

<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	<a href="#">P19/V1445/FUL</a>
<b>SITE</b>	Army Rowing Club Wilsham Road Abingdon, OX14 5LD
<b>PARISH</b>	ABINGDON
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Demolish existing detached club room and store building. Form new detached club room and rowing boat store (Amended drawings to show revised boat store, club room and car parking/cycle provision received 1 October 2019). (Revised flood risk assessment received 17 October 2019)
<b>WARD MEMBER(S)</b>	Samantha Bowring Neil Fawcett
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Army Rowing Club Association
<b>OFFICER</b>	Susannah Mangion

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to the following conditions:

### **Standard**

- 1. Commencement 3 years - Full Planning Permission**
- 2. Approved plans**

### **Prior to commencement**

- 3. Surface Water Drainage**
- 4. Foul Drainage**
- 5. Landscaping details**
- 6. Flooding - details of the proposed 'Hit and Miss Wall'**
- 7. Submission of details – construction management plan**

### **Prior to use or occupation**

- 8. Flooding – measures in accordance with Flood Risk Assessment**
- 9. HY7 - Car Parking**
- 10. HY20 - Bicycle Parking**
- 11. Materials in Accordance with Application**

## Informatives

### 12. Watercourses

#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION AND PROPOSAL

- 1.1 The application comes to committee at the request of the Planning Manager.
- 1.2 The application site lies within Flood Zone 3 on the western bank of the River Thames to the south of Abingdon Town Centre. The site lies north of residential development at Kingfisher Close and to the east of residential development on Wilsham Road. Immediately to the south is Abingdon Rowing Club and further to the south beyond Kingfisher Close is the Abingdon School Boat Club. Immediately to the north is Abingdon Sailing Club. The east side of the river is undeveloped floodplain land.
- 1.3 The site was formerly used by the RAF Abingdon Sailing Club but it was transferred to the Army when RAF Abingdon became Dalton Barracks.
- 1.4 A site location plan is below:



- 1.5 At present there are two timber buildings on the site which are in poor condition and the clubroom building is understood to be no longer safe to use. An additional timber storage building located near the site entrance is understood to have recently been removed but its concrete base remains. Access is taken via an existing access on Wilsham Road. The site is bounded by a hedge along the road frontage. Informal parking on grass is currently available. Any boats currently stored on site are stored on racks outside.
- 1.6 It is proposed to erect a new clubroom building to be sited in the same location as the current building and a rowing boat store to provide tiered storage for 8-person, 4-person and 2-person rowing boats. The proposed double gabled boathouse building includes a service block, providing changing areas and toilet facilities, and includes facilities for disabled persons. Use of the facilities is likely to be mainly seasonal from April to October due to better weather and river conditions for rowing.
- 1.7 The proposed boathouse building is a steel-framed structure with timber cladding and grey coloured roof sheeting. The building's dimensions are 25m x 10m with a ridge height of 5.1m and eaves height of 3.4m. The club room building is proposed to be timber clad building of 7.6m x 6.3m with a grey-coloured tiled roof with a ridge height of 4.5m and eaves height of 3.6m and it will be accessed via a ramp to allow disabled access. Each building benefits from flow-through voids and the finished floor level of the clubhouse and the wc/changing area within the boathouse are to be above flood level.
- 1.8 Parking for 12 vehicles including 1 disabled space and 6 bicycle storage stands is proposed on site: 8 of the parking spaces are to be provided on grass with pvc ground stabilisation mesh and 4 spaces will be provided on an existing concrete area.
- 1.9 Amended plans and a revised Flood Risk Assessment were submitted to address officers' concerns regarding the design and appearance of the building, to ensure the layout of parking spaces conformed to standard dimensions, and to address the initial objection of the Environment Agency.
- 1.10 Extracts from the plans are **attached** at Appendix 1.

