

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	243207
Site Address:	Stanford End Farm, Barge Lane, Swallowfield, Wokingham, RG7 1SY
Expiry Date:	20 March 2026
Site Visit Date:	19 March 2025
Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of a single storey extension to the existing dwelling following demolition of existing structures, facilitated through a partial change of use, with landscaping and changes to fenestration, plus the installation of a new sewage treatment plant with associated drainage works.	

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 CP6 – Managing Travel Demand 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 CC02 – Development Limits CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB05 – Housing Mix TB06 – Development of Private Residential Gardens TB07 – Internal Space Standards TB21 – Landscape Character TB23 – Biodiversity and Development TB24 – Designated Heritage Assets TB25 – Archaeology TB26 – Buildings of Traditional Local Character and Areas of Special Character	
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List	

PLANNING HISTORY		
Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
223583	Householder application for the proposed single storey extension and new sewage treatment	Withdrawn:

	plant following demolition of the existing attached outbuildings, barns and existing conservatory, insertion of 1 no. first storey window and other changes to fenestration.	February 2023
223584	Application for Listed Building consent for the proposed single storey extension and new sewage treatment plant following demolition of the existing attached outbuildings, barns and existing conservatory, insertion of 1 no. first storey window and comprehensive refurbishment of existing dwelling house.	Withdrawn: February 2023

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Drainage – No objection
WBC Highways – No objection subject to conditions
WBC Landscape and Trees – No objection subject to a condition
WBC Built Heritage Officer – No objection subject to conditions
WBC CIL – CIL liable development
WBC Ecology – No objection subject to conditions

External

Thames Water Utilities Ltd – No comments
Berkshire Archeology – No objection subject to a condition

REPRESENTATIONS

Swallowfield Council	Parish	Object to the application on visual amenity grounds, relating to the countryside setting and Listed Building
Ward Member(s)		No comments received
Neighbours		No comments received

APPRAISAL

Context: Stanford End Farm lies on the western side of Barge Lane, Swallowfield. The site comprises the main farmhouse (a Grade II listed late-Georgian building), together with ancillary buildings and barns. The surrounding area is characterised by large, open fields, with the River Loddon located to the south-west.

The proposal seeks full planning permission for a single-storey extension to the Grade II listed farmhouse. The extension would be facilitated by the demolition of existing agricultural storage buildings and a partial change of use of the former buildings' footprint from agricultural to residential. The wider scheme also includes the erection of a rear terrace, alterations to the farmhouse fenestration, associated soft and hard landscaping, and the installation of a new package sewage treatment plant with associated drainage runs and an attenuation basin positioned in the field to the southwest of the site.

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 application site is located within the countryside and therefore lies outside the defined Development Limits. Core Strategy Policy CP11 seeks to restrict inappropriate development in the countryside in order to protect its character and rural setting.

Under the adopted development plan, extensions to existing dwellings within the countryside may be considered acceptable where they remain proportionate and subordinate to the host dwelling, and where they do not result in an intrusive encroachment of domestic form into the surrounding open countryside. In this instance, the proposed extension is positioned entirely within the established envelope of built development formed by the existing buildings and projects only into the existing garden area, which is already experienced as part of the residential setting.

The Proposed Site Plan demonstrates that the works would remain tightly contained between existing structures and established boundaries, with no projection into the open fields beyond the existing farmstead. The only element extending beyond this area relates to drainage works to the southwest; however, given their limited scale and functional nature, these works would not give rise to any visual harm to the wider countryside.

The development would therefore not represent excessive encroachment into the surrounding rural landscape or an unjustified expansion of residential activity into the wider countryside. Rather, the proposal would consolidate and rationalise the existing residential use through a more coherent and concentrated form of development.

With regard to the partial change of use, this is limited in scope and relates primarily to the agricultural outbuildings proposed for demolition and the immediate land they occupy. The wider site already operates within a mixed residential and agricultural context, and the structures in question function only as minor storage buildings with no active operational purpose. Furthermore, the buildings appear to be in a poor and dilapidated condition and possess no apparent architectural merit.

In these circumstances, the removal of these small ancillary agricultural structures would not adversely affect the operational needs or viability of any agricultural enterprise and therefore provides limited justification to withhold planning permission on this basis. The associated change of use would also not result in any discernible expansion of residential activity beyond the already established residential site as these buildings enclose the residential garden of the property.

Overall, the proposal represents a proportionate and subordinate extension to an existing dwelling within the countryside, contained entirely within an established cluster of built form. The modest and localised partial change of use required to facilitate the development would not result in undue intensification of residential use significantly beyond the established site. Although the extension is substantial, the host dwelling is

itself is a large farmhouse and the proposed residential extensions would not result in an inappropriate increase in the overall scale, form or footprint of the original building, when read in the context of the existing dwelling.

Accordingly, the principle of development is considered acceptable and compliant with Core Strategy Policy CP11.

Heritage: This application is being assessed alongside Listed Building Consent application 243208, which contains a detailed appraisal of the proposals' impact on the heritage asset.

