

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	250932
Site Address:	179 Loddon Bridge Road, Woodley, Wokingham, RG5 4BP
Expiry Date:	20 June 2025
Site Visit Date:	7 May 2025
Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of 1no. 4 bedroom dwelling plus restoration of entrance brick wall following demolition of the existing dwelling.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Major Development Location – Woodley
Landscape Character Assessment Area – Woodley-Earley Settled and Farmed Clay
Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone (Major Applications Only)
SSSI Impact Risk Zones
JCEB Mineral Safeguarding Areas

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
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 – Development Limits CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB07 – Internal Space Standards TB21 – Landscape Character TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (JMWP)	The JMWP does not apply to the scale of the proposed development within the site's location.
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document Woodley Design Statement

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PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
F/2014/1812 (Not implemented)	Proposed erection of front, side and rear extension, plus raising of roof to create habitable accommodation to dwelling with front and rear dormer windows.	C/A – 09/10/2014

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Environmental Health: No comments received
WBC Drainage: Request further information before determination
WBC Highways: No objection
WBC Landscape and Trees: No objection subject to condition
WBC CIL: Advice regarding CIL liability
WBC Cleaner and Greener: No comments received
WBC Ecology: No objection

External

Thames Water Utilities Ltd: No comments received

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	Woodley Town Council raised no objections
Ward Member(s)	Cllr Carol Jewell has raised concern with the separation distances between the proposed replacement dwelling and the site's side boundaries. <i>Officer's Comment: This is discussed in the 'Design and Character of the Area' section of the report.</i>
Neighbours	No comments received

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site is a vacant early 20th Century detached bungalow on Loddon Bridge Road, Woodley. The dwelling, which has been largely unaltered since its erection, has fallen into a state of disrepair. The applicant has advised that the building is reliant on temporary steel supports, and that its condition renders restoration unviable. The dwelling forms part of a row of detached properties which are set well back from the highway on a consistent building line.

Proposal:

This application proposes the demolition of the existing dwelling and the erection of a replacement two storey dwelling. The replacement dwelling would be of a greater scale

compared to the existing with a footprint of approximately 120sqm (circa. 45 sqm larger than the existing) with a total ridge height of approximately 6.3m, width of approximately 10.3m and an overall depth of approximately 12.45m. The proposal also comprises the restoration of the existing front boundary wall with no increase in its height or size.

The proposed scheme is similar in terms of its design and scale to a previous scheme for alterations and additions to the existing dwelling approved under consent ref F/2014/1812 dated 09/10/2014. This permission was not implemented and has expired.

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 site is located within settlement limits and as such a replacement dwelling is acceptable in principle subject to an assessment of the impact on the character and appearance of the area, amenity of neighbours and all relevant material considerations.

Design and Character of the Area:

Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy requires developments to maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area in which it is located and must be of high quality design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land uses and occupiers.

With regard to well-designed places, paragraph 135 of the NPPF states that developments should:

- a) function well and add to the overall quality of the area in the long term,
- b) are visually attractive with good architecture, layout and appropriate & effective landscaping,
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities),

Paragraph 139 of the NPPF states that development which is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design as well as any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents.

This section of Loddon Bridge Road has a mixed street scene comprising detached and semi-detached predominantly two storey dwellings as well as single storey bungalows of varying architectural styles and scale. There are various examples of later additions which contribute to the mixed character of the area including first floor extensions. The site forms part of a row of 3no. bungalows which are set well back

from the highway with both adjoining neighbours benefitting from large additions at the rear and habitable accommodation within the loft space.

Siting and Scale

The proposed replacement dwelling would be located in a similar position to the existing. While the proposal would have a considerably larger footprint than the existing, it would be in keeping with similarly sized dwellings within the immediate street scene and would not be out of character in this respect. Moreover, the enlarged footprint to the rear would be set well back from the shared rear building line with both adjoining neighbours. While the proposal would marginally project forward of the existing principal (front) elevation, the dwelling would remain well set back from the highway and broadly in keeping with the established building line.

Concern has been received regarding the separation distances between the replacement dwelling and the site's side boundaries. Within the immediate street scene, dwellings on the western side of Loddon Bridge Road are sited in very close proximity to the northern (flank) boundary of their respective plot, with varying gaps between the built form and the southern (flank) boundary. The proposal would be sited in very close proximity to the site's northern boundary shared with No.181 Loddon Bridge Road. However, this represents no change to the existing relationship between these two properties or the layout of the immediate street scene.

