

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	242980
Site Address:	162a Nine Mile Ride, Finchampstead, Wokingham, RG40 4JA
Expiry Date:	21 January 2025
Site Visit Date:	14 January 2025
Proposal: Householder application for the proposed detached double garage.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Scale and Location of Development Proposals
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 CP6 – Managing Travel Demand 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 CC07 – Parking
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
202494	Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey front/side extension to form a store, demolition of detached garage in rear garden and installation of cladding to the front elevation of the dwelling.	Approved: October 2020
142147	Application for a certificate of lawfulness for the proposed erection of a single storey rear extension to dwelling.	Approved: August 2014
970949	Proposed Single Storey Rear Extension To Dwelling To Form Conservatory And Rear Extension To Garage. front porch extension	Approved: May 1997

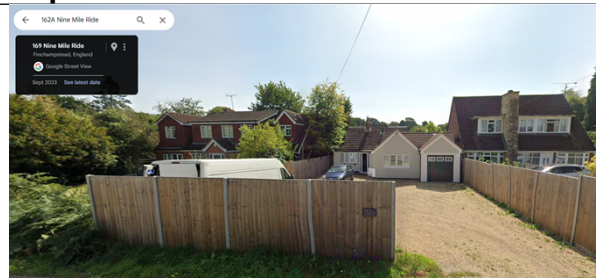
CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal
WBC Highways – Request further information
External
None

REPRESENTATIONS	
Finchampstead Parish Council	Object to this planning application on the grounds that the garage is in front of the building line contrary to Policy D3, 1b of the FNDP.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	One letter received in support of the proposal

APPRAISAL
Context: The application site is situated within a residential setting of Finchampstead. This application seeks planning permission for the proposed erection of a detached double garage, to be sited adjacent to the front boundary of the plot. 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: Core Strategy Policy CP1 states planning permission will be granted for development proposals that <i>'maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment'</i>. CP3 states planning permission will be granted if development is <i>'of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area together with a high quality of design'</i> and <i>'contributes to a sense of place in the buildings and spaces themselves and in the way they integrate with their surroundings (especially existing dwellings) including the use of appropriate landscaping'</i>. Nine Mile Ride is a designated green route with properties set back from the front boundaries with large driveways in large plots, despite recently all the vegetation having been removed from 162A Nine Mile Ride and the front boundary replaced with close boarded fencing. Policy CC03 and TB21 among other things, seek to maintain the high quality of the environment and protect the Borough's Green Infrastructure networks and protect and retain existing trees.

September 2023



August 2021



The Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2012 (BDG) states that garages should not be sited in front gardens or project forward of the building line. Furthermore, although not identifying this stretch of Nine Mile Ride specifically, the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan (FNDP) identifies pressure caused by frontage development (such as garages in front of the established building line). Policy D3 1b of the FNDP also seeks to achieve layouts which integrate with existing building lines.

It is clear the intention of the BDG guidance, and to a lesser extent the FNDP, is to prevent such buildings becoming overly prominent visually, undermining the coherence of the street scene and having an undesirable impact on the established pattern of development and visual landscape characteristics of the area.

Whilst it is accepted that there are a number of forward sitting garages within the wider area (significantly further east along Nine Mile Ride, approximately 115 metres from the site), there is only one example of a garage forward of the prevailing building line within close proximity of the application site. This is the garage at No.162, which is completely screened from public view due to the presence of a dense and vegetative boundary along the front of the site. Notwithstanding this, the garage at No. 162 is set back from the boundary by approximately 6.5 metres and is subordinate to the existing two storey dwelling at the site.

Given the above, the intention of the guidance urging against frontage development is particularly relevant in this site-specific circumstance. This is to retain a strong characteristic of this section of Nine Mile Ride, which is that of built form being set far back from the highway, creating an open feel while traversing through the street scene. This characteristic is synonymous with its Green Route designation.