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that development must ensure the preservation of any nearby listed building, including its setting. Section 16 of the NPPF requires consideration of the harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset. Policies TB24, TB25 and TB26 in the MDD Local Plan refer to heritage assets. Policy TB24 of the MDD Local Plan requires the conservation and enhancement of Listed Buildings, Historic Parks and Gardens, Ancient Monuments and Conservation Areas, including their views and setting.

Following extensive discussions between the applicant and the Heritage Officer, and subsequent design revisions, the Heritage Officer has confirmed that the proposals are acceptable and comply with national and local planning policy. Accordingly, no objection has been raised, subject to a number of heritage-related conditions, which have been agreed with the agent.

Character of the Area: The site forms part of an established mixed-use site comprising a mixture of agricultural barns, open-sided stores, and the Grade II listed farmhouse. Alongside the adjoining site to the northeast, this would have once formed a large farmstead setting. The Existing Site Plan and site photographs demonstrates that the farmhouse already sits within a clearly defined residential garden, framed by the wider collection of outbuildings and hardstanding that together create an established cluster within the rural landscape.

As discussed within the Principle of Development section, the overall footprint of the proposed extension is notably offset by the removal of these existing agricultural outbuildings, meaning the overall spread of development across the site is not substantially increased. Notwithstanding this, it must still be acknowledged that the resultant footprint remains appreciable and exceeds what would typically be expected for a conventional residential extension in the countryside. This was a key concern identified during the assessment of the previously withdrawn applications (223583 and 223584) and in subsequent pre-application discussions. Throughout those stages, the Local Planning Authority highlighted that for any future proposal to be considered acceptable, the extension would need to demonstrate a clear and convincing degree of subservience to the Grade II listed farmhouse, in order to mitigate against the large footprint. In particular, it was stressed that a substantially lower and visually recessive ridge height, especially at the glazed link element, would be essential to ensuring that the historic building retained its primacy and that the extension was visually appropriate within its context.

It is thought that the revised scheme has successfully addressed this requirement. The design and appearance of the buildings reproduce the form of agricultural development and utilitarian character through simple massing, fenestration and restrained detailing and the use of barn-like proportions. The submitted elevations confirm that the new extension achieves a distinctly subordinate roofline and massing relative to the main farmhouse, with the link section in particular now clearly secondary in scale. The design revisions between the withdrawn proposal and the current submission demonstrate a meaningful response to the feedback previously provided by the LPA and this is shown below:



Proposed front Elevations pertaining to application 223583 & 223584



Proposed front Elevation pertaining to the current scheme

In more specific design terms, the proposed single-storey extension has been conceived as a low-profile addition that responds positively to the established built form of the site. The submitted elevations illustrate a simple and traditional roof form, with a ridge height set significantly below that of the historic farmhouse. This ensures a clear visual hierarchy between the buildings and reinforces the subordinate role of the extension in terms of both scale and massing.

Whilst the extension does not directly replicate the historic farmstead layout, its broadly linear configuration reflects the prevailing rhythm and alignment of the existing development. In this way, the proposal maintains a visual relationship with the established pattern of built form and integrates comfortably with the character of the site.

The extension projects into the existing garden area through the proposed terrace element. However, this modest expansion occurs entirely within land already associated with the residential garden and perceived as part of the domestic setting. As such, it is not considered to affect the rural setting of the site. As noted previously, the development would remain fully contained within the established envelope of

buildings, with no encroachment into the surrounding open fields. Consequently, the proposal would not result in any noticeable spread of built form into the wider countryside.

Turning away from matters of rhythm and scale, it should also be noted that, from a purely visual perspective, the proposal establishes a clear and deliberate contrast between the listed farmhouse and the proposed extension. This design approach reinforces the hierarchy of the buildings, ensuring that the historic farmhouse remains clearly legible as the principal structure, while the extension reads as a distinctly secondary addition. By adopting a more contemporary architectural expression, expressed through restrained detailing and the use of modern materials, the design avoids creating a poor recreation of the style of the historic building while still remaining sympathetic to its character.

The proposed drainage infrastructure to the south-west comprises modest engineering features that would sit discreetly within the landscape and would not introduce visually intrusive built form. As stated previously, given their limited scale and largely functional nature, these elements would not detract from the openness or rural character of the surrounding countryside.

Taken together, the proposed development would improve the overall condition and appearance of the site. Whilst the proposed residential extension represents a more permanent form of development than the agricultural structures to be demolished, its carefully considered scale, subservient form, and deliberate architectural contrast ensure that it would not cause harm to the character of the rural landscape. Instead, the scheme would establish a positive and well-integrated relationship with the existing buildings and the wider countryside setting.

Neighbouring Amenity: Despite the relatively large scale of the development proposed, it is not anticipated that there would be any harm to the adjoining agricultural site or any other neighbours land uses.

Landscape and Trees: On initial review, the Landscape & Trees Officer raised concerns regarding the scale of the proposed extension and terrace, and requested further information demonstrating compliance with Local Plan Policy TB21 and addressing the Council's Landscape Character Assessment.