At ground floor level, the southern side (flank) elevation would be set back from the shared boundary with No.177 Loddon Bridge Road by approximately 1m in accordance with the Borough Design Guide SPD. It is acknowledged that the roof form would slightly overhang the flank elevation, resulting in a slight visual degradation of the gap between the buildings at first floor level, however this would not be a significant change from the existing relationship while the retained gap would be in keeping with the rhythm of the street scene.

In terms of height, while the proposed ridgeline would be considerably higher than the existing it would be in keeping with the prevailing building heights along this section of Loddon Bridge Road, where two storey dwellings are prevalent. Moreover, it would not encroach the ridge height of No.177 Loddon Bridge Road adjacent to the south. Overall, the size and siting of the replacement dwelling would not harm the character of the street scene and its surroundings.

Design

Due to the varied street scene, while the proposed gable roof form would be a considerable change from the existing dwelling this would not be out of character with the street scene or the surrounding neighbourhood. The proposed part hipped part gable element is also an appropriate feature which would appear subservient to the main dwelling, tie the development to the adjoining hipped roof bungalows and reduce the overall bulk of the scheme.

Other architectural features including the dormer windows and porch canopy are also proportionate in size and would be in keeping with several neighbouring examples. The proposed fenestration is also proportionately sized and well positioned on the front

façade. In terms of external materials, the proposed facing brickwork, off-white render and hanging roof tiles would be in keeping with the existing dwelling and are common features on the street scene. While it appears that the proposed PVC light sage green window frames would introduce a new element to the street scene, there are a mixture of white and dark coloured frames visible, and it is considered that the colour would relate well with the render finish and not detract from the overall appearance of the dwelling.

There are no concerns relating to the reinstatement of the existing front boundary wall which would remain in keeping with the size and appearance of the original boundary treatment and the visual amenity of the street scene.

Overall, the proposal is of an appropriate scale and appearance and would respect the mixed character of the street scene. The proposal would therefore have an acceptable impact on the visual amenity of the street scene and local character in accordance with Core Strategy policies CP1 & CP3 and the NPPF.

Housing Amenity:

Internal Amenity:

Policy TB07 of the MDD Local Plan and R17 of the SPD require adequate internal space to ensure the layout and size achieves good internal amenity. In accordance with the Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard, a minimum standard of 115m² applies for a 2 storey, 4 bedroom, 7 person occupancy dwelling. The proposed replacement dwelling would have an internal floorspace of approximately 170m² which would exceed this minimum standard.

A dwelling with more than one bedroom should have a main bedroom, which is to have a minimum area of 11.5m² while single bedrooms should have a minimum area of 7.5m². The proposed dwelling would meet these minimum standards, while the proposed ground floor living space and built-in storage is also sufficient. The proposed fenestration would also allow sufficient daylight into all habitable rooms.

Therefore, the level of amenity as proposed is compliant with policy TB07 of the MDD Local Plan and is acceptable.

External Amenity:

R16 of the SPD requires a minimum depth of 11m for rear gardens and a 1m setback from the site boundary to allow access thereto. It should receive direct sunlight and be capable of accommodating play, clothes drying and storage. The proposed development would retain a rear garden depth of approximately 31m which well exceeds the recommended minimum standard. As such, there are no concerns on residential amenity grounds.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Overlooking: With the exception of 3no. rooflights, the proposal would not introduce any first floor windows on the flank (side) elevations of the development facing both adjacent neighbours. Due to their positioning within the roof plane and their modest size they would not introduce direct overlooking onto either adjacent neighbour. To

prevent any potential adverse overlooking opportunities a condition is recommended which restricts the insertion of any additional side facing windows at first floor level or above without consent.

The proposal would retain a circa. 45m minimum separation distance from neighbouring properties on Malvern Close to the west, as such there are no overlooking concerns in respect of the proposed rear facing fenestration.

Loss of Light: Due to the proposed development being set back from the rear elevations of both adjoining neighbours, and the main built form respecting the principal (front) building line there would be no loss of light impact on the front or rear facing fenestration serving both Nos. 177 & 181 Loddon Bridge Road.

The proposal would likely overshadow adjacent side windows facing the proposed development, including rooflights. However, planning history records for both adjoining neighbours indicate that any ground floor windows serve as a secondary outlook for habitable rooms, with the main outlook from front and rear fenestration, while the rooflights serving No.181 also serve as a secondary outlook. Impact on the rooflights serving No.177 would be sufficiently mitigated by the part hipped design of the dwelling and the 1m separation distance between the properties.

