

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	252600
Site Address:	Swallowfield Parish Stores, The Street, Swallowfield, Wokingham, RG7 1QY
Expiry Date:	5 January 2026
Site Visit Date:	13 November 2025
Proposal: Full application for the proposed installation of refrigeration condenser unit and acoustic cabinet on the front elevation of the building.	

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 CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 – Development Limits CC06 – Noise CC07 – Parking
Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (JMWP)	DM5 - Protection of the Countryside DM15 - Site History
Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU)	CE6 – Reducing energy consumption in existing buildings CE7 – Low carbon and renewable energy generation C5 – Parking and electric vehicle charging C6 – Technology and innovation in transport ER6 – Town, district and local centres and shopping parades DH2 – Safeguarding amenity DH3 – Shopfronts
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
150298	Full application for proposed demolition of rear single storey extension & construction of part single/part two storey extension to form 2no two	Approved 20/11/2015

	bedroom flats, 1no two bedroom house, 1no one bedroom flat, refurbishment of shop unit and construction of 2no semi-detached two bedroom bungalows with associated parking.	
43442	Construction of new porch to link offices.	Approved 03/11/1994
41846	Change of use of offices to residential and change of use of store to office.	Approved 07/01/1994
34759	Change of use of lounge and part dining room to shop (Class A1 use).	Approved 23/01/1990
34758	Change of use of lounge to shop (A1 Use) ground floor to offices (B1 Use) conversion of first floor to maisonette.	18/01/1990
30382	Conversion of store/parts shop to form office accommodation.	Approved 29/06/1988
25049	Change of use of part ground floor from retail to office.	Approved 08/04/1986

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Environmental Health – No objection.

WBC Drainage – No objection.

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 is owned by Swallowfield Parish Council and comprises a mixed-use building with a convenience store and post office on the ground floor, a two-bedroom flat above and two flats to the rear. The eastern side of the building comprises a two-storey semi-detached dwelling. There is parking to the front of the building for customers and resident parking to the rear.

Adjoining the site to each side are detached residential properties; Hollycroft and Willowbrook.

The eastern end of The Street falls within Swallowfield Conservation Area, however, the application site lies outside the heritage area. The application building is not listed.

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. Policy CC01 of the MDD Local Plan 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.

In this instance, the site is located within settlement limits within a limited development location and is acceptable in terms of the principles stated in the Core Strategy.

Core Strategy policy CP15 states that outside the nine Core Employment Areas, and within settlement limits, 'the redevelopment, refurbishment or minor extension of buildings in employment use, will be acceptable in principle'. The application site is not located in one of the nine Core Employment Area but is within settlement limits and does employ staff to run the business. It is, therefore, compliant with CS Policy 15.

Section 7.7 of the BDG supports mixed use development. It states that 'Successful communities require a range of different uses, including residential, workplaces, local facilities and services'.

It also accords with the relevant policies in the MDD Local Plan. Policy TB17 states that proposals that retain and enhance the provision of day-to-day shopping facilities in Local Centres, neighbourhood and village shops, will be supported'. Paragraph 3.83 specifies that 'day-to-day shopping facilities' include post offices, newsagents and convenience stores selling food items.

The proposed development is therefore, acceptable in principle.

Character of the Area:

The proposed development consists of the installation of an external condenser unit (J&E Hall Model JEHR-0100) in an acoustic enclosure at ground floor level on the front elevation of the building. The unit would be ancillary to the commercial use of the premises and is necessary to support the ongoing operation of the business.

Alternative locations were investigated by the Local Councillor and Swallowfield Parish Council (the owners of the site) prior to the submission of this application; however, due to the technical requirements for the storage units within the shop, the only place to site the acoustic unit was on the front elevation. They propose that the best and most obscure position would be below the false window and in a colour that is neutral.

The site is situated in the heart of Swallowfield Village on the main road that runs through the settlement. The building contains an essential 'day-to-day facility' as it serves as the only local convenience store with Post Office in the village. Therefore, the proposal would comply with MDD Local Plan Policy TB17 as the proposed development would enhance and retain the only local shopping facility.

