



Statement to Accompany Full Planning Application

Autumn House, Milley Lane, Hare Hatch

March 2025

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This statement has been prepared to support an application for full planning permission at Autumn House, Milley Lane Hare Hatch. The purpose of this Statement is to assist the allocated Planning Officer by providing a comprehensive description of the proposed development and an assessment of the scheme against relevant planning policy, guidance and material considerations.
- 1.2 The application seeks full planning permission to retain the existing office/staff welfare building alongside the development approved under planning application reference 212446. The office/staff welfare building is proposed to be used as a gardener's workshop and store and would be incidental to the dwelling approved under planning application reference 212446. The application was approved on the 23rd October 2023 under redetermined appeal reference APP/X0360/W/21/3289621 RD and was subsequently varied under S73 application reference 240108.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION & DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1 The application site comprises land that was known as The Bird Gardens and is located on the north side of Milley Lane, Hare Hatch. The site is now referred to as Autumn House and work has begun on land within the blue line, as indicated on the site location plan, to commence the implementation of the planning permission for the new dwelling. The site falls within the built confines of the settlement of Hare Hatch which comprises a low density collection of buildings in residential, office, retail and industrial land uses.
- 2.2 The application site comprises 37.5 sq metres and contains an existing single storey brick built building that was formerly used as a staff welfare/office building in connection with the previous use of the land as a private zoo. The application building is a small, modern, brick built, single storey building located in the south western corner of the wider site. It is of simple form and has a hipped and peg tiled roof.
- 2.3 The wider site comprises 1.5 hectares and slopes gently towards the north west and formerly formed part of the residential land associated with the Grade II Listed dwelling house “The Old House” which is located to the west of the site. The full site falls within two distinct parts. The northern part of the site stretches to the A4/Bath Road and the southern part of the site is occupied by most of the built form associated with the former private zoo.
- 2.4 The northern part of the application site was formerly occupied by a long linear, timber shed building, a large framed aviary, and associated area of hardstanding that runs parallel to the site’s eastern boundary. A former man-made pond is located in the north western corner of the site. The remainder of the northern part of the site was otherwise occupied by planting which has become unmanaged.
- 2.5 A new vehicle access which will eventually serve Autumn House has been constructed as approved on the 19th September 2019 under planning application reference 191566 and some work has begun to implement the approved scheme.
- 2.6 The wider site is bounded to the east by land associated with the now closed Berkshire Gardener “Garden Village”. To the west, the site is bounded by the ornamental gardens/parkland associated with The Old House. The site is bounded to the south by Milley Lane beyond which is Hill House, another Grade II Listed dwelling house, and the A4 bounds the northern boundary of the application site.
- 2.7 In terms of policy designations the application site is located within the Green Belt, Countryside and an Area of Special Character. The site is located in Flood Zone 1 and is at low risk of surface water flooding.

2.8 The planning application seeks full planning permission for the retention of the aforementioned office/staff welfare building for use as a gardener's workshop/store which will be incidental to the dwelling house approved under planning application reference 212446. Section 3 below provides an assessment of the proposed development against relevant planning policy and material considerations.

3.0 PLANNING POLICY OVERVIEW & ANALYSIS

- 3.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning decisions to be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF provides that decisions should apply the presumption of sustainable development. For decision taking this means approving development proposals that accord with an up to date development plan without delay or where the policies that are the most important for determining the planning application are out of date, granting permission except where the application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development or where any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly or demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the development as a whole when assessed against the policies of the NPPF.
- 3.2 The development plan comprises the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Development Plan Document (CS), adopted in 2010 and the Managing Development Delivery (MDD) Local Plan Plan adopted in 2014. Material considerations in the context of this planning application include the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Wokingham Borough Design Guide SPD.

The principle of the development

- 3.3 The principle of the wider development has been established by the approval of planning application reference 212446. (appeal reference APP/X0360/W/21/3289621 RD) and as varied by application reference 240108. It is necessary to consider if the proposed retention of the outbuilding along with the approved scheme would be acceptable in Green Belt terms.

Green Belt Matters

- 3.4 It was established in the context of redetermined appeal reference APP/X0360/W/21/3289621 RD that the relevant test of the appropriateness of the scheme in Green Belt terms is provided by NPPF (December 2024) paragraph 154 g. This was paragraph 149 g of the Sept 2023 iteration of the NPPF which was the relevant document at the time the appeal was assessed.
- 3.5 This paragraph provides that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this, where new buildings may be appropriate in the Green Belt, include *“g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use*

(excluding temporary buildings) which would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land ”.

