

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	251474
Site Address:	Springfields, Trowes Lane, Swallowfield, Wokingham, RG7 1RN
Expiry Date:	19 August 2025
Site Visit Date:	8 July 2024
Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of a side extension to existing barn for storage and restoration of vintage vehicles.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS

Countryside
Green and Amber Risk Zones for Great Crested Newts
Nuclear Consultation Zone – 12km Zone for AWE Burghfield

PLANNING POLICY

National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) National Design Guide
Core Strategy (CS)	CP1 – Sustainable Development CP2 – Inclusive Communities CP3 – General Principles for Development CP5 – Housing Mix, Density and Affordability CP6 – Managing Travel Demand CP7 – Biodiversity CP8 – Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area 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 CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction CC06 – Noise CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage 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
Wokingham	SS1 – Sustainable development principles SS2 – Spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy

Borough Local Plan Update (LPU)	SS5 – Development in the countryside CE1 – Design principles for efficient buildings CE2 – Environmental standards for non-residential development CE7 – Low carbon and renewable energy generation C2 – Mitigation of transport impacts and highway safety and design C4 – Green and blue infrastructure and public rights of way ER3 – Supporting the rural economy FD1 – Development and flood risk (from all sources) FD2 – Sustainable drainage NE1 – Biodiversity and geodiversity NE2 – Biodiversity net gain NE4 – Trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows NE5 – Landscape and design DH1 – Place making and quality design DH2 – Safeguarding amenity HC8 – Noise pollution HC10 – Odor, fumes and dust
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document Swallowfield Village Design Statement

PLANNING HISTORY		
Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
CLE/2006/6979	Application for a certificate of existing lawfulness for occupation of dwelling without compliance to agricultural restriction.	Approved 26/06/2006
F/2007/0793	Proposed erection of replacement dwelling and garage	Refused 15/06/2007 Appeal Dismissed 31/07/2008
F/2008/2751	Demolition of existing dwelling and garage and erection of new dwelling and carport.	Approved 03/03/2009
102031	Application for submission of details to comply with the following conditions of planning consent F/2008/2751: 3. Samples/details of materials. 4. Details of boundary treatment(s). 6. Site levels 8. Scheme to deal with contamination. 9. Programme of archaeological work	Replied 07/07/2010
142530	Application to vary condition 10 of planning consent F/2008/2751- (demolition of existing	Approved 14/03/2014

	dwelling and garage and erection of new dwelling and carport), to allow the applicant to vacate and demolish garage before the 31 st December 2014	
142519	Proposed change of use of outbuilding from temporary accommodation to ancillary garage with replacement of north-east windows to three garage doors	Refused 12/02/2015 Appeal Allowed 10/06/2015
152793	Householder application for the proposed erection of a first-floor side, part single storey side extensions to dwelling	Approved 22/12/2015
163027	Householder application for the proposed erection of a replacement garage, following demolition and removal of existing garage block	Approved 16/12/2016
211919	Full application for the proposed change of use of the garage with alterations to ancillary living accommodation including demolition of existing side extension and erection of replacement side extension	Approved 10/08/2021
222305	Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for the use of a barn building for the storage and restoration of vintage vehicles, a mixed use of the surrounding land for the storage of agricultural machinery and historic materials, with adjacent hardstanding utilised for the storage of old vehicles.	Approved for the use of the barn only 29/09/2022
223699	Householder application for the erection of a single storey annexe following the demolition of the existing annexe.	Approved 12/04/23
230568	Full application for the change of use of land to facilitate the provision of hardstanding and the erection of 2 no. side extensions to the existing barn, plus alterations to fenestration. (Part retrospective)	Refused 25/05/23
233093	Certificate of lawfulness for the use of land for the parking and storage of vehicles, plant and machinery and laying of hardstanding to facilitate the change of use. The hardstanding has also been used for the placement of ancillary containers.	Refused 07/02/2024

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Environmental Health – No comments received
WBC Drainage – No objection subject to condition(s)

WBC Highways – No objections
WBC Landscape and Trees – Request further information (see main body of report)
WBC Ecology Newts – No objection subject to condition(s)
WBC Ecology – No comments received
External
None consulted

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	Swallowfield Parish Council requests that, if Wokingham Borough Council is minded to approve the application, conditions are applied to ensure that the building is not used for commercial purposes.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	No comments received

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site consists of a large barn building that has historically been used by the owner of the site for the storage and restoration of vintage vehicles, which was regularised by CLUED application 222305 for this specific use. Primarily, this has been a hobby use by the owner of the site with no commercial elements involved.

