

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	221221
Site Address:	Barn Farm, Wokingham Road, Hurst, Wokingham, RG10 0RX
Expiry Date:	21 June 2022
Site Visit Date:	26 October 2021
Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of 1no. dwelling following demolition of existing dwelling and outbuildings, with associated parking and new vehicular access.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Countryside
Public Right of Way (bridleway) along lane
AWE Burghfield consultation zone (special case zone)
Groundwater consultation zone 3
Flood Zone 2 - Surface flood risk (1 in 1000 year)
Nitrate vulnerable zone (surface water)
Tree Preservation Order 1810/2021 (Oak in northern corner)
Adjacent to Veteran Tree 2514 (Oak over southern boundary)
Bat roost suitability
Heathrow Aerodrome wind turbine safeguarding zone
Non-classified road

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 CP4 – Infrastructure Requirements CP5 – Housing Mix, Density and Affordability CP6 – Managing Travel Demand CP7 – Biodiversity CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals CP11 – Proposals Outside Development Limits CP17 – Housing Delivery
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 – Development Limits CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction CC06 – Noise CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage

	TB04 – Development in vicinity of Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE), Burghfield TB07 – Internal Space Standards TB21 – Landscape Character TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List

PLANNING HISTORY

The following site history applies to Barn Farm Nurseries and surrounding buildings.

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
1108/1971	Dwelling house (outline)	Refused 01/12/1971
1129/1973	Extension to dwelling and garage	Approved 08/1973
19613	Dwelling house (outline)	Refused 30/06/1983
20690	Mobile home	Refused 09/02/1984
	Appeal against refusal of 20690	Dismissed 15/03/1985
20852	Mobile home	Refused 09/02/1984
39052	Polytunnel (retrospective)	Approved 16/04/1992
42696	Agricultural dwelling	Approved 04/10/1994
44910	Detached dwelling	Approved 24/10/1995
F/1996/63333	Detached dwelling	Withdrawn 04/03/1996
F/1996/63884	Dwelling house	Refused 01/08/1996
F/1997/65701	Garages	Refused 15/08/1997
F/1997/66659	Double garage	Refused 05/02/1998 Appeal Dismissed 03/06/1998
F/1999/69090	Detached garage	Approved 20/03/1999
F/1999/69091	Boundary gates and pergola	Approved 02/06/2002
F/2001/4217	Store building (retrospective)	Approved 03/04/2002
F/2006/8763	Two storey side extension	Refused 01/12/2006
F/2006/7791	Two storey side extension and dormer	Refused

		12/09/2006
PA/2006/7968	Reorganisation of site	Approved 20/07/2006
212670	Detached outbuilding for habitable use	Approved 27/08/2021

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Environmental Health – No objections
WBC Drainage – No objections subject to conditions
WBC Highways – No objections subject to conditions
WBC Landscape and Trees – No objections subject to conditions
WBC Ecology – No objections subject to conditions
WBC Public Rights Of Way – No objections

REPRESENTATIONS

St. Nicholas Hurst Parish Council	No adverse comments to make on the application
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	No comments received

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site is located within countryside on a lane leading west from Wokingham Road south of Hurst. Agricultural land lies to the west and south of the and Barn Farm Nurseries and its associated buildings lie to the east.

Proposal Description:

The proposal seeks permission for the erection of 1no.dwellinghouse with associated parking and new vehicular access. Following the demolition of the existing dwelling and outbuildings.

The dimensions of the proposed dwelling are as follows – 14.7m (depth) x 11m (width) with a total ridge height of 8m.

The internal layout of the proposed dwelling comprises of no.4 bedrooms (including en-suites and bathroom) on the ground floor with an external decking area and an open plan kitchen/dining/lounge area, cinema, study, and pantry room on the first floor, with a balcony. A total of 3 vehicular spaces will be provided at the front of the site and cycle storage for 2 cycle spaces will be provided within the designated rear garden.

Principle of Development:

The application site falls within designated countryside outside of settlement boundary and any residential development would have to be in accordance with local and national policies. Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy relates to proposals outside such development limits. It is a restrictive policy designed to protect the separate

identity of settlements and maintain the quality of the environment. Policy CP11 states that proposals outside of development limits will not normally be permitted except (summarised):

1. Where it contributes to diverse and sustainable rural enterprises; and,
2. Where it does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from original buildings; and,
3. Buildings appropriate for conversion or environmental improvements for replacement buildings; or,
4. Appropriate residential extensions.
5. Where replacement dwellings would bring about environmental improvements and not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint or the original building.
6. Provision of community facilities, and
7. Affordable housing on rural exception sites.

