

TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

MR DAVE MEAKIN

PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

**SPRINGFIELDS
TROWES LANE
SWALLOWFIELD
BERKS
RG7 1RN**

**Erection of side extension to existing barn on an existing area of hard standing
for storage and restoration of vintage vehicles**

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Planning, Design and Statement is submitted on behalf of Mr Dave Meakin in support of a full application for the 'Erection of side extension to existing barn on an existing area of hard standing for storage and restoration of vintage vehicles'.

1.2 The existing barn is lawfully used as a hobby workshop for the storage and restoration of vintage vehicles, having been granted a Certificate of Lawfulness in September 2022 (LPA ref. 222305). The current proposal follows the refusal of a planning application (LPA ref. 230568) in May 2023 for the change of use of land to facilitate the provision of hard standing and the erection of 2 no. side extensions to the existing barn, plus alterations to fenestration. The application was refused due to its unwarranted extension into the countryside and its effect on the character and appearance of the area. The current proposal is for a single extension on the north eastern side of the barn only, on an existing area of hard standing. The proposal has therefore been considerably scaled back with the extension that would have protruded into open countryside being removed. The planning history of the site is expanded on in Chapter 3 of this Statement and the detailed justification for the proposed development is set out in Chapter 5.

1.3 The proposal is accompanied by the following consultant reports:

- Planning, Design and Access Statement – see below
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Bats) -
- Great Crested Newt Assessment and Non-Licensed Method Statement (GS Ecology)

1.4 This statement is divided into the following sections:

- Site and Surroundings

- Site History
- Planning Policy Context
- The Planning Application
- Design and Access
- Summary and Conclusions

1.5 This statement will set out how the proposal would not result in any significant harm the character and appearance of the countryside and that it would be appropriate in terms of its size, scale, bulk and design. It will also demonstrate that the proposal would not have any significant adverse effect on the ecology of the site; flooding/drainage; trees; and other landscape features. It will be concluded that the proposal is consistent with the objectives of Local and National Planning Policy.

2 SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1 The application site is located on the south western side of Trowes Lane, Swallowfield. The site lies to the rear of Springfield which is a large two storey detached dwelling with associated outbuildings in the same ownership as the application site.
- 2.2 The existing barn is accessed from Trowes Lane via the same point of access as the existing dwelling. There is an existing area of hard standing to the front of the barn and on its north-eastern side. The existing barn is positioned to the rear of Springfields and is set well back from Trowes Lane. It is generally well screened by existing buildings and hedging. It is also partially screened from the rear garden of Springfields by coniferous hedging.

Extract from Google Maps showing location of the site



- 2.3 The site is surrounded by open land to the north / west which is generally flat and enclosed by hedgerows. To the south-east of the site are a number of large commercial buildings with associated hard standing associated with Springalls Farm.
- 2.4 The site is located outside the settlement boundary within land defined as being 'Countryside' in the Proposals Map. The site is not within a conservation area and the adjacent dwelling is not Statutorily listed. The site falls within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore within an area of low flood risk.

3 SITE HISTORY

- 3.1 The site has been the subject of the following applications:

222305 – Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for the use of a barn building for the storage and restoration of vintage vehicles, a mixed use of the surrounding land for the storage of agricultural machinery and historic materials, with adjacent hard standing utilised for the storage of old vehicles. Granted 29 September 2022.

- 3.2 The reason for granting the Certificate was ‘Based on the evidence provided and the Local Planning Authority’s own information, it is considered to have been demonstrated that use of the barn building for the restoration of cars as the applicant’s personal hobby has been ongoing for a continuous period of 10 years.’

- 3.3 It is also acknowledged that the certificate does not relate to the use for the land outside of the barn building for storage.

230568 – Full application for the change of use of land to facilitate the provision of hard standing and the erection of 2no. side extensions to the existing barn, plus alterations to fenestration (Part retrospective). Refused 25 May 2023.

- 3.4 Application 230568 was refused for the following reason:

“The proposal by virtue of its scale, height and siting together with the increase in hard standing would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area and would represent an unwarranted extension into the countryside, which fails to maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment. The proposed development is therefore contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework 2021, and policies CP1, CP3 and CP11 of the Core Strategy.”

