

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	210826
Site Address:	Bank Cottage, Holme Park Farm Lane, Woodley, Wokingham, RG4 6SX
Expiry Date:	19 May 2021
Site Visit Date:	
Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of 1no. detached dwelling with associated garaging, following demolition of existing dwelling and outbuildings.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS
Bat Roost Habitat Suitability Scale and Location of Development Proposals Minerals Site Consultation Area Replacement Mineral Local Plan Landscape Character Assessment Area SSSI Impact Risk Zones

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 CP4 – Infrastructure Requirements CP7 – Biodiversity 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 CC07 – Parking TB21 – Landscape Character TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Sonning Parish Design Statement Sonning Design Appraisal

PLANNING HISTORY		
Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
191906	Proposed two storey side/rear extension to include single storey orangery following	GRANTED 06.11.2019

	demolition of existing single storey side extension, replacement traditional oak framed garage following the demolition of existing garage, extended parking and turning within the site off existing access.	
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CONSULTATION RESPONSES	
Internal	
WBC Environmental Health – No objection and no conditions proposed WBC Drainage – No objection, subject to conditions WBC Highways – No objection, subject to conditions WBC Education (School Place Planning) – No response received WBC Landscape and Trees – No objection, subject to conditions WBC Cleaner and Greener – No response received WBC Ecology – No objection, subject to conditions	
External	
Thames Water Utilities Ltd – No response received	

REPRESENTATIONS	
Parish/Town Council	A great improvement. Full support.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	No comments received

APPRAISAL
<p>Site and Surroundings:</p> <p>The application site is located in the countryside. Bank Cottage is one of the original dwellings forming part of the wider Holme Park Farm estate, which is located outside the settlement limits of the Limited Development Location of Sonning. The estate comprises the equestrian business, located to the east of the dwelling in the main farm buildings, together with the neighbouring dwelling known as Dairy Cottage. The estate is set in a parkland setting with mature trees and paddocks extending down to the River Thames and has its own particular character and is separate from the more edge-of-settlement development known as Sonning Meadows, located to the east of the site. Directly to the north are the playing fields of Reading Rugby Football Club and beyond trees to the south-west is the Microsoft campus.</p> <p>The existing dwelling is a two-storey painted brick and tile detached dwelling, with single storey side projection and detached garage to the rear. It is of no historic or architectural interest. A barn exists in the garden, which is incidental to the dwelling. It is weatherboarded and with a plain clay tile roof and has the potential to be of historic and / or architectural interest. The house is situated with its own residential curtilage. Planning application 191906, granted 6th November 2019, has not been implemented.</p> <p>The host dwelling is owned by the applicant, together with the surrounding equestrian business, buildings and wider farmland which make up Holme Park Farm. Barns</p>

within the curtilage of the farm are listed Grade II, dating from the 17th and 18th centuries, and are mostly weatherboarded with plain clay tiled roofs. Sonning Conservation Area's northern boundary lies approximately 350 metres north of the existing dwelling.

The whole of the site is accessed by a gated private drive off Holme Park Farm 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.

The site is located within the countryside and, as such, the development should be acceptable providing that it complies with the principles stated in the Core Strategy.

Relevant policies of the Core Strategy include Policy CP11, which does not normally permit development outside of development limits except where the replacement dwelling does not result in inappropriate increases in scale, form or footprint, or it would bring about environmental improvement.

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.

Paragraph 8.5.3 of the Borough Design Guide (BDG) states that replacement dwellings may be permissible within the countryside, only where there is no inappropriate increase in scale, form or footprint; or they bring about environmental improvements. RD11 of the BDG states that the form or massing of a replacement dwelling should relate well to its context and to local character. Indicative guidance within the BDG states that a 50% increase in volume is acceptable, determined by factors including impact on the surrounding environment.

Description of the Proposed Development:

The existing dwelling would be demolished. The proposed two-storey dwelling would be sited over the footprint of the existing dwelling, garage and outbuilding and has a reduced roof height when compared to the highest point of the existing dwelling.

Materials proposed include plain clay tiles, red brick and black stained timber boarding, to match the existing barn buildings. Some materials will be reclaimed from the demolition, including timbers from the oak-framed outbuilding.

One tree, defined in the Design and Access Statement as a poor-quality fruit tree, will be lost. All other existing mature trees and hedging are proposed to be retained.

The existing driveway will be used and parking exists and continues to be proposed for four cars.

Impact on the Character of the Area:

The agent has submitted data relating to the net gain for the footprint, gross internal area and volume:

Building Footprint (m.sq.)

Existing – 186

Proposed – 198 (6% uplift)

Gross Internal Area (m.sq.)

Existing – 253

Proposed – 310 (22% uplift)

Volume (m.3.)

