

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Application Number:	260139
Site Address:	Riseley Farm, Part Lane, Swallowfield, Wokingham, RG7 1TB
Expiry Date:	25 March 2026
Site Visit Date:	13 February 2026
Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of a barn for equestrian use following demolition of existing barn.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Areas of Special Character
 Bat Roost Suitability Model
 Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zone
 Archaeology Buffer Zone
 Scale and Location of Development Proposals - Countryside

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 CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals CP11 – Proposals Outside Development Limits
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB23 – Biodiversity and Development TB25 – Archaeology TB26 – Buildings of Traditional Local Character and Areas of Special Character
Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU)	SS1 – Sustainable development principles SS5 – Development in the countryside C4 – Green and blue infrastructure and public rights of way C5 – Parking and electric vehicle charging FD1 – Development and flood risk (from all sources) NE1 – Biodiversity and geodiversity NE6 – Valued landscapes DH5 – The historic environment DH6 – Archaeology DH7 – Equestrian development

Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List A Vision for Our Villages: Ryeish Green, Spencers Wood, Three Mile Cross Riseley Village Design Statement Swallowfield Village Design Statement
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PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
44131	Replace agricultural building.	Approve 3 May 1995
2000/2342	Change of Use of grazing area to sand for carriage driving.	Approve 3 January 2001
211545	Pre-application advice for proposed erection of 2no. detached dwellings with garage, plus the conversion of existing barn to create 1no. detached dwelling with garage, following demolition of the existing 5 buildings.	Replied 25 August 2021
222281	Full application for the proposed change of use from agricultural barns to 2 no. residential dwellings, involving the demolition and rebuild of one barn and one conversion.	Refuse 25 July 2023
231196	Application for Listed Building consent for the conversion of 1 no. existing curtilage listed threshing barn into 1 no. dwellinghouse and the demolition of 1 no. existing pole barn to facilitate the erection of 1 no. new dwellinghouse.	Refuse 1 August 2023
260126	Application for the Listed Building Consent for the proposed repair and renovation of existing Grade II listed farmhouse, including fenestration alterations, internal alterations and external works and landscaping.	Approve 2 March 2026

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Drainage – No objection
WBC Built Heritage Officer – No objection.
WBC Ecology Newts – No objection subject to Informative
WBC Ecology Bats – No objection subject to conditions

External

Berkshire Archaeology – No objection

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	Swallowfield Parish Council does not object to this application. However, we ask that the applicant be required to confirm the material of the corrugated roof of the existing barn and ensure appropriate demolition practice should the roof material be found to be hazardous (e.g. corrugated asbestos). <i>Officer comment: It has not been established whether the existing corrugated roof contains asbestos. Furthermore, identification requires testing by a qualified, UKAS-accredited asbestos surveyor and is not part of the planning process. An informative will be added to the Decision Notice. If the application were to be approved, an Informative will be added stating that any works must comply with the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012, and asbestos, if present, must be appropriately handled and disposed of.</i>
Ward Member(s)	No comments received.
Neighbours	No comments received.

APPRAISAL

Site Description: Riseley Farm is on Part Lane in Swallowfield. It is designated a Special Character Area and located in Countryside. The site comprises a Grade 2 listed farmhouse, a curtilage listed threshing barn plus various barns and outbuildings. Figure 1 shows the existing 1960's brick outbuilding to be demolished.



Figure 1 Existing barn

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 in Countryside where Core Strategy Policy CP11 applies and states that proposals outside of development limits will only be permitted that do not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings. Furthermore, proposals outside development limits will not normally be permitted except where it contributes to and/or promotes recreation in, and enjoyment of, the countryside.

Proposal: Erection of a barn following demolition of existing barn. The proposed barn shown in Figure 2 will measure approximately 9.5m in length, 4.8m in width, 2.4m to the top of the eaves and 4.5m to the top of the pitch roof. The north and south elevations will each have 2 no. window openings with shutters and an opening approximately 3m wide and 2m in height with a 5-bar gate.

