

ERECTION OF FIRST FLOOR SIDE EXTENSION AND AN ENLARGED PORCH

AT

WYCHWOOD HOUSE, HOLLYBUSH RIDE, FINCHAMPSTEAD, RG40 3QP

SUPPORTING PLANNING STATEMENT

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1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 This report supports a planning application for the erection of a first floor side extension and enlarged porch at Wychwood House, Hollybush Ride, Finchampstead. A full description of the proposal is set out in section 3 of this report.
- 1.2 This supporting planning statement sets out in detail why the proposed development is acceptable having regard to the policies of Wokingham Borough Council in addition to national planning policy and guidance as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).

2. Site Description and review of planning history

- 2.1 The site subject to this application comprises a two-storey 3 bedroom detached single family dwellinghouse with front and rear gardens, located off Hollybush Ride. It is bounded to the north, south and east by similar large residential property within their own generous residential plots.
- 2.2 Overall, the area has a semi-rural character, containing residential properties in a rural location; this reflects that it is within the 'countryside' as defined on Wokingham Borough Council's policies map. This is considered further in section 4 of this report.
- 2.3 A review of the Council's Planning register has only identified applications at the property relating to works to protected trees, which are not considered to be relevant to this application. It is noted that neighbouring properties have been granted planning permission for extensions and alterations in recent years, including Conifers (directly to the north – LPA Ref: 202007) and Heather Cot just to the south of the site where planning permission was granted in November 2018 for the erection of a replacement dwelling. This demonstrates that the principle of extensions and alterations to dwellings in the immediate area is acceptable, and that the character of the area includes dwellings that have been altered, extended and modernised.

3. Description of development proposed

- 3.1 This planning application proposes the erection of a first-floor side extension set over an existing habitable accommodation at ground floor level. This side extension will provide an additional en-suite bedroom at the property. The first floor extension will measure 3.128 metres in width and extend 6.799 metres in depth. As illustrated by the submitted plans, the extension will mirror the width and depth of the habitable accommodation at ground floor level which is set back from the front elevation, and does not extend to the whole depth of the rest of the dwellinghouse. Furthermore, the ridge height of the first floor extension will be set below the ridge height of the main section of the house.
- 3.2 To the front of the property an enlarged porch will be provided, which will be built using similar materials that are in place with the existing porch at the property.

4. Summary of relevant planning policies

- 4.1 When considering the merits of development that requires a planning application the Council, in its function as the local planning authority, has a requirement to determine that application in accordance with the policies of its Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise¹.
- 4.2 Therefore, in preparing this planning statement consideration has been had to relevant policies of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010) and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014) as set out below. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2019) and the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG, 2018) are also relevant.

Wokingham Borough Core Strategy

- 4.3 The Borough's Core Strategy contains the following policies which are relevant to the proposed development.
- 4.4 **CP1 Sustainable development:** This policy requires proposals to maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment.
- 4.5 **CP3 General principles for development:** This policy states that planning permission will be granted for proposals that (*inter alia*):
- a) Are of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area 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;*
- 4.6 **CP11 - Proposals outside Development Limits (including countryside):** This identifies the development which would be acceptable in a countryside location and in the case of residential extensions it states that they should not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building. It is noted that the reasoned justification for this policy does not define what would constitute an inappropriate increase.

National Planning Policy

- 4.7 The Government's national planning policies are set out in the 'National Planning Policy Framework' (NPPF). The NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 4.8 Paragraph 7 establishes the overriding principle that the planning system is to contribute towards sustainable development.
- 4.9 In relation to applications for planning permission, paragraph 47 refers to these being determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

5. Acceptability of development proposed

5.1 Having regard to the Council's planning policies it is apparent that the main planning considerations in relation to this proposed development relate to:

- Principle of the development.
- Impact on the openness of the countryside.

5.2 An assessment of these issues in light of the Council's planning policies, in addition to national planning policy, is as follows.

Principle of development

5.3 The site is within a countryside location where the Council's policies seek to restrict development to that which is appropriate to such a location.

5.4 The development proposed is for the extension of an existing dwelling where policy CP11 allows for such development provided that it does not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building. Subject the following assessment of these issues, the development is in accordance with Development Plan policy CP11.

5.5 As previously stated, the site is located in an area where there has been a number of extensions and alterations permitted to residential dwellings. The proposed first floor extension is set over existing built form, ensuring that there is no increase in the footprint of the dwelling within the plot. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal is located in an area whereby the principle of residential extensions is acceptable.

Impact on the openness of the countryside

- 5.6 Having regard to the policy test of the extension not resulting in an inappropriate increase in the scale, form or footprint of the original building the following needs to be taken into consideration
- 5.7 The scale of the extension is appropriate to that of the existing dwellinghouse and does not result in any harm to neighbouring properties, which are a significant distance away and screened by many mature trees. The form of the extension is compatible with the existing house in style, design and materials.
- 5.8 As such the size of the extension represents an acceptable size that, in our view, would sit comfortably to the existing dwelling, without any adverse effect on this countryside location.
- 5.9 For these reasons we consider the development not to have an inappropriate increase in the scale, form or footprint of the original building. This view is also supported by a previous decision by Wokingham Borough Council at a property known as the Coach House, Fleet Lane, Finchampsstead (planning application reference no. 211028). In both cases, whilst the size of the new extension is large; the site location, size of the site and relationship to adjoining residential properties means that the proposal is entirely appropriate and sits comfortably within the plot without resulting in any adverse impact on neighbouring property or the locality.
- 5.10 Further we would also identify that there have been several developments along Holly Bush Ride for either replacement dwellings or extensions to dwellings that have resulted in significant increases compared to the original dwelling on site. In particular attention is drawn to planning permission for a replacement dwelling at Kalevala, Hollybush Ride (now known as Pennywood) under planning reference 183064. This consent increased the size of dwelling from a GIA floor area of 215m² to 755m², representing an increase of 251%.
- 5.11 In approving the application, the case officer made the following comments:

“Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for development proposals that ‘maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment’. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states planning permission will be granted if development is ‘of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area 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’.

The north section of Hollybush Ride has some suburban characteristics which include street furniture, pavements and street lighting. The southern end of the road, where the development site is located, has a more prominent woodland and rural setting. There area is characterised by bungalow style properties but there are also large detached modern houses along the road.

As noted above, the proposal would result in a significant increase in scale from the existing building. The proposed dwelling would however be commensurate in scale to some of the larger properties in the locality, included the neighbouring house to the north. The dwelling will be set back from the street frontage and will be in a similar position to the existing house, broadly aligning with the neighbouring properties. The front of the site is well screened by existing trees which will be retained. Taking the set back from the road and the tree screening into consideration, the replacement dwelling would not be a prominent feature in the landscape.

5.12 As such we are of the view that these comments are also applicable to this development.

5.13 Similarly, we note the conclusions of the Planning Officer in granting planning permission for extensions and alterations to Conifers (LPA Ref: 202007). In granting planning permission, the Officer’s Report states that:

“The first floor element of the extension is not subservient to the main dwelling however the design is within keeping of both the current dwelling and as properties in the surrounding area vary in style, the proposal does not have any unacceptable harmful impact on character.”

- 5.14 We would note that this proposal incorporates design features to ensure that the extension is subservient to the host dwelling. This includes the reduced ridge height of the proposal, as well as the extension being set back from the front elevation of the property. Taken together with the Planning Officer's comments above, we consider that this proposal is acceptable in this regard.
- 5.15 We also note that the property provides a detached garage with a pitched roof set in front of the side of the property where the extension is proposed. This serves to restrict the visibility of the extension. It is also noted that the neighbouring property to the south provides a higher ridge than Wychwood House, ensuring that the proposal is in keeping with the character of the area.

Ecology

- 5.16 This application is supported by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal which includes a daytime bat walkover. The Appraisal states that whilst the property is in good condition externally, there are features suitable for crevice dwelling bats, for example gaps within the soffits and missing mortar. As such, dusk emergence surveys are recommended.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 This report has highlighted that the proposed development, subject to this application for planning permission, is in accordance with the Council's planning policies.
- 6.2 For these reasons, the proposal is considered to be sustainable development and is in accordance with national policy and guidance.
- 6.3 Therefore, in the absence of any other material considerations to justify otherwise it is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted for this proposed development.