

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	242506
Site Address:	Aston Rise, Remenham Lane, Remenham, Wokingham, RG9 3DE
Expiry Date:	27 November 2024
Site Visit Date:	17 October 2024
Proposal: Householder application for a proposed two storey side/front extension (with loft accommodation) and part single storey/part two storey rear extension following demolition of existing single storey side projection and rear extensions together with associated changes to fenestration and provision of 3 x additional triangular roof dormers. Demolition and replacement of existing porch and demolition of existing detached ancillary cottage and garage with associated hard and soft landscaping works.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Contaminated Land Consultation Zone
Local Authorities
Affordable Housing Thresholds
Areas of Special Character
Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
Borough Parishes
Scale and Location of Development Proposals
Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone
Green Belt
Ground Water Zones
Nuclear Consultation Zone
Borough Wards
Radon Affected Area
Landscape Character Assessment Area
SSSI Impact Risk Zones
Safety Hazard Areas MAH Pipelines
PRoW Within WB Consultation Zone

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 CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals CP11 – Proposals Outside Development Limits CP12 – Green Belt

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 CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB01 – Development within the Green Belt TB02 – Development adjoining the Green Belt TB21 – Landscape Character TB22 – Sites of Urban Landscape Value TB23 – Biodiversity and Development TB24 – Designated Heritage Assets TB25 – Archaeology TB26 – Buildings of Traditional Local Character and Areas of Special Character
Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (JMWP)	DM1 - Sustainable Development DM3 - Protection of Habitats and Species DM4 - Protection of Designated Landscape DM5 - Protection of the Countryside DM6 - Green Belt DM7 - Conserving the Historic Environment DM10 - Flood Risk DM11 - Water Resources DM14 - Ancillary development DM15 - Site History
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document

PLANNING HISTORY		
Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
981311	Proposed erection of detached garage.	Approved 26/11/1998
950153	Renewal Of Consent 37246 For The Erection Of Garage.	Approved 29/01/1996
37246	Construction of detached garage.	Approved 19/03/1991
16595	New double garage and store also new front entrance porch.	Approved 02/12/1981
R/4/68	Sun lounge extension.	Approved 19/01/1968

CONSULTATION RESPONSES
Internal

WBC Drainage – No objection, subject to condition (08/10/2024).
WBC Highways – No objection (08/10/2024).
WBC Landscape and Trees – No objection, subject to conditions (10/10/2024).
WBC Public Rights Of Way – No comments received.
WBC Built Heritage Officer – No objection, subject to conditions (30/10/2024).
WBC Ecology – No objection, subject to conditions (24/11/2024).

External

Berkshire Archaeology – No objection, subject to condition (23/10/2024).

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	No objection, subject to volumes being within allowance (15/10/2024).
Ward Member(s)	No comments received.
Neighbours	No comments received.

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site consists of a large detached, two and a half-storey property located on Remenham Lane within the Metropolitan Green Belt and designated Countryside. The dwelling dates from the late 19th Century and is not listed or located in a conservation area but is identified as a non-designated heritage asset. The site also comprises a detached workshop and detached garage which adjoins a cottage. To the north of the site is Remenham Wooded Chalk Slopes which is part of a High Landscape Character Assessment area. Large gardens surround the property with woodland to the east and west and a public footpath adjoining the southern site boundary. The host dwelling is located at a significantly higher level than Remenham Lane. The property is accessed via a long private driveway running upslope directly south of the road.

There are two adjoining neighbours to the north and one adjoining neighbour to the east. Both are more than 100m from the host dwelling.

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 Green Belt. The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. Paragraph 147 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) indicates that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 138 of the NPPF indicates limited exceptions to inappropriate development. 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. This approach is reflected in the NPPF as well as Core Strategy Policy CP12 and adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy TB01, which aligns with the NPPF

test that permits extensions provided they are not disproportionate over and above the size of the original building. The NPPF says the following with regard to Green Belts:

152: Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

153. When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

154. A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are... (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.

As can be seen from above, paragraph 154 establishes that an extension or alteration to a dwelling within the Green Belt, providing the extension of any building does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building and that any development contrary to this would be inappropriate development in a Green Belt location.

