



Woolf Bond Planning

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6th October 2025

Planning Department
Place & Growth
Development Management and Regulatory Services
Wokingham Borough Council
Shute End
Wokingham
Berkshire
RG40 1BN

By electronic transmission only

Dear Sirs,

**2 RIVERSIDE, WARGRAVE ROAD, HENLEY ON THAMES, BERKSHIRE RG9 3JD
HOUSEHOLDER APPLICATION FOR THE PROPOSED ERECTION OF A PITCHED ROOF TO REPLACE THE OLD
ONE.**

On behalf of my client Mr Doherty, please find attached an application for planning permission for a pitched roof to the existing dwelling. The supporting documents include:

Supporting Documents

Location Plan Drawing No. 3956-100
Existing Ground Floor Plan Drawing No. 3596-101
Existing Roof Plan Drawing No. 3596-102
Existing Elevations Drawing No. 3596-103
Block Plan Drawing No. 3596-200A
Proposed Floor Plans Drawing No. 3596-201D
Proposed Roof Plan Drawing No. 3596-202D
Proposed Elevations Drawing No. 3596-203C
Updated Bat Roost Assessment 4th February 2025

The application seeks to address the sole reason for refusing planning application 242859 dated 23 May 2025.
The reason for refusal being:

1. By virtue of its excessive volume, the proposal would result in a disproportionate increase to the size of the original dwellinghouse, which would be inappropriate development within the Green Belt and, by definition, harmful to its openness. Therefore, the proposed development is unacceptable in principle and no very special circumstances have been identified that would warrant a different decision being taken contrary to Policies CP12 of the Core Strategy; Policies CC01 and TB01 of the MDD Local Plan and guidance contained within Section 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The application now submitted addresses the reasons set out in the officer report which led to the application being refused for the reasons stated above. In summary, the officer report (page 7 of 12) sets out the following in respect of **Development within the Green Belt**:

In this case, the original building proposes enlargement through the erection of a pitch roof to replace a flat roof. Volume calculations for the existing dwelling and proposed development have been submitted as part of this application (see Table 1 below). The proposed volume increase for this application is 49% above the size of the original dwelling, and this exceeds the 35% limit imposed under Policy TB01. It is therefore recognised that the proposal would amount to 'inappropriate' development in the Green Belt when assessed under Policy TB01, and therefore the proposal would only be found as acceptable if there are 'very special circumstances or a genuine fallback position.

On page 8 of 12, it is stated in the officer report:

Furthermore, in spatial and visual terms, the increase in height, bulk and mass of the building would have a detrimental impact on the openness of the Green Belt when viewed by people travelling along the river or from public locations to the north of the site, including Park Place a designated Historic Park located immediately opposite.

To summarise, the scheme does not comply with Policy CP12 in relation to the Green Belt. In addition, there is no robust fallback position on this site and no very special circumstances have been identified by the applicant that would warrant approving the application in this instance. Furthermore, in spatial and visual terms, the height mass and bulk of the proposal would have a harmful impact on the openness of the Green Belt, something that has already been established by virtue of exceeding the 35% test.

However, the part of the officer report which considers **Countryside and Character of the Area** on page 8 of the officer report it is stated:

However, it would not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion away from the original building; the increase in height would not differ significantly from the immediate neighbour; and the footprint would not be affected. Therefore, although the scheme does not fully comply with CP11, it would not cause significant harm to the Countryside, notwithstanding the impacts on the openness of the Green Belt discussed above.

And in respect **Character of the Area** (pages 9 and 10), the officer report considers and concludes that

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.

Figure 3 shows that the neighbouring property at no.3 Riverside is already visible above the fence and can be seen from the road. The proposal would be approximately 0.3m above the roof line of no. 3 and visible from both the roadside and river. It would have a ridge height approximately 2.7m higher than existing and be 5.9m in height from ground level. Furthermore, some of the trees shown in Figure 4 have since been removed, reducing potential screening. However, the roof design would blend with existing buildings that have pitch roofs and gable designs in the immediate vicinity along the riverbank (locations shown in Figure 5). Also, the roof materials will be natural slate, and the gable ends will be infilled with wood cladding to be in keeping with the character of the area.

