



## Woolf Bond Planning

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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.**  
**APPLICATION NUMBER 242859.**

Thank you for your letter dated 14 November 2024. In putting together the information requested, the applicant has reviewed the energy requirements for their home given the and attached to this letter are amended plans which include slate solar roof tiles as a form of renewable energy to contribute towards a net zero future. These are discussed in more detail below.

In response to the three matters raised in your letter, regarding the first matter, I attach a Bat Survey dated 12 June 2020 and Bat Survey dated 7<sup>th</sup> September. The report is valid for two years from the date of the assessment (September 2023).

Regarding the 2<sup>nd</sup> matter, the application is to replace an existing roof. It does not require the submission of a Tree Survey. I produce some photographs taken from earlier this year which show that there are no trees that are affected by the proposal to replace the existing roof.



Photograph taken 28 January 2024 showing the site from Wargrave Road and 3 Riverside in background with no trees on the site.



Photograph taken 28 January 2024 from Wargrave Road looking towards the site and River Thames in background. No trees on site.



Photograph taken 28 January 2024 showing the site from Wargrave Road with no trees on the site.

Regarding the third matter, the following calculations are provided to assist. I refer you to my letter dated 11 November 2024 which sets out the reasoned justification for the proposed replacement roof.

The existing Volume is 311.47m<sup>3</sup>

The proposed roof would have a volume of 153m<sup>3</sup>

The resulting total volume for the dwelling would be 464.47m<sup>3</sup>

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. I enclose amended plans 3596-202A and 3596-203B for the proposed roof plan and proposed elevations to show slate solar roof tiles. The sustainability benefits are considered to be an improvement to the scheme and are part and parcel of the proposed development applied for. This is a minor change that would not be noticeable. The amended drawings are to be substituted for drawing numbers 3596-202 and 3596-203A. Thus, the schedule of Drawings is now:

|                            |             |           |
|----------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| 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. | 3596-200  |
| Proposed Floor Plans       | Drawing No. | 3596-201A |
| Proposed Roof Plan         | Drawing No. | 3596-202A |
| Proposed Elevations        | Drawing No. | 3596-203B |

The proposed roof would see a volume increase by 49%. With the reasons we have set out in our letter dated 11 November 2024, the proposal can be supported and is acceptable 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 29<sup>th</sup> 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.*

As we set out in our letter dated 11 November 2024, 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 fits 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 is reproduced from our letter dated 11 November 2024 which 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 the Regulation 19 Local Plan Update Proposed Submission Plan has been published and is subject to public consultation until 13 November 2024.

Furthermore, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2023) 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 38 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 or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which **would:**
  - **not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development;** or
  - not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.’ (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 disproportion 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 a greater impact upon 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 impact on 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 glazing is recessed behind the canopy and allows for light to be received within the dwelling to enhance its internal environment. This feature is similar to other examples seen within other dwellings in the vicinity of the site.

The verdant mature landscaped 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 preserves 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 ensures 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.

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 fits 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.

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. 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

*for Woolf Bond Planning Ltd (obo Mr. Doherty)*

Enclosures:

2 Riverside - Bat Survey June 2020

2 Riverside – Bat Survey Sept 2023

Drawing No. 3956-202A - PROPOSED ROOF PLAN

Drawing No. 3596-203B – PROPOSED ELEVATIONS.