

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	251180
Site Address:	Brandywell, Spring Lane, Swallowfield, Wokingham, RG7 1SU
Expiry Date:	14 July 2025
Site Visit Date:	13 June 2025
Proposal: Householder application for the proposed garden shed (part retrospective).	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Local Authorities
Affordable Housing Thresholds
Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
Borough Parishes
Scale and Location of Development Proposals
Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone
Nuclear Consultation Zone
Borough Wards
Landscape Character Assessment Area
SSSI Impact Risk Zones
Thames Basin Heaths SPA Mitigation Zones
Local Plan Update Submitted Sites

PLANNING POLICY

National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
Core Strategy (CS)	CP1 – Sustainable Development CP3 – General Principles for Development CP7 – Biodiversity CP8 – Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals CP11 – Proposals Outside Development Limits
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 – Development Limits CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction CC06 – Noise CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB04 – Development in vicinity of Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE), Burghfield TB21 – Landscape Character TB23 – Biodiversity and Development

Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (JMWP)	DM1 - Sustainable Development DM3 - Protection of Habitats and Species DM4 - Protection of Designated Landscape DM5 - Protection of the Countryside DM7 - Conserving the Historic Environment DM10 - Flood Risk DM14 - Ancillary development DM15 - Site History
Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU)	SS1 – Sustainable development principles SS2 – Spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy SS5 – Development in the countryside SS7 – Development in the vicinity of Atomic Weapons Establishments CE1 – Design principles for efficient buildings CE3 – Environmental standards for residential development FD1 – Development and flood risk (from all sources) FD2 – Sustainable drainage NE1 – Biodiversity and geodiversity NE2 – Biodiversity net gain NE3 – Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area NE4 – Trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows NE5 – Landscape and design NE6 – Valued landscapes NE7 – Sites of Urban Landscape Value DH1 – Place making and quality design
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document Swallowfield Village Design Statement

PLANNING HISTORY		
Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
190051	Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey two bay garage and store room with two dormers linked to the main dwelling, and erection of new entrance walls and gates.	Approved 06/03/2019
161235	Application for submission of details to comply with the following conditions of planning consent 160290 (Dated 11/04/2016) 4. Landscaping 5. Arboricultural Survey 7. Asbestos Survey 8. Dust Mitigation Plan	Approved 02/06/2016
160290	Full planning application for the demolition of existing dwelling, double garage/workshop and	Approved 11/04/2016

	cottage to rear plus erection of replacement chalet bungalow.	
070687	Proposed erection of two storey side/front/rear extension to dwelling plus raising of existing roof and internal alterations. Demolition of garage/workshop	Approved 31/08/2007

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

Trees and Landscapes – No formal comments received.

External

None.

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	No comments received.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received.
Neighbours	No comments received.

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site consists of a large, detached property located on the eastern side of Spring Lane, Swallowfield.

The site is located outside of settlement limits within designated countryside. the plot is also located within the Riseley Woods Valued Landscape and Stanford End Wooded Sands and Gravel Hills Area as defined in the Landscape Character Assessment (2019).

The host dwelling is large and set back from the road behind a large driveway providing off-street parking. The driveway extends to the side of the property into the rear garden to provide access to the existing outbuilding in the rear garden.

The rear garden is large and extends behind the rear of the adjoining neighbour, Balcombe Cottage. Beyond the existing outbuilding is an area of woodland which forms the rear section of the plot.

Proposal:

This application seeks part-retrospective approval for the erection of a detached outbuilding. The outbuilding would measure approximately 13.98m in length and 6m in width. The outbuilding would have a pitched roof form with one side gable.

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 outside settlement limits in the countryside and is therefore to be considered under policy CP11 of the adopted Core Strategy. This states that in order to protect the separate identity of settlements and maintain the quality of the environment, proposals outside development limits will not normally be permitted except where, in the case of residential extensions, it does not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building.

The proposed development would conflict with policy CP11 as it would result in inappropriate increases in the scale of development across the site away from the original dwelling. This impact is set out in further detail throughout this report but in summary, the development would result in a large outbuilding that is not subservient to the main dwelling and is outside of the historic curtilage of the property. The outbuilding would also be located away from the dwelling and would spread development across the site into an area of woodland.

Character of the Area:

Spring Lane is a single-track country road which consists of large, detached properties that are largely separated by mature hedging and trees. The application site consists of a dwelling and existing outbuilding with a hardstanding track which are set within generous verdant grounds. The rear of the site comprises broadly undeveloped grassland punctuated with mature trees.

There are open long-range views and shorter-range views across the countryside through the post and rail fence along the rear boundary. Despite the existing buildings, the rural character of the area gives a sense of tranquillity and contributes towards the high-quality landscape of the Riseley Woods Valued Landscape.

While there would be no loss of trees, the proposed development would introduce an additional detached building of significant width, depth and height, deep into the plot towards the rear boundary.