Thus, in visual terms, the officer report sets out that the proposed pitched roof would not harm either the character of the area, or cause significant harm to the countryside. Therefore, the sole argument for refusing the previous application refers to the spatial matter that the volume of the previous application proposals exceeded the 35% limit imposed under Policy TB01. In all other respects, the proposal was found to be acceptable. Matters of neighbouring residential amenity, flooding and drainage, landscape and trees, and ecology were all considered to be acceptable.

To support the current revised application proposals, a Bat Survey dated 4 February 2025 is attached. Noting the conclusions of the report dated 4th February 2025 are consistent with those previously undertaken and dated 12 June 2020 and Bat Survey dated 7th September 2023 in that the building is considered to have 'negligible' suitability for roosting bats; however, the potential for occasional presence of roosting bats cannot be entirely ruled out. To avoid any breaches in legislation the report includes recommends following precautionary measures.

The Ecology Officer commented during the previous application:

"I am satisfied that the survey methodology and effort are adequate for the Ecologist to conclude the building has few potential access points or roosting features and is considered to have 'no/very limited' suitability for hibernating bats and 'negligible' suitability for roosting bats. Provided that the development is implemented in accordance with the precautionary avoidance measures in the Recommendations section of the Updated Bat Roost Assessment, a no external lighting condition and informatives 17 and 19 are included and are included in the decision notice there are no ecological objections to the development as proposed."

The application is to replace an existing roof. It does not require the submission of a Tree Survey. I produce some photographs which show that there are no trees that are affected by the proposal to replace the existing roof.



Photograph showing the site from Wargrave Road and 3 Riverside in background with no trees on the site.



Photograph taken from Wargrave Road looking towards the site and River Thames in background. No trees on site.



Photograph taken showing the site from Wargrave Road with no trees on the site.

The Landscape and Tree Officer had no objection to the previous application commenting that:

“the site is located along a Green Route, there is a Group TPO 0002-1951 that spans the SW extent of the rear gardens of dwellings in this location between the river Thames and Wargrave Road, the Green Route. Neither the TPO nor the existing tree to the southeast will be affected by the proposals and no other landscape elements will be adversely affected.”

The following calculations are provided to assist.

The existing Volume is 311.47m³

The proposed roof would have a volume of 97.04

The resulting total volume for the dwelling would be 408.547m³

This would result in a 31% increase in volume to the original building. It is less than the 35% figure set out in paragraph 3.4 of the Managing Development Delivery Development Plan which states that:

‘Limited’ means a cumulative increase of generally no more than a 35% increase in volume over and above the original dwelling.

On this reasoning, the 31% increase in volume is proportional to the original building.

The proposed pitch roof in this application will fit into the landscape and not cause significant harm to the openness of the Green Belt. It would assimilate into the landscape when viewed from the river or other public locations to the north of the site. The photographs presented in this document demonstrate that the area

enjoys many pitched roof buildings. The specific site circumstances where the site is lower than the road to the north, as well as being screened by existing fencing and buildings when viewed from the north, the proposal would be glimpsed in views, and its proportionate scale means that it would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

The applicant has considered the sustainability aspects of the proposed roof. The pitch roof provides an opportunity for slate solar roof tiles to be used in the construction.

Taking into consideration the changes made for the pitched roof in this resubmitted application compared to the previous proposal, it is our opinion that the proposal can be supported as it would not impact on the openness of the green belt and is a proportionate addition to the dwelling.

Noting the comments made by the Inspector in his decision letter dated 29th December 2021, in paragraphs 12 -14 where the Inspector considered green belt matters as follows:

12. Another way of looking at the problem is to ask what is the purpose of paragraph 149 (c)? It is to allow modest extensions to existing buildings in the green belt in such a way as to protect its openness. Looking at photographs and aerial shots of the 2012 cabin and the current one there is very little apparent difference in the bulk and footprint of the two.

13. As the cabin is not inappropriate development then it only remains to look at character and appearance. The riverbank in the immediate locality is largely built up with a mix of larger brick houses, some modern riverside wood clad dwellings and more low key chalets, boatsheds and even railway carriages. These are set among trees and often with lawned frontages with moorings and sometimes pleasure cruisers.