In response, a comprehensive landscape and visual impact assessment was undertaken and submitted to the LPA, including detailed landscape proposals. Following review, the Landscape & Trees Officer has raised no concerns with the information provided and agrees with the assessment's conclusion that the extension, together with the additional planting and landscaping, will integrate well with the existing landscape character of the surrounding countryside. A condition has been included requiring compliance with the submitted landscape drawings; (471/04, 471/05 & 471/06).

There are no Tree Preservation Order (TPO) trees within or adjacent to the site, and no concerns have been raised in this regard.

Flooding and Drainage: The proposal includes the installation of a new sewage treatment plant with associated drainage works. The southern boundary of the application site lies within Flood Zone 2. Whilst the extension itself is located within Flood Zone 1, the proposed drainage features are within Flood Zone 2, as set out in the RAB Flood Risk Assessment (3058_FRD v2, dated 13/01/2025).

On initial review, the Drainage Officer considered that it had not been adequately demonstrated that the proposed drainage features would be located outside the climate change flood extent, to ensure that the proposed attenuation volumes would not be compromised, potentially resulting in flooding to the property or surrounding land.

In response, the applicant submitted further drainage information, including clarification of the drainage design, section drawings, infiltration details, and anticipated run-off rates.

On the basis of the revised strategy, the Drainage Officer has raised no objection in principle. Further clarification was requested regarding the acceptability of land beyond the red line boundary accommodating the discharge pipe to the main river; however, following further discussions between the Planning and Drainage teams, it was concluded that this matter would not prevent planning permission from being granted. Notwithstanding this, the applicant will require a Flood Risk Activity Permit (FRAP) from the Environment Agency to undertake these works, which will be highlighted by way of an informative.

It is noted that the proposed sewage treatment plant is located within an agricultural field beyond the residential curtilage of the farmhouse. The land on which it is sited does not form part of the residential use of the dwelling and is not included within the change of use sought under the current application. As such, the installation of the sewage treatment plant represents an ancillary piece of infrastructure rather than development within the residential curtilage of the dwelling and cannot be treated as incidental householder development. Instead, it represents standalone operational development on land in non-residential use, which requires separate planning consideration and assessment.

Ecology:

Biodiversity Net Gain

Following extensive discussions between the agent, Planning Officers and WBC Ecology, an agreed position on Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) has been reached.

The applicant's ecologist submitted an updated BNG Assessment Report and an updated Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation, prepared by Arbtech and dated 26 February 2026.

Within the updated BNG Assessment Report and Statutory Metric, the baseline habitat has been reclassified as 'vegetated garden', which WBC Ecology agrees is the correct baseline classification. WBC Ecology also agrees with the baseline habitat categories and condition assessments.

Under the statutory BNG regime, the development must deliver a minimum 10% net gain in habitat, hedgerow and watercourse units. To secure this, a Biodiversity Gain Plan will be required and must be approved prior to commencement of development, to be secured by condition. The Gain Plan must include a Biodiversity Gain Site Reference Number, confirming that any off-site units are recorded on the Biodiversity Gain Site Register. The LPA will be unable to discharge the condition unless the off-site units are registered, allocated and publicly viewable on the register.

Protected Species

An emergence and re-entry survey was undertaken at the site in July 2025. The survey concluded that, given the nature of the findings, a bat licence from Natural England will be required to lawfully permit the works as proposed. The LPA is satisfied with the survey effort and agrees with the conclusions reached by the ecologist. An appropriately worded condition has been agreed with the agent.

Highway Access and Parking Provision: The Highways Officer notes that acceptable parking provision has been provided and therefore raises no objection to the development, subject to the extension remaining incidental to the host dwelling.

Archaeology: There are potential archaeological implications with this proposed development as demonstrated by Berkshire Archaeology's Historic Environment Record. The site lies close c.330-500m north of the route Roman Road known as the Devils Highway and a further conjectured route running northeast from Chequer Lane. To the east, from c.100m, the adjacent field has evidenced spreads of prehistoric lithics, Roman and Medieval pottery assemblages, indicating the landscape has long been in use. The wider area evidences a Medieval occupation landscape with Medieval settlement including a moated manor c.1km north, near the Priory, and Medieval agricultural ridge and furrow east towards Riseley.

Although this is not a largescale development in relative terms, the area where attenuation pond and drainage field will be created is likely to have never previously been developed, therefore any archaeology in these areas may remain undisturbed.

In accordance with the above, Berkshire Archaeology have recommended a condition comprising the requirement for a programme of archaeological work, including a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) to be carried out and approved by the LPA prior to any development taking place. The condition is considered appropriate in order to mitigate for the potential impact of the development,

Conclusion: For all the above, the proposal is acceptable and the application is recommended for approval.

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:	30 March 2026
Earliest date for decision:	7 December 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	1 April 2026

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

- *Countryside*
- *Flood Zone 2*
- *Archaeological Zone*
- *Bat Habitat*