Overbearing: Due to the existing relationship with both adjoining neighbours, the minimum 1m flank-to-flank separation distance and the proposal not encroaching the front or rear building lines the proposal would not result in adverse overbearing impact on either adjacent property.

Overall, any potential harm on neighbouring amenities has been sufficiently mitigated, prohibiting any adverse harm over and above the existing level of amenity. The proposal is therefore compliant with Core Strategy policy CP3 in this respect.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

Policy CP6 of the Core Strategy seeks to manage travel demand with sustainable travel modes, appropriate vehicle parking and minimisation of traffic impacts and highway safety concerns. Policy CC07 and Appendix 2 of the MDD Local Plan set out the recommended minimum parking requirements for development proposals.

No change to the site's existing access off Loddon Bridge Road is proposed. An enlarged front parking area would accommodate 3no. off road parking spaces in accordance with the Council's parking standards. An existing shed to the rear of the property would be replaced like for like and used for cycle storage, with direct access to the southern side of the replacement dwelling. The Council's Highways Officer has raised no objection to this arrangement. The proposal therefore accords with Core Strategy policy CP6 and MDD Local Plan policy CC07.

Flooding and Drainage:

Policy CC09 of the MDD Local Plan requires consideration of flood risk from historic flooding and policy CC10 requires sustainable drainage methods and the minimisation of surface water flow. The site falls within Flood Zone 1 with Environment Agency data

indicating that the site is not prone to surface water flooding and the proposal represents no additional flood risk or vulnerability from fluvial sources.

The Council's Drainage Officer has reviewed the proposal and requested the submission of a surface water drainage strategy prior to the determination of the application. While this request is duly noted, the site is already developed, and the proposal would not result in an increase in residential population. Moreover, the increase in footprint resulting from the development is not significant, and the replacement dwelling would be able to connect into the existing drainage system.

Given the site's suburban setting, its location within Flood Zone 1 and the nature of the development it is not considered necessary or reasonable to request the submission of further information relating to drainage or to require consideration of sustainable drainage methods. The proposal would not conflict with policies CC09 and CC10 of the MDD Local Plan.

To ensure that the enlarged front drive does not increase surface water run-off, a condition is recommended which requires it to be constructed from porous materials or provision to direct water run-off to a permeable or porous area within the curtilage of the development, and for it to be retained in perpetuity.

Landscape and Trees:

Policy CC03 of the MDD Local Plan aims to protect green infrastructure networks, promote linkages between public open space and the countryside, retain existing trees and establish appropriate landscaping. Policy TB21 of the MDD Local Plan requires consideration of the landscape character.

The Council's Trees and Landscape Officer has reviewed the proposal and raised no objection, noting that its design and size are in keeping with the street scene and no trees of note would be impacted by the development. The enlarged front drive would result in the loss of grass and some shrubs within the existing front garden. On this basis, the Officer has recommended a condition requiring the submission of a landscaping scheme to be submitted to and approved by the LPA prior to the commencement of the development.

While this request is duly noted, these soft landscape features do not make a significant contribution to the visual amenity of the street scene or the suburban landscape character. Moreover, several neighbouring properties benefit from front drives which extend across their respective frontage, including both immediate adjacent neighbours, while the proposed gravel would be soft in appearance. As such, the proposal would not introduce any adverse harm in this respect, and the recommended condition fails the 6 tests under Paragraph 57 of the NPPF as it is not necessary to improve the proposed development.

Ecology:

The site is not located within an ecological sensitive area and as such there are no implications for protected species or biodiversity. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is now mandatory for major and minor planning applications unless the proposed development

meets the exception criteria set out in paragraph 17 of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024 and The Environment Act 2021 (Commencement No. 8 and Transitional Provisions) Regulations 2024.

Section 8(1) of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024 states that development which:

- a) consists of no more than 9 dwellings;
 - b) is carried out on a site which has an area no larger than 0.5 hectares; and
 - c) consists exclusively of dwellings which are self-build or custom housebuilding
- is exempt from the mandatory BNG requirement of 10% post development. This application meets this exemption and a 10% BNG is therefore not required in this instance.

Conclusion

Subject to conditions, the application is acceptable and is therefore 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, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. 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:	18 June 2025
Earliest date for decision:	14 May 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
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Date:	19 June 2025
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