CS Policy CP1 promotes sustainable development. It specifies that permission will be granted for development that minimises the consumption and use of resources and contributes towards the goal of reaching zero-carbon developments by minimising energy consumption. The proposed condenser unit would replace the existing shop equipment which is dated and inefficient and which generates significant levels of heat within the shop. The proposed replacement refrigeration units would be more energy

efficient and require an external unit to remove the heat.

The proposed modern unit would ensure the shop can continue to operate and function to serve the local community whilst committing to modern energy performance standards which aim to reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions. Therefore, the proposal is considered to bring positive change to the existing local facility which would bring further environmental, social and economic benefits to the local community.

Siting and Scale

CP3 of the Core Strategy states that proposals should be of an appropriate scale of mass, built form and character of the area. SH3 of the BDG states that proposals for shop fronts should respond positively to the design of the building as a whole as well as to the scale and architectural character of the building.

The host building is of traditional construction with a red brick façade with two-framed sash windows divided by glazing bars. Above the windows are flat arch, brick lintels with stone sills below. To the northeast of the proposed unit is the entrance door to the adjoining residential unit which has a solid front door with a glass fanlight above. These traditional architectural features compliment the overall appearance of the building.

The unit and enclosure would measure approximately 1.65m in width, 1m in height, 0.95m in depth and would be sited below the central ground-floor sash window. No alterations are proposed to the window or surrounding architectural detailing. As the top of the acoustic cabinet would sit below the existing window, full views of the window would be retained within the street scene. Therefore, the proposed location of the unit is considered acceptable as it ensures that views are not obscured and do not detract from the existing architectural features that contribute to the local character.

The acoustic cabinet would be constructed from metal and would be finished in a neutral grey. The modest scale of the unit, together with its neutral finish and low-level positioning, would limit its prominence in the street scene and would not result in visual clutter or harm to the appearance of the shop front or wider area.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Overlooking, Loss of Light & Overbearing:

Due to the small scale and location of the proposed development, there are no concerns of this nature that would be generated.

Noise:

Residential accommodation is located above, to the rear and side of the commercial unit. The location of the condenser unit at ground-floor level, combined with the installation of the acoustic cabinet and separation distance to residential windows would reduce potential noise and vibration impacts.

The council's Environmental Health officer reviewed the proposal and raised no objection. They commented:

"The Environmental Protection Team have reviewed the submitted Plant Noise Assessment Report (Auricl Acoustic Consulting, dated 30 September 2025) and provide the following comments.

The applicant proposes a new J&E Hall JEHR 0100 condenser unit, to be located on the north western elevation of the property, within an acoustic enclosure. The assessment includes:

- A 4 day unmanned environmental noise survey undertaken in September 2025.*
- Background noise levels representative of nearby residential receptors:*
 - 45 dB LA90 daytime*
 - 37 dB LA90 night time*
- Predicted plant noise level of 28 dBA at the nearest façade (approx. 3 m distance).*

The consultant concludes that the plant noise results in a "low noise impact" during both day and night, in accordance with BS 4142:2014+A1:2019.

Based on the information provided, the predicted noise emissions from the proposed plant fall well below existing background sound levels, indicating a low likelihood of adverse impact for nearby residential properties, there the Environmental Protection Team have no objections the proposal".

Therefore, the proposed unit would not result in any detrimental harm to residential amenity, in accordance with Section 15 of the NPPF, Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3, and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC06. A condition will be attached to ensure noise levels do not exceed those set out in the submitted 'Plant Noise Assessment Report' (Auricl Acoustic Consulting, 30 September 2025, Ref: R/PNA/1/250930). The condition is necessary to safeguard neighbouring properties from noise disturbance.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

The proposed unit would not impact the existing parking arrangements which are considered acceptable.

Flooding and Drainage:

The application site is located in Flood Zone 1 according to Environment Agency mapping. The council's Drainage officer was consulted and raised no objection to the proposal.

Conclusion:

For the reasons set out above and subject to conditions, the proposal is acceptable as it accords with local policy and guidance.

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:	Not required
Recommendation:	Approve
Date:	12 December 2025
Earliest date for decision:	1 December 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	22/12/25

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Limited Development Location

Bat Roost Habitat Suitability

Spencers Wood and Swallowfield Ward

Swallowfield Parish