## 2.0 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

Abingdon Town Council	<p>Objection:</p> <p>The Town Council did not object to the original application although expressed concern about the level of activity at the site and neighbouring sites and the impact on residents due to traffic movements, parking and noise. Army may wish to review their plans and consider relocating away from residential properties.</p> <p>Objection to amended information on grounds of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overdevelopment and inappropriate</li> </ul>
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	<p>development – does not respond positively to the site and surroundings in terms of scale, height and massing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adverse impact on neighbours from noise</li> <li>• Generates additional traffic with inadequate provision for parking and turning.</li> </ul> <p>If approved recommend conditions to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) partition and secure site from Abingdon Rowing Club</li> <li>2) Restrict hours to 7am until sunset plus 30 mins to mitigate impact on neighbours</li> </ol>
<p>Neighbours Support (5)</p>	<p>Improves facilities and allows better access to the sport for soldiers. Aids soldiers' fitness. Is required for safe training facilities for grass-roots and elite athletes. Current buildings are an eyesore and need replacing. Will improve appearance of site. Allows for adequate storage of equipment.</p>
<p>Neighbours: Object (11) plus letter from residents' group</p>	<p>Objections can be summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposal for National Army Rowing Club who only plan to use site infrequently</li> <li>• Boats should be stored off-site</li> <li>• Kingfisher canoe club were removed from using site and site has since been used very little</li> <li>• Priority should be given to local groups to use the site</li> <li>• A multi-use facility for local use would be preferable since riverside access is so limited</li> <li>• Traffic and parking concerns including on-road parking</li> <li>• Wilsham Road is part of the Hanson Way and heavily used by cyclists so inconsiderate parking creates danger</li> <li>• Concerned the proposed large building reduces on-site parking</li> <li>• Army should continue to allow Abingdon Rowing club to park on-site to reduce pressure on on-road parking as many Abingdon Rowing club members are not local</li> <li>• At 5.1m height building will be taller than</li> </ul>

	<p>adjoining building at Abingdon Rowing club</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing building should be removed but replacment is too large and will have industrial/warehouse appearance</li> <li>• Building too large for site</li> <li>• Concern about height and footprint of clubroom building</li> <li>• Revised design does not improve visual amenity</li> <li>• Inappropriate facility at residential location</li> <li>• Additional vegetation should be planted on site as it has become depleted</li> <li>• Conditions should limit use to daytime hours on weekdays only, no sub-letting including of clubroom and prevent parking on Wilsham Road.</li> <li>• Terms of lease should be reconsidered as rent is minimal</li> <li>• Inadequate planning consultation</li> <li>• Army claim pre-application discussions with residents were not objected to but this is incorrect</li> <li>• Both Army and Abingdon Rowing club have allowed others to use sites contrary to lease (e.g. University colleges)</li> <li>• Concerns slipway has been removed</li> </ul>
Environment Agency	<p>No objection subject to planning condition to undertake development in accordance with the revised FRA dated September 2019.</p> <p>Initial objection to first Flood Risk Assessment withdrawn.</p>
Forestry Team (Vale of White Horse)	<p>No objection subject to a condition to require the management of the vegetation on site. The proposed removal of two Maples further into the site to facilitate the siting of the boat store is not harmful to visual amenity.</p>
Vale - Highways Liaison Officer (Oxfordshire County Council)	<p>No objection subject to conditions for car and bicycle parking.</p> <p>Initial objection due to insufficient information</p>
Drainage - (South&Vale)	<p>No objection subject to pre-commencement surface water, foul water and Hit and Miss Wall and all IPP measures conditions</p>
Leisure	<p>No observations</p>

Sport England	No observations
Contaminated land	No objection

### 3.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

#### 3.1 [P19/V0515/PEM](#) - Other Outcome (08/04/2019)

Replace existing detached club room, remove existing store building and construct a new rowing boat store.

#### [P06/V1030](#) - Approved (15/08/2006)

Erection of a canoe equipment store

#### [P94/V1699/O](#) - Approved (24/03/1994)

New build development for the Abingdon Rowing Club, to accommodate also the Kingfisher and Pathfinders Canoe Club. (Site area approx. 0.4 hectares). Abingdon Rowing Club, Wilsham Road, Abingdon, Oxon.

#### [P93/V1458/O](#) - Refused (02/12/1993)

Change of use of land to residential and the erection of a single dwelling house, together with access improvements to existing riverside facilities. Land adjacent to Wilsham Road, opposite 2 Townsend and 32-39 Wilsham Road, Abingdon, Oxon.

