

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	250020
Site Address:	Arlington, Basingstoke Road, Spencers Wood, Wokingham, RG7 1AE
Expiry Date:	17 March 2025
Site Visit Date:	6 March 2025
Proposal: Householder application for the proposed first floor side extension over garage, including the removal of 2 no. existing chimneys and the addition of 2 no. roof lights.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
Scale and Location of Development Proposals – Modest Development Location – Spencers Wood
Green Routes

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 CP7 – Biodiversity CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping TB26 – Buildings of Traditional Local Character and Areas of Special Character
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List A Vision for Our Villages: Ryeish Green, Spencers Wood, Three Mile Cross

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
33445	Two-storey rear extension to enlarge kitchen and form utility room and WC, bedroom and bathroom	Approve 4 th July 1989
F/2004/3585	Proposed first floor side extension to dwelling.	Approve 1 st February 2005

241627	Application for a certificate of lawfulness for the proposed erection of a rear dormer along with loft conversion to create habitable accommodation to include 2no roof lights to the front plus removal of 2no existing rear/side chimneys.	Refuse 2 nd September 2024
242472	Application for a certificate of lawfulness for the proposed loft conversion to create habitable accommodation along with insertion rooflights, erection of a rear dormer, internal alterations plus removal of 2no. existing rear chimneys.	Approve 18 th October 2024

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Landscape and Trees – No objection subject to condition.
WBC Built Heritage Officer – Objection raised.
WBC Ecology – No objection subject to condition.
WBC Highways – No objection.

External

N/A

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	One comment received: Shinfield Parish Council has concern over the removal of the garage so need reassurance that there is enough parking on site for the size of the property.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received.
Neighbours	One comment received: 1. Concern that removing the garage eliminates a parking space, especially given Arlington's location near a busy junction. <i>Officer comment:</i> 2. Concern about potential overlooking into the neighbouring garden. Assurance that any replacement windows will match the original sash windows, in keeping with the period character of surrounding properties on The Square. 3. Request construction work be limited to daytime hours, Monday to Friday only.

APPRAISAL

Site Description: A 19th century semi-detached villa fronting the Basingstoke Road in Spencers Wood and located in an Area of Special Character. It is directly opposite

the The School House/Library which is a Listed Building. The property is not in a Conservation Area or within the listed building buffer zone. It benefits from a garage extension and a driveway for off road parking. The front garden is enclosed by a low brick wall.

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 the development should be acceptable providing that it complies with the principles stated in the Core Strategy. 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.

Proposal: The proposed first floor side extension over the garage, including the removal of 2 no. existing chimneys and the addition of 2 no. roof lights. The first-floor side extension will be built above the existing ground floor garage and utility room. It will measure approximately 7.9m in length, 2.8m in width and abut the shared boundary with Tankerton House and restaurant. The front elevation will be set back from the principal elevation of the existing dwelling by approximately 0.6m. The proposed maximum height of the side elevation will be approximately 9.3m.

The first floor will have no. 2 ensuite bathrooms and a walk-in wardrobe/dressing room with a window on the front elevation. The loft space in the extension will facilitate the enlargement of the games room and have one roof light on the front elevation and one roof light on the rear elevation. On the ground floor, the garage will be converted to habitable accommodation to facilitate a home office with a window on the front elevation instead of a door.

Procedural Matters

Revised Parking Layout Plan was received by the Council on 5th August 2025, and after the consultation date had ended. The amendments included the removal of a section of the front boundary wall and relocation of the dropped kerb. The amendment was not considered to have a significant impact on neighbour amenity to warrant extending the consultation period.

Character of the Area:

Core Strategy Policy CP3 states that planning permission will be granted for proposals that are of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials, and character, together with a high quality of design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users, including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life. Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy requires developments to maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment.

The Wokingham Borough Council Design Guide (BDG) also provides some guidance

on front and side extensions as follows:

- R4: The rhythm of buildings and gaps between them along the street frontages is often important to the character of the area.
- R23: Maximum eaves height and ridge height should be no more than those of the existing property.
- R23: Side extensions should be set back by 1m, preferably with a lower roof line and should be at least 1m from the plot boundary.
- R23: Front extensions should not project significantly forward of the building line.

