

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	260167
Site Address:	39 Elk Path, Three Mile Cross, Wokingham, RG7 1WE
Expiry Date:	24 March 2026
Site Visit Date:	7 January 2026
Proposal: Householder application for proposed loft conversion and erection of 1.no side dormer.	

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 CC02 – Development Limits TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document

PLANNING HISTORY		
Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
252800	Householder application for the proposed loft conversion featuring dormer with 3no. windows, plus the insertion of 1no. rooflight.	Refused: January 2026

CONSULTATION RESPONSES	
Internal	
WBC Ecology – No comments	
External	
None	

REPRESENTATIONS	
Parish/Town Council	No comments received
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	No comments received

APPRAISAL

Context: The application site is located within a residential setting of Three Mile Cross. This application seeks planning permission for the conversion of the loft at No.39 Elk Path, facilitated by the erection of a dormer extension and changes to fenestration.

The current scheme follows a similar development proposed through application 252800, which was refused planning permission on the basis of a perceived and actual overlooking risk to No.38. To remedy this, the side facing dormer windows have been removed, with windows now proposed to the existing gable end, both front and rear, plus ceiling rooflights.

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.

Character of the Area: The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) makes clear that creating high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. The National Design Guide (NDG) Section I1, Paragraph 53, states that well-designed new development is influenced by the characteristics of existing built form...and local architectural precedents.

Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy requires developments to maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment. Core Strategy Policy CP3 states that planning permission will be granted for proposals that, amongst other things, have a high quality of design.

The Borough Design Guide (BDG) states that any alteration and extension to an existing building should be well-designed, respond positively to the original building, contribute positively to the local character and street scene, and relate well to the neighbouring properties.

The proposal seeks to introduce a large flat-roofed dormer extension on the side elevation of the dwelling. Whilst dormer extensions are common forms of development, they are typically positioned on rear roof slopes where their visual impact is more limited.

In this instance, the dormer would be located on the side elevation of the dwelling, where it would be readily visible from the adjacent public footpath and surrounding street scene. Due to its siting and the open nature of this boundary, the structure would appear visually prominent within public views.

Although the dormer is set below the ridge line and back from the roof edges, its overall proportions are considered excessive. The proposed dormer would occupy a substantial width of the roof slope and would project with a height and massing that would dominate the existing symmetrical gable roof form. As a result, the extension would appear bulky and top-heavy when viewed in relation to the host dwelling.

Furthermore, the dormer, due to the removal of the previously proposed windows, would present a largely blank and visually stark elevation. Given its lack of articulation, the structure would appear incongruous and poorly integrated with the existing building. This would be particularly apparent from the adjoining footpath, where the development would be experienced in close proximity and would be visually overbearing.

Taken together, the excessive scale and poor design of the proposed dormer would result in an addition that fails to remain subordinate to the host dwelling and would detract from the established character and appearance of the property and surrounding street scene.

The proposal is therefore considered contrary to the design principles set out in Core Strategy Policies CP1 and CP3, as well as the guidance contained within the Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Overlooking: As detailed above, the previous application (ref: 252800) was refused on overlooking grounds. The revised scheme, which removes the side-facing dormer windows previously proposed flush with the shared boundary, addresses the specific overlooking concern that formed the basis of that refusal. However, this amendment does not overcome the significant harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding street scene identified above.

Loss of Light & Overbearing: Given the separation between the dormer extension and adjacent properties, there are no concerns regarding loss of light or overbearing impacts.

Ecology: Based on internal and external inspection, the property has negligible potential for roosting bats, hence no additional surveys are required.

Conclusion: Two iterations of the proposal have now been submitted, both of which have resulted in schemes that are considered unacceptable. This demonstrates that a dormer extension of the form proposed cannot be accommodated on this elevation without causing harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and/or the amenities of neighbouring occupiers. This conclusion reflects the inherent physical constraints of the site and the prominent, publicly visible position of the prominent gabled roof slope within the street scene.

While a fallback position under permitted development has been considered, limited weight is afforded to this. It has not been put forward by the applicant and there is thus an absence of detailed evidence to demonstrate that the same/similar development would be lawful and realistically implemented. No detailed permitted development drawings, calculations or Certificate of Proposed Lawful Development have been

submitted to confirm compliance with the relevant limitations and conditions, nor has any clear intention to pursue such a scheme been evidenced.

In any event, the existence of a potential fallback does not render the proposal acceptable in design terms. The planning system allows for the assessment of proposals on their individual merits, and permitted development represents a separate statutory regime with a different assessment.

By contrast, the proposed dormer, by reason of its scale, bulk, width and design, would appear visually dominant and incongruous within the roofscape, failing to respect the proportions and architectural character of the host dwelling. The current proposal would result in a more prominent and harmful feature when viewed in the context of the surrounding area, causing an unacceptable erosion of local character. As such, the fallback position does not outweigh the identified harm arising from the development as proposed.

Notwithstanding this, any Certificate of Proposed Lawful Development would need to ensure it met the requirements of conditions 8 (windows) and 38 (number of storeys) of the original planning permission for the estate.

For the reasons set out above, the proposal is considered unacceptable and the application is therefore recommended for refusal.

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:	N/A
Recommendation:	Refuse
Date:	9 March 2026
Earliest date for decision:	17 February 2026

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	<i>HMM</i>
Date:	9 March 2026

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

- *Major Development Location of Three Mile Cross*