

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	242543
Site Address:	79 Clares Green Road, Spencers Wood, Wokingham, RG7 1DU
Expiry Date:	30 May 2025
Site Visit Date:	22 November 2024
Proposal: Full application for the proposed change of use of the dwelling to small Children's care home (Use Class C2).	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
Scale and Location of Development Proposals – Modest Development Location (Spencers Wood)
Nuclear Consultation Zone
Landscape Character Assessment Area
SSSI Impact Risk Zones
Thames Basin Heaths SPA Mitigation Zones
Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone Minor – Red

PLANNING POLICY

National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
Core Strategy (CS)	CP1 – Sustainable Development CP2 – Inclusive Communities CP3 – General Principles for Development 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
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 – Development Limits CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC06 – Noise CC07 – Parking TB04 – Development in vicinity of Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE), Burghfield TB05 – Housing Mix TB09 – Residential Accommodation for Vulnerable Groups TB21 – Landscape Character TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Joint Minerals	DM1 - Sustainable Development DM2 - Climate Change – Mitigation and Adaptation

and Waste Plan (JMWP)	DM3 - Protection of Habitats and Species DM4 - Protection of Designated Landscape DM9 - Protecting Health, Safety and Amenity
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document A Vision for Our Villages: Ryeish Green, Spencers Wood, Three Mile Cross

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
17118	Single storey addition to provide new bedroom, dressing room and toilet, also new hallway.	Approved 13/04/2025
100276	Proposed erection of part two storey, part single storey side/rear extension including extension of first floor rear dormer, plus first floor front extension and single storey side extension to form garage. Demolition of existing side extension.	Approved 30/11/2010
100854	Proposed erection of part two storey, part single storey side/rear extension including extension of first floor rear dormer, plus first floor front extension and single storey side extension to form garage. Demolition of existing side extension.	Refused 18/05/2010
111074	Application for submission of details to comply with condition 6 of planning consent F/2010/2417 as follows: 6: Soft landscaping proposal.	Approved 19/07/2011

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Environmental Health – No objection subject to conditions.
Officer comments: This is discussed within the 'Neighbouring Amenity' section of the main report.

WBC Highways – No objection subject to conditions.
Officer comments: This is discussed within the 'Highway Access & Parking Provision' section of the main report.

WBC Emergency Planning – No objection subject to conditions.

External

Office for Nuclear Regulation – No objection subject to conditions
West Berks Emergency Planning Officer – No objection subject to conditions
AWE Burghfield – No objection subject to conditions

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	No comments received
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	Three neighbours have commented on this application and their comments are summarised below: • The proposal will lead to an increase in noise during and after construction. <i>Officer comments: This will be assessed within the 'Neighbouring Amenity' section of the main report.</i> • The proposal will lead to an increase in traffic and potential parking issues. <i>Officer comments: This will be assessed within the 'Highway Access & Parking Provision' section of the main report.</i> • This may impact on property values. <i>Officer comments: Not a material planning consideration.</i> • Staffing levels and the number of children residing at the property is unclear. <i>Officer comments: It is proposed that there would be a maximum of four children living on site, and the intention is for staffing levels to maintain a staff-to-child ratio of 1:2.</i> • This will impact on the privacy of neighbouring properties. <i>Officer comments: This will be assessed within the 'Neighbouring Amenity' section of the main report.</i>

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site is located within a pre-dominantly residential area of Spencers Wood. The site features a chalet style bungalow that has adequate of space for off-street parking and it also features a private rear garden.

Description of Development:

This application seeks permission to change the use of the property from use Class C3 (dwellinghouse) to C2 (residential institution). There would be no physical external or structural changes to the property. Up to four children would live at the house and the carers would work on a rota basis with there always being two full-time members of staff on-site. The staffing level is assessed on the risks and needs of the children, with aims of focusing on low-risk children in order to maintain a staff-to-child ratio of 1:2.

Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) Burghfield – DEPZ:

Policy TB04 of the MDD allows development in the vicinity of the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) at Burghfield, but only where it can be demonstrated by the applicant that the increase in the number of people living at the site can be safely accommodated with regards to the needs of "Blue light" services and the emergency off-site plan for the AWE.

The application site is located within the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ) of AWE Burghfield. The Council's Emergency Planning Manager, West Berks' Emergency Planning Officer, and the Officer for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) were consulted on this application. Initial comments from these consultees were negative as no information had been submitted regarding the AWE or the DEPZ. However, during the planning application process, Emergency Plans have been prepared and submitted by the applicant to demonstrate that those living on the site can be safely accommodated within the emergency off-site plan for the AWE.

The Council's Emergency Planning Officer is satisfied with the principles outlined within the submitted Emergency Plans. However, they have requested further information with regards to the 'twinning arrangement' referred to in section 7.3 of the submitted 'Emergency Shelter in Place and Evacuation Plan'. To allow the application to be determined, the Council's Emergency Planning Officer is satisfied that this additional information can be secured via condition. Accordingly, this condition is recommended.

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 settlement limits and as such the development should be acceptable providing that it complies with the principles stated in the Core Strategy. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area in which it is located and must be of high quality design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land uses and occupiers. Policy CP2 of the Core Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for proposals that address the requirements of children, including the co-ordination of services to meet their needs.

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.

Whilst the proposed C2 use would result in the loss of a residential dwelling, the primary nature of the proposed use would be quasi-residential and as such it is considered acceptable due to the existing residential form in the directly local area. As mentioned, there would be no physical changes to the building in terms of an extension or external works, so there would be no harm in regards to the character of the area.

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.

As no external works are proposed to the property, there are no concerns relating to overbearing, overlooking or loss of light.

With regards to potential noise and disturbance it is unlikely that the proposal would result in any significant increases on the site compared to that of a typical C3 residential use. However, any unacceptable or antisocial noise or disturbances should be suitably managed by on site staff, or, if they persisted, could be suitably controlled via Environmental Health legislation. The anticipation of such unlikely events is not something that would warrant further assessment from a planning perspective.

The Council's Environmental Health Officer was consulted on this application. The Environmental Health Officer's only concern was if noise levels are increased over and above what would be normally expected from a family home. As music is often the most intrusive, the Environmental Health Officer recommended a music specific noise condition requiring music noise to not be audible from outside of the boundary of the property. However, as stated above, it is unlikely that noise would significantly exceed that of a typical C3 residential use and therefore it is not considered necessary or reasonable to impose a music noise condition. Accordingly, the condition is not recommended.

Residential Amenity Space:

The proposed change of use would not impact upon the level of amenity space on the site.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

The Council's Highways Officer was consulted on this application, and they are satisfied that the proposed level of parking and the existing access will be acceptable to serve the proposed use. The level of use is comparable to a standard dwelling, and therefore the proposal is not considered to have a significant impact upon the highway network.

A condition was recommended for secure and covered cycle storage. The submitted Site Plan (TI-BCH001-002) identifies an existing garden shed and an existing secure cycle storage located at the bottom of the rear garden. It is therefore considered unnecessary and unreasonable to attach a pre-commencement condition for further details of cycle storage and access to it. Accordingly, this condition is not attached. However, a condition is recommended to ensure that there shall be no more than four children registered as residing at the property at any one time. This is to ensure that a sufficient level of staff parking equates to the needs of child care provision on site.

Ecology:

The application site is located within an area that holds the potential to support bat roosts, and it is within a red impact risk zone for great crested newts. However, as no physical changes are proposed to the property, it is not considered that the proposal would impact upon protected species.

Conclusion:

For the reasons stated above, the proposal is acceptable in local plan policy terms and therefore is recommended for approval.

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.

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.

RECOMMENDATION**Conditions agreed:**

Yes

Recommendation:

Approve

Date:

30 May 2025

Earliest date for decision:

8 November 2024

**Recommendation
agreed by:
(Authorised Officer)****Date:**

30/05/25