

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	260443
Site Address:	26 Old Bath Road, Sonning, Wokingham, RG4 6TA
Expiry Date:	5 August 2026
Site Visit Date:	22 April 2026
Proposal: Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey side and part single part two storey rear extension following demolition of an existing single storey element, plus changes to fenestration.	

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 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 CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB21 – Landscape Character TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU)	C4 – Green and blue infrastructure and public rights of way C5 – Parking and electric vehicle charging
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document Sonning Parish Design Statement Sonning Design Appraisal

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
35604	Two storey side and single storey front extension to provide living room, shower room, utility room	Approved 14/05/1990

	and breakfast area with enlarged bedroom and additional bedroom and bathroom above.	
37823	Erection of detached garage with pitched roof.	Approved 29/07/1991

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Landscape and Trees – 1st consultation: No objection subject to a condition. 2nd Consultation: No comments received.

WBC CIL – No comments received.

WBC Ecology – Request further information; Emergence surveys. Emergence survey 'Bat Emergence and Re-Entry Survey' by Arbtech was submitted dated 23/07/2026.

External

None.

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	No objection but raise concern in relation to the tree within the rear garden of no. 28 and the close proximity of the development to the western shared boundary.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received.
Neighbours	One letter of comment received. No objection in principle to the extensions but raises concern over a tree on adjoining land that may be impacted by the development, and the extension is close to the western shared boundary and would be visually dominant when viewed from the neighbouring property.

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site consists of a two-storey detached property located on the northern side of Old Bath Road, Sonning. Properties along the road vary in age, form and style, as such there is no prevailing character to the appearance of dwellings along Old Bath Road.

Typical materials include brick, render, hung tiles, timber and brick detailing.

Proposal:

This application seeks approval for the erection of a part single-storey, part two-storey rear/side extension following the removal of the existing single-storey side extension and chimney. The single-storey rear element of the scheme would have a flat roof with no. 1 rooflight.

Proposed materials include light render and concrete roof tiles to match the main house.

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 and Managing Development Delivery (MDD).

Character of the Area:

Old Bath Road contains a variety of dwelling types displaying differing designs, forms and architectural styles. Many properties have been altered or extended over time, resulting in a diverse streetscene with no prevailing architectural character.

Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy requires development to be of an appropriate scale, massing, built form and character, whilst the Borough Design Guide (BDG) SPD provides guidance on the design of residential extensions.

The proposal comprises the demolition of the existing single-storey side extension and chimney and the erection of a part single-storey, part two-storey side and rear extension. The side element would project approximately 1.9m beyond the existing western flank wall and would incorporate a mono-pitched roof. It would align with the building line of the existing sitting room and remain clearly subordinate to the host dwelling, given that the front sitting room projects approximately 6.4m further forward. Consequently, the extension would appear as a subservient addition and would not represent an unduly dominant feature.

The host dwelling, in common with neighbouring properties to the east, is positioned well back within its plot, with the majority of the amenity space located to the front. As a result, the proposed side extension would be set approximately 27m back from the highway. The extensive frontage is currently landscaped with established planting, including shrubs and bushes, which provides a degree of screening from public viewpoints. Given its siting and the existing vegetation, the proposed extension would have limited visibility within the street scene and would preserve the character and appearance of both the host dwelling and the surrounding area.

The proposed use of light render and concrete roof tiles to match the existing dwelling is considered acceptable and would ensure that the extension integrates satisfactorily with the host property.

Overall, the proposal is considered to comply with Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy and the guidance contained within the Borough Design Guide SPD.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Overlooking:

The proposed development would introduce one additional first-floor window within the rear elevation serving a walk-in wardrobe. This window would be centrally positioned

within the rear elevation and would primarily overlook the application's rear garden, with only oblique views towards the adjoining property to the west. Given the orientation and relationship between the properties, the proposed window would provide a level of outlook broadly comparable to that which already exists from the rear elevation. Accordingly, it would not result in a material increase in overlooking or any unacceptable loss of privacy to neighbouring occupiers.

Furthermore, the site backs onto the A4 Bath Road, beyond which lies open countryside. As such, the proposed rear-facing window would not give rise to any adverse privacy impacts to surrounding residential properties.

The single-storey rear extension would incorporate one rooflight serving the kitchen/dining room. Owing to the property's position within the plot, the rooflight would be located more than 11m from the rear-facing windows of No. 28 Old Bath Road. Given its position within the roof slope and the separation distance involved, the rooflight would not result in any overlooking or loss of privacy.

