

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	260743
Site Address:	12 Farmers End, Charvil, Wokingham, RG10 9RZ
Expiry Date:	21 May 2026
Site Visit Date:	11 June 2025 – see PA 250719
Proposal: Full application for the proposed conversion of existing loft to create habitable accommodation including the insertion of a rear dormer, extension of existing rear canopy roof, alterations to external staircase width plus insertion of roof lights.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

- Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
- Scale and Location of Development Proposals
- Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone
- Nuclear Consultation Zone
- Landscape Character Assessment Area
- Flood Zones 2 and 3

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 CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction CC05 – Renewable Energy and Decentralised Energy Networks CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB10 – Traveller Sites TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (JMWP)	DM1 - Sustainable Development DM2 - Climate Change – Mitigation and Adaptation DM3 - Protection of Habitats and Species

Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List
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PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
250719	Full application for proposed loft conversion with front and rear dormers, internal alterations and all associated works.	Refused, 20/06/2025
260171	Pre-application advice for the proposed erection of a two storey rear extension, a rear dormer along with insertion of roof lights and changes to fenestration.	Replied, 05/03/2026

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Drainage – No objections.
WBC Highways – No objections.
WBC Landscape and Trees – No objections.
WBC CIL – No comments received.
WBC Ecology – No comments received.

External

None consulted.

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	Charvil Parish Council - Application to be considered at meeting on 20th April. (<i>No further comments where received.</i>)
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	No comments received

APPRAISAL

Site Description and Proposed Development:

The application site relates to a two storey, semi-detached coach house style dwelling located in an established residential area. The surrounding area is characterised by detached, semi-detached and terrace properties that are set in discernible groupings which are distinguished by repeated house type. The grain of development in the immediate is relatively tight and the property has a shallow rear garden.

Planning permission is sought for the erection of a rear dormer extension, the insertion of rooflights, and alterations to the existing rear external staircase.

This application follows a similar scheme that was refused planning permission in June 2025 under reference 250719. The previous application was refused for three

principal reasons, which, in summary, related to: (1) harm to the character and appearance of the area; (2) adverse impacts on neighbouring residential amenity; and (3) insufficient information and potential impacts in respect of ecology, specifically bats.

A follow-up pre-application enquiry was submitted in March 2026 under ref: 260171 to address the reasons for refusal outlined above. The current planning application seeks to respond to and incorporate the advice provided through that process, with revisions made to the proposal accordingly.

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:

Section 4 of the Borough Design Guide 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.

Relating to proposals for dormer windows specifically, Section 4 advises that Dormers should relate to the design of the existing building in terms of roof form, materials, positioning and window proportions.

Rear dormer extension

The previously submitted planning application was refused, in part, due to the excessive scale of the proposed rear dormer extension, which spanned the full width of the rear roof slope. This, combined with the asymmetrical placement of windows that did not align with the existing fenestration pattern, resulted in a form of development that was considered visually dominant and harmful to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and wider area.

The dormer now proposed has been reduced in scale and would extend across approximately half the width of the building. The revised design also incorporates more appropriately positioned windows that align with the established fenestration pattern of the host property, thereby presenting a more balanced and coherent appearance.

Whilst the flat roof design remains and does not fully reflect the pitched roof form of the existing dwelling, the Case Officer notes the presence of a similarly proportioned rear flat-roofed dormer at No. 6 Farmers End, located opposite the application site. This provides some contextual precedent within the immediate street scene. Furthermore, the proposed dormer would be set down from the main ridge and set in from the eaves, and its reduced width would assist in ensuring that it appears more subservient to the host dwelling.

In light of these amendments, it is considered that this element of the proposal would adversely impact the character or appearance of the area.

External Staircase

The proposal also includes an increase in the width of the rear external staircase by approximately 1.1 metres. This is considered to represent a modest alteration that would not materially alter the overall appearance of the rear elevation. Given its position to the rear of the property and its limited scale, the extension would not adversely impact the character of the area.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Overlooking:

Figure 4.25 within Section 4 of the council's Borough Design Guide SPD provides a summary of the Council's minimum separation distances to maintain privacy and limit sense of enclosure. For developments over two storeys in height, the Borough Design Guide SPD recommends a minimum back-to-flank separation distance of 15 metres and a back-to-back separation distance of 26 metres

The existing first-floor rear windows at the application site, including one serving a dining/living area are positioned approximately 8.8 metres from the southern boundary of No. 32 East Park Farm Drive, creating a close and direct relationship between the two properties.

The proposal would now introduce a total of four rear-facing windows at roof level. Notwithstanding the reduction in the scale of the dormer, concerns remain that the proposed windows would fall significantly short of the Council's recommended back-to-flank and back-to-back separation distances, as set out above.

However, the Case Officer acknowledges the revised specification and functionality of the rear-facing windows. The submitted sectional drawings indicate that two of the roof-level windows would be sited approximately 1.7 metres above the finished floor level of the rooms they are intended to serve. As such, although the windows would not meet the Council's usual separation standards, their elevated positioning would place them above typical eye level.

