected and some are recognised as Veteran trees, as is the case with Barkham Road.

The site is located in the countryside between the settlements of Wokingham and Barkham. The existing entrance to the Olde Leathern Bottle Pub extends into the site to the northwards to a large car park which is edged with a consistent tree screen to the paddock beyond. The whole site is characterised by trees; to the front of the site, there were until Summer 2023, two large fine Oak trees to the west of the entrance, and another equally fine Oak tree on the corner of the access to Bottel Farm. There is tree screening to the east along Limmerhill Lane, and trees screening the boundary with Bottel Farm. The site is very typical of the wooded character of the J2 landscape and setting of dwellings along Barkham Road. In fact, there is clear tract of woodland from Bottel Copse in the south to Fox Hill woods to the north-west, which is only broken by the paddock to the north.

The Council's Trees and Landscape Officer has reviewed the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment (DPA, October 2024). To facilitate the proposed development, small sections of a group of trees and shrubs (G3), two individual trees (T4 and T25), and a section of hedgerow will require removal. The submission includes a Tree Survey Schedule, along with the following drawings:

- Existing Site Layout – Tree Survey (Dwg. Ref. DPA-5070-01 Rev. B, October 2024)
- Existing Site Layout – Tree Protection Plan (Dwg. Ref. DPA-5070-02 Rev. B)
- Proposed Site Layout (Tree Protection Plan) (Dwg. Ref. DPA-5070-03 Rev. B)

The Trees and Landscape Officer considers the submitted information to be satisfactory overall. However, it is noted that the previous application (231900) included a Proposed Site Layout – Tree Protection Plan which demonstrated that the predicted western visibility splays grazed the edge of Oak T1. This tree is recognised as a veteran tree by the Woodland Trust and is recorded on the Ancient Tree Inventory (Ref. 46688). This information is absent from the current Proposed Site Layout – Tree Protection Plan.

The Trees and Landscape Officer remains of the view that the proposed reconfigured access would harm the character and appearance of the area and countryside. Its urbanised design, including road-like engineering and associated lighting, would introduce a permanent feature that detracts from the rural character of the country pub and its wooded setting, thereby compromising the high-quality environment of the locality. Consequently, the proposals are considered contrary to Policies CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy and Policies CC03 and TB21 of the MDD Local Plan.

Neighbouring Amenity:

The proposed development is appropriately situated and of modest proportions, thus avoiding any adverse impact on neighbouring residential amenities, such as loss of light, overbearing presence, or overlooking.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

Policy CP6 of the Core Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for schemes that:

- Improve the existing infrastructure network, including road, rail and public transport, enhance facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, including provision for those with reduced mobility, and other users;
- Provide appropriate vehicular parking, having regard to car ownership;
- Mitigate any adverse effects upon the local and strategic transport network that arise from the development proposed;
- Enhance road safety; and
- Do not cause highway problems or lead to traffic related environmental problems.

Policy CC07 of the Managing Development Delivery Local plan (MDDLDP) also states that planning permission will only be granted where the proposal demonstrates the following:

- How the proposed parking provision meets the standards set out in Appendix 2 of the MDDLDP
- That the new scheme retains an appropriate overall level of off-street parking

The Councils Highways Officer has reviewed this planning application and has notes the following:

Access

This application will be based on the proposed access strategy of Application 232621 and stop up the existing access. Dropped kerbs and tactile paving are proposed at crossing points.

As Application 232621 are not permitted, the proposed access designs and construction shall be secured under this proposal. The same planning condition will be recommended to secure this.

Traffic Impacts

The traffic generated from 5 hotel rooms are unlikely to have significant impacts on the wider highway network.

Parking

The site has 60 parking spaces (including two disabled parking). This proposal will reconfigure the parking spaces and reduce the total parking spaces to 46 (including two disabled parking) of dimensions 4.8m x 2.4m.

According to WBC Parking Standards, the new hotel will require 5 parking spaces for guests and additional staff parking based on the numbers of hotel staff. Each parking space shall have minimum dimensions of 5.0m x 2.5m. A minimum of 6m driveway clearance will be required for vehicle manoeuvring at forwards gear.

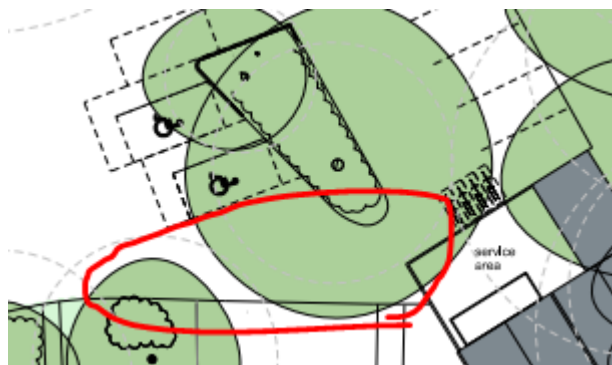
The submitted Transport Statement in Appendix B considers the development of the previous application with 13 hotel rooms, which suggests that the staff associated with the pub would operate the B&B and therefore no further parking for staff would be

required. Due to the reduced scale in this application, the Highways assume no additional staff will be required for this application.

