

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	250828
Site Address:	139 Wilderness Road, Earley, Wokingham, RG6 5RD
Expiry Date:	5 November 2025
Site Visit Date:	27 October 2025
Proposal: Householder application for proposed single storey front extension, two storey side, single storey rear and single storey infill extension followed by changes to fenestration.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
Scale and Location of Development Proposals – Major Development Location – Earley

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
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC07 – Parking
Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU)	SS1 – Sustainable development principles SS2 – Neighbour amenity SS3 – Development within or adjacent to major and modest settlements NE3 – Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area NE4 – Trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
156/64	Revised layout of 169 dwellings and sewers on 21 acres of land off Wilderness Road	Approve 3 rd September 1964

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Highways – No Objection
WBC Ecology – No Objection Subject to Condition

External

N/A

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	No objection raised.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received.
Neighbours	One neighbour comment: 1. Prayer Room Construction Concerns: The submitted plans show a narrow rear infill structure (approx. 1.4m wide) adjacent to the kitchen wall of 137, which could complicate construction access, maintenance of existing walls, fascia, guttering, and roof. Updated plans showing how fascia, guttering, and roof will be managed and confirmation that these changes have been reviewed by Planning Officers is requested. <i>Officer comment: The Party Wall etc. Act 1996 provides guidance on construction and maintenance of a wall and roof up to or astride the boundary with a neighbouring property. The proposed development would be entirely within the application site. The management of guttering would be covered by Building regulations.</i> 2. Drainage Concerns: The shared drainage system between 137 and 139 has a history of blockages due to tree root ingress and limited access for maintenance. The proposed addition of two bathrooms raises concerns about increased load on the system. <i>Officer comment: Compliance with drainage regulations for foul and surface water drainage is a separate process to planning that is dealt with by Building control.</i>

APPRAISAL

Site Description: A detached dwelling on a residential road that is located close to the junction with Pepper Lane. There is a garage and driveway for off street parking. Part of the front garden has been laid to grass and the boundary adjacent to the highway is a low hedge.

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.

Procedural Matters

Revised Elevation plans were received by the Council on 7th November 2025, and after the consultation date had ended. The revised proposed plans showed:

- A reduced front porch extension.
- The two-storey side extension set back from the principal elevation; set down from the main roof line; project approximately 3m from the existing rear wall; be 1m from the side boundary; 7m separation distance with the side wall of 118 Elm Road; and set back from the rear wall of no. 118 by approximately 4m.
- The single storey rear extensions would protrude beyond the existing rear wall by 3m.

Therefore, the amendment was not considered to have a significant impact on neighbour amenity to warrant extending the consultation period.

Proposal: A single storey front extension, two storey side, single storey rear and single storey infill extension followed by changes to fenestration.

The single storey front extension would facilitate a hallway and enlargement of the WC to provide a shower room. It would have a flat roof and measure approximately 3.7m in length, 1.4m in depth and 2.8m in height. The two-storey side extension would measure 4.3m in width, 8.2m in depth and be set back from the principal elevation by approximately 0.9m. It would measure approximately 5.3m to the top of the eaves. The front elevation of the roof would be set down from the main roof by approximately 0.3m. The rear wall would extend approximately 3m beyond the existing rear wall. The rear elevation roof would have a gable design; it would measure approximately 5.3m to the top of the pitch and be set down from the ridge of the extended roof by 0.3m. The single storey rear extension would have a sloping roof and measure approximately 11.6m in width and 2.5m in height to the top of the eaves. The rear infill extension would have a flat roof, be adjacent to the side boundary, and measure approximately 3.3m in depth, 2m in width and 2.8m in height. Overall, the width of the single storey rear extensions would be approximately 13.5m, and the two-storey section would measure an additional 4.5m in width.

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 immediate street scene is a residential road comprising detached properties

along one side; and trees with tall vegetation and a low brick wall bordering the highway on the opposite side. Most of the other properties in the street of varying traditional designs. The application site is located close to the junction with Pepper Lane and Elm Road. It is one of a pair of detached properties built circa 1960's with open front gardens and detached garages. The neighbouring property at 118 Elm Road has a single storey front extension in line with the principal elevation, and there are no examples of two storey front extensions in the street scene.

In this case, the two-storey side extension would have a lower roof line than the existing roof and would be approximately 0.3m lower. It would be set back from the existing front wall of the lounge by approximately 0.9m; set back from the porch extension and existing front wall to the WC by approximately 3m; and the separation distance with the side boundary would be 1m. from the plot boundary. Furthermore, the orientation of the neighbouring property at 118 Elm Road provides a separation distance of 7m with the nearest side wall. In addition, the side boundary is tall vegetation and trees that will soften the view from the public realm and further protect the rhythm of buildings and gaps between them.