TB01 of the MDD states that the extension of a dwelling in the Green Belt over and above the size of the original building shall be limited in scale. Point 3.4 clarifies this by adding "*With regard to the alteration and/or extension of a dwelling.... proposals will be assessed against the original building(s), as defined in the NPPF. Due to the restrictive policies that apply to the Green Belt and the need to retain the openness of the countryside, only limited extensions to a dwelling will generally be permitted. 'Limited' means a cumulative increase of generally no more than a 35% increase in volume over and above the original dwelling*".

The submitted volumes calculate the works to comprise a 32% volume increase in overall size from the 1948 dwelling.

Character of the Area and Impact on Green Belt:

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. This approach is reflected in the NPPF as well as Core Strategy Policy CP12 and adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy TB01, which aligns with the NPPF test that permits extensions provided they are not disproportionate over and above the size of the original building.

The host dwelling is located on a large, sloping site, with the front of the site significantly lower than the rear. The main dwelling is located at a significantly higher level than Remenham Lane. Remenham Lane has a green verdant character commensurate with the local area. The site is surrounded by dense planting of mixed trees and shrubs. The natural screening and level changes mean the proposal would hold very limited views to the public realm or neighbouring properties.

There is a public footpath that runs parallel to the southern boundary of the site. The closest section of the footpath to the proposed works would be more than 60m away. Views of the property would be very limited from this section of the public footpath, as the existing workshop and established trees and shrubs to the south of the proposed works would largely screen the works. The BDG states that for rural and settlement edge sites 'New development and associated landscape should retain, incorporate and enhance features that contribute towards the landscape character and biodiversity of the area'. Section 4.4.2 of the Arboricultural Report confirms that no trees located in the area surveyed in the report will be removed to implement the scheme.

The proposed two and a half-storey, side extension would be located on the eastern side of the host dwelling and would be significantly set back from the street frontage by more than 130m. The extension would measure approximately 4.8m in width and 14.3m in depth following the removal of the existing single storey store room and sauna. The side extension would wrap around the property to the rear and adjoin a part single-storey, part two-storey extension. The extensions would effectively infill space between the existing lean-to and conservatory and would not generate sprawling encroachment into the open garden space.

To facilitate the extensions, the scheme also proposes the removal of the existing detached garage and ancillary cottage. The NPPF highlights that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open and that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. There is no definition of openness in the NPPF, however in Green Belt context, it is generally held to refer to freedom from, or the absence of development.

In this instance, by removing the detached garage and cottage and replacing the built form as vertical additions to the main house this would open up the garden space and create more permanent openness around the host dwelling.

Regarding the removal of garage and cottage, the council's Built Heritage officer commented *"Perhaps one of the most interesting elements of the site, was the original garage 'the cottage', somewhat reminiscent of Lord Nuffield's garage at Nuffield Place. Much like the house, this has been subject to numerous changes and now barely resembles its historic appearance. If this building was in its original form with historic fabric etc. there would have been a strong preference for retention, however given the pre-occurring harm, no objection can be made to its loss from a heritage perspective"*. Therefore, it is considered that the removal of the cottage/garage would not result in any significant harm to the non-designated heritage asset building or setting of the Green Belt or countryside. Therefore, this element of the scheme would remove features of limited value to the overall character of the host dwelling and would have no detrimental impact on the historic character of the site.

Detailed volume calculations were carried out by Greenhatch Surveys Ltd and submitted as part of the Design and Access Statement (DAS). The calculations outline the volume changes with an overall 32% enlargement on the original dwelling.

Original Dwelling (Main House and Cottage as at July 1948)

Total Volume: 1693m³

1

Proposed Dwelling:

Retained Existing Volume: 1361m³

Additional Volume: 877m³

Total Volume: 2238m³

(32% Enlargement on Original Dwelling)

4

Workshop (retained): 224m³

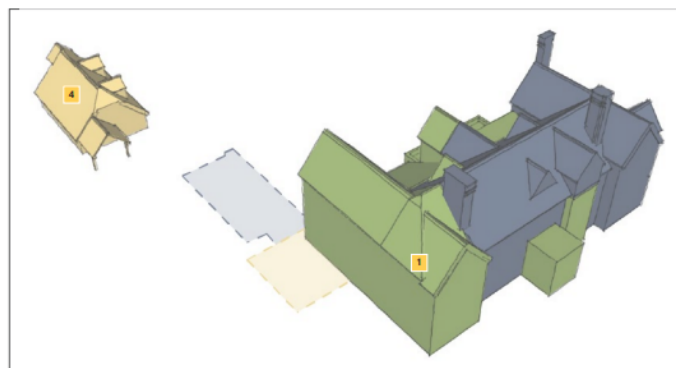


Figure 54. Proposed Massing Model - Front View

The workshop is not included within the calculations. It is a non-original outbuilding and as stated in paragraph 3.5 of the MDD 'For the purposes of clarity, any assessment of increase in volume of a dwelling will not include any other buildings on the site'. By removing the cottage and off-setting this with additions to the main house results in volume increases that are consistent with the MDD: 'Only limited extensions to a dwelling will generally be permitted. 'Limited' means a cumulative increase of generally no more than 35% increase in volume over and above the original building'.

