TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

MR DAVE MEAKIN

PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

SPRINGFIELDS
TROWES LANE
SWALLOWFIELD
BERKS
RG7 1RN

Erection of side extension to existing barn on an existing area of hard standing for storage of maintenance equipment and machinery

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Planning, Design and Statement is submitted on behalf of Mr Dave Meakin in support of a full application for the 'Erection of a side extension to existing barn on an existing area of hard standing for storage of maintenance equipment and machinery'.

1.2 The existing barn is lawfully used as a hobby workshop for the storage and restoration of vintage vehicles, having been granted a Certificate of Lawfulness in September 2022 (LPA ref. 222305). The barn was granted permission for a side extension (north-eastern side) in September 2025 (LPA ref.251474). This has now been built and is fully operational. The current proposal is to extend the building to its south-western side to provide secure storage for the owner's grounds maintenance equipment.

1.3 The proposal is accompanied by the following consultant reports:

- Planning, Design and Access Statement – see below
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Bats) – (Urban Tree Experts)
- Great Crested Newt Assessment and Non-Licensed Method Statement (GS Ecology)

1.4 This statement is divided into the following sections:

- Site and Surroundings
- Site History
- Planning Policy Context
- The Planning Application
- Design and Access
- Summary and Conclusions

1.5 This statement will set out how the proposal would not result in any significant harm the character and appearance of the countryside and that it would be appropriate in terms of its use which is fundamentally different to the earlier proposal refused by the Council in 2023 (LPA ref.230568). It will also demonstrate that the proposal would not have any significant adverse effect on the ecology of the site; flooding/drainage; trees; and other landscape features. It will be concluded that the proposal is consistent with the objectives of Local and National Planning Policy (updated NPPF 2026).

2 SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

2.1 The application site is located on the south-western side of Trowes Lane, Swallowfield. The site lies to the rear of Springfield which is a large two storey detached dwelling with associated outbuildings in the same ownership as the application site.

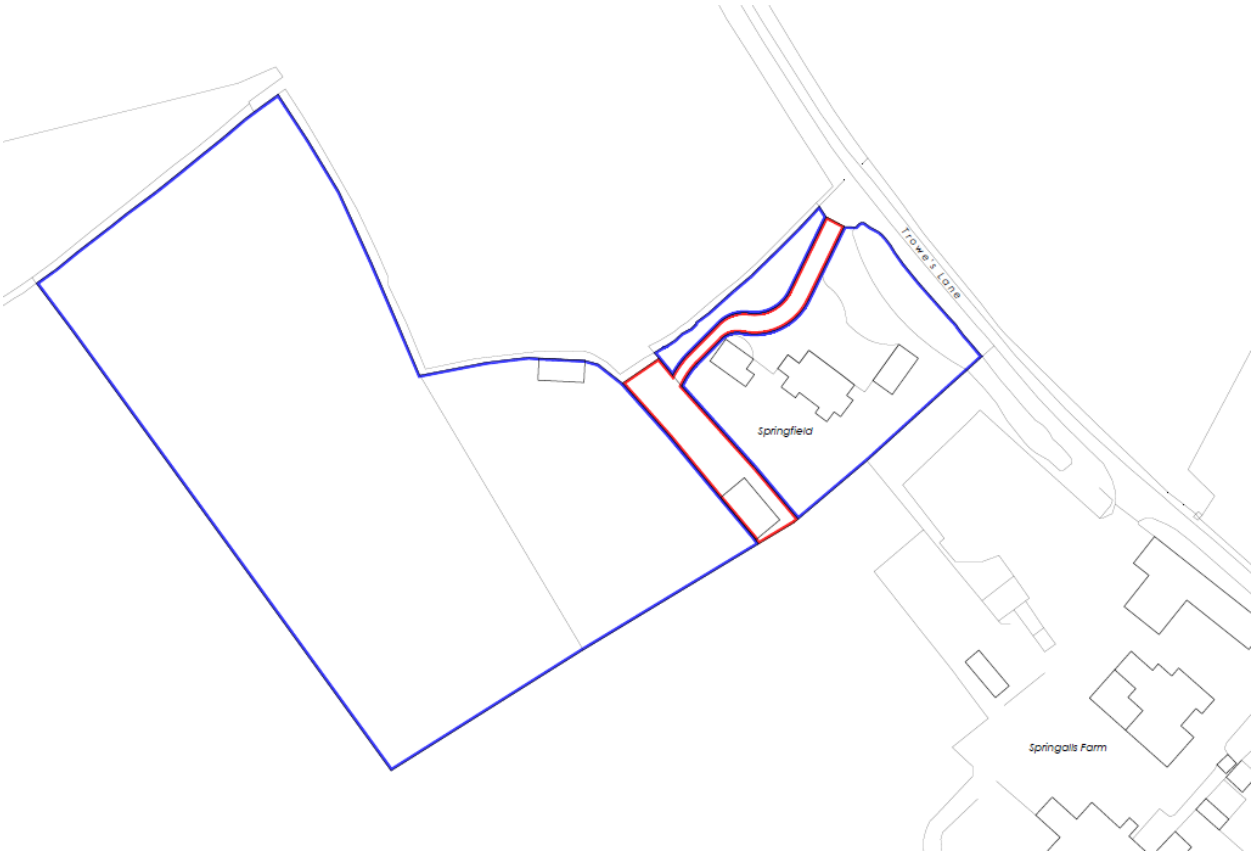
2.2 The existing barn is accessed from Trowes Lane via the same point of access as the existing dwelling. There is an existing area of hard standing to the front of the barn and on its south-western side. The existing barn is positioned to the rear of Springfields and is set well back from Trowes Lane. It is generally well screened by existing buildings and planting. An extension approved in September 2025 has now been constructed to the north-eastern side of the barn to house storage for the owners hobby use.

