

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	252419
Site Address:	1 and 2 Wakefield Cottages, Bath Road, Hare Hatch, Wokingham, RG10 9SS
Expiry Date:	2 December 2025
Site Visit Date:	24 November 2025
Proposal: Householder Joint Planning Application for the proposed erection of a first-floor rear extension with a dual pitched tiled roof to the 2 no. existing dwellings, incorporating matching facing materials and fenestration, with associated internal alterations.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Scale and Location of Development Proposals – Countryside
Green Belt
Green Route Enhancement Area
Bat Roost Habitat Suitability

PLANNING POLICY

National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
Core Strategy (CS)	CP1 – Sustainable Development CP3 – General Principles for Development CP7 – Biodiversity CP11 – Proposals Outside Development Limits CP12 – Green Belt
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC07 – Parking TB01 – Development within the Green Belt TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU)	SS1 – Sustainable development principles SS5 – Development in the countryside SS6 – Development in the Green Belt C5 – Parking and electric vehicle charging NE1 – Biodiversity and geodiversity NE4 – Trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List

PLANNING HISTORY 2 Wakefield Cottages			
Number	Proposal	Decision Date	Decision
04916	Vehicular access	20/07/1976	C/A
10607	Outline application - change of use from dwellinghouses to offices	05/07/1979	REF
15810	Two storey addition to provide new kitchen also lounge with bedroom over Part implemented – single storey rear extension only <i>*Condition 4 states: ‘Notwithstanding the Provisions of the Town and Country Planning General Development Orders, 1977-81, no addition or extension to the dwelling shall be built without the prior written permission of the District Planning Authority. To prevent an intensification of development in a rural area.’</i>	07/08/1981	C/A
F/2006/8346 061658	Proposed erection of two storey side extension and first floor front extension to dwelling. Demolition of existing conservatory Not implemented	26/09/2006	C/A
F/2009/0893 090244	Proposed erection of two storey side extension <i>*Condition 4 states: ‘Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended) (or any order revoking and re-enacting that order with or without modification) no buildings, extensions or alterations permitted by Classes A, B, C, D and E of Part 1 of the Second Schedule of the 1995 Order (as amended) shall be carried out. To safeguard the character of the premises and the residential and visual amenities of the occupiers of the adjoining properties.’</i> Condition removed by Appeal on application 203257	25/06/2009	C/A
F/2014/1239 140933	Proposed erection of replacement flat roofed garage. Demolition of existing garage and attached outbuildings	11/07/2014	C/A
172755	Householder application for the proposed erection of a first-floor rear/ side extension to the existing dwelling	17/11/2017	REF

180903	Householder application for the proposed erection of first floor rear extension to dwelling APP/X0360/D/18/3207586	05/06/2018 29/10/2018	REF Appeal Dismissed
192442	Householder Application for the proposed drop kerb to existing dwelling	27/11/2019	C/A
203257	Application to remove condition 4 of planning consent F/2009/0893 (090244) for the proposed erection of two storey side extension. Condition 4 refers to the removal of permitted development rights (Classes A, B, C, D and E). The Appeal decision leaves PD rights intact for the property	12/01/2021 Appeal 31/08/2021	C/A APP

PLANNING HISTORY 1 Wakefield Cottages

Number	Proposal	Decision Date	Decision
131599	Proposed demolition of garage, plus erection of single storey side extensions and first floor side extension with dormer window.	12 th August 2013	Approve

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Highways – No Objection Subject to Condition
WBC Landscape and Trees – No Objection
WBC Ecology – No Objection

External

N/A

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	No comments received
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	No comments received

APPRAISAL

Site Description: The site comprises a pair of late 19th century two-storey, semi-detached dwellings located on the Bath Road in Hare Hatch. The principal elevation of No. 1 Wakefield Cottages is west facing. The vehicular entrance and side boundary adjacent to the highway is north facing and comprises a fence approximately 1.8m in height with trees at least 4m in height behind. The rear side boundary between the 2 dwellings is a fence approximately 1.8m in height with a single gate to allow access between them. The entrance to no. 2 Wakefield Cottages is via electric gates on Bath Road and a private

driveway at the rear boundary of no. 1. The main entrance to No.2 is east facing and overlooks the rear garden and a detached garage.

