

Wokingham Baptist Church
Milton Road
Wokingham
RG40 1DE

Development Management
Wokingham Borough Council
Shute End
Wokingham
RG40 1BN

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find enclosed a full planning application submitted on behalf of Wokingham Baptist Church for alterations to the atrium roof at Milton Road, Wokingham RG40 1DE.

Supporting documents submitted with this covering letter:

- Completed application forms and ownership certificates.
- Correct Planning fee
- Drawings:
 - Location Plan
 - 06_003_000 - Proposed Site Plan (April 2024)
 - 06_111_00 – Proposed Roof Plan (April 2024)
 - 06_121_00 – Proposed North Elevation (April 2024)
 - 06_130_00 – Proposed Detailed Cross Section (April 2024)
 - 06_131_00 – Proposed New Roof Construction (April 2024)
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- Condition note and photographic evidence documenting degradation of the internal barrel roof.
- GS Ecology Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (ECO3755) dated 16 May 2025.
- Certificate of Authorisation – Listed Buildings Advisory Committee of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, and the Baptist Union of Wales. (Dated 6th November 2025)
- Letter from Wokingham Borough Council (Dated 13th November 2025)
- This covering letter incorporating a combined Planning, Heritage, Design and Access Statement.

Listed Building Consent

This submission is an application for planning permission only. Listed Building Consent is not being sought from the Local Planning Authority because Wokingham Baptist Church is an active place of worship and falls within the statutory Ecclesiastical Exemption. Under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the Exemption Orders made under that Act, certain denominations, including the Baptist Union of Great Britain, use their own internal approval procedures instead of a council-issued Listed Building Consent.

Given the above, an application was submitted to Wokingham Borough Council on 8th August 2025 (ref. 251910) to confirm that the proposed works fall within the scope of the Ecclesiastical Exemption. A letter from Wokingham Borough Council was received on 13th November 2025, confirming that listed building consent from the Local Planning Authority is not required for these works.

The Certificate of Authorisation (LBAC ref.462) and the letter from Wokingham Borough Council have been submitted to accompany this full planning application.

Given the above, this planning application seeks full planning consent only for the aspects of the works that require planning consent.

Site and Surroundings

The application site comprises Wokingham Baptist Church and its immediate churchyard on Milton Road, positioned at the southern end of Wokingham town centre. The church is a nineteenth century, Grade II-listed building located on the north-eastern side of Milton Road. The surrounding area is predominantly residential, with a mix of two-storey houses, outbuildings and garden plots immediately adjoining the churchyard.

The site lies entirely within the Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area, with the rear of the plot forming part of the Conservation Area boundary. The site and surrounding area are identified in the Council's policies as part of the Wokingham Major Development Location (Core Policy CP9). The local landscape is classified in the Council's 2019 Landscape Character Assessment as the Wokingham-Winnersh "settled and farmed clay" character area, which the Council records as having relatively low landscape sensitivity in the immediate context. Two Tree Preservation Orders cover mature trees within the churchyard.

The property lies within a designated Archaeological Area and is shown as lying within a potentially contaminated land zone. It also falls inside the Surface Water Emm Brook Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (2021) and within the 7 km Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area mitigation zone. The site is not at risk from fluvial or surface water flooding according to current flood risk records.

There are no other relevant planning constraints affecting the application site.

Proposal

Planning permission is sought for internal and external works to the existing modern glazed barrel roof, a modern addition, linking the original building to a modern addition.

The proposal seeks the replacement of approximately two thirds of the rear section of the existing barrel-vaulted atrium roof, with a new flat roof, including the installation of a centrally located flat rooflight measuring approximately 1200mm by 1200mm to provide natural light into the existing stairwell. The flat roof is proposed to comprise of single-ply waterproofing with timber supports and a painted plywood soffit.

The proposal also seeks permission for the replacement of an existing Velux, with a top-hung, fully opening rooflight to provide safe roof access for maintenance. The new rooflight will be double glazed and is proposed to be set on a low plinth in order to ensure it sits discreetly within the new roof plane. The replacement window will match, where possible, the width and location of the existing window and will be fitted with fixed access steps and handrail to provide safe access out onto the roof for easy maintenance.

