

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	242028
Site Address:	22 Keephatch Road, Wokingham, RG40 1QJ
Expiry Date:	22 November 2024
Site Visit Date:	See PA: 04/05/2024
Proposal: Full application for the change of use of amenity land to residential garden, including erection of a new boundary fence. (Retrospective)	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

- Scale and Location of Development Proposals
- Landscape Character Assessment Area
- Green Routes and Riverside Paths Consultation Zone

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 CP5 – Housing Mix, Density and Affordability CP6 – Managing Travel Demand 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
Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (JMWP)	DM1 - Sustainable Development DM2 - Climate Change – Mitigation and Adaptation
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
231035	Householder application for the proposed 2No storey front extension to include infill and	Approved, 02/06/2023.

	changes to fenestration following part demolition of the existing front. Extension to the existing rear dormer.	
240843	Householder application for proposed single storey front extension to create a porch, first floor rear dormer extension with changes to the fenestration.	Approved, 25/06/2024

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Property Services – No comments received.
WBC Enforcement – No comments received.
WBC Highways – No objections.
WBC Highways Assests – Have expressed concerns.
WBC Landscape and Trees – No objections.

External

None consulted.

REPRESENTATIONS

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

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site relates to a two storey, detached property located in an established residential area. The surrounding area is characterised by detached, semi-detached properties that vary in design and appearance.

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:

An abundance of mature trees, boundary hedgerow planting and grass verges provides Keephatch Road - a designated Green Route - with a distinctly green and verdant edge. The application site is situated at a visually prominent location, positioned at the corner junction of Keephatch Road and Hughes Road and is also partially visible from Campion Way to the east. Properties along Keephatch Road are primarily two storey detached and semi-detached and are set back from the highway, with landscaping at the front typically consisting of grass verges, small trees and hedges which help soften the street scene and create a spacious verdant character.

The proposal seeks retrospective approval to convert a section of amenity land into residential garden space by enclosing the southern portion of the property with a 2.1 metre high close boarded and trellis timber fencing.

Close boarded timber fencing appears to be a common boundary feature amongst similar sited corner plot sites within the immediate area, it is acknowledged that the tall mature boundary hedgerow and grass verge which previously positively contributed to the verdant character of the area has been removed to facilitate the new close boarded timber fencing. However, there is no discernible consistent pattern in the vicinity in the proportions and arrangements of roadside open spaces, or in the distances between boundary treatments and the footway. In particular, a nearby close boarded fencing along the side of no.20 Keephatch Road has a similar arrangement along Hunges Road, erected directly adjacent to the public footway with no amenity space or landscaping on the fencing to screen or soften it from the public realm. Whilst this neighbouring fencing is set further back from the highway, it extends for a considerably longer distance compared to the proposals and also adjoins a 1.2 metre high fence along front corner of the house.

The front driveway of the application site remains well landscaped with boundary hedgerow, therefore maintaining the verdant appearance of Keephatch Road. Furthermore, the proposed fencing would weather over a few seasons and blend with the muted colours of existing darker closed boarded fencing and thereby will gradually appear more natural in its setting and assimilate into its surroundings.

Overall, it is considered that whilst the proposal would not enhance the street sense, it would not cause undue harm to the character and appearance of the area and therefore would not be contrary to policies CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy and policy CC03 of the MDD in this respect.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Due to the nature of the proposals, there are no loss of light, overlooking or overbearing concerns.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

The Council's Highways Officer has reviewed this application and considers that the position of the boundary fence will not impact the visibility splays of the application site. However, it is relevant to assess if the proposed boundary fence will reduce visibility from the driveway of the neighbouring site. The speed limit of Hughes Road is 30mph, which will require 2.4m x 43m visibility splays to be achieved. The position of access of 28 Hughes Road has referred to the approved access plan of Planning Application Reference 041103.

Despite 2.4m x 43m left-hand visibility splay cannot be achieved from the edge of the carriageway after the erection of proposed boundary fence, as the site is adjacent to a roundabout, vehicles entering and leaving the roundabout are not anticipated to cross the centre line from opposite directions.

Alternative measurement of left-hand visibility splay from the centre line can be accepted. The 2.4m x 43m left-hand visibility splay from the centre line of carriageway can be retained, which is acceptable. The 2m x 2m pedestrian visibility can also be retained, which is acceptable. As such, no objections from the Highways development team are raised.

Highway Assets

The Council's Highways Assets department have raised concerns regarding a potential breach of the Highways Act 1980, due to the encroachment of the proposed fence and tiles onto adopted highway land. However, these concerns do not affect the planning acceptability of the scheme, as the matters are related to legal enforcement under the Highways Act rather than planning policy considerations. The proposed development remains in accordance with relevant planning policies, and the Highways Officer has confirmed that the proposals would not cause harm to access, safety, or amenity, either to the application site or the surrounding area.

Landscape and Trees:

The Council's Trees and Landscape Officer has reviewed the application and notes that the application form states there are no trees or hedges on the proposed development site. However, this is not entirely accurate, as boundary hedgerow was removed to facilitate the proposals. Nevertheless, the proposals do not result in any further impact on existing trees or landscaping. As such, no objections are raised in relation to trees or landscape matters.

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:	Not required
Recommendation:	Approval

Date:	1 November 2024
Earliest date for decision:	31 August 2024

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	<i>MC</i>
Date:	22.11.2024