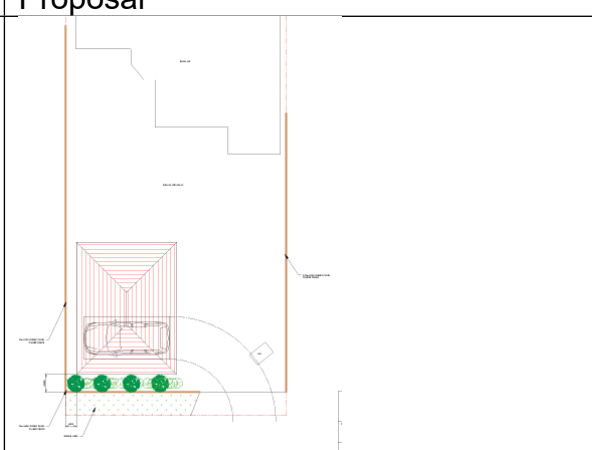
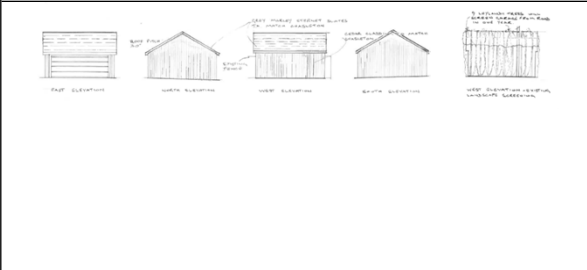
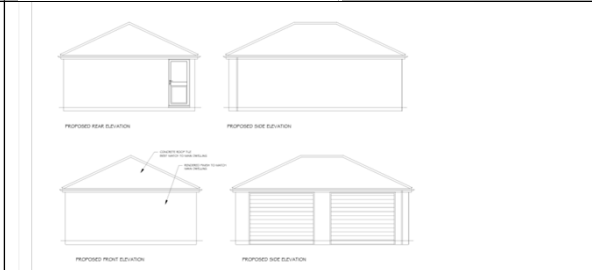
The structure would be approximately 3.8 metres in height and would cover nearly half the width of the plot. As such, with the dwelling being a modest, single storey building, the significant size of the garage would become an overly dominant addition to the site. The impact of this would be twofold, as not only would the garage become the focal point when viewing the dwelling from the public domain, but this would also undermine the coherence of the street scene, having an undesirable impact on the established pattern of development, and eroding the spacious character of the immediate area, which as discussed, is an important aspect of the street scene and Green Route.

The landscaping proposed, which has been put forward to reduce the prominence of the garage within the street scene, is minimal and lacks detail. It would not make an otherwise unacceptable proposal, acceptable. Any planting would be unprotected and

if removed, or should die, it would render the garage even more discordant and at odds with the street scene, in a highly visible location. The proposal would result in a cramped and dense form of development on the plot, which would harmfully impact the space available to the frontage.

Of relevance is a similar appeal decision at Chasleton, Lower Wokingham Road, another Green Route in the Borough (ref: APP/X0360/D/23/3319260, dated 30 August 2023). Although the location on Lower Wokingham Road has a slightly different character and context to the proposed development, and the existing dwelling was two storey in nature, the impact of a pitched roof double garage abutting a Green Route has a similar impact.

The Inspector at paragraph 7 states: *“I consider that the proposed garage would have a visually detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the area because of its size, occupying approximately half the width of the site, and its location in close proximity to the front boundary fence.”* They continue to state that *“There are several other examples of garages in front gardens nearby. Many of these are in larger plots and set some distance back from the front boundary or are a sufficient distance back to be screened from most views by a variety of vegetation”* and concludes that in this instance screening is insufficient to outweigh any harm.

Appeal Scheme	Proposal
	
	

Notwithstanding minor differences between these schemes, there are many similarities. The Inspector concluded that *“the proposed garage would harm the character and appearance of the property itself, the surrounding area and the Green Route, contrary to policies CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy and CC03 and TB21 of the local plan, the SPD, the Framework...”*

For the reasons detailed above, the proposed development would cause harm to the street scene, Green Route and character of the area, thus failing to comply with Policies CP1 & CP3 of the Core Strategy, Policy CC03 of the MDD Local Plan and the advice contained within the BDG. The application is therefore recommended for refusal.

Neighbouring Amenity: Despite its considerable scale, the proposal would not harm the amenities of neighbouring residents as it would be positioned away from front windows and would not unduly obscure light or outlook.

Highway Access and Parking Provision: The proposed garage does not fully meet the Council's requirement for car parking and in order to do so, it would need to be increased in size. This would elevate the negative implications of the scheme, as highlighted in the 'Character of the Area' section of this report.

Conclusion: For the reasons previously stated, the proposal is unacceptable, and the application is subsequently 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, 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:

N/A

Recommendation:

Refuse

Date:

15 January 2025

Earliest date for decision:

18 December 2024

Recommendation agreed by:

(Authorised Officer)



Date:

16 January 2025