Extract from Google Maps showing location of the site



2.3 The site is surrounded by open land to the west which is generally flat and enclosed by hedgerows. This area of the applicant's ownership amounts to over 3.5 acres of land including boundary ditches and which requires regular maintenance (see blue land below to the west of the barn). To the south-east of the site are a number of large commercial buildings with associated hard standing associated with Springalls Farm.

Site location plan



2.4 The site is located outside the settlement boundary within land defined as being 'Countryside' in the Proposals Map. The site is not within a conservation area and the adjacent dwelling is not Statutorily listed. The site falls within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore within an area of low flood risk.

3 SITE HISTORY

3.1 The site has been the subject of the following applications:

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 hard standing utilised for the storage of old vehicles. Granted 29.09.2022.

230568 – Full application for the change of use of land to facilitate the provision of hard standing and the erection of 2no. side extensions to the existing barn, plus alterations to fenestration (Part retrospective). Refused 25.05.2023.

251474 – Full application for the proposed erection of a side extension to existing barn for storage and restoration of vintage vehicles. Granted 12.09.2025.

Approved site plan to application ref.251474



4 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

i) National Planning Policy Framework (2026)

4.1 By way of background, the introduction to the Framework repeats the planning law position (Section 38(6) of the P&CPA 2004) that *'…applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The national decision-making policies in this Framework are a material consideration in making these decisions and should be read alongside these policies in the development plan'* (paragraph 3). It is acknowledged that the NPPF is a material consideration of '*critical importance'.*

4.2 Annex A states that development plan policies (or parts of those policies) which are materially inconstant with national decision-making policies in the Framework should be given very limited weight.

4.3 DP3: Key principles for well-designed places – Staes that development proposals should respond to their context so that they integrate with and enhance their surroundings.

4.4 S3: Presumption in favour of sustainable development - Confirms that decisions on development proposals should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Outside settlements, this means applying Policy S5.

4.5 S5: Principle of development outside settlements – States that only certain forms of development should be approved outside of settlements. These should be approved, unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects when assessed against the Framework. Paragraph 1.(c.) confirms that the following is one of the exceptions that benefit from the policy:

> *'The reuse, extension, alteration or replacement of an existing building, provided that the existing building is of permanent and substantial construction, is lawful in planning terms, and any extension or alteration will not result in a disproportionate increase in size compared to the existing building'.*

4.6 Footnote 25 confirms that the 'existing building' is to be assed as the property as existing on the date of the publication of the Framework (i.e. August 2026).

ii) The Development Plan

Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010) (CS)

4.7 Policy CP1 (Sustainable Development) requires that a number of criteria are met. These include maintaining or enhancing the high quality of the environment; providing attractive, functional, accessible, safe, secure and adaptable schemes; demonstrate how they support opportunities for reducing the need to travel particularly by the car; and contribute towards reaching zero – carbon development as soon as possible.