- 3.5 Following the refusal of the above application, the proposed development has subsequently been amended, as summarised below:

- The proposal is now to extend the barn on its north-eastern side only, on an area of existing hard standing. The extension would fill in the gap between the existing barn and the boundary of the site with the rear garden of Springfield and would not therefore encroach development further into the open countryside.
- The overall size and scale of the extension has also been significantly reduced, as set out in Chapter 5 of this statement.

4 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

i) National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

- 4.1 Paragraph 7 states that the purpose of the planning system is to achieve sustainable development. There are three overarching objectives to sustainable development which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways: economic, social and environmental objectives. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 10).
- 4.2 Paragraphs 131-141 are concerned with design. It states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. Paragraph 135 states that planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments (among other things):
- 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;
 - Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development;
 - Sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting;
 - Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture layout and appropriate and effective landscaping.
- 4.3 Chapter 15 is concerned with conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Paragraph 187 states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by (among other things):
- Protecting and enhancing valued landscaped (para 187.a)

- Recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services (para 187.b)
- Minimising impact on and providing net gains for biodiversity (para 187.d)

ii) **The Development Plan**

Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010) (CS)

- 4.4 Policy CP1 (Sustainable Development) requires that a number of criteria are met. These include maintaining or enhancing the high quality of the environment; providing attractive, functional, accessible, safe, secure and adaptable schemes; demonstrate how they support opportunities for reducing the need to travel particularly by the car; and contribute towards reaching zero – carbon development as soon as possible.
- 4.5 Policy CP3 (General Principles for Development) requires, amongst other matters, that new development is of an appropriate scale, mass, activity, built form, height, materials, character and design quality. Proposals should not adversely affect the amenities of neighbouring land uses. It also states that proposals should have no detrimental impact upon important ecological, heritage, landscaping or geological features or water courses.
- 4.6 Policy CP11 (Proposals outside of Development Limits (including Countryside). The policy states that in order 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 they meet certain criteria, including:
- It does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings;

Wokingham Borough Managing 'Development Delivery Document (2014) (MDD Local Plan)

- 4.7 Policy CC01 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development) states that there will be a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Planning applications that accord with policies in the Development Plan will be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.8 Policy CC03 (Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping) sets out the Council's requirements for green infrastructure, trees and landscaping.
- 4.9 Policy TB21 (Landscape Character). States that proposals shall retain or enhance the condition, character and features that contribute to the landscape.

5 THE PLANNING APPLICATION

- 5.1 The application is for a side extension to the existing barn which is lawfully used for the storage and restoration of vintage vehicles as the applicant's personal hobby.
- 5.2 Following the refusal of the previous application, the applicant has provided further detailed information regarding activities that take place within the existing barn and the need for its extension as these were not considered to have been thoroughly represented in the previous submission.
- 5.3 In summary, the applicant has been restoring old HGV vehicles as a hobby for approximately the last 15 years. Due to the age of the vehicles when they arrive at the site, they consist of mostly rust and the applicant therefore completes a full rebuild on the body and the engine as his hobby. As these vehicles are technically HGV's, they take up a lot of space when remolding aluminum foot wells, chassis and the body itself plus the space required for a full HGV engine rebuild. Due to the age of the vehicles, once they are built and ready for showing they are stored within the barn to keep them out of the elements of the weather. Currently the applicant has three HGV vehicles stored; one fully complete and two that are still under restoration. The proposed extension is therefore required to provide additional space within the building for further work to be completed and for the applicant's hobby to be carried out under cover.
- 5.4 The restored vehicles are displayed at various Rallies and Shows, with all contributions going to local charities. This year the applicant is taking part in the Basingstoke Festival of Transport, Castle Combe Steam Rally, Classic and Vintage Commercial show, amongst others. It is a hobby which gives the applicant much personal enjoyment along with those who have the opportunity to view the restored vehicles at the various events.
- 5.5 As stated above, the site is within the countryside where CS Policy CP11 aims to protect the separate identity of settlements and maintain the quality of the

environment. The main issue is therefore considered to be the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the surrounding countryside.