The roof light to the front elevation would be in addition to no. 2 approved roof lights ref 242472. The ridge height of the side extension would be below that of the existing roof and not forward of the principal elevation. Therefore, it complies with R23 of the BDG. The side extension would be built above the existing garage and set back 0.6m from the principal elevation of the dwelling house which is less than the 1m recommended in R23 of the BDG. The side extension will reduce the first-floor separation distance with the immediate neighbour by 2.8m. However, the principal elevation of the existing dwelling is set back approximately 3m from the principal elevation of Tankerton House, lessening the impact of the reduced separation distance. Moreover, the rhythm of buildings along the street is not uniform. Therefore, the development would not be contrary to R4 of the BDG.

The site is located within *The Square Spencers Wood* which is an Area of Special Character. It is also located opposite the School House/Library which is a Listed Building. Policy TB26 states that planning permission will only be granted for proposals to buildings of Traditional Local Character and Areas of Special Character where they demonstrate that they retain and enhance the traditional, historical, local and special character of the building and its setting. In addition, R23 of the Borough Design Guide states that alterations and extensions to buildings should be well designed, respond positively to the original building and contribute to the local character. The proposed windows on the front elevation would be of a similar size and design to the existing windows, blending in well with the overall appearance of the property from the street. Nevertheless, the proposal should also match existing external facing materials of grey and red stock bricks and roof tiles to retain the special character of the building.

Overall, the impact of the development on the character of the local area would be acceptable in relation to policy CP1, CP3 and TB26 of the Core Strategy; and R4 and R23 of the Borough Design Guide if the external facing materials are conditioned to match existing.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Core Strategy Policy CP3 states that development proposals should not result in a detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life.

Overlooking: The side elevation of the extension that faces onto Tankerton House would not have any windows. The front windows will not face onto habitable rooms. Therefore, there will be no additional overlooking.

Loss of Light: The side elevation of Tankerton House has two small windows on the first-floor side elevation that serve a bathroom and a WC. Therefore, there would not be a significant loss of light to a habitable room.

Overbearing: The side extension would be set back from the existing front elevation by 0.6m. The height of the first-floor extension would be lower than the existing roof of the main dwelling house. The first-floor side extension would be adjacent to the shared boundary and reduce the separation distance at first floor level. However, the site is set back from the adjacent property by 3m. Therefore, there are no concerns related to overbearing.

Overall, would be acceptable in relation to policy CP3 and CP9 of the Core Strategy.

Highways: The Highways Officer was consulted and requested further information: *“The recommended maximum width by the Traffic Management team of a dropped kerb is 3.6m. To serve the proposed parking layout, this will need to be provided in a centralised position. Part of the existing dropped crossing will need to be reinstated to full height kerbs. The access shall be surfaced with a hard bound material. Separate consent will be required from the TM team for the proposed width and location of the new dropped crossing.*

The applicant is required to confirm if they are happy with the recommended parking arrangement. Upon the proposed parking arrangement is agreed, the Highways will have no objection to the proposal subject to the following conditions:

- *CF4 – PARKING (AS APPROVED)*
- *The development shall not be occupied until the vehicular access from the highway has been altered to provide a centralised circa 3.6m wide dropped crossing, unless agreed otherwise, in writing, by WBC Traffic Management (this work will need separate authorisation by the Borough’s Traffic Management section – see informative below). – DROPPED CROSSING Informative I22 – ACCESS CONSTRUCTION”*

Officer comments: The Highways officer has raised no objection to a revised parking plan with 3no. parking spaces, vehicular access and a dropped kerb. Separate consent will be required from the Traffic Management Team for the proposed width and location of the new dropped crossing.

Landscape and Trees:

Landscape and Trees Officer raises no objection subject to condition and has commented: *“The site is on a Green Route, within ‘The Square, Spencers Wood, Shinfield’ area of special character. There is no green backdrop to the site. According to public images, green infrastructure has been removed from the front garden. Parking area is proposed to increase. Due to the demarcations of the site, I have suggested a landscaping condition for this area. This will help the application accord with policies such as CC03, CP3, TB21 and TB26.*

Requested Condition: *CL4 Landscaping (amended)*

Prior to the commencement of the development there shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority a scheme of landscaping for the area of the site between the Basingstoke Road boundary and the house frontage,

which shall specify species, planting sizes, spacing and numbers of trees/shrubs to be planted, and any existing trees or shrubs to be retained. Planting shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the building(s). Any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the date of the planting (or within a period of 5 years of the occupation of the buildings in the case of retained trees and shrubs) die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species or otherwise as approved in writing by the local planning authority.