4.8 Policy CP3 (General Principles for Development) requires, amongst other matters, that new development is of an appropriate scale, mass, activity, built form, height, materials, character and design quality. Proposals should not adversely affect the amenities of neighbouring land uses. It also states that proposals should have no detrimental impact upon important ecological, heritage, landscaping or geological features or water courses.

4.9 Policy CP11 (Proposals outside of Development Limits (including Countryside). The policy states that 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 where they meet certain criteria, including:

- 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
- It does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings.

Wokingham Borough Managing DPD (2014) (MDD Local Plan)

4.10 Policy CC01 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development) states that there will be a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Planning applications that accord with policies in the Development Plan will be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

4.11 Policy CC03 (Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping) sets out the Council's requirements for green infrastructure, trees and landscaping.

4.12 Policy TB21 (Landscape Character). States that proposals shall retain or enhance the condition, character and features that contribute to the landscape.

iii) Supplementary Planning Guidance

Wokingham Borough Design Guide

4.13 R1 – Requires that development contribute positively towards and be compatible with the historic or underlying character and quality of the local area.

4.14 RD5 – New development in rural areas should respond to the typical forms of buildings in the village or locality.

4.15 RD6 - The elevations of new buildings must be well composed, well-proportioned and well detailed.

4.16 RD7 – New buildings should respond to the materials, details and colours that may be distinctive to a locality.





[redacted]



5.3 As stated above, the site is within the countryside where CS Policy CP11 aims to protect the separate identity of settlements and maintain the quality of the environment. The main issue is therefore considered to be the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the surrounding countryside.

5.4 Material to the consideration of the proposal's acceptability is the recent update to the NPPF (2026) which now provides explicit support under policy S5 for extensions to buildings that are permanent and lawful. This is subject to the increase not being considered as disproportionate and the benefits not being 'substantially' outweighed by any adverse impacts.

5.5 The term 'disproportionate' is not defined in the Framework. In addition, it states that the existing building is to be considered as that present on the site when the Framework was published (i.e. August 2026). This is irrespective of whether the extension would be in the same use as the host building or otherwise. The original

barn plus its extension built in 2025 must therefore collectively be considered as the 'existing building' for the purposes of assessing the proposal.

i) Character and appearance, including the effect on the surrounding countryside and landscape

5.6 The proposal is for a side extension to the existing barn. It would be 5.6m wide and 13.8m deep (equivalent to that of the existing building). It would have a shallow mono pitch roof which would sit below the eave's height of the existing building and would therefore appear subservient to it in the same vein as the 2025 permission on the opposing side elevation. The extension would have a maximum height of about 4.4m and an eaves height of 3.6m. The proposed extension is well designed and is in keeping with the main barn in terms of appearance and materials which would match those of the existing building. The proposal therefore complies with the design requirements of CS Policies CP1 and CP3.

5.7 As stated above, the size and scale of the proposed extension is now required to be assessed under NPPF policy S5 which includes the 2025 extension as part of the existing building. There is no reference to the 'original' building within the NPPF assessment. The single extension now proposed has a floor area of 77.3m2 and a volume of 231.9m3. This would result in the building having a total floor area of 231.9m2 and a volume of 1105m3. This is illustrated in the Table below:

	Existing Barn (August 2026)	Proposed increase	Total
Floor space	154.6m2	77.3m2	231.9m2 (49.9% uplift)
Volume	741m3	364m3	1105m3 (49.1% uplift)

5.8 The extension proposed is on an area of existing loose stone material where the agricultural equipment is currently stored.

5.9 The earlier officer report (251474) stated that only criteria 1 and 2 of Policy CP11 were relevant. Whilst there are doubts that CP11 should still be afforded the same weight given its inconsistency with the Framework, it is clear that this proposal is compliant in the following way:

1. The proposed extension would be used to store equipment and machinery to maintain the adjacent field, including the boundary ditches which interlink with adjoining land. It would therefore be to house machinery associated with a sustainable rural enterprise. It is more sustainable to retain the equipment on site than repeatedly hiring the same equipment with all of the additional traffic movements that this would generate.

2. It does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings. Clearly there is a need for the machinery/equipment and secure storage to protect the machinery from being stolen and weathering. Attaching it to the existing barn is seen as being more compliant in terms of expansion away from existing development than an independent building for storage in the adjacent 3.5 acre field.

5.10 The proposed extension would not therefore have any significant adverse effect on the visual amenity, character and appearance of the area and would maintain the separate identity of settlements.