The two and a half storey side extension would incorporate one front and one rear gable. These would be subservient additions to the host dwelling as they would be set down from the main ridge line by between 0.4m and 0.65m. Both gables would replicate the existing gables in the front and rear elevations creating symmetry and balance to the dwelling. The Council's Built Heritage officer commented "*With respect to the proposed extension and alterations to the house, whilst relatively large in form, the new wing would seek to balance the host and introduce an improved, almost 16th century E-plan, form. The proposed extensions and alterations are well considered in form and detail and would seek to remove – or correct – the numerous unsympathetic changes of the past. Compounding on this, the proposals introduce certain nuances of detail not seen previously, such detailing (e.g. fenestration, catslide roof) is welcomed*". Therefore, the addition of the eastern wing is considered an architectural feature that would improve the historic interest of the host dwelling and enhance the original design features of the main house.

The two additional dormers proposed in the eastern elevation and one additional dormer in the rear elevation would match the existing pitch roof dormer at the rear. They are subordinate to the host dwelling as they are set down from the main ridge line and in from the sides.

In relation to the surrounding area, Remenham Lane is a long rural road with the application site located towards the eastern end, close to the Aston Lane and Aston Ferry Lane junction. The application site forms part of a small hamlet of residential properties centred around the Flower Pot Hotel. RD5 of the Borough Design Guide (BDG) states that new development in the rural area should respond to the typical forms of buildings in the village or locality. Properties within the hamlet exhibit features similar to those proposed. These include front facing gables and pitched roof dormers, as

evidenced at nos.112-113, 114 and 115-116 Aston Ferry Lane. Therefore, any views of the extensions from the public footpath located to the rear of the property would be complementary and sympathetic to other properties within the local area.

The proposal also includes other changes to fenestration and a replacement porch. The existing pitched roof porch would be replaced with a flat roof porch. The existing porch is not an original feature of the property and was added in the 1980s. The proposed porch would consist of brick with corbel detailing. The changes to the porch would not be obtrusive and would be more sympathetic with the original period of the property. Overall, the proposed changes to the fenestration would contribute positively towards the underlying character and quality of the host dwelling and local area.

The overall size of the extensions would be proportional to the host dwelling and would not be overly oppressive or dominant additions to the host dwelling. The site is well screened from all directions and obscured from view from the road. Therefore, in terms of design, bulk and scale, the proposal would be proportionate and subservient to the main dwelling and would not be harmful to the street scene or character of the host dwelling or wider Green Belt environment.

Impact on Countryside:

CP11 of the Core Strategy states that proposals should not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion away from original buildings or result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form, or footprint of the building.

The proposed house extensions would remove the garage and cottage and increase the footprint of the main house by approximately 131 GEA (m²). The rear extension would extend approximately 6.65m (maximum) from the rear building line, following demolition of the existing conservatory. The proposed family room would largely maintain the footprint of the existing conservatory but would extend further towards the east to adjoin the proposed eastern wing. Approximately half of the two and a half storey eastern wing would be positioned on the footprint of the existing single-storey store and sauna. Therefore, a large area of the proposed extensions already consists of built form and would not result in excessive expansion away from the original building. Although the proposed extensions to the main house appear as relatively large, they are proportional in comparison to the scale of the host dwelling.

To facilitate the extensions, the existing garage and cottage would be demolished resulting in a net loss of built form away from the host dwelling within the site.

Overall, the proposed works would not cause excessive encroachment or expansion into the countryside and would not harm the character of the countryside. Thus, the proposal would not conflict with CP11 of the Core Strategy.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Overlooking, Loss of Light and Overbearing:

The BDG outlines recommended separation distances to maintain a sense of privacy and to limit a sense of enclosure.