Therefore, the proposal will not cause significant harm to the character of the area.

Overall, the proposal would comply with CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy.

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: There would be no side windows to the two-storey side extension and no significant increase in loss of privacy to immediate neighbours. The back-to-back separation distance of the rear first floor window to the bathroom with no. 24 Reeds Avenue would be approximately 21m and 1m less than recommended in the BDG. However, any loss of privacy could be mitigated if the window were to be obscure glazed and non-opening below 1.7m of the internal floor, level. Therefore, there would be no significant overlooking impact to neighbour amenity.

Loss of Light: The 45-degree angle test is advocated within the British Research Establishment's (BRE) publication Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: a guide to good practice, to assess impact on daylight and sunlight levels to neighbours potentially impacted upon by adjacent developments. As can be seen in Figure 1, the vertical 45-degree angle test is complied with in relation to the nearest habitable room at 118 Elm Road. Furthermore, there would be no impact on loss of light to no. 137 Wilderness Road. Therefore, there would be no significant overshadowing as a result of the proposal.

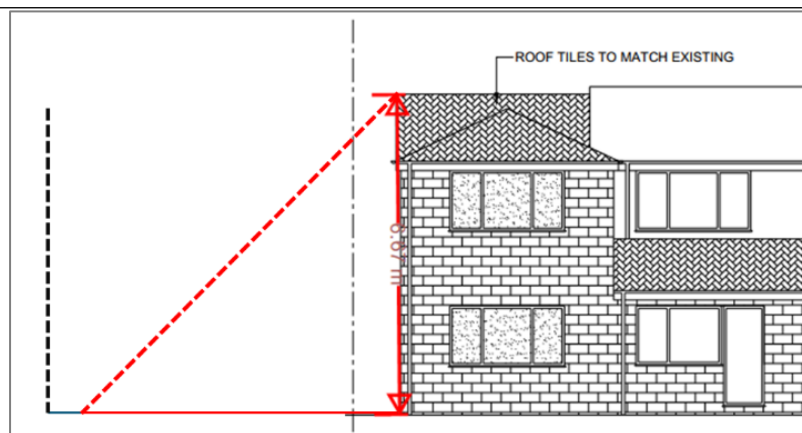


Figure 1 Vertical 45-degree angle test

Overbearing: The Wokingham Borough Council Design Guide (BDG) provides some guidance on extensions which relate to visual impact and states that the layout and design must have a balanced response to the local context in terms of provision of external space. However, front elevation walls are staggered; and the two-storey extension would be set back from the principal elevation and set down from the existing roof. The overall width of the proposed rear elevation wall would be approximately 18m. However, due to the differing heights and roof designs of the rear extensions, the overbearing appearance would be limited. For example, the single storey infill extension adjacent to the boundary would not protrude beyond the neighbouring property and have a flat roof; the single storey extension to the kitchen/dining area would have a sloping roof and the two-storey extension would have a hip roof that was inferior to the front elevation roof. Furthermore, the rear extensions would project approximately 3m from the existing rear wall and the separation distance with the side boundary of no. 118 elm Road would be 1m. Therefore, the proposal would not have an overbearing impact on neighbour amenity and occupants would still have access to adequate open space.

Overall, the proposal would comply with Policy CP3 in relation to neighbour amenity.

Surface Water Drainage:

MMD Local Plan policy CC10 states that all development proposals must reproduce greenfield runoff characteristics and return run-off rates and volumes back to the original greenfield levels, for greenfield sites and for brownfield sites both run-off rates and volumes be reduced to as near greenfield as practicably possible.

In this case, the proposal is located within an area identified by the Environment Agency as having a 1 in 100 year risk of surface water flooding and the resulting non-permeable area would not be so significant as to warrant a condition for a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS).

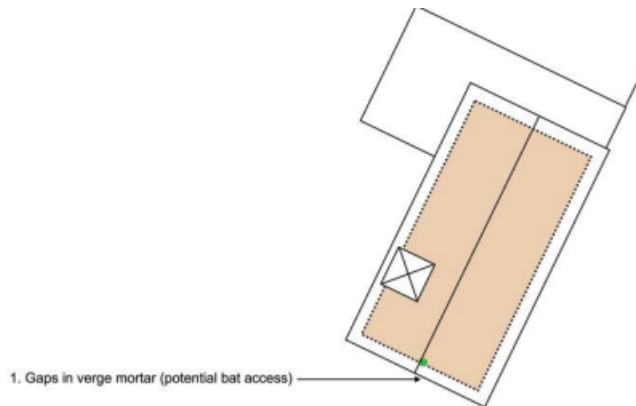
Highway Access and Parking Provision: The Highways Officer raises no objection and has commented: *"The proposal will result in an additional habitable room; however, this will not have a significant impact in respect of the councils parking standards. The existing level of parking will be retained, and this is considered acceptable to serve the development."*