The front one third of the barrel roof, which is visible from the public realm when looking at the front elevation of the building is to be retained. As a result, the building's external form and visual appearance is preserved.

Principle of Development

The application site lies within the Wokingham Major Development Location (Core Policy CP9), where the principle of development is generally supported subject to compliance with other relevant policies. In turn, Policy CC01 of the Managing Development Deliver (MDD) Local Plan confirms that applications that accord with the Local Development Plan will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The proposal seeks a minor alteration to an existing building within Wokingham Town Centre. The proposals are in accordance with the criteria set out in Policy CP3, therefore, in principle, the development, located within the settlement limits, is acceptable.

Heritage

Policy TB24 states that designated heritage assets should be conserved or where possible enhances as a result of development. This application is for works to a Grade II listed building located within Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area.

As the application does not require Listed Building Consent, only the impact on the Conservation Area is required to be assessed as part of this planning application.

The proposals have been designed to conserve the visual appearance of the Grade II listed building. The section of barrel roof that is visible when look at the front elevation of the church is proposed to be retained, ensuring that the external appearance of the and visual character of the church when viewed from Milton Road remains materially unchanged.

The building, at present, suffers from leaks as a result of lack of access to the existing barrel roof for maintenance purposes. The works will enable future repairs, ensuring that going forward, both modern additions and elements of the significance of the asset can my conserved.

The proposed area of flat roof is located centrally in the roofscape, such that the external appearance of the building appears predominantly unchanged. The proposed new section of flat roof will only be partially visible on the north elevation behind the sloped roof of the most northern part of the building.

In summary, the proposed works would not result in the loss of any original fabric of the building given it relates solely to the modern link extension. As such there would be no harm to the significance of the heritage asset. The proposal will enable the continued viable use of the building as a functioning place of worship and ensuring the future preservation of the heritage assets through improved access for maintenance. The proposal conserves the significance of the both the listed building and the surrounding conservation area. The scheme will also ensure the preservation of the Listed Building, in compliance with Policy TB24 of the Local Development Plan. The application is therefore in accordance with National and Local Planning Policy.

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.

As aforementioned the works proposed to the building would not be visible from the public realm on Milton Road due to being sat behind a third of the retained barrel roof. The glimpsed views of the proposed flat roof that may be afforded when look at the northern elevation of the building are nominal and will preserve the existing character and appearance of the local area.

The works are nominal, and the proposed roof changes are in keeping with the design and scale of the existing building. There are no proposed alterations to the overall height or footprint of the building. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Policy CP3.

Neighbouring Amenity

Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy aims to protect neighbouring amenity. The proposed alterations to the roofscape, and location of the replacement Velux window would not result in any adverse impacts to neighbouring properties.

Trees, Landscaping and Ecology

Policy CP7 states that development should not harm Local Wildlife Sites or harm habitats or species of principle importance.

A Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment has been submitted to accompany this planning application. It confirms that the atrium and the roof areas proposed for alteration are unsuitable for roosting and showed no signs of bat activity. The ecologist concluded that the only known roosts in the main loft will be unaffected by the proposed works and that no further bat surveys are required in relation to this scheme. The application includes the full report, and the proposed works will be implemented in accordance with any reasonable recommendations.

No works are proposed that would impact any existing trees or landscaping. As such the proposal is in accordance with Policy CC03 and TB23 of the MMD and Policy SP7 of the Core Strategy. The application is also in accordance with national planning policy.

Conclusion

The proposed roof alterations are necessary and proportionate that result in the long-term conservation of the Grade II Listed Building. The design is sympathetic to the buildings heritage, improves the buildings functionality and safety when undertaking future maintenance.

The application is submitted alongside the LBAC Certificate of Authorisation confirming that Listed Building Consent from the Local Planning Authority is not required, and the aspects of the works which would normally require listed building consent are acceptable, such that this application only request planning consent for the aspects which require full planning permission.

For correspondence and site access arrangement, please contact Mr Tim Clarke at clarktim403@gmail.com. We look forward to confirmation the application has been validated.

Yours faithfully,

On behalf of Wokingham Baptist Church