Application 222305 also applied to regularise the mixed use of the surrounding land for the storage of agricultural machinery and historic materials, with adjacent hardstanding utilised for the storage of old vehicles. This was however refused due to insufficient evidence of a consecutive use for a minimum of 10 years.

The barn building is situated to the rear of the dwellinghouse known as Springfields on Trowes Lane, Swallowfield. It is accessed via the site's main access to the north and via a narrow track.

Proposal Description:

This application seeks approval for the proposed erection of an extension to the existing barn building. The use of the extension would remain the same as that of the existing building, namely for the storage and restoration of vintage vehicles.

The planning statement outlines that this extension would be a continuation of the applicant's hobby rather than a commercial use. The applicant lives in the adjacent dwellinghouse known as Springfields, identified within the application blue-line.

Principle of Development:

General:

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.

Local Plan Update (LPU):

The Council are also progressing with their Local Plan Update (LPU) which has progressed beyond the Proposed Submission Plan (Regulation 19) stage, with representations received on the plan's legal compliance and soundness between 30 September and 13 November 2024.

The Proposed Submission Plan (Regulation 19) consultation has now closed and the Council have now analysed the representations received. The Regulation 22 plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination in February 2025, and two Planning Inspectors have been appointed to examine (EiP) the plan. The examination of the local plan is ongoing, and the council responded to initial questions and requests from the Inspectors in May 2025.

As seen in High Court judgements, even when an emerging plan is at an advanced stage, it may still attract limited weight if further consultation and modifications are required, and the Inspector has yet to issue a final report. Wokingham's LPU has several stages yet to be completed, including the examination hearings and main modifications stages, which restricts the weight that can currently be afforded to non-substantive.

The Council however acknowledge that there are unresolved objections on substantive grounds pursuant on the majority of relevant conditions listed above, meaning weight attracted to these policies is limited.

Countryside:

The site lies within the Countryside as designated in the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy. Core Strategy policy CP11 states, in order 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 in certain circumstances. This criteria is as follows:

- 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.

With regards to criterion 1, in a literal sense, a vintage vehicle restoration hobby cannot reasonably be seen as a sustainable or diverse rural enterprise, nor can the storage of the vehicles. Despite this conflict, it is acknowledged that the hobby nature of the use would notably limit the overall harm to the Countryside due to the lack of commercial elements.

Turning to criterion 2, the extension has a footprint of approximately 50sqm and would be sited on an area of existing hardstanding where various equipment is currently stored. It would have a mono-pitch lean-to roof form that would protrude from the north-eastern elevation of the existing barn building and would abut the adjacent line of conifer hedging. Overall, the extension is relatively modest and would be spatially enveloped by the existing barn and the dwelling/ancillary buildings to the north. Therefore, it is not considered that the development would lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings. Compliance with criterion 2 is therefore achieved.

Criterion 3 is not applicable to the proposed development.

Policy CP11 requires compliance with the first three criteria to be considered acceptable in principle. Whilst this is not achieved, attention turns to the overall aim of CP11, that being to protect the separate identity of settlements and maintain the quality of the environment. In this regard, the modest scale of the extension and its siting would have no impacts on the separate identity of settlements and would have a negligible visual impact on the surrounding landscape, adequately maintaining the quality of the environment.

Despite conflicts with the relevant criteria, the proposed development is considered to comply with Policy CP11's overall aims, subject to a condition ensuring the building cannot be used for commercial purposes.

Character of the Area:

Policy Context:

With regards to well-designed places, paragraph 130 of the NPPF states planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging
- d) appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);

Paragraph 187(b) of the NPPF requires that planning applications enhance the natural and local environment by 'recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.'