Proposal: The proposal is for the erection of a first-floor rear extension to 2 adjoining dwellings at no.1 and no.2 Wakefield Cottages. The extension would measure approximately 7m in width and have a dual gable roof.

The proposed first floor extension to 1 Wakefield Cottages would facilitate a bedroom, have 1 no. window and a gable roof that is set down from the main roof line by approximately 0.5m. It would measure approximately 3.5m in width, 6.25m to the top of the pitch roof and extend beyond the original rear wall by approximately 2m.

The proposed first floor extension to 2 Wakefield Cottages would facilitate a bedroom and ensuite bathroom with roof light. It would have 1 no. window and a gable roof that is set down from the main roof line by approximately 0.5m. It would measure approximately 3.5m in width, 6.7m to the top of the pitch roof.

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 outside any defined settlement limits (which are defined by policy CP9 of the Core Strategy). As such, the site is defined as being located within the Wokingham Countryside. It is also located within the Green Belt. As such, any development is ordinarily resisted. The principle of development is only acceptable subject to meeting exceptions in Green Belt and Countryside policy.

Location within the Green Belt

The application site is located within designated Green Belt and outside of settlement limits in the Countryside. The government attaches great importance to Green Belts with national policies for the protection of Green Belt land covered by Chapter 13 of the NPPF. Paragraph 142 of the NPPF states that, “The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence”. Paragraph 143 of the NPPF states that the Green Belt serves 5 purposes, the one most relevant to this proposal is, “(c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment”.

Paragraph 153 of the NPPF states that, “Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.” When considering any planning application, LPAs must ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness. Paragraph 153 further states that, “Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of its inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.”

Paragraph 154 of the NPPF states that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless one of eight exceptions applies. In this case, the most relevant exception is “c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.”

Paragraph 155 of the NPPF states that, “The development of homes, commercial and other development in the Green Belt should also not be regarded as inappropriate where:

- a) The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan.
- b) There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed.
- c) The development would be in a sustainable location.
- d) Where applicable the development proposed meets the ‘Golden Rules’ requirements”

Paragraph 63 of the NPPF states that within the context different groups in the community, local planning policy should reflect the needs of families with children and people with disabilities. Section 1 of The Children Act 1989 states that the physical, emotional and educational needs of the child are paramount in decisions that impact their upbringing. Part 3 of the Children Act 1989 states that Local Authorities must safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need. In this case, the applicant has stated that special circumstances exist due to the needs of two vulnerable family members.

Specifically, the proposed first-floor extension at No. 2 Wakefield Cottages would create a bedroom and ensuite, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Furthermore, the proposed first-floor extension at No. 1 Wakefield Cottages would allow internal adjustments, including a through-floor lift [REDACTED] It would also provide capacity for a live-in carer, should support needs increase.

In returning to the assessment of paragraph 154, similar principles over proportionate increases are reflected in Core Strategy policy CP12 and MDD Local Plan policy TB01. The NPPF does not define what can be considered a “disproportionate addition” in size. Policy TB01 defines a “limited” addition as one that is cumulatively 35% or less in volume compared to the original building, and as such could be viewed as not “disproportionate” in size. Although the supporting text to Policy TB01 is specifically directed towards proposal for residential extensions, it remains a useful comparative tool to assist in assessing harm to the Green Belt. Policy TB01 further clarifies that with regard to the construction, alteration or extension of buildings ancillary to a dwelling, changes should not result in disproportionate additions to the original building(s) or cause a detrimental to the scale of the dwelling or to the scale of development on the site.