Due to the substantial separation distances to the adjoining neighbours to the north and east, there are no over-looking, over-bearing or loss of light impacts that would be generated by the proposal.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

The proposal would increase the number of habitable rooms and would demolish the existing garage. WBC Highways were consulted, they raised no objection to the development and commented *"The proposal will result in additional habitable rooms. The existing access will be retained and this is considered acceptable. The garage is to be demolished, however, the remaining level of driveway parking is considered acceptable to serve the development"*.

Flooding and Drainage:

The application site is located in flood zone 1 and drainage strategy drawings were submitted. The council's drainage officer was consulted and raised no objection to the proposal, subject to a condition relating to drainage system details. Whilst this is duly noted, as the submitted drainage plans show the location of the proposed soakaway storage and septic tank, these plans will be conditioned.

Landscape and Trees:

There are no protected trees on site, however, the application site is located within Green Belt and designated Countryside.

The proposal includes the installation of steps into the existing grass bank to the north of the main house. Further details of the steps, including materials and installation method via condition would be required with any granted permission. Section 13 of the submitted DAS states that the proposed scheme would include enhancing the quality of the existing planting with the provision of new formal and informal planting and the reconfiguration of the terraces. These are acceptable in principle, subject to further details.

The council's Trees and Landscape officer was consulted and raised no objection to the proposal, subject to conditions relating to landscaping, retention of existing trees/shrubs and protection of trees. They commented *"The site is located down a driveway, in Green Belt and Countryside in an area of High landscape quality and sensitivity and low capacity, off a single-track lane. There are scant public realm views eg from public right of way REME6."*

The tree aspects of the application have been satisfactorily addressed. These can be put in place under a condition". The Trees and Landscape officer has recommended conditions relating to landscaping details, and the protection and retention of trees and shrubs.

Archaeology:

There are potential archaeological implications with the proposed development as demonstrated by Berkshire Archaeology's Historic Environment Record. Berkshire Archaeology raised no objection to the proposal, subject to condition and commented *"The proposal site has been recorded as the site of an Early Medieval burial (Meaney 1964) discovered in 1921, which included an inhumation burial and associated grave goods. There are records of two similar period burials in the wider Aston Farm area,*

therefore it should be considered that further burials may be nearby. The wider area has multi period archaeological potential with Neolithic pits found during pipeline works c.200m south and a finds assemblage suggestive of a Roman villa c.450m north.

As shown, the application site falls within an area of archaeological significance and archaeological remains may be damaged by ground disturbance for the proposed development. It is therefore recommended that a condition is applied, should permission be granted, in order to mitigate the impacts of development. This is in accordance with Paragraph 211 of the NPPF(2023) which states 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'".

In the comments, Berkshire Archaeology also stated that they would be pleased to discuss the approach of the archaeological Scheme of Works with the applicant/consultant, should permission be granted.

Ecology:

The application site is located in an area suitable for bat roosts. The Council's ecology officer was consulted and raised no objection, subject to further information, or via conditions. The officer raised concern regarding a change of use of the northern end of the site being used as residential garden space as a result of the grass bank steps. However, the application does not propose to incorporate this area into residential garden. If in the future this was the intention of the owner, planning permission would be required. The officer was also concerned with changes to the northern area of the site leading to a loss of biodiversity habitat. This information will be secured via a landscaping condition.

Other observations made by the ecology officer included disturbance to bats caused by the motion-sensor lights on each elevation of the property. Although these lights are existing, the council's ecology officer advises that the flood lighting be amended as a matter of urgency. The officer reiterates what is stated in para. 5.1.7 of the Building 1 Bat Report; that a European Protected Species Mitigation licence will be required once permission is granted. The bat report will be conditioned.

A condition to remove permitted development rights was also recommended. However, the this is unreasonable or relevant to the development proposed in order to make the scheme acceptable.

A further pre-commencement condition relating to a lighting scheme was recommended for the house, workshop and grounds. Whilst this is duly noted, the scheme only relates to house extensions, and no changes are proposed to the workshop. Therefore, the condition is not relevant to the development to be permitted.

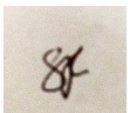
Conclusion:

For the reasons set out above and subject to conditions, the proposal is acceptable as it accords with local plan policy and guidance.

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.

RECOMMENDATION	
Conditions agreed:	Yes
Recommendation:	Approve
Date:	12 November 2024
Earliest date for decision:	25 October 2024

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	3.12.24