5.11 In respect to policy S5 of the NPPF the following tests are relevant:

- Would the benefits of approval be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the Framework?

- Would the proposal result in a disproportionate increase in size compared to the existing building?

5.12 As stated above, there are substantial benefits to providing space to securely store machinery and equipment to maintain the 3.5 acres of open land. There are numerous ditches that require regular maintenance and there are real fears that the machinery could be stolen or subject to harmful weathering left unprotected. In terms of the size of the increase, both in terms of volume and floor area, the increase is below 50% which can be considered to be proportionate given that it would maintain a level of subservience to the existing structure with a lower roof and eaves height.

5.13 It is therefore concluded that the proposed extension to the barn would not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings and that is falls within the definition of a sustainable rural enterprise. The extension will provide for demonstrable benefits which would not be substantially outweighed by adverse effects and the increase to the existing building is not disproportionate. Accordingly, the proposal complies with the objectives of CS Policies CP1, CP3 and CP11 which seek to protect the countryside from inappropriate development and/or encroachment. It would also accord with Policies CC03 and TB21 of the MDD Local Plan which promote the protection of the green infrastructure of the Borough. There would also be no conflict with NPPF policy S5.

ii) Amenity

5.14 The extension to the barn is to accommodate the owner's machinery required to maintain the land and ditches which are numerous. The extension would not impact upon the amenities of the existing occupants of Springfields who are also the applicants. The extension would not be readily visible from the dwelling's garden area and there are no other residential dwellings close to the site. The proposal would not therefore raise any amenity issues and thus would comply with Policy CP3 of the CS insofar as it seeks to protect the amenity of existing and future users.

iii) Access and Parking

5.15 The application does not propose any changes to the existing access arrangement onto Trowes Lane. The proposed extension would not result in any material

intensification of vehicle movements to and from the site as the machinery is already in situ.

iv) Landscape and Trees

5.16 The proposed extension would not have any impact on existing hedges or other landscape features. Therefore, the landscape character of the site would be unaffected by the proposal, and the proposal complies with MDD Local Plan Policy TB21 in this regard. Additional native tree planting is proposed to the south west of the side elevation which will filter views of the proposed extension which would in any event be read against the backdrop of the current structure.

v) Ecology

5.17 The application is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Bats). An internal and external inspection of the building was undertaken. The appraisal concludes that there was no evidence of bats (current or historically) within the workshop. The building is in good condition, however due to the construction materials, poor thermal properties and high levels of disturbance, the building has no potential to support roosting bats. No further surveys were required and there are no grounds to update the report given that the building has not changed since 2023 or 2025.

5.18 A Great Crested Newt Assessment and Non-Licensed Method Statement has been provided. Its summary is as follows:

There is a large pond at the north eastern boundary of the site - located approximately 35m from the annex building to be demolished - The pond is subdivided by a concrete wall and was assessed as two ponds (Ponds 1a and 1b).

The pond has a HSI score of "Poor" and it very unlikely that it will host GCN.

Given: 1) the small amount of land of land within the works footprint – no more than 100m2 (2) the poor suitability of the habitats to be affected by the proposals – building and hardstanding and 3) the fact that the nearby pond(s) are unlikely to host

GCN,- it is considered highly unlikely that GCN will be affected by the proposals. The site will therefore not need to be registered under the Naturespace District Licence or a conventional licence.

If the method statement detailed in this report is followed this impact will be reduced further'.

5.19 This report and method statement was submitted with the 2025 application when it was determined as follows in the officer report:

> *'The applicant has provided a Great Crested Newt Assessment & Non-Licensed Method Statement (G S Ecology, February 2023) prepared for a different planning application at the same site. This report includes an assessment of the suitability of 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.'*

5.20 The Council's ecologist also considered the sparse vegetation and existing use to store heavy machinery and concluded that the potential for GCN's was 'very low'. The ecologist was therefore satisfied with the precautionary measures recommended by the applicant's ecologist. This application commits to the same precautionary approach agreed previously and therefore there are no grounds to require an updated report.

vi) <u>Flooding and drainage</u>

5.21 The site is within Flood Zone 1 so is at a low risk of flooding. There would therefore be no conflict with Policy CC09 of the Local Plan in this regard.