#### [P83/V0161](#) - Approved (09/04/1984)

Erection of a replacement boat house.

#### [P80/V0159](#) - Approved (12/11/1980)

Erection of a pre-cast 'Batley' type garage for use as a secure tool and boat equipment store.

### 4.0 **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

#### 4.1 The proposed development is neither of a sufficient scale, nor within a location of sufficient environmental sensitivity, to require an EIA.

### 5.0 **MAIN ISSUES**

#### 5.1 The relevant planning considerations are considered to be the following:

- Principle of the development
- Flood risk
- Design, appearance and impact on character
- Leisure and sport facilities
- Neighbour impact
- Highways and access considerations
- Trees and landscaping
- CIL
- Other

#### 5.2 **Principle of the development**

The site is currently used by the Army Rowing Club and the agent has advised it

is used by all army personnel who learn to row, continue rowing as a sport and so as to train for regattas and competitions. It is understood to be used by soldiers from local units including Dalton Barracks, Shrivenham, Bicester and Didcot as well as nationally and the new buildings will allow better disabled access and facilities.

5.3 This site benefits from an existing leisure use and the proposal concerns the erection of new buildings and associated works only.

5.4 Policy CP3 of the Local Plan 2031 Part 1 defines the settlement hierarchy for the district and confirms that development should be focused within the Market Towns due to the sustainable nature of these locations. Paragraph 85 a) of the NPPF recognises the role of towns in providing sites for leisure uses. Therefore, the principle of the redevelopment of the site for sport and leisure purposes is acceptable.

5.5 **Flood risk**

The site is within Flood Zone 3b the functional floodplain, an area with a probability of flooding of 1 in 20 years. The proposed use is water compatible, but to ensure compliance with planning policy the development needs to ensure the development will not increase flood risk elsewhere and that the flood risks associated with the proposal can be managed satisfactorily.

5.6 The buildings are designed in such a way that the ground floor of the boat house will be allowed to flood and water will be allowed to flow under the club room building via the provision of opening voids, thereby not having a detrimental impact on flood storage levels. The club room and wc/changing areas have been kept higher than the flood level, so the facilities are not damaged.

5.7 During times of flood, the site would not be in active use as it would not be a safe time for rowing activity.

5.8 **Design appearance and impact on character of area (adjoining River Thames)**

Paragraph 127 of the NPPF provides that planning decisions should ensure development is well-designed. Policy CP37 states that proposals for new development will be required to be of a high-quality design that responds positively to the site and its surroundings. Policy CP44 seeks to ensure development is successfully integrated into the landscaped character of the area. The site adjoins the River Thames and policy DP30 requires that development will only be permitted where it would not harm the setting of the watercourse and a construction management plan should be agreed to ensure there is no harm to the watercourse.

5.9 The boathouse building is proposed to be positioned approximately parallel to boathouse on the adjoining Abingdon Rowing Club site. The revised boathouse building design proposes a simple timber clad structure with double gabled roof to better reflect the riverside vernacular. Although local concerns have been raised in respect of the scale of the boathouse building, this has been dictated

by the need to provide sufficient capacity for on-site boat storage together with adequate changing facilities. Storing the boats on-site will reduce traffic movements associated with the development as the boats would no longer need to be driven to and from the site for training sessions.