The applicant has provided on-site parking survey data on a Saturday between 10:00 and 23:00, with a maximum occupancy of 31 spaces, which can be acceptable.

While the applicant confirms that the busiest operational day of the week is Saturday, it is uncertain if the parking demand on Sundays are comparable. The Highways also expect parking survey results on Sunday between 11:00 and 22:30.

Clarification is sought as to whether the circled section will form part of the circulation route for the car park. If this is the case, the Highways Officer considers that it is unlikely to be of sufficient width to allow vehicles to manoeuvre effectively.



Additional space should be provided on three sides of the designated disabled parking spaces to ensure accessibility. Furthermore, the current positioning of these spaces is not ideal. An overlay of the swept path for a 7.5-tonne box van with the proposed parking layout indicates that the servicing vehicle would need to traverse the disabled parking spaces to manoeuvre, which is unsuitable and may compromise accessibility.



A swept path analysis for a large saloon car should be provided for all end spaces to confirm adequate turning and manoeuvring areas. Additionally, the applicant must submit a swept path analysis for a 10m HGV to demonstrate that a servicing vehicle can enter and exit the driveway in forward gear under the proposed layout.

Given the lack of sufficient information available and the other additional concerns highlighted above, the Council cannot be satisfied the proposals would not have an adverse impact on Highway safety and parking provision. As such, Insufficient information has been provided for the Council to determine that the proposal will make adequate provision for car parking and contrary to Policy CP6 of the Core Strategy 2010, Policy CC07 of the MDD Local Plan 2014 and the Borough Design Guide SPD.

Flooding and Drainage:

Policy CC09 of the MDD Local Plan requires consideration of flood risk from historic flooding. The site and access thereto is located within Flood Zone 1.

The development proposes attenuation, via storage crates, albeit with the attenuation crate moved from the east of the car park to the west for the impermeable area for the entire site (betterment), as represented by drainage strategy drawing 0110 P1 dated 05/06/2024, with pumped discharge into a surface water manhole on Barkham Road. The Council's Drainage Officer has reviewed this application and has queried why the ditch to the northeast of the site, along Limmerhill Road, that flows northwards was not explored as a discharge option as it is positioned closer to the attenuation crates.

Despite this, a revised drainage strategy could be conditioned in the event of any approval and the Drainage Officer would raise no objection the principle of the development.

Ecology:

The site is located in habitat which matches where bat roosts have previously been found in the borough and is surrounded by a habitat suitable for use by foraging and commuting bats including large, connected trees that barkham Road.

The supporting Ecological Impact Assessment (ethos, October 2024, ref: W1154.001) outlines that the development layout has been designed to avoid impacts on biodiversity through the retention, protection and enhancement of the most valuable ecological features, namely the boundary hedgerows and trees across the site. Mitigation measures are proposed and described to ensure compliance with protected species legislation for hedgehog, badger, bats, birds, reptiles and invertebrates, details of which will be provided within a CEMP.

Assuming the implementation of effective mitigation measures, as set out in this report, which could be secured by way of a condition, no significant adverse ecological effects are predicted. As such, no objections are raised on ecological grounds.

Environmental Health:

The Council's Environmental Health Officer has reviewed this application and has raised no objections to the proposed development.

Archaeology:

An Archaeology Officer on behalf of Berkshire Archaeology has reviewed this application and comments that the application site falls within an area of archaeological significance where prehistoric remains have been evidenced. The Archaeology Officer believes that these may be damaged by ground disturbance for the proposed development. In order to mitigate the impacts of development, a pre-commencement condition which secures a programme of archaeological work, including a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) is recommended. In the event that this application was

recommended for approval, a suitable condition would be attached to secure these details.

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.

Conclusion:

The proposal would be contrary to the development plan policies and the NPPF, and result in material harm for the following reasons:

1. The proposed development would have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the area and countryside by reason of the creation of a new 10 metre wide lane into an open field already served by a functional access, and that fails to link into the permitted turning and parking area associated with the existing public house. The increase in hard surfacing & engineering works further away from the existing building & access and loss of vegetation would detrimentally impact the Green Route of Barkham Road, result in a harmful encroachment of development away from existing buildings/development and erode the rural gap between Barkham and Wokingham. The development is contrary to policy CP1, CP3 and CP11 of the Core Strategy, CC01, CC03 and TB21 of the MDD Local Plan, the council's Character Landscape Assessment and Section 12 and 15 of the NPPF.
2. Insufficient information has been provided for the Council to determine that the proposal will make adequate provision for car parking and contrary to Policy CP6 of the Core Strategy, Policy CC07 of the MDD Local Plan and section 6 of the Borough Design Guide SPD.

RECOMMENDATION	
Conditions agreed:	Not required
Recommendation:	Refusal

Date:	21 December 2024
Earliest date for decision:	25 November 2024

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	24/12/2024