6 DESIGN AND ACCESS

a) Use and Amount

6.1 The proposal is for an extension to an existing barn which is used by the applicant in connection with his personal hobby, which involves the restoration and storage of vintage HGV vehicles. The proposed extension would have a floor area of 77.3m2 and a volume of 231.9m3 and would be used to accommodate the owner's maintenance equipment comprising of a digger, topper and dumper. The land to the west, which comprises of open fields and ditches (circa 3.5 acres) requires regular maintenance and there is currently no storage available to keep the machinery secure and free from weathering.

b) Layout

6.2 The proposed extension would be located on the south-western side of the building on an existing area of loose stone. Encroachment into the open countryside as a result of the proposal will be minimal and, in any event, the floorspace generated would be directly used to maintained the land immediately adjacent. The existing access and parking arrangements would be maintained.

c) Scale

6.3 The scale, form and height of the proposed extension would be appropriate and would ensure that it would be subservient in appearance to the existing building.

(d) Appearance

6.4 The proposed extension would have a shallow mono pitch roof and would reflect the design and appearance of the existing barn. It would be constructed in materials to match the exiting building.

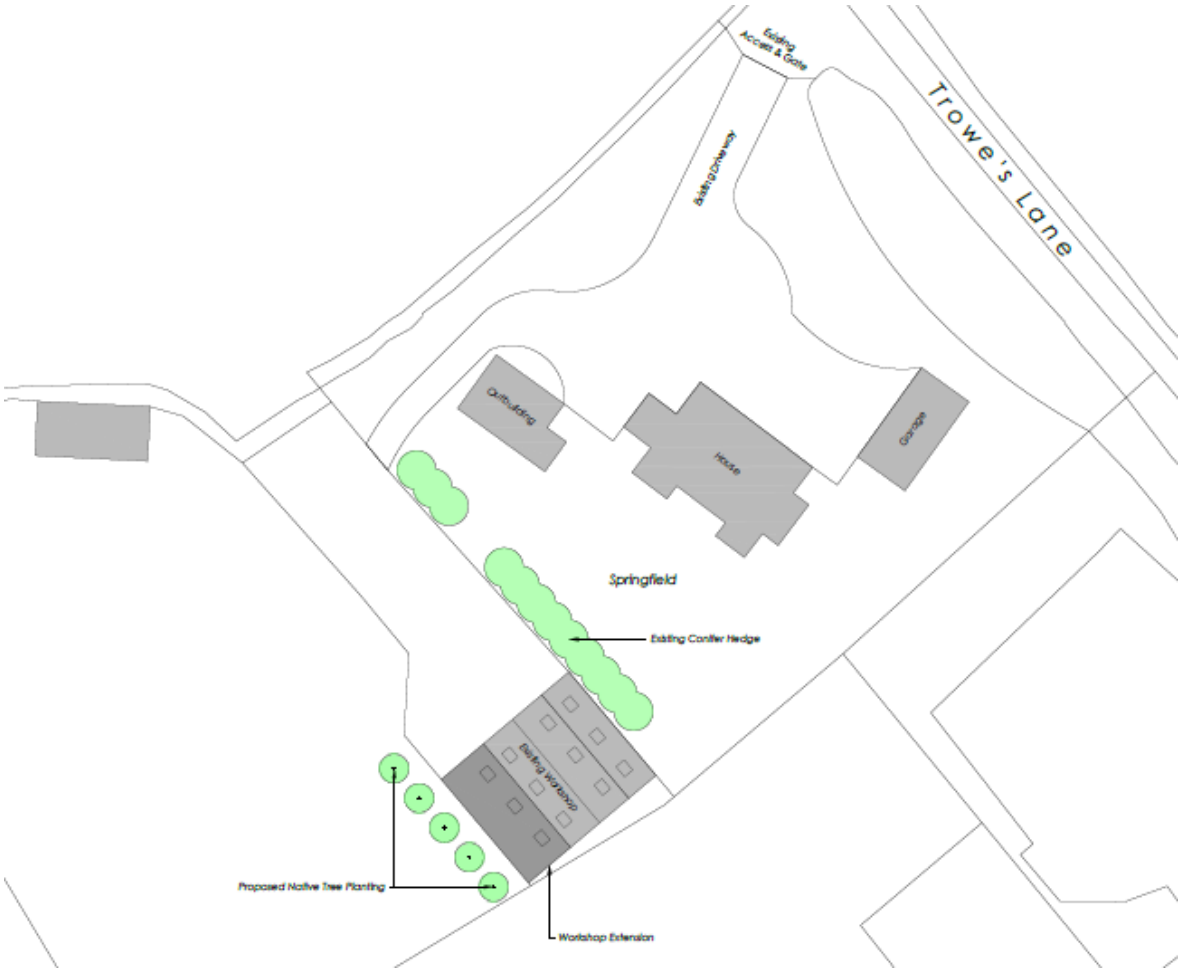
d) Landscaping and Trees

6.5 The proposal would not have any adverse effect on existing landscaping, trees or the biodiversity of the site. The existing land is hardsurfaced with loose stone and there are no trees within the site itself. Additional native planting is proposed alongside the south western flank elevation of the extension.