The outbuilding would be single-storey comprising one open plan space with one front gable providing an open canopy area. The structure does not contain the facilities required for day-to-day living, and thus, could not be occupied as a separate dwelling. Therefore, the circumstances indicate that the outbuilding would be ancillary to Brandywell Spring. However, the large scale of the building would not be subservient in terms of scale or massing and it would appear as a new building in the countryside with a commercial appearance.

The outbuilding would be located approximately 88m from the main dwelling and can be accessed independently by the front entrance along the northeastern side of the site. There is no physical connection to the main house, and whilst the same driveway would be used, the building could be accessed independently without any disturbance or inconvenience to the occupants of the main dwelling.

The proposed siting of the outbuilding is in a part of the site that does not appear to be within the lawful residential curtilage and is within an area dominated by woodland.

Sinclair-Lockhart's Trustees v Central Land Board [1950] 1 P&CR 195 stated that where to fall within the curtilage of a building, land should serve the purpose of the building in some reasonably useful or necessary manner. *Methuen-Campbell v Walters* [1979] requires land to have an intimate association with, and forms part and parcel of, the building.

There is clear separation between the main garden space of the dwelling which extends up to the existing detached outbuilding (measuring approximately 60m in length), and the rear section of wooded grassland.

The site visit made by the Case Officer on 13/06/2025 observed the area of the proposed siting for the outbuilding did not appear to form maintained lawn that had been recently mown or form part of the domestic garden.

The below aerial photograph from 2025 shows the end of the residential curtilage demarcated by the end of the manicured lawn (red line).



The image also shows the woodland to the rear of the site (between the red line and the approximate rear of the site shown in green). The woodland area where the outbuilding would be located also forms part of the Riseley Woods Valued Landscape. The Riseley Woods Valued Landscape is the smallest of the valued landscapes in the borough. The Riseley Woods Valued Landscape falls almost entirely within the L3 'Stanford End Wooded Sands and Gravel Hills' Landscape Character Area (LCA) and centres on a block of ancient woodland within that LCA.

Page 162 of the Valued Landscape Assessment states outlines the scenic quality and rarity of the area. In summary:

Scenic quality

- *Rural farmed character due to the mosaic of irregular fields of varied size, woodland and sparse settlement.*
- *Variety of the mixed and coniferous woodlands of ancient origin.*
- *The wooded skyline which provides a distinctive backdrop to surrounding areas, including in adjacent boroughs.*
- *Network of mature hedgerows with mature oak standards which are silhouetted against the sky.*

Rarity

- *Skyline woodland; the sunken lanes; a sense of remoteness; the rural character and sparse built form.*
- *Uniqueness of ancient woodland (irreplaceable habitat).*

The introduction of the outbuilding in the proposed location would have an intrusive visual impact on the open nature of the rear of the site, surrounding countryside and valued landscape. Whilst not stated on the plans, it is assumed that the existing hardstanding would be extended in order to access the outbuilding. There is already a large, dilapidated outbuilding located towards the end of the garden, along with the existing hardstanding. The council has no record of this building having permission. The cumulative increase in development on the site would cause an urbanising effect harmful to the existing character, tranquillity, and intrinsic beauty of this part of the countryside.

The submitted Design Statement describes the 'single shed' for the purposes of storing garden maintenance equipment and general storage. Whilst the need for a secure building and clearance height is noted, the evidence on the need regarding the size of the building is not clear. It has not been shown why a building of this size would be genuinely required and therefore, does not outweigh the identified harm.

In summary, the proposed outbuilding would have a negative impact on the countryside and would result in excessive urbanising encroachment away from the main building. The outbuilding would also be sited outside the domestic curtilage of the original dwelling.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Overlooking, Loss of Light & Overbearing:

The erection of the outbuilding would not generate any loss of light, overshadowing or overbearing impact by virtue of the significant separation distances from neighbouring properties.

Landscape and Trees:

Whilst there are numerous mature trees on site, none are protected. However, due to the proposed location of the outbuilding and the proximity of a number of established trees, a tree report was submitted to support the application. The submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment also combined a Method Statement. The report considers the impact of the proposed development upon trees and their juxtaposition with the layout.

The report confirms that no trees are to be removed or pruned to facilitate the development.

Whilst an informal message was sent to the case officer from the Trees and Landscape consultee which indicated an intention to object to the proposal, no formal objection has been raised.

Conclusion:

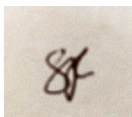
For the reasons set out in this report, the proposal is unacceptable in principle as the development amounts to inappropriate increases in form and footprint away from the original building which is outside of the lawful curtilage of the property and is an unacceptable form of development within the countryside.

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.

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.

RECOMMENDATION

Conditions agreed:	Not required
Recommendation:	Refusal
Date:	7 July 2025
Earliest date for decision:	10 June 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	30.7.25

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS
Insert where relevant