- 3.6 The approved scheme was found to meet the criteria set by paragraph 154 g and, most importantly, not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt. It is therefore necessary to assess whether the proposed alterations to the scheme continue to “*not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt*”.
- 3.7 The following table provides an overview of the spatial impact of the proposed development on the openness of the Green Belt comparing the existing, approved and proposed arrangement and primarily considers the addition of the retained building that is proposed to be used as a gardener’s shed/store:

	Existing	Approved Scheme	% Reduction	Proposed Scheme	% Reduction
Built footprint - buildings	807.26 m2	302.5 m2	-62.53%	339 m2	-58%
Total Built footprint	2020.69 m2	302.5 m2	-85.03%	339 m2	-83.22%
Built volume - buildings	2158.72 m3	1664 m3	-22.92%	1,831.85 m3	-15.14%
Total Built volume	5601.51 m3	1664 m3	-70.29%	1,831.85 m3	-67.23%
Hardstanding	1344 m2	428.2 m2	-68.10%	590 m2	-56%

- 3.8 The table above shows that there would be a 4.53% increase in the built footprint of buildings on the site, compared to the approved arrangement, or a 1.8% increase in the footprint of built “structures” on the site. There would be a 7.78% increase in the volume of the proposed building compared to that approved or a 3.06% increase in volume of structures overall. There would be no increase in hardstanding compared to the approved scheme. These minor increases, as the table illustrates are still vast decreases compared to the existing form on site and so the scheme continues to represent a significant improvement in terms of the site’s openness in spatial terms. It cannot be said that the scheme as proposed would cause a substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.
- 3.9 The small increase in volume and footprint, as proposed, is on account of the proposed retention of the office/store that is intended to be used as a gardener's shed/store. The building is of small scale and is discreetly located within the site and so will have a negligible

impact on the visual perception of openness across the site. The proposals still will not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt and continues to comply with MDD Local Plan policy TB01 and the advice contained in the NPPF.

Heritage Issues

- 3.10 As the character, appearance and form of the development will remain largely unchanged compared to the approved scheme, the proposals will continue to preserve the setting of the nearby Grade II Listed Heritage Assets of The Old House and Hill House.
- 3.11 The site is located within an Area of Archaeological Potential. The change of use of the building does not have any potential to disturb archaeological deposits that may be present within the site. In any event condition 5 of the appeal decision letter secured a scheme of Archaeological Investigation which ultimately found that no archaeological deposits were present within the site. The development proposals therefore meet the requirements of Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as amended, MDD Local Plan policies TB24 and TB25 and the advice contained in the NPPF.

Design & appearance

- 3.12 The overall character and appearance of the scheme will remain largely unaltered and will continue to be complimentary to the building styles and form found in the site's surroundings so as to comply with Core Strategy policy CP3, the advice contained within the NPPF, and the BDG SPD. The application building is an existing building that forms part of the established character of the area. It is a small-scale building, located discreetly within the site, and when refurbished will appear as a low-key characterful addition to the scheme as a whole.

Amenity of Neighbouring & Future Occupiers

- 3.13 Due to generous separation distances and the minor nature of the changes proposed, the retention of the building will have no material impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers when compared with the approved scheme such that the development will continue to comply with the relevant requirements of Core Strategy policy CP3, MDD LP policy TB07 and the advice contained within the NPPF.

Trees, Hedges and Landscape

- 3.14 There are no trees or hedges on the application site and the non-evasive nature of the change of use poses no threat to the trees and landscaping that will form part of the wider development scheme. With the retention of the office/staff welfare building, the development will continue to comply with the development proposals accord with the objectives MDD LP

policies CC03 and TB21; the advice contained in the NPPF; or the advice contained in the BDG SPD.

Ecology

- 3.15 The proposed amendments to the scheme will have no material impact on matters relating to biodiversity and ecology. The building, in the context of the wider planning application was found to be of no ecological potential. The development proposals therefore comply with Core Strategy policy CP3, MDD LP policy TB23 and the advice contained in the NPPF.

Car Parking & Highways Matters

- 3.16 The retention of the building will have no material impact on matters relating to car parking and highways and poses no conflict with MDD Local Plan policy CC07 and the advice contained in the NPPF.

Flood Risk & Drainage

- 3.17 The retention and change of use of the existing building will have no material impact on flood risk and drainage. The development proposals subsequently comply with MDD Local Plan policies CC09 and CC10 and the advice contained in the NPPF.

Developer Contributions

- 3.18 Wokingham Borough Council has a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule. Net additional floorspace is understood to be charged at a rate of £365 per square metre (index linked). The planning application is accompanied by the relevant CIL form.

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 This statement has identified the key considerations in the determination of this planning application. This statement has shown the retention and change of use if the building to be in accordance with the relevant policies contained within the Core Strategy and the MDD Local Plan together with the advice contained within the NPPF. It is respectfully requested that planning consent is granted.