i) Character and appearance, including the effect on the surrounding countryside and landscape

- 5.6 The proposal is for a side extension to the existing barn. It would measure 3.5m wide and a depth of 13.8m - equivalent to that of the main barn. It would have a shallow mono pitch roof which would sit below the eaves height of the existing building and would therefore appear subservient to it. The extension would have a maximum height of about 4.6m and an eaves height of 3.9m. The proposed extension is well designed and is in keeping with the main barn. The materials would match those of the existing building. The proposal therefore complies with the design requirements of CS Policies CP1 and CP3.
- 5.7 The size and scale of the proposed extension is significantly less than that of two extensions proposed under LPA ref. 230568 which were proposed on either side of the building. These extensions were shown to have a total proposed floor area of about 99.34m² and a volume of around 406.81m³ and would have resulted in a building with a footprint of 199.08m² and a volume of 935.66m³.
- 5.8 The single extension now proposed has a floor area of 48.3m² and a volume of 205m³. This would result in the building having a total floor area of 154.56m² and a volume of 741m³. This is illustrated in the Table below:

	Existing Barn	Previous proposal	Current proposal
Floor space	106.26m ²	99.34m ²	48.3m ²
Volume	536m ³	406.81m ³	205m ³

- 5.9 In addition to the considerable scaling back of the proposed extensions to the building, the extension proposed is on an area of hard standing on its north-eastern side. This area of hard standing is understood to be lawful as confirmed in the officer report for the LDC (i.e. ref. 222305) where the officer states that the hard standing is seen in 2013 aerials. It has therefore been present on the site for in excess of 10 years.
- 5.10 As stated above, the previous application proposed an extension on both sides of the building, with the extension on the south western side encroaching into open countryside. In relation to the current proposal, the siting of the proposed extension to the north-eastern side of the building on an area of existing hard standing ensures that the development would not encroach further into the surrounding countryside. The extension would essentially fill in the 3.5m gap between the side of the barn and the boundary of the site with the rear garden of Springfield. There is also a coniferous hedge within the garden of Springfield which runs adjacent to most of the boundary with the application site. Views of the barn from Trowes Lane are already restricted due to its distance from the road and existing screening by Springfield and associated outbuildings and hedges. Any glimpses of the extension that might be obtainable would be against the backdrop of the existing building which is higher than the proposed extension with the extension sitting beneath its eaves, as well as the larger scale commercial uses to the south-east of the site. The proposed extension would not therefore have any significant adverse effect on the visual amenity, character and appearance of the area.
- 5.11 It is therefore concluded that the proposed extension to the barn would not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings and would have no significant adverse effect on the character and appearance of the countryside. Accordingly, the proposal complies with the objectives of CS Policies CP1, CP3 and CP11 which seek to protect the countryside from inappropriate development and/or encroachment. It would also accord with Policies CC03 and TB21 of the MDD Local Plan which promote the protection of the green infrastructure of the Borough. There would also be no conflict with Chapter 15

of the NPPF which is concerned with conserving and enhancing the natural environment

ii) Amenity

- 5.12 The barn is used by the owner and occupier of the adjacent dwelling Springfield. Notwithstanding this, the proposed extension is some distance away from the dwelling itself and is partially screened by conifer hedging. There are no other residential dwellings close to the site. The proposal would not therefore raise any amenity issues and thus would comply with Policy CP3 of the CS and paragraph 135 (f) of the NPPF insofar as they seek to protect the amenity of existing and future users.

iii) Access and Parking

- 5.13 The application does not propose any changes to the existing access arrangement onto Trowes Lane are proposed. The proposed extension would not result in any material intensification of vehicle movements to and from the site.

iv) Landscape and Trees

- 5.14 The proposed extension would not have any impact on existing hedges or other landscape features. Therefore, the landscape character of the site would be unaffected by the proposal and the proposal complies with MDD Local Plan Policy TB21 in this regard.

v) Ecology

- 5.15 The application is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Bats). An internal and external inspection of the building was undertaken. The appraisal concludes that there was no evidence of bats (current or historically) within the workshop. The building is in good condition however due to the construction materials, poor thermal properties and high levels of disturbance, the building has no potential to support roosting bats. No further surveys were required and there are no grounds to update the report given that the building has not changed since 2023.