Therefore, in volumetric terms, Tables 1 & 2 below show that the proposal would amount to 'inappropriate' development in the Green Belt when assessed under Policy TB01 and Paragraph 153 of the NPPF.

1, Wakefield Cottages

Comparison between original and proposed submitted volumes and area

	Original	2013	Proposed
Volume		+13.6m ³	+42.8m ³
Total	265m ³	278.6m ³	321.4m ³
		+4.8%	+21.2%

2, Wakefield Cottages

Comparison between original and proposed submitted volumes and area

	Original	1981 & 2009	Proposed
Volume		+150m ³	+42.8m ³
Total	265m ³	415m ³	457m ³
		+57%	+72.7%

The proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt because the volume increase of no. 2 Wakefield Cottage would be approximately 72.7% compared to the volume of the original building. Therefore, by definition, the proposal would cause harm to the openness of the Green Belt and would normally be resisted. Substantial weight is given to this perceived harm. The volume increase of no. 1 Wakefield Cottage represents approximately 21.2% compared to the volume of the original building and would be considered a 'limited addition'.

Consideration needs to be given as to whether the identified disability needs of a family member at No. 2 Wakefield Cottages amounts to Very Special Circumstances (VSC), in the context of weighing against any harm caused by the inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

While the NPPF does not provide specific examples VSCs, planning appeals and case law indicates that such factors which might contribute to VSCs need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis but could include:

- Demonstrable need for the development that cannot be met elsewhere (e.g., essential infrastructure or community facilities).
- Significant public benefits, such as economic growth or improved local services.
- Unique site-specific constraints that make alternative locations impractical.

In this instance, the identified disability needs are particular to just this single family and, while special and important, do not constitute wider public issues or problems that the proposal would aim to provide improved facilities for. Hence, in this instance, these needs are not considered to be VSCs.

Nevertheless, while VSCs do not exist, the family member's history [REDACTED] DO amount to 'special circumstances'. A GP letter has been submitted as evidence to confirm [REDACTED] are necessary to allow [REDACTED] to function safely in the home. The GP has also confirmed that the development will provide a [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Therefore, these 'special circumstances' carry significant material weight that will need to be considered in the overall planning balance.

In this case, the proposal is 'inappropriate development' in the Green Belt because it does not meet the criteria in Policy TB01 of the Local Plan that defines a "limited" addition as cumulatively 35% or less in volume compared to the original building. Furthermore, the resulting volume increase at no. 2 Wakefield Cottages would be approximately 72.7% compared to the volume of the original building.

Substantial weight must be attributed to the harm to the openness of the Green Belt that occurs by the proposal being defined as 'inappropriate development'. However, following an officer site visit and assessment of the proposal from a visual and spatial perspective, the height, mass, and bulk of the proposal would not significantly impact the openness of the Green Belt. This is because it would be contained within the existing footprint of the building with the proposed two-storey rear gables not projecting as far as the largest existing gable at No. 2. Also, the maximum height of the extensions would not exceed the height of the existing main roof and any vertical encroachment impacting the openness of the Green Belt would be minimal.

Therefore, despite its status as 'inappropriate development' due to the resulting volumetric increases, the proposal would not result in demonstrable harm to the openness of the Green Belt in a visual or spatial sense.

Countryside and Character of the Area:

Countryside

The site is in Countryside and Core Strategy Policy CP11 states that to protect the separate identity of settlements and maintain the quality of the environment, 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.

In this case, the proposal would be contained within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion and would not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building. Therefore, the scheme would comply with CP11 of the Core Strategy and would not cause significant harm to the Countryside.

Character of the Area

Core Strategy 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, together with a high quality of design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users, including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life. Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy requires developments to maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment.