In visual terms the Site it is not readily seen from public views from Wargrave Road (A321). There are some limited views from the river and opposite bank, but these are glimpsed views and absorbed in the landscape by its low form, use of traditional materials in the construction and sympathetic design. When the proposed development would be seen, it is read in the context of the existing dwelling, and other existing dwellings in the area, it is indistinguishable.

The conclusions made by the Inspector in 2021 equally apply to the proposals contained in this application to replace the existing roof. It would not change the character of the area and the extra height would not be noticeable.

The provision of the slate solar roof tiles supports the transition to a low carbon future. It includes the use of a renewable form of energy and its design and appearance fit in with the natural slate for the remainder of the roof. Thus a contribution towards the energy provision for the dwelling can be achieved in a sustainable and environmentally friendly manner and represents a benefit of the proposed development towards a net zero future.

The proposal meets the requirements of paragraphs 135 and 154 (c) and (g) in that it would be visually attractive, sympathetic to local character and history and will create a safer environment. It would not impact on the openness of the green belt and is a proportionate addition to the dwelling.

The following sets out the reasoned justification for the proposed replacement roof.

The application Site and Its Context

The Site is located on the southern side of Wargrave Road (A321), fronting the eastern bank of the River Thames, and to the east of the town of Henley-on-Thames.

The site is enclosed by mature well established verdant hedges to the neighbouring plots at 1 Riverside and 3 Riverside as well as to Wargrave Road.

The site is principally open fronted to the river bank apart from a low level metal picket style fence which then leads to a floating pontoon. Applying the definition of 'previously developed land' in the NPPF and *Dartford BC v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government* [2017] EWCA Civ141 this site is previously developed land.

It consists of an existing dwelling with a flat roof and a detached annexe building with a pitched roof. The site is at a lower level than Wargrave Road.

Planning Policy Considerations

Whilst the current development plan policies are more than 5 years old, It is noted that the emerging plan is progressing and on Friday 28th February 2025, the Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update 2023-2040 Proposed Submission Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination by an independent Planning Inspector.

Furthermore, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024) is also a relevant consideration in addressing the merits of the development proposed.

The Proposed Submission Plan reflects the approach set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) taking into account the site's green belt and countryside location.

Of particular relevance to the scheme are paragraphs 11 and 39 of the NPPF which highlight how Local Planning Authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way and that decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

Paragraph 135 of the NPPF requires that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

'a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);

d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;

e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and

f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience'

Paragraph 154 of the NPPF sets out that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:

'a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;

b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;

c) **the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;**

d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;

e) limited infilling in villages;

f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and

g) **limited infilling limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land (including a material change of use to residential or mixed use including residential), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.**

(emphasis underlined and emboldened)

Main Issues

The main issue is whether the proposed pitch roof constitutes appropriate development in the Green Belt.

The 'test' to be applied in carrying out an assessment of the acceptability of the proposal is whether the alterations would result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building (NPPF, paragraph 154(c), and/or whether the limited infilling that has been undertaken, on previously developed land would have caused substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development (NPPF paragraph 154(g)).

In carrying out that assessment, openness has a visual and a spatial aspect. In this regard, as can be seen from the supporting documents and photographs below, it is considered the proposed pitch roof is proportionate and does not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

To demonstrate the development is not inappropriate development, the following matters identified below:

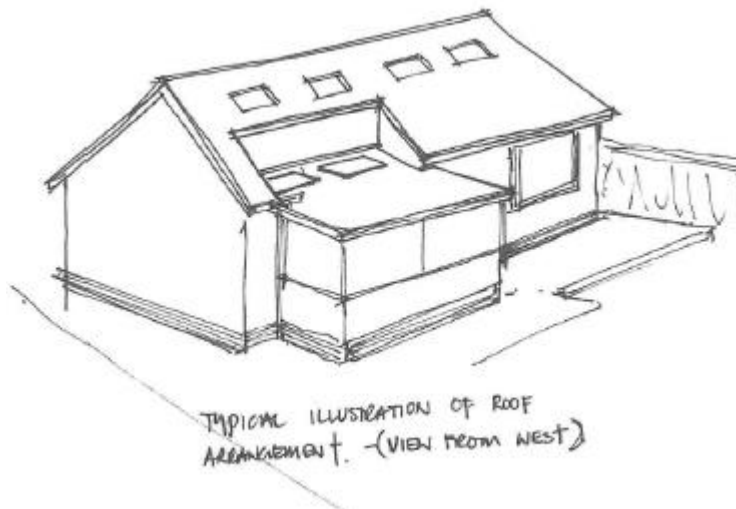
- Considering the development on the site
- Considering the development in the context of neighbouring plots
- Considering the development in the context of the wider landscape