- 5.10 The timber clad clubhouse building has a simple pitched roof and is of a scale suited to its location, its height having to take into account the need for flood water to flow beneath the finished floor level. Whilst local concerns have been expressed regarding the appearance of the boathouse building, officers consider the revised design and materials of the proposed building reflects a traditional boathouse appearance and is suited to the riverside location and the rowing club use of the site.
- 5.11 Planning conditions are proposed to ensure the materials accord with the submitted details and to require the submission of a construction management plan so as to ensure the construction process is not harmful to the river.
- 5.12 **Leisure and sports facilities**  
Access to both leisure and sports facilities is important in allowing the military community to participate in sporting activities and contribute towards their health and well-being. It is important for military personnel to maintain physical fitness and the Armed Forces consider sport makes a significant contribution to operational effectiveness, fighting spirit and personal development. It also plays an important part in Service life, including recruiting and retaining staff as it provides a balance in the lives of personnel. Sport also supports the recovery and rehabilitation of wounded, injured and sick personnel.
- 5.13 It is noted that some concerns have been expressed that the site should be made available for use by local sports groups and that the Army Rowing Club very seldom uses the site. However, the site is already used by and leased to the Army Rowing Club and no change of use or lessee is being considered. The neighbouring Abingdon Sailing Club and Abingdon Rowing Club provide leisure facilities for local residents.
- 5.14 **Neighbour impact**  
Policy DP23 states, 'Development proposals should demonstrate that they will not result in significant adverse impacts on the amenity of neighbouring uses'.
- 5.15 Whilst the built form on site is proposed to increase, the height and siting of the buildings has been designed to limit the impact on the visual amenity of neighbouring residents and the limited visual impact of the development would not warrant the refusal of planning permission.
- 5.16 It is noted that neighbouring residents have expressed concerns about noise from use of the site and from inconsiderate parking on the local roads. However, there are no proposals to intensify the use of the site. After the completion of the construction works, the alterations to the built form on site should not give rise to increased noise or disturbance to neighbouring residents. However, it is also

noted that concerns have been raised that the site is only used by the Army on a very limited basis. Therefore, the noise concerns may be due to the more regular use of neighbouring facilities.

5.17 With regard to parking, it is understood that parking occurs on Wilsham Road in order to walk into the town centre, increasing the pressure on parking in the locality. However, it is likely that the provision of the larger boathouse will reduce traffic implications as boats will be stored on site and will not regularly need to be transported to and from site for training sessions. It will also formalise on-site parking facilities, allowing for improved on-site parking. Officers consider the proposed development will not give rise to any increased harm to the amenity of neighbouring residents.

5.18 **Highways and access considerations**

The site benefits from an existing access and use. The proposal formalises arrangements for vehicle and cycle parking on site. There is no in-principle objection to the rationalisation of the parking arrangements on site and the proposed vehicle and cycle parking spaces accord with adopted standards. Panning conditions are proposed to ensure the parking provision is laid out in accordance with the plans.

5.19 **Trees and landscaping**

The hedge and tree at the site frontage are to be retained, which will help to soften the impact of the development. The Tree Officer considers the removal of two smaller trees further into the site is acceptable as they do not make a significant contribution to visual amenity. It is proposed that a landscaping condition be imposed to ensure the retained vegetation on site is managed effectively to benefit the visual amenity of the area.

5.20 **Community Infrastructure Levy**

The Council adopted the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule 2017 (CIL) on 1 November 2017. A wholly D2 Use Class development, as proposed, would not be CIL liable. Details of the proposed charging schedule and all the relevant forms can be found on our website at <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/cil>.

5.19 **Other**

The council owns the site, which is leased to the applicant. These facts are not material considerations to the planning application.

6.0 **CONCLUSION AND PLANNING BALANCE**

6.1 The proposal is to improve an existing facility which has recognised benefits and requires a location adjacent to the river. It is considered that the proposal will not lead to a material intensification of use, and may reduce some aspects of the impact of the facility due to the improved amount of boat storage. The design is acceptable, whilst no harm is identified to either neighbours' amenities or highway safety. Overall, the weighing of material considerations is in favour of approval, and the proposal is considered to accord with relevant policies of the development plan and with the NPPF.

The following planning policies have been taken into account:

**Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1 policies:**

- CP01 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CP03 - Settlement Hierarchy
- CP08 - Spatial Strategy for Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area
- CP35 - Promoting Public Transport, Cycling and Walking
- CP37 - Design and Local Distinctiveness
- CP42 - Flood Risk
- CP44 - Landscape
- DP16 - Access

**Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 2 policies:**

- DP23 - Impact of Development on Amenity
- DP30 - Watercourses
- DP34 - Leisure and Sports Facilities

**Vale of White Horse Design Guide (March 2015)**

**National Planning Policy Framework, 2019**

**Planning Practice Guidance**

**Equality Act 2010**

The application has been assessed against section 149 of the Equality Act. It is considered that no recognised group will suffer discrimination as a result of the proposal.

**Human Rights Act, 1998**

The application has been assessed against Articles 1 and 8. The impact on individuals has been balanced against the public interest and the officer recommendation is considered to be proportionate.

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