The application site is located on a primary A-road and a Green Route. Directly opposite there is a Garden Centre; to the west, there is a plant centre comprising greenhouses; and to the east the neighbouring property is a detached dwelling known as 'The Stables'. In this case, the first-floor extension would be screened from the public realm by trees and vegetation. Furthermore, the rhythm of buildings and gaps between them along the street frontages would not be impacted. Also, the maximum eaves height and ridge height of the 2 no. gable roof extensions would be set down 0.5m from the main roof. Therefore, the proposal would not cause significant harm to the character of the area.

Overall, the proposal would comply with CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy.

Neighbouring Amenity: Core Strategy Policy CP3 states that development proposals should not result in a detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life.

Overlooking: The rear to front separation distance with the nearest neighbour at "The Stables" would be approximately 30m. Therefore, there would be no significant loss of privacy to neighbour amenity.

Loss of Light: There would be no loss of light to neighbour amenity as a result of the development.

Overbearing: The proposed development would not have an overbearing impact on neighbour amenity given its setting within a spacious plot and separation distance with nearest neighbour at 'The Stables'.

Overall, the proposal would comply with Policy CP3 in relation to neighbour amenity.

Other potential amenity issues and implementation of planning permission which relates to two planning units

Whilst this planning application proposes to extend both dwellings, the impact on each property does need to be considered as they are two separate planning units. Furthermore, the prospect of the development being partially completed with one property extended to the rear, and not the other, also needs to be considered. In particular how partial implementation would affect either property should circumstances prevent the applicant from extending both properties concurrently.

In relation to loss of light, given that the first-floor extension would be erected on the existing footprint, there would be no significant increase in overshadowing to the neighbouring ground floor habitable windows at either property. However, the horizontal 45-degree angle test would not be complied with in relation to the first floor neighbouring window. Nevertheless, the nearest neighbouring habitable first floor window to both dwellings serves a bedroom that would receive its main source of light from an additional west facing window at the front. Therefore, there would be no significant increase in overshadowing. There are no concerns related to loss of privacy or overbearing appearance.

In summary, the partial implementation of the scheme would not result in harm to the amenity of either property within the application site. Nonetheless, it should be considered whether the full implementation of the scheme could be controlled to ensure that the identified harm can be avoided entirely.

The submitted location plan shows the red line covering both plots respectively. Therefore, the development proposals are considered as a whole despite relating to separate dwellinghouses within the same ownership. Therefore, in the event of approval, the applicant would benefit from the opportunity to commence development at both properties within the standard 3 year time limit. Like any other planning consent, commencement can occur at any time within this period and in any order.

An approach sometimes taken on applications relating to extensions to two properties, either submitted simultaneously by two neighbours, or submitted together under one application (as in this case) is to require both neighbours to enter a s106 legal agreement to ensure the approved development commences and completes simultaneously at both addresses. This is to minimise the risk of one property's extension being completed without the other which could cause adverse effect on neighbouring amenity to the property which remains un-extended. This also protects both properties should one site never pursue the development.

However, for planning obligations (like s106s) to be attached to planning permissions, they should meet the relevant tests stipulated in regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010, paragraph 58 of the NPPF and paragraph 002 of the NPPG (Reference ID: 23b-002-20190901) which are outlined below:

- necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- directly related to the development; and
- fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

Paragraph 003 of the NPPG (Reference ID: 23b-003-20190901) also establishes that s106 agreement should only be used where it is not possible to address unacceptable impacts through a planning condition. Therefore, it must firstly be established whether the implementation of the development can be controlled via condition.

Paragraph 57 of the NPPF makes clear that planning conditions should be kept to a minimum, and only used where they satisfy the following tests:

1. necessary;
2. relevant to planning;
3. relevant to the development to be permitted;
4. enforceable;
5. precise; and
6. reasonable in all other respects

According to paragraph 005 of the NPPF (Reference ID: 21a-005-20190723):

“Conditions which place unjustifiable and disproportionate financial burdens on an applicant will fail the test of reasonableness.”