Criterion 5 is relevant in regard to the current proposal. Given the proposal is for a replacement dwelling, it would fit within the above exemption criteria, therefore the principle of the development in the countryside location would be acceptable subject to further assessment of the impact of the proposed development on the character of the area), street scene, neighbouring amenity, highway safety as well as compliance with other local and national planning policies.

Character of the Area:

Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale, mass, layout, built form, height and character of the area and must be of high-quality design. R1 and RD1 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires that development contribute positively towards and be compatible with the historic or underlying character and quality of the local area and R11 requires a coherent street character, including in terms of scale, rhythm, proportion, and height.

Form and volume

RD11 notes that replacement buildings may be appropriate in the countryside where there is no adverse increase in scale, form, or footprint and where there are environmental improvements. As a reference, a 50% increase in volume for a one storey development is acceptable when compared with the original building.

The applicant has provided volume and footprint calculations within the Planning Statement and are shown in the table below:

	Existing (dwelling and 3no.outbuildings)	Proposed	% Increase
Volume	526m3	1102m3	109.5%
Footprint	126.4m2	159.6m2	26.3%

The table below provides the Council's calculations on the proposal:

	Existing (dwelling and 3no.outbuildings)	Proposed	% Increase
Volume	526m ³	1123.8 m ³	113.6%
Footprint	126.4m ²	160.3m ²	26.8%

Although the proposal will result in an increase footprint, height, and volume, it is appropriate in the context of the existing dwelling and would not represent a dominant element within the countryside, and thus is acceptable.

Siting and alignment

The proposed dwelling would be orientated east to west across the site with the front elevation facing north, this would open up the visibility from the adjacent bridleway through the site to the rural landscape beyond therefore no objections are raised on this aspect.

Height

R9 of the Borough Design Guide SPD note that height, bulk, and massing should respond to the local context and the prevailing heights in the area. The proposed dwelling would have a total ridge height of 8m which is acceptable given its proximity away from neighbouring plots.

Design

R11, RD6 and RD7 of the Borough Design Guide SPD require that housing ensure a coherent street character, including materials and colour, with elevations that are well composed, proportioned, and detailed.

The proposed dwelling would have a contemporary barn-like appearance with a dual pitched roof with gables to the side elevations and materials will include timber cladding and glazing. There are no principle objections to the design of the proposed dwelling which is considered to be acceptable within a countryside setting. Full details of the materials are to be secured via condition in the event of an approval.

Affordable Housing:

Policy CP5 of the Core Strategy, Policy TB05 of the MDD Local Plan and the Affordable Housing SPD specify an affordable housing rate of 40% for any development involving five dwellings or more on land with a total area of 0.16 hectares or more. Neither trigger is met, and affordable housing is not required.

Housing Amenity

Internal Amenity Space

Policy TB07 of the MDD and Policy R17 of the Borough Design Guides requires adequate internal space to ensure the layout and size achieves good internal amenity.

A minimum standard of 124m² applies for a 4-bedroom dwelling (on the basis of 8 persons sharing). The proposed dwelling will have an internal gross floor area of 285m² (as measured off the submitted plans) which complies with this requirement.

In terms of bedroom sizes, the Technical Housing Standards requires that a dwelling with more than one bedroom should have a main bedroom (double), which is to have a minimum area of 11.5sqm. Secondary of single bedrooms should have a minimum area of 7.5sqm and living spaces should have a minimum area of 31sqm. There should also be provision for storage.

The bedrooms meet the minimum space requirements for double occupancy rooms as above including the living spaces on the ground floor.

R18 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires sufficient sunlight and daylight to new properties, with dwellings afforded a reasonable outlook. The proposal takes advantage of its southern aspect and is acceptable.

External Amenity Space

R16 of the SPD requires a minimum depth of 11m for rear gardens and a 1m setback from the site boundary to allow access thereto. The proposal complies with this requirement with the depth of the rear garden being in excess of 11m and provision of a suitable access to the space.