Existing – 840

Proposed – 1155 (37% uplift)

The proposed increase, together with the proposed siting, design and layout, is considered to comply with adopted policy and is therefore acceptable.

The materials proposed for the new dwelling are considered to be an improvement on the existing. It is therefore acceptable in this respect.

The submitted Heritage Assessment by Ridgeway Heritage Consultancy states that the setting of the listed barns is principally confined to the visually-enclosed farmstead courtyard and that few direct views of the barns are possible beyond the courtyard, with no direct intervisibility between them and Bank Cottage due to screening provided by a stable building. It also states that the proposal would have a negligible effect on longer views from Sonning Conservation Area. The Case Officer's site visit results in agreement with this assessment.

However, the Heritage Assessment fails to acknowledge the outbuilding to the existing dwelling. This issue is addressed by the Built Heritage Officer, below.

Neighbouring Amenity:*Overlooking / Loss of Light / Overbearing:*

The nearest neighbouring dwelling is Dairy Cottage which forms part of the Holme Park Farm estate and is owned by the applicant. This cottage is sited some 28 metres away from the host dwelling and significant boundary hedging exists between the two. As such, the proposal is not considered to have an adverse impact in terms of overlooking, loss of light or overbearing impact on this neighbouring dwelling.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

The proposal makes no change to the existing access or amount of parking proposed.

The Highways Officer has stated no objection to a replacement dwelling. He states that the existing access will be retained and this remains acceptable.

The driveway will be modified and provides space to park several vehicles, in

accordance with WBC parking standards. A garage and car port is also proposed.

A minimum of 1 x passive electric vehicle charging point is recommended by condition.

In this instance it is considered that cycle storage could be accommodated within the proposed garage.

Heritage:

The Built Heritage Officer states that Bank Cottage raised some interest with respect to the hipped tile roofed weatherboarded outbuilding. Whilst Bank Cottage is clearly not of particular merit and appears to be a much-altered Edwardian dwelling, the outbuilding appears to be a lot earlier and is seemingly shown on the 1873 OS map.

Given the proximity to Holme Park Farm, he considers that this outbuilding may have been associated with the farm and would count as being a heritage asset. As such, he is somewhat surprised that the Heritage Assessment appears to make no comment on this outbuilding that it is intended to demolish, but rather appears focused solely on the potential impact to the setting of the designated heritage assets of Holme Park Farm.

Whilst not thought likely to be of any great significance historically in itself, and as such not necessarily objecting to the demolition of the outbuilding, I do believe that the planning permission should be conditioned to ensure that the outbuilding is recorded before its demolition, in accordance with guidance given under paragraph 205 of the NPPF (2021) that 'local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.'

To that end, he requests that any planning permission given includes the imposition of a suitable condition.

Flooding and Drainage:

Following the Location/Site Plan, the development is in Flood Zone 1 according to the EA mapping.

By reviewing the proposed development sketches and plans, it can be concluded that the new construction is mainly in the borders of an already existing hardstanding area and will not significantly increase the current run-off.

It was noted from the Application Form dated 06.03.2021 that surface water runoff from the development will be managed via soakaway method.

Based on the above, LLFA would have no objection to the principle of the development as represented, however proposed drainage details about the chosen method - soakaway to deal with the surface water have not been provided and we would request the imposition of a condition.

Landscape and Trees:

The Tree and Landscape Officer has responded to consultation, stating that the site is located in the countryside, there are no protected trees on the site, but there are several trees around the garden boundary and just outside of it to the other side of the driveway, which I note will be returned to grass.

I cannot see that any significant on-site trees will be adversely impacted by the proposals, although please note that, when restoring soft from hard landscaping, no more than 100mm of soil should be placed over the rooting area of any trees.

As a precaution during construction, she advises the use of a suitable informative.

Ecology:

The Council's Ecologist has responded to consultation as follows:

This application is supported by a Preliminary Roost Assessment Survey report (Arbtech, January 2021) and a Phase II Bar Report (Pro Vision, July 2021). I am of the view that this provides sufficient information for the local planning authority to be able to consider the impact of the proposed development on protected species.

The Pro Vision surveys identified that 'Keepers Cottage', the converted timber framed barn, supports a Soprano Pipistrelle bat roost. On the evidence presented, I am inclined to agree with the interpretation of roost status given by Pro Vision.

The applicant's ecologist advises that a derogation licence from Natural England will be required to lawfully allow the demolition of this building with consequent destruction of the bat roost. I am of the view that a licence is not unlikely to be granted by Natural England. Consequently, as per BS 42020:2013, I recommend that a condition is applied to require the submission of a copy of the licence prior to commencement.

Subject to the derogation licence being secure, I am of the view that there are no ecological reasons to object to this application.

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:	11 August 2021
Earliest date for decision:	17 April 2021

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	<i>MM</i>
Date:	12.8.2021