Considering the development on the site

The existing dwelling has a flat roof construction which is expensive to maintain and is prone to leaking and flooding the dwelling. The flat roof to the dwelling also presents as an incongruous form when it is considered in the context of the existing annex on the site and the numerous examples of pitched roofs to dwellings in the vicinity.

The proposal does not increase the footprint. Because of its high quality design, its scale and massing assimilates into the site context with the sloping roofs to the rear and front. The gable features provide interest and enhance the design.

The reduction in volume compared to the previous application scheme is the integration of the existing canopy with the proposed pitch demonstrated below:



Extract from Proposed Elevations (Drawing 3956/203RevC)
showing typical illustration of the roof arrangement.

The pitch roof enjoys a recess to accommodate the existing canopy and results in an attractive and discreet form of design.

The verdant mature landscape boundaries as well as the backdrop to Wargrave Road from the mature landscaping will enable the proposal to fit into the landscape and countryside setting.

The proposal is sympathetic to the character of the surrounding area and does not result in a material change in size or scale. The respective distances to site boundaries, the change in levels from the road to the site, with the site lower than the road, contributes towards the low visibility of the site and its buildings in the landscape. The proposed pitch roof will also be barely noticeable from public vantage points because of the existing landscaping, distances from the site boundaries, the levels between public vantage points and the proposed development. The use of high quality materials will assimilate the proposed development into its surroundings.

The proposed development maintains and enhances the high quality of the environment by reason of its low profile, the use of traditional materials ensures it fits in with the context of the varied character and appearance of existing buildings with pitched roofs being predominant features, as well as respecting the space afforded to the river bank environment.

The proposal will be safe and secure and is an adaptable form of development because it has been well designed to ensure the building is protected from flooding and leaking roofs. As noted before, the existing flat roof construction is expensive to maintain and makes the existing dwelling prone to flooding.

It is visually attractive because of the good architecture employed with its design that responds to the vernacular and surroundings. Its form takes advantage of the natural assets as well as respecting the character and appearance of the countryside. It is well set back from the river bank and its appearance compliments the verdant setting in which it sits. Its low level form and minor increase preserve the openness of the Metropolitan Green Belt. It conserves the character and appearance of the countryside as its low height, elevation materials and fenestration are sympathetic to local character and history. This ensures it

also maintains a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of the streets, the spaces between the street and river, the spaces between the building and the river all contribute towards the appeal site being an attractive, welcoming and distinctive place to live, work and visit.

Considering the development in the context of neighbouring plots

The proposal is like many examples in the vicinity of the site which can be seen in the photographs which follow. Photographs 1 to 2 consider the development in the context of neighbouring plots.



Photo 1 - Photo of the application site viewed from River Thames with 2 Riverside in the middle. To the right of the photograph is plot 3 with a higher dwelling with a flat roof. To the right of the photograph is plot 1 Riverside.

Plot 1 Riverside contains a series of detached bowed roof cabins in the form of rustic carriages and is of a lesser footprint than the built form of the appeal site. This site has a verdant character and shares a mature high evergreen hedge with the appeal site boundary.

The verdant surroundings to the sides and backdrop are notable features which would permit the pitch roof to assimilate into the landscape without any noticeable changes to the roofline and skylines.



Photo 2 - Photo of the application site viewed from River Thames with 2 Riverside to the right. Evergreen hedge between plots 1 and 2 to the right of the photograph. An evergreen hedge exists between plots 2 and 3 Riverside. The photograph shows the contrast in the existing heights of the dwellings at plots 2 and 3 with the dwelling at plot 3, to the left hand side of the photograph. The verdant surroundings to the sides and backdrop are notable features which would permit the pitch roof to assimilate into the landscape without any noticeable changes to the roofline and skylines.