Policy CP11 supports development in the countryside only where it maintains the

high quality of the rural environment. Policy CP1(1) similarly only supports development that maintains or enhances the high quality of the environment, with policy CP3 supporting development of an appropriate mass, layout, built form, height and character to the area CP3(a) and which makes a positive contribution to the sense of place contributes to the buildings and spaces themselves and in the way they integrate with their surroundings CP3(f).

The Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document provides further guidance for developers with general guidance that development should respond positively to its site and local context (G1) and respond positively to the local character of the area (G2).

The National Design Guide section B1, paragraph 67 also states that the built form of well-designed places should relate well to:

- the site, its context and the opportunities they present;
- the proposed identity and character for the development in the wider place;

Assessment:

As outlined above, the extension is relatively modest and would be spatially enveloped by the existing barn and the dwelling/ancillary buildings to the north. Views from Trowes Lane would be adequately screened due to intervening built form and the fact that the building is well set back from the roadside.

Overall, subject to the commercial restriction condition discussed above, the extension would have an acceptable impact on the character of the area.

Neighbouring Amenity:

The extension is adequately distanced away from the dwellinghouse on site and the lack of commercial activity will ensure no adverse impacts on the occupiers. Further afield, neighbouring properties are located a notable distance away from the site to ensure no adverse harm comes to them as a result of the development.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

WBC Highways do not anticipate a significant traffic impact as a result of the development, subject to a condition ensuring no commercial use of the development.

The existing access and level of parking is considered acceptable.

Flooding and Drainage:

The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and at low risk of surface water flooding. WBC Drainage have requested a condition requiring the submission of a drainage scheme, but this is not considered necessary to make the scheme acceptable due to the site's low flood risk and the minimal scale of the extension.

Landscape and Trees:

The application is supported by an Arboricultural Impact and Method Statement (Mark Welby, 27th August 2025).

The proposed extension would lie adjacent to a line of coniferous Lawson Cypresses. Their root growing areas have been notably limited by the hardstanding the extension

would be sited upon.

The arboricultural statement clarifies that tree protection fencing will be installed around the Root Protection Areas of the trees, with sensitive pad excavation proposed for the extension's construction.

Subject to compliance with the arboricultural statement, there are no anticipated adverse impacts to vegetation on site.

Ecology:

Great Crested Newts:

The application site is within an amber impact risk zone for great crested newts. There are two ponds within the site but no other ponds within 500m.

The applicant has provided a Great Crested Newt Assessment & Non-Licensed Method Statement (GS Ecology, February 2023) prepared for a different planning application at the same site. This report includes an assessment of the suitability of the on-site ponds for great crested newts. Both ponds were found to have poor suitability. This information is not sufficient to rule out great crested newt presence, and the site and ponds may have changed in the 2.5 years since the report was produced. However, it is indicative that in 2023 the site was sub-optimal for great crested newts.

The footprint of the proposed development is confined to a small area of sparsely vegetated bare ground used for storage of heavy machinery, between the existing conifer hedge and workshop. Therefore, the potential for the development to impact great crested newts is very low, if they are present within the site. The applicant has provided the supporting document: 'Non-licensed Avoidance Measures for Great Crested Newts' – which includes precautionary measures to further reduce the likelihood of impacts. WBC Ecology Newts are satisfied that if these measures are adhered to, the development is unlikely to impact great crested newts. Therefore, WBC Ecology Newts recommend a compliance condition should the application be approved.

Biodiversity Net Gain:

As the proposed development impacts less than 25sqm of on-site habitats, it is classed as 'de minimis' and therefore exempt from mandatory biodiversity net gains.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):

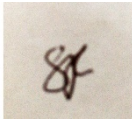
When planning permission is granted for a development that is CIL liable, the Council will issue a liability notice as soon as practicable after the day on which the planning permission first permits development. Completing the assumption of liability notice is a statutory requirement to be completed 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:	Not required
Recommendation:	Approval
Date:	12 September 2025
Earliest date for decision:	16 July 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	12.9.25