Neighbouring Amenity:

The nearest residential dwelling is located east of the adjacent lane with there being an established high hedge on the opposite side of the lane. Due to the sufficient separation distances between the two sites, the proposal would not have a detrimental impact upon the occupiers of the adjacent lane on grounds of overlooking, overbearingness, or loss of light.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

Access

The proposal would create a new access to the north and serve the new front driveway at the site. The submitted plans indicate the existing access would be closed off. No objections are raised by the Council's Highways Officer on this aspect on highway safety or traffic grounds.

Parking Provision

Policy CC07 and Appendix 2 of the MDD Local Plan stipulates minimum off streetcar and cycle parking standards

Three car parking spaces would be provided on the front driveway of the application site, and the provision of parking is acceptable to the Council's Highways Officer. The submitted site plan indicates an EV Charging point will be provided; nonetheless in the absence of full details this is to be secured via condition in the event of an approval.

Cycle Parking

Secure cycle storage for the two cycle spaces would be provided within the rear garden with suitable access and thus is acceptable.

Flooding and Drainage:

Section 10 of the NPPF, Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy and Policies CC09 and CC10 of the MDD requires flooding protection, sustainable drainage methods and the

minimisation of surface water flow.

The site is located within Flood Zone 2, which is outside of the 1 in 100-year flooding extent (Flood Zone 3). The applicant has submitted a Flood Risk Assessment ref: 221499/FRA/RS/JR/01 Rev.A.

Paragraph 3.1.2 states that the proposed site is shown to be within Flood Zone 2, this defined as land assessed having between a 1 in 100 and 1 in 1000 annual probability of river flooding (1% - 0.1%). The nearest know Flood Zone 3 area is located some 1.0km away to the north of the site. Paragraph 3.2.2 states that Environment Agency online mapping of the extent of surface water flooding in the local area, shows that there are various areas which are subject to surface water flooding. The figures included in the report show the areas prone to surface water flooding from a 1.0% probability and indicates the depths of flood waters around the site to be between 0mm to 900mm. Site is at high risk from surface water flooding.

Paragraph 4.2.2 states that existing building has a footprint of approximately 125m² with the outbuildings the total built area is 176m², the proposed residential building will have an approximate roof area of 152m². The proposed development will be located outside of flood zone 3 and the built area will result in a reduction when compared to the existing situation, therefore the proposals will not result in a loss of flood water for an event with a probability of 1.0% or greater. An indicative drainage layout for the proposed development has been prepared and is included in as drawing 211451/DS/01 and 221499/DS/01. The development is to be carried out in accordance with submitted FRA and drawings.

The Council's Drainage Officer raises no objections to the proposal however it is the responsibility of the applicant to get approval from Environment Agency for fluvial flooding.

Landscape and Trees:

Policy CC03 of the MDD Local aims to protect green infrastructure networks, retain existing trees and establish appropriate landscaping and Policy TB21 requires consideration of the landscape character.

The site is located to the southwest of Barn Farm, in the countryside along Public Right of Way STHN14 which is also a PROW improvement route.

The site is within Wokingham Borough Landscape Character (WBLCA) Area I4 Hurst Clay 'Farmed Lowlands'. The landscape strategy for the area is to *conserve and enhance the rural pastoral intimate character*.

The key aspects to be conserved and actively managed are the small watercourse, ponds and drainage ditches, small scale pastoral fields, and wooded rural lanes. There is an opportunity to reinstate hedgerow boundaries. In terms of development, the aim is to conserve the low-density settlement pattern of farmsteads along rural lanes and the small village of Hurst.

There are 2 mature Oak trees on the site; 1 in the northern corner protected by TPO1810/2021 and the other on the southern corner just outside of the site is a

Veteran Oak tree Wokingham District Veteran Tree Association Ref. 2514. Although this tree is outside of the site it is still material to development and shown as tree T4 on the Tree Constraints and Protection Plans.

In the Tree Survey Schedule, the tree has not been measured accurately as it was inaccessible. The root protection area of the tree is shown as slightly encroaching the southern corner of the garden, and the retained garden wall slightly encroaches the RPA. The building that was located in the south boundary is not affected by the RPA of T4 and will be demolished.