- 5.16 A Great Crested Newt Assessment and Non-Licensed Method Statement has been provided. Its summary is as follows:

“There is a large pond at the north eastern boundary of the site - located approximately 35m from the annex building to be demolished - The pond is subdivided by a concrete wall and was assessed as two ponds (Ponds 1a and 1b).

The pond has a HSI score of “Poor” and it very unlikely that it will host GCN.

Given: 1) the small amount of land of land within the works footprint – no more than 100m2 (2) the poor suitability of the habitats to be affected by the proposals – building and hardstanding and 3) the fact that the nearby pond(s) are unlikely to host GCN,- it is considered highly unlikely that GCN will be affected by the proposals. The site will therefore not need to be registered under the Naturespace District Licence or a conventional licence.

If the method statement detailed in this report is followed this impact will be reduced further.”

vi) Flooding and drainage

- 5.17 The site is within Flood Zone 1 so is at a low risk of flooding. There would therefore be no conflict with Policy CC09 of the Local Plan in this regard.

6 DESIGN AND ACCESS

a) Use and Amount

- 6.1 The proposal is for an extension to an existing barn which is used by the applicant in connection with his personal hobby which involves the restoration and storage of vintage HGV vehicles. The proposed extension would have a floor area of 48.2m² and a volume of 205m³.

b) Layout

- 6.2 The proposed extension would be located on the north-eastern side of the building on an existing area of hard surfacing. It would fill in the gap between the existing barn and the boundary of the site with Springfields which is owned and occupied by the applicant. There would therefore be no encroachment into the open countryside as a result of the proposal. The existing access and parking arrangement would be maintained.

c) Scale

- 6.3 The scale, form and height of the proposed extension would be appropriate and would ensure that it would be subservient in appearance to the main barn.

(d) Appearance

- 6.4 The proposed extension would have a shallow mono pitch roof and would reflect the design and appearance of the existing barn. It would be constructed in materials to match the exiting building.

d) Landscaping and Trees

- 6.5 The proposal would not have any adverse effect on existing landscaping, trees or the biodiversity of the site.

e) Access and Parking

- 6.6 No changes to the existing access onto Trowes Lane are proposed and parking provision on the site would remain unaltered. The proposal would not lead to any material increase in vehicle movements to and from the site.

7 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1 The application should be supported for the following reasons:

- i) The proposal is for an extension to an existing barn which is lawfully used by the applicant in connection with his personal hobby which involves the restoration and storage of vintage vehicles which are then regularly displayed at various rallies and shows, with all contributions going towards local charities. The extension would provide much needed space for the renovation and storage of vintage HGVs in connection with this hobby allowing the hobby and storage of the vehicles to be undercover and not exposed to inclement weather conditions.
- ii) The proposed extension to the barn would be on an existing area of hard standing and given its siting in between the barn and the boundary of the site with Springfields, would not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings. Accordingly, the proposal would have no significant adverse effect on the character and appearance of the countryside. The proposal therefore complies with the objectives of CS Policies CP1, CP3 and CP11 which seek to protect the countryside from inappropriate development and/or encroachment.
- iii) The proposed extension is well designed and is in keeping with and subservient to the main barn. Materials would match those of the existing building. The proposal therefore complies with the design requirements of CS Policies CP1 and CP3.
- iv) The barn is used by the owner and occupier of the adjacent dwelling Springfield. The proposed extension is some distance away from the dwelling itself and is partially screened by conifer hedging. There are no other residential dwellings close to the site. The proposal would not therefore raise any amenity issues.

- v) No alterations are proposed to the existing highway and parking arrangements. The proposal would not result in any material intensification of vehicle movements to and from the site.
- vi) The proposal would not adversely affect any trees or other natural features of merit.
- vii) The application is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Bats) and a Great Crested Newt Assessment and Non-Licensed Method Statement which collectively demonstrate that no harm to the ecology of the site would occur as a result of the proposal.