RL4; To ensure adequate planting in the interests of visual amenity. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21 (and TB06 for garden development)."

Officer Comment: Google images dated 2019 show the front garden laid to hardstanding for off streetcar parking. Earlier images show 1 no. green shrub in the front garden. Therefore, as the proposal would not result in the loss of green landscaping, it would not be reasonable to condition a landscaping plan if the application were to be approved.

Ecology: The Ecology Officer raises no objection subject to a condition and has commented: *"The external inspection of the property and garage/utility found multiple gaps in the roof and hanging tiles and verges that could provide potential roosting opportunities or access into the building for roosting bats. Emergence surveys were undertaken on 31 May and 26 June 2025 in general accordance with Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th Edition). Bat activity recorded was low.*

Despite ecological surveys being undertaken which suggest that protected species are not currently roosting in the application site, bats are mobile creatures, and it is possible that protected species may be encountered once works commence. I recommend the following informative should be appended to any such consent:

Informative: Bats are a protected species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Should any bats or evidence of bats be found prior to or during the development, all works must stop immediately, and an ecological consultant contacted for further advice before works can proceed. All contractors working on site should be made aware of the advice and provided with the contact details of a relevant ecological consultant."

Heritage: The Built Heritage Officer has raised an objection and commented: *"Arlington is one half of a pair of 19th century villas located within The Square, Spencers Wood Area of Special Character (ASC). It comprises grey and red stock brick with detailing and ornamentation of significant quality, notably the decorative barge boards and ridge tiles. By virtue of the age, architectural and historic interest, as well as the positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area, including the setting of the directly opposite Grade II listed School, Arlington and Tidewell are identified as non-designated heritage assets (NDHA).*

The application proposes the loss of the extant garage. This lean-to structure is of limited merit and dates from the late-20th century as such no concern is raised to the

loss of this element in itself.

Part of Arlington's significance is drawn from the butterfly semi-detached form, which the proposed side addition would seek to dilute and unbalance this symmetrical appearance. It would also negatively alter the view of the side and elevation of the building as viewed from Hyde End Road.

It is noted the efforts to design the extension in a form sympathetic to the host – that of a similar architectural appearance with matching detailing. The slightly setting down on the ridge and stepped back from the front elevation assists in conveying a later addition which has a degree of subservience to the host, however this does not go nearly far enough in terms of the impact upon the architectural interest.

The existing dwelling is constructed from high-quality materials. The new addition should seek to replicate these as close as possible. The gauged red brick flat arches are highly skilled and thus care will be needed to reproduce these. Similarly, the correct bricks to match will need to be sourced and other details such as the decorative ridge tile (not shown the drawing) will be required. The windows too are important and should seek to replicate the original windows. The proposed rooflights should be of a conservation type, top or side hung with a central glazing bar.

Given the above, the proposal would seek to harm the interest of the NDHA and ASC. This harm arising through the erosion to the identified character and appearance of the Area of Special Character and to the architectural and historic interest of the NDHA through the unsympathetic proposed alteration. Directly related, harm would occur to the settings of the other heritage assets identified for the same reasons.

As such, an objection is raised to the application."

Officer Comment:

The first-floor front/side extension above the garage would impact the symmetrical appearance of Arlington and Tidewell semi-detached villas as can be seen in Figure 1. However, it would be set back by approximately 0.5m from the existing side wall and inferior to the main roof line. Furthermore, it would be set back from the front elevation of the adjacent restaurant at Tankerton House (Figure 2) and not overly prominent when viewed from the public realm.

Therefore, if the proposal was conditioned so that the proposal matches the existing gauged red brick flat arches; the bricks, decorative ridge tiles and windows match existing; and rooflights are of a conservation type, top or side hung with a central glazing bar, the proposal would not significantly harm the character of the area to warrant refusal of the application.



Figure 1 Front and side of Arlington as seen from the highway.



Figure 2 Arlington principal elevation in relation to Tankerton House.

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:	Yes
Recommendation:	Approve
Date:	5 August 2025
Earliest date for decision:	12 February 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	6 August 2025