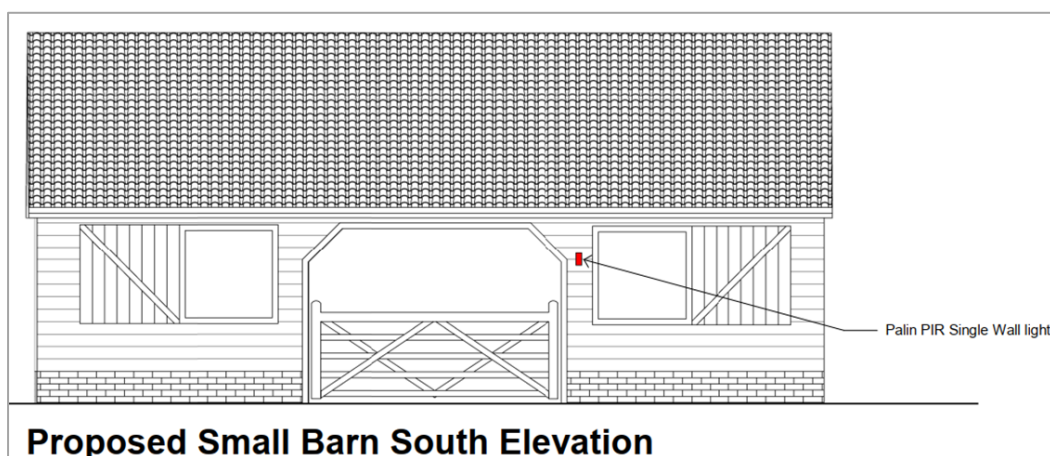


Figure 2

The application includes a statement of need as follows: *“The small barn serves a very specific equestrian need on the farm as it currently creates a weather shelter for horses from two different fields. A weather shelter is of critical importance as some horses live outside all year and in the worst weather (extreme cold, wet and heat) they bring themselves inside to shelter from those conditions. As it serves this purpose for those 2 specific fields replacing the current end of life barn in the existing location is the only practical solution to this problem and the small barn cannot be erected anywhere else.”*

Procedural Matters

A Revised Proposed Front and Side Elevation plan was received by the Council on 27th March 2026, and after the consultation date had ended. However, the revised proposed plans showed a minor amendment to show 1 no. downfacing light. Therefore, the amendment was not considered to have a significant impact on neighbour amenity to warrant extending the consultation period.

Location in Countryside: Core Strategy Policy CP11 states that 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:

1. 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

2. It does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings; and
3. It is contained within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion, or in the case of replacement buildings would bring about environmental improvement; or
4. In the case of residential extensions, does not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building.
5. In the case of replacement dwellings, the proposal must: i) Bring about environmental improvements; or ii) Not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building.
6. Essential community facilities cannot be accommodated within development limits or through the re-use/replacement of an existing building.
7. Affordable housing on rural exception sites in line with CP9.

In this case, exceptions 1 to 2 apply. The proposal will promote and contribute to recreation in the countryside through equestrian activities and it will not result in an inappropriate increase in scale because it will occupy the same footprint as the original building and will be single storey with maximum eaves height of 2.4m.

Therefore, the proposal complies with Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy.

Character of the Area: Core Strategy Policy CP3 states that planning permission will be granted for proposals that are of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character, together with a high quality of design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users, including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life. Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy requires developments to maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment.

The street scene in this section of Part Lane is a single-track road, lined with trees and hedges, that connects the villages of Riseley and Swallowfield. The application site at Riseley Farm sits approximately halfway along the lane's 2.5km length, equidistant between the villages. The main dwelling house is a Grade 2 Listed Building. The small barn to be demolished sits outside the Listed Building Buffer Zone and is set back approximately 100m from the highway at the far end of the driveway as shown in Figure 3.