The submitted tree information is acceptable for the proposed development however a robust landscape scheme is required that provides native hedgerow boundaries and hedgerow trees that reflects the hedgerow character of the area and enhances the setting of the new dwelling, screening long views towards the site. A Landscape Scheme is to be secured via condition in the event of an approval.

Ecology:

Policy CP7 of the Core Strategy 2010 requires the conservation of sites for nature conservation in accordance with national, regional, county, and local biodiversity action plans. Policy TB23 of the MDD Local Plan requires the incorporation of new biodiversity features, buffers between habitats and species of importance and integration with the wider green infrastructure network.

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal report (Elite Ecology, version V2 Draft, June 2021) and a Bat Activity Survey report (Elite Ecology, version V1 Final, October 2021) have been submitted in support of this application. The Council's Ecology Officer is satisfied the surveys have been conducted and reported adequately to consider the impact of the proposed development on protected species.

Bats

The activity surveys observed the re-entry of three Common Pipistrelle bats to building B1. The Council's Ecology Officer agrees with the interpretation of the survey results that there is presence of a day roost of a small number of a common species.

The building is proposed to be demolished and therefore the roost will be destroyed. The applicant's ecologist has advised that this will require a derogation licence from Natural England and has outlined mitigation and compensation measures likely necessary to maintain favourable conservation status of a protected species and obtain the licence.

The Council's Ecology Officer is of the view that the mitigation and compensation measures are achievable within the proposed design and a condition to secure submission of a copy of a licence from Natural England is requested in the event of an approval.

Great Crested Newts

The application site is within 250m of at least five ponds and there is a watercourse alongside the access road (but on the far side of the road to the application site). None of these ponds are within 100m of the application site. The presence or

absence of Great Crested Newt from any of the five ponds has not been determined. Instead, given the distance between the application site and these ponds, in section 5.3.1 of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, the applicant's ecologist has recommended a precautionary method statement to follow to mitigate the risk to this protected species.

The Council's Ecology Officer has noted this is a proportionate and reasonable approach to ensuring the proposed development does not adversely affect the conservation status of this protected species. A condition to secure the implementation of this method statement is recommended.

Water Vole

There are historic records of Water Vole using the ditches in this part of Hurst, including in the ditch alongside the access road to the application site. The protected species Water Vole has not specifically been considered in either ecological report. The continued presence or otherwise of this species locally has not been established

The Council's Ecology Officer is of the opinion that the scale and scope of the proposed development is unlikely to adversely affect a local Water Vole population, if still present. The species is unlikely to be directly using the application site as it would typically be found in close proximity to water and marginal vegetation. There would be adequate buffer between the development and any burrows. No further surveys or mitigation measures for this species is required.

Public Rights of Way:

The proposal will not affect the Public Right of Way STNH FP 14.

Environmental Health:

No objections are raised by the Council's Environmental Health Officer on the proposal on grounds of contamination, air, or noise pollution.

Waste Storage:

Policy CC04 of the MDD Local Plan requires adequate internal and external storage for the segregation of waste and recycling, as well as provision for green waste and composting and an appropriate area for ease of collection.

The submitted plans indicate that there would be provision for waste storage at the site which would be appropriate within the residential setting.

Building Sustainability:

Policy CC04 of the MDD Local Plan and the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD require sustainable design and conservation and R21 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires that new development contribute to environmental sustainability and the mitigation of climate change.

It is considered the proposed dwelling can be reasonably built to the required standards for Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes as set out in Policy CC04 and no objections are raised on this aspect.

Atomic Weapons Location:

Policy TB04 of the MDD allows development in the vicinity of the Atomic Weapons Establishment at Burghfield but only where the increase in density can be safely accommodated. The site is within the special case zone and the proposed development does not trigger any further consideration.

Community Infrastructure Levy:

The application is liable for CIL payments because it involves additional floor area in excess of 100sqm. It is payable at £365/sqm index linked. The applicant has submitted a Self-Build Exemption, and this is subject to a separate liability notice.

Planning Balance:

On balance the proposal results in an increase of footprint than the existing dwelling however the overall scale and design of the replacement dwelling is considered suitable and outweighs any significant harm to the countryside setting.

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:	TBC
Recommendation:	Approve
Date:	09 June 2022
Earliest date for decision:	18 May 2022

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	9.6.2022