“Conditions requiring a development to be carried out in its entirety will fail the test of necessity by requiring more than is needed to deal with the problem they are designed to solve. Such a condition is also likely to be difficult to enforce due to the range of external factors that can influence a decision whether or not to carry out and complete a development.”

Therefore, a condition requiring the owner of both properties to build out the extensions in their entirety fails the tests of reasonableness and necessity and therefore cannot be imposed if this application is approved.

In returning to whether a s106 agreement would be a suitable mechanism, it must be acknowledged that like any development upon commencement, there is no guarantee that it will be completed for reasons such as insufficient funding or changes in home ownership. In which case, the construction of one element may occur independently of another, and the development may remain partially complete.

In the event of this happening, as both properties are under single ownership, and the neighbours are from the same family, neither neighbour would be prejudiced. Either the current or future property owner would retain the right to commence construction of their part of the development at any point in the future should part implementation occur.

Moreover, as discussed above, the identified impact on the amenity of either property should partial implementation occur would not be considered substantial enough to warrant refusal of this application.

Therefore, it is considered that a s106 agreement would not be necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms or be fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development, contrary to paragraph 58 of the NPPF. As such and given the limited risk and harm arising from partial implementation, it is considered that there is no need to secure the full completion of the development via any mechanism in this instance.

Highway Access and Parking Provision: The Highways Officer raises no objection subject to condition and has commented: *“The proposed development would result in 1 Wakefield Cottages having six habitable rooms, and 2 Wakefield Cottages having eight habitable rooms. No detail is provided on the car parking provision. Each parking space shall have minimum dimensions of 2.5m x 5.0m. 1 Wakefield Cottages would require a total of 3 spaces, and 2 Wakefield Cottage would require a total of 3 parking spaces, in line with WBC’s parking standards. Highways would welcome the applicant to demonstrate accordance with this by way of a parking plan. This is to be secured via condition.*

Conditions & Reasons (if required)

CF3 - PARKING (TO BE APPROVED)”

Officer comment: The driveway at no. 1 Wakefield Cottage can accommodate 2 parking spaces measuring 5m in length and 2.5m in width. No. 2 Wakefield Cottages has a driveway that can accommodate 4 no. parking spaces. Therefore, in this case it would not be reasonable to condition a parking plan as a condition of planning permission, given that there is adequate off-street parking for 6 no. vehicles.

Landscape and Trees: The Tree and Landscape Officer raises no objection.

Ecology: The Ecology Officer raises no objection and has commented: *“I have read the Bat Scoping Survey (Crossman Associates, Ref R1164.001 Issue One, 3 October 2025). The survey is adequate to conclude the property currently has negligible bat roost potentially. I support the biodiversity enhancements recommended by the Ecologist. There are no ecological objections to the development as proposed.”*

Planning Balance

The proposed development constitutes inappropriate development within the Green Belt as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and local policy. Substantial weight must therefore be given to this harm. Furthermore, the identified circumstances relating to the needs of family members, while important and material, do not amount to Very Special Circumstances (VSC) as they do not demonstrate wider public benefit or essential infrastructure provision.

However, in assessing the overall impact, it is noted that the proposal would not result in demonstrable harm to the openness of the Green Belt in either a visual or spatial sense.

The extensions would be contained within the existing footprint, set down from the main roofline, and screened from public views. The scale and massing would not materially alter the character of the site or lead to encroachment beyond its established curtilage.

In addition, the application attracts weight from the special circumstances presented, namely the specific accommodation needs of two vulnerable family members. These considerations, while not amounting to VSC, are significant in terms of meeting the objectives of the Equality Act 2010 and supporting inclusive living arrangements.

On balance, while the proposal is inappropriate development and VSC do not exist, the absence of harm to openness and the presence of compelling personal circumstances weigh in favour of the scheme. When considered against the development plan and the NPPF as a whole, these factors are sufficient to tip the balance in favour of approval.

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 reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. 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:	15 December 2025
Earliest date for decision:	4 November 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	17/12/25