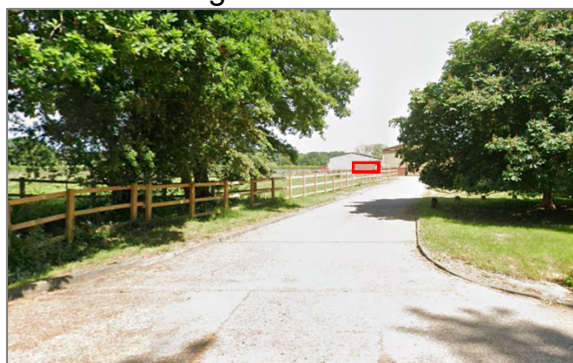


Figure 3 View of existing barn from the public realm shown as a red line

In this case, the proposed outbuilding would occupy the same footprint as existing and be approximately 1.5m taller to the top of the dual pitch roof than the existing maximum height of the mono pitch roof. Nevertheless, the eaves height would be approximately 2.4m and the development would not exceed the height of the barn

immediately behind. Therefore, given that the development would be set back 100m from the highway, and would be single storey, it would not be prominent in the street scene or cause harm to the character of the area.

Overall, the proposal would comply with CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy.

Neighbouring Amenity: Core Strategy Policy CP3 states that development proposals should not result in a detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life. In this case, the proposal would be located approximately 150m from The Poors House (Grade 2 Listed Building), 70m from Riseley Farm Bungalow and 100m from Riseley Lodge. There would be no loss of privacy, loss of light or overbearing appearance to neighbour amenity because of the development.

Overall, the proposal would comply with Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy in relation to neighbour amenity.

Built Heritage: The Built Heritage Officer raises no objection and confirmed that demolition is acceptable because the existing mid-20th century brick building lacks architectural or historic merit. Furthermore, the proposed new structure fits appropriately within its setting and will not harm the listed farmhouse, historic barns, or the Special Character Area.

Flooding and Drainage: Although some land within the curtilage of Riseley Farm lies within Flood Zone 3, the proposal will be located on land in Flood Zone 1. The LLFA raises no objection to the development and commented that it is unlikely to materially affect local surface water drainage or increase flood risk elsewhere.

Ecology (Bats): The Ecology Officer raises no objection and has confirmed that the barn and surrounding fields have negligible potential to support roosting or foraging bats. The Officer recommends a sensitive lighting strategy to comply with Bat Conservation Trust Guidance Note 08/18, including the use of lighting below 2700 K, downward-directed fittings, and motion sensors.

Officer comment: The applicant subsequently confirmed the specification of the of the 1 no. Palin PIR Single Wall light to be installed would have a maximum luminance of 2000 lux and submitted an annotated plan to show the location of the light (shown in Figure 2). Therefore, the Ecology Officer was satisfied that a lighting strategy was not required.

Biodiversity enhancements

To comply with national and local legislation, the Ecology Officer requested the provision of one bat box and one bird box, to either be implemented into the dwelling of the barn or retained trees west of the site was secured by condition.

Ecology (GCN): The Ecology Officer raises no objection and has commented: *“The development falls within the amber impacts zone for great crested newts. There are 2 ponds within 250m of the development proposal. The applicant has provided a preliminary ecological appraisal (PEA): ‘Small barn at Riseley Farm, Part Lane, Swallowfield’, Crossland Ecology, January 2026. This appraisal summarises that the*

habitat onsite is unsuitable for great crested newts, with the development surrounded by hardstanding and short, horse grazed grassland. A habitat suitability index (HSI) was completed on the pond closest to the development, returning a below average value of 0.56 (where <0.5 is poor and >0.8 is excellent). We are satisfied that if this development was to be approved, it is unlikely to cause an impact on great crested newts and/or their habitat. However, as this application sites lie in the amber impact zone as per the modelled district licence impact map, which indicates that there is highly suitable habitat for great crested newts (GCN) within the area surrounding the application site An informative is recommended highlighting legal protection for wildlife.

All other protected species

The Ecology Officer had no concerns regarding ecological impacts arising from the proposed development.

Archaeology: The Archaeology Officer raises no objection and has commented: *“I have reviewed the above application and do not see any need for mitigation for archaeology in this case. The barn will be erected over the site of that being demolished and no new areas, nor extensive ground works, appear to be required by the development. It should be noted however, as stated in the Heritage statement submitted with the application, that the area has archaeological potential, and any further applications for development in other areas of the site will need to be assessed for archaeology.”*

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 reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. 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:	Yes
Recommendation:	Approve
Date:	27 March 2026
Earliest date for decision:	11 February 2026

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	<i>MC</i>
Date:	27.03.2026