Ecology: The Ecology Officer raises no objection subject to condition: *"All bat*

species are legally protected, and it is a criminal offence to deliberately or recklessly to destroy or damage their roosts, or to disturb, kill or injure them without first having obtained the relevant licence from Natural England. A bat roost is interpreted as “any structure or place used for shelter or protection” whether or not bats are present at the time.



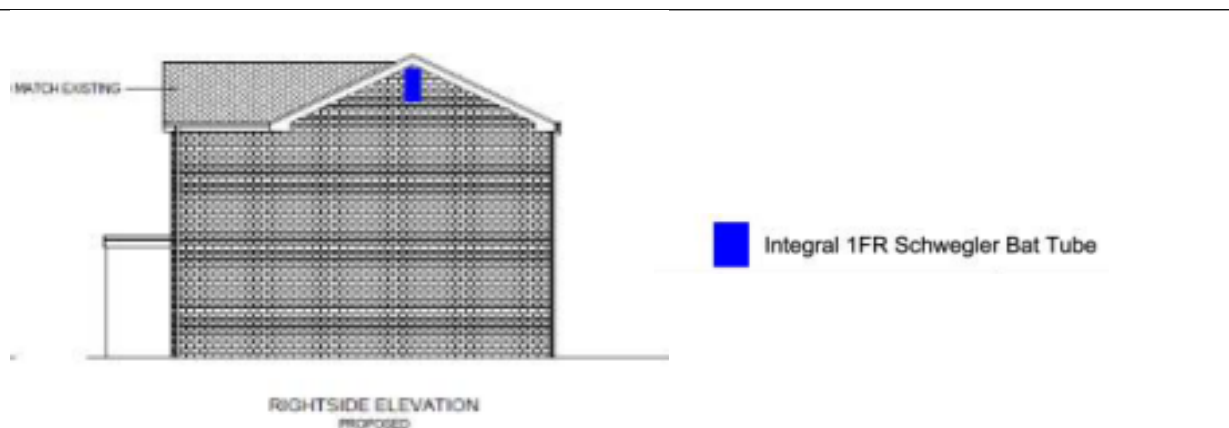
Photograph 5. *Pipistrellus* sp. emergence at 20:36



According to the PRA there are a number of potential bat access points via gaps in the verge mortar at the southern gable end. The access points are likely to lead to a suitable crevice roost location at the apex of the southern gable end within the wall cavity and soffit box. During the internal inspection one small bat dropping resembling those typically deposited by *Pipistrelle* bats was recorded on fibreglass at the base of the southern gable end.

Dusk emergence surveys were completed on 21 July and 11 August 2025. Four pipistrelle bats were observed emerging from crumbling verge mortar at the apex of the southern gable. Subsequent recordings confirmed that these were likely to be Common pipistrelle. The proposed development works will result in the permanent loss of a confirmed Common pipistrelle day roost. In the absence of mitigation measures the work would cause disturbance, injury and or death of bats.

I am satisfied that the survey effort and methodology are adequate for the Ecologist to conclude that a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence will be required to allow the works to proceed lawfully. The mitigation and enhancements will include stripping by hand under ecological supervision and incorporation of an integrated bat box such as the 1FR Schwegler Bat Tube (or suitable equivalent) with an access slot made within the new southern gable. Provided implementation of the development in full accordance with the Mitigation and Compensation Proposals provided in PRA Section 7 and provision of a copy of the site registration for a Bat Class Mitigation Licence and the mitigation measure approved by Natural England are secured by condition, there are no ecological objections to the development as proposed.



Condition: Works are to be carried out in full accordance with the given in Section 7 Mitigation and Compensation Proposals of the submitted Bat Emergence Survey (John Wenman Ecological Consultancy, Ref R2960_BES_a, September 2025. Within one month of substantial completion a short closing-out report demonstrating that the ecological mitigation and enhancement measures have been implemented to the satisfaction of the Owner's Ecologist is to be issued to the council.

Reason: To ensure that biodiversity, protected and priority species are not adversely affected by the proposals. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 and CP7 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB23."

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:	Yes
Recommendation:	
Date:	10 November 2025
Earliest date for decision:	10 October 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	11/11/25