

23rd May 2025

Design and Access statement

Fox and Hounds House, Church Road, Farley Hill, RG7 1UB



Introduction

The site is situated to the east of Farley Hill and currently comprises a residential dwelling converted from the original Public House. The existing building is positioned toward the northern boundary of the plot, with a spacious gravel driveway extending along the eastern side. To the southwest lies a private garden, offering a secluded outdoor space.

The main structure is predominantly two storeys and features a traditional hipped roof. At the rear and side are single-storey sections with flat roofs, as well as an outbuilding located to the east of the main house.

The surrounding area is characterized by a mix of detached and semi-detached homes. These properties are generally set back from the road, each with driveways, contributing to a consistent and orderly streetscape. Architectural styles and materials vary among the neighbouring dwellings, creating a visually appealing and eclectic village atmosphere.

Planning History

F/2009/2222 Approval to change the existing use from a public house to a dwelling.

F/2011/0465 Withdrawn Application to separate annexe from main building as a separate residence.

F/2011/0891 Approval to separate the existing residential annexe to form new dwelling.

F/2011/2283 Approval to erect single storey rear extension.

F/2014/1268 Approval to erect part single and part two storey rear extension.

Design rationale

The existing dwelling retains much of the distinctive character of the original public house. However, the flat-roofed elements appear visually disconnected from this aesthetic. We believe these areas would benefit from the introduction of pitched roofs, which would soften their appearance and better integrate them with the overall form.

The side extension we have added a hipped roof that mirrors the main roof structure, maintaining architectural coherence. At the rear, the existing geometry presents a more complex challenge. We have intentionally designed the new roof to align squarely with the first floor, resulting in a consistent ridge line. The roof then contours at the eaves, creating a dynamic roofscape that not only adds architectural interest but also helps to reduce the visual impact on the detached rear annex.

Facing the road, we have retained a traditional tiled roof with two modest rooflights. On the side elevation, a glazed roof section is proposed to introduce natural light into the interior and to highlight the dramatic geometry of the structure.



The proposed rear extension is enclosed on three sides by existing buildings. As such, we believe it will have minimal visual or environmental impact on the surrounding countryside or neighbouring properties, and should therefore be considered appropriate in context.

The application also includes revisions to the fenestration, aiming to harmonise the rear extension's modern aesthetic with the character of the original dwelling.

The existing layout has been reconfigured to provide a modern family space at the rear with a new traditional lounge and large reception room.

Externally, the proposal includes a new area of raised decking and a sunken terrace below the existing deck, providing access to the basement. Importantly, the proposal does not include any increase in the basement's footprint.

Additionally, a new porch is proposed for the front elevation, enhancing the entrance and contributing to the overall architectural composition.

Site designations

The site contains no trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders, It is not within a conservation area, AONB or national green belt.

The site adjoins, is within the Farley Hill Wooded Sand and Gravel Hills Landscape Character Assessment (2019 & 2004).

Landscape Quality - High,

Landscape Sensitivity - Moderate,

Landscape Capacity- Limited.

The site is on the edge of a Landfill Gas Consultation Zone, being on the edge and the minimal nature of the extensions it is not considered that this application would change the risk of this property

The site is within the SSSI Impact Risk Zone (Bramshill is just over 1Km away)

The site is within Farley Hill, Swallowfield area of special character, we believe the proposed modifications to the

Ecology

The Site is within the Bat Roost Habitat Suitability Model NT1088, while the proposal includes works to the flat roofs, we don't believe these to be viable habitats for bats.

The site is on the edge of the Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zone, The rear garden is covered with either decking or astroturf with some potted plants, in addition to the location of the extension it is being surrounded on three sides it is very unlikely that newts would be present, either as a habitat

or as a route between habitats, we will naturally advise the contractor to be vigilant and should a newt be found a specialist ecologist will be contacted to remove and advise.



Public transport links

there is a bus stop a 26 minute walk away at Harvest Path, Arborfield green, with access to Wokingham, Shinfield and reading, the nearest train station is Reading.

Sustainability

Sustainability is a core principle guiding all of our projects, with careful consideration given to both environmental and social impacts. Our aim is to create developments that contribute positively to the wider community while minimising ecological footprints.

This project exemplifies that commitment by repurposing and upgrading an existing building. By extending the life of the structure rather than opting for demolition and new construction, we significantly reduce embodied carbon emissions and preserve the building's inherent value.

We adopt a fabric-first approach, prioritising improvements to the building envelope to reduce energy demand. Wherever feasible, we will enhance the insulation and airtightness of the existing structure, aiming to exceed minimum regulatory standards. These upgrades will improve thermal performance and reduce reliance on mechanical heating and cooling systems.

In addition to fabric improvements, the project will incorporate green technologies to further lower the property's energy consumption. These measures will work in tandem to deliver a more sustainable, efficient, and future-ready home.

Flood risk assessment

The site is wholly within flood zone 1. The proposals are for a relatively small additional footprint the new roof will be drained to an appropriately sized soakaway onsite.

It is not considered appropriate to do a further detailed FRA given the scale, nature and location of the development.

Conclusions

The proposed scheme is designed to enhance the character of the street scene through thoughtful, high-quality design and sensitive upgrades to the existing building. The intention is to transform the current structure into a well-considered, high-quality home that makes significantly improved use of the site.

The introduction of the infill extension and the addition of pitched roofs are expected to greatly improve the property's visual appeal, while maintaining a respectful relationship with neighbouring properties and the wider community.

We believe this proposal represents a positive and sustainable enhancement to the site and trust it will be supported as a valuable contribution to the local built environment.

Daniel Kellett RIBA, ARB