The replacement dwelling in situ at 3 Riverside is raised above the ground to allow for undercroft parking and the floor to ceiling heights for the raised building. The building's scale, massing and design is more noticeable due to the roof overhangs to its front and back. By comparison, the proposed pitch roof to the existing dwelling on the application site will not require the same degree of roof overhang. As part of the approved drawings for the dwelling at 3 Riverside, it also included an extensive high-level canopy to the side of the main part of the building. Whilst this high-level canopy does not currently exist, it does have the benefit of planning permission and could be built. When this is compared to the proposals for 2 Riverside, the proposals for 2 Riverside would be a similar height to the flat roof at 3 Riverside, noting that the scale, design and context for the pitched roof at plot 2 sees a reduced built form due to the sloping roof nature from the ridge to the respective eaves.

Considering the development in the context of the wider landscape

Photographs 3 to 6 below include examples (not exhaustive) of pitched roof development in the vicinity of the application site. These include a variety of materials and design features, some of which are proposed for the pitch roof in this application.

As has been referenced above, the use of traditional materials and the sensitive design ensure the development on the application site conserves the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. In the context of the wider landscape, the proposed pitch roof on the site maintains the openness of the green belt and its limited increase does not harm the character and beauty of the countryside.



Photograph 3 - Photograph of 'Penguin', Wargrave Road to the north west of the application site. This shows a pitched roof with roof lights with a hipped form.



Photograph 4 – Pitch roof with 3 gable features facing the River at ‘The Landing’ sited to the north west of the application site viewed from the River Thames. To the left of the photograph is Kilgarran.



Photograph 5 showing Kilgarran with pitch roof and gable feature with glazing facing the River Thames. Sited to the northwest of the site. The photograph shows The Landing, neighbouring Kilgarran to the right.



Photograph 6 of the two storey dwelling and boat house at Green Isle to the south east of the application site. Viewed from the River Thames with pitched roofs and gables set against the backdrop of mature trees. This dwelling was granted planning permission on 13 November 2024, under reference 241509 for proposed raising of the roof to create habitable accommodation along with raising of the floor plus replacement and modification of the existing roof structure, erection of a two storey front extension to create a porch and steps, replacement of the existing side/rear conservatory to include a roof terrace plus changes to fenestration. The planning permission results in a volume increase of 40.8%.

Noting the examples above, the pitched roof forms with gable features, varying design features with glazing to the gables and rooflights, the relative scale and massing of the existing dwellings and their relationship to their surroundings means that the proposal with its similar features will be in keeping with the vernacular and the surrounding landscape.

The provision of the slate solar roof tiles supports the transition to a low carbon future. It includes the use of a renewable form of energy and its design and appearance fit in with the natural slate for the remainder of the roof. Thus a contribution towards the energy provision for the dwelling can be achieved in a sustainable and environmentally friendly manner and represents a benefit of the proposed development towards a net zero future whilst being of an appearance that fits into the existing mixed character of the area.

Summary

In visual terms the Site it is not readily seen from public views from Wargrave Road (A321). There are some limited views from the river and opposite bank, but these are glimpsed views and absorbed in the landscape by its low form, use of traditional materials in the construction and sympathetic design. When the proposed development would be seen, it is read in the context of the existing dwelling, and other existing dwellings in the area, it is indistinguishable.

Noting that the Local Planning Authority's assessment of the previous application concluded that the proposed pitched roof would not harm either the character of the area, or cause significant harm to the countryside. Matters of neighbouring residential amenity, flooding and drainage, landscape and trees, and ecology were all considered to be acceptable.

The proposal meets the requirements of paragraphs 135 and 154 (c) and (g) of the NPPF in that it would be visually attractive, sympathetic to local character and history and will create a safer environment. It would not cause significant harm to the openness of the green belt. It is a proportionate addition to the dwelling. It also provides a renewable energy form of development with the slate solar roof tiles which contribute towards a net zero future.

Should you like to arrange a site visit or require any further information, please contact me.

I trust the application and supporting documents has all the information you require to reach a positive decision.

Yours faithfully,

Woolf Bond Planning Ltd

Laurence Moore MRTPI

Associate Director

for Woolf Bond Planning Ltd (obo Mr. Doherty)