Overall, the proposed development would not result in a harmful loss of privacy or overlooking and is therefore acceptable in terms of its impact on neighbouring residential amenity.

Loss of Light & Overbearing:

A representation has been received raising concerns regarding the proximity of the proposed side extension to no. 28 Old Bath Road. In response, the proposed single-storey side extension would be positioned approximately 1.1m from the shared western boundary. Page 56 of the BDG advises that, where a single-storey side or rear extension is located within 2m of a boundary, the eaves height should not exceed 3m and a minimum 1m gap should be retained to the boundary. The proposal complies with this guidance with an eaves height of approximately 2.8m and a separation distance of 1.1m from the boundary. Consequently, the design accords with the BDG's objectives of safeguarding neighbouring amenity and minimising any undue sense of enclosure.

The first-floor element would be set in from the side extension and would effectively infill the space between the existing master bedroom and rear facing bedroom. Importantly, the proposed first-floor flank wall would remain approximately 3m from the shared western boundary, reducing its visual presence when viewed from the neighbouring property.

Daylight and sunlight impacts have been assessed with regard to BRE Report BR209 *Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A Guide to Good Practice*. Whilst the proposed first-floor extension would not satisfy the 45-degree test when measured from closest neighbouring rear facing windows, this test is advisory and forms only one component of the overall assessment. In this case, significant weight is given to the existing relationship between the properties. The host dwelling is already positioned such that its built form on the western side of the property only begins approximately 1.2m beyond the rear building line of no. 28, meaning the existing dwelling already breaches the 45-degree guideline.

Having regard to the site-specific circumstances, it is not considered that the proposed extension would result in an unacceptable loss of light or outlook. The retained

separation distances, together with the pitched roof design, which slopes away from the neighbouring property, would reduce the perception of bulk and maintain opportunities for daylight to reach neighbouring windows. Furthermore, the orientation of the properties means that any additional overshadowing would largely be confined to the early morning period and would predominantly affect limited areas of the neighbouring garden rather than principal habitable room windows.

The proposed single-storey rear element of the scheme would extend approximately 1.95m beyond the existing rear building line of the host dwelling and would have a hipped to flat roof form. It is acknowledged that the additional built form would extend close to the eastern shared boundary; within approximately 0.45m. However, the protrusion is relatively modest in scale and aligns with the existing eastern flank elevation. In addition, the hipped to flat roof form is inherently less visually intrusive than a traditional pitched roof and results in a lower overall bulk and massing when viewed from surrounding properties. Furthermore, due to the approximate 3.3m separation distance between the two properties, the rear extension would not breach the 45-degree test when measured from closest rear facing windows of no. 24.

Overall, having carefully considered the concerns raised by neighbouring residents and the specific relationship between the properties, it is concluded that the proposed development would not result in a significant loss of light, outlook or an unacceptable overbearing impact. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with Policies CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy and the guidance contained within Section 4 of the Borough Design Guide SPD.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

The proposal would not alter the total number of habitable rooms and the existing parking arrangements which are considered acceptable to serve the proposed development.

Amenity Space:

The BDG identifies a minimum garden depth of 11m as a general guideline for private amenity space. Following construction of the rear extension, the rear garden would have a depth of approximately 6.7m, which is below this guideline. However, it is important to consider the specific circumstances of the site.

The dwelling is unusually positioned within a deep plot, with the majority of its outdoor amenity space located to the front rather than the rear. The existing rear garden already falls below the recommended 11m depth, whilst the front garden extends in excess of 27m and currently functions as the primary private outdoor amenity area for the occupiers.

This arrangement would remain unchanged following the proposed development. Indeed, the usability of the front garden would be enhanced through the installation of bi-fold doors serving the living room, providing improved access and a stronger connection between the dwelling and the outdoor space.

Taking account of the substantial front garden and the overall quantity and functionality of outdoor amenity space that would be retained, it is considered that the proposal

would continue to provide an adequate level of private amenity space for future occupiers. The development is therefore acceptable in this regard.

Landscape and Trees:

The Council's Tree and Landscape Officer raises no objection in principle subject to a condition. The site is located between Bath Road, a designated Green Route Enhancement Area, and Old Bath Road, which is characterised by large, detached dwellings set within generous plots and landscaped frontages. The Officer notes that many properties within the area have been extended or renovated, contributing to the established residential character.

There are no protected trees within the application site, and the rear garden contains only limited planting. However, trees within the adjoining highway verge and a mature strawberry tree (*Arbutus unedo*) located within the neighbouring property at no. 28 Old Bath Road are considered to make a positive contribution to local amenity, screening and biodiversity. The Officer also highlights the importance of