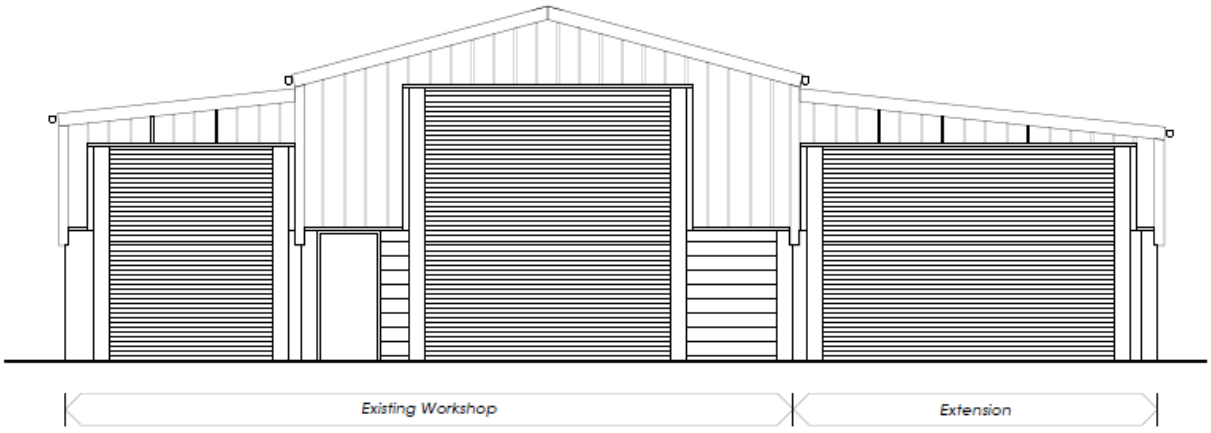
e) Access and Parking

6.6 No changes to the existing access to Trowes Lane are proposed and parking provision on the site will remain unaltered. The proposal would not lead to any material increase in vehicle movements to and from the site.

Proposed site layout



Proposed front elevation



Front Elevation - Northwest

7 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1 The application should be supported for the following reasons:

i) The proposal is for an extension to an existing barn which is lawfully used by the applicant in connection with his personal hobby. It is of permanent and substantial construction. The proposed extension would provide much needed space for the storage of machinery used to maintain the owner's adjoining fields and boundary ditches. The proposal meets the first two paragraphs of Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy and policy S5 of the NPPF as the increase in size is not disproportionate and the benefits are not substantially outweighed by any adverse effects.

ii) The proposed extension to the barn would be on an existing area of hard standing (loose stone) and physically attached to an existing building as opposed to being a detached building within the adjoining field. It would therefore not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings. Accordingly, the proposal would have no significant adverse effect on the character and appearance of the countryside. The proposal therefore complies with the objectives of CS Policies CP1, CP3 and CP11 which seek to protect the countryside from inappropriate development and/or encroachment.

iii) The proposed extension is well designed and is in keeping with and subservient to the main barn. Materials would match those of the existing building. The proposal therefore complies with the design requirements of CS Policies CP1 and CP3.

iv) The barn is used by the owner and occupier of the adjacent dwelling Springfield for an existing hobby. The proposed extension is some distance away from the dwelling itself and is on the opposing elevation facing the field. There are no other residential dwellings close to the site. The proposal would not therefore raise any amenity issues.

v) No alterations are proposed to the existing highway and parking arrangements. The proposal would not result in any material intensification of vehicle movements to and from the site.

vi) The proposal would not adversely affect any trees or other natural features of merit.

vii) The application is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Bats) and a Great Crested Newt Assessment and Non-Licensed Method Statement which collectively demonstrate that no harm to the ecology of the site would occur as a result of the proposal. There are no grounds to change the opinion reached under the 2025 permission in this regard.