In addition, given that these windows would serve non-habitable areas, the intensity and frequency of use is likely to be limited. The potential for harmful overlooking would therefore be materially reduced, as these spaces would not ordinarily be used for prolonged periods of occupation. By virtue of their position within a sloping roof plane, rooflights typically afford a more limited outlook than vertical windows. As such, there would also be a reduced perception of overlooking towards properties to

the rear.

The remaining two windows would serve an en-suite and a bedroom. The submitted plans indicate that the en-suite window would be obscure glazed and non-opening up to 1.7 metres to mitigate any potential overlooking, which is considered appropriate in this context. A suitable condition will be attached to any approval to ensure compliance.

The only clear-glazed window at roof level capable of affording direct views would therefore serve Bedroom 3. Whilst this window would still fall below the Council's recommended separation distances as set out within the SPD, it would be positioned furthest from No. 32 East Park Farm Drive, at an approximate distance of 18 metres. Any views towards this neighbouring property, including its rear patio area, would be angled rather than direct in nature.



Figure 1 – Views towards the southern boundary of No. 32 East Park Farm, taken from the rear external staircase of the application site.

The Case Officer also notes that the southern boundary of No. 32 East Park Farm Drive is defined by a mature and tall hedgerow, which provides effective screening of the main rear patio area. Whilst it is acknowledged that vegetation cannot be relied upon in perpetuity as a sole means of mitigation, it is considered that, in this instance, it contributes to reducing the perception of overlooking and therefore carries some weight in the overall assessment.

Overall, whilst some concerns remain given the shortfall against the Council's recommended separation distances, when having regard to the specific site context, the revised window positioning, the nature of the accommodation served, and the presence of boundary screening, it is considered that the proposal would not result in detrimental harm by way of overlooking or loss of privacy.

Loss of light and Overbearing:

The proposed dormer extension and widened external staircase are modest in scale and appropriately positioned and are not considered likely to give rise to any unreasonable overbearing or loss of light impacts on neighbouring properties.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

The proposal would increase the number of habitable rooms from two to five. In accordance with Wokingham Borough Council's Car Parking Standards, a development of this scale within a Town and Fringe location would require the provision of two parking spaces within the red line boundary.

The Council's Highways Officer has reviewed the application and notes that the submitted Block Plan indicates the provision of two parking spaces on the driveway. It should be noted that the Council requires minimum dimensions of 2.5m by 5.0m for each parking space, and the spaces shown do not fully comply with these standards. The tandem arrangement results in the rear vehicle slightly encroaching towards the edge of the public highway, which would not typically be considered acceptable.

However, as this reflects the existing parking arrangement and the proposal does not increase the parking requirement beyond two spaces, the Highways Officer considers the arrangement acceptable in this instance. Accordingly, no objections are raised on highway grounds.

Flooding and Drainage:

According to Environment Agency mapping, the site lies within Flood Zone 2. The submitted Flood Risk Assessment (by Resi, dated March 2026) sets out a number of mitigation measures, including resilient construction techniques, the provision of drainage features where necessary, and the use of a soakaway to help manage surface water. In addition, operational measures such as signing up to Environment Agency flood alerts and appropriate emergency response actions are outlined. Overall, the FRA concludes that, with these measures in place, the development would not increase flood risk on site or elsewhere and would remain safe for its lifetime.

These conclusions are considered acceptable, particularly given the limited scope of the development. The proposed dormer extension would not increase the overall footprint of the building, nor would it introduce significant new areas of impermeable surfacing that could materially affect surface water drainage patterns. As such, the proposal is not considered to give rise to any unacceptable flood risk impacts.

Landscape and Trees:

There are no protected trees on the application site and given the modest scope of development proposed and the distances to any mature trees within the site, it is considered that no tree or landscape related impacts would arise from the proposed development.

Ecology:

The site is located within a habitat area where bat roosts have previously been recorded within the borough.

A Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (by Indigo Surveys, April 2025, ref: 251273)

was submitted in support of the application. This included a detailed inspection of the building, during which all external and internal features, particularly those associated with the roof and walls, were examined for potential roosting features. This included cracks in walls, gaps in soffit boards, lifted roof tiles, and the loft space. Due to the presence of multiple potential roost features, the building was assessed as having moderate suitability for roosting bats, and two dusk emergence surveys were recommended to confirm the presence or likely absence of bats.

Subsequently, a Bat Emergence Survey Report (by Eco 360 Ltd, dated May 2025) was undertaken, which concluded that no bat roosts are present within the structure. However, evidence of occasional commuting bats within the surrounding area was recorded. The report recommends the optional installation of at least one bat box to enhance the site for local bat populations. The submitted elevation drawings indicate that a bat box will be incorporated into the development, and a suitable planning condition can be attached to ensure its installation.

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:	Not required
Recommendation:	Approval
Date:	5 May 2026
Earliest date for decision:	19 April 2026

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	<i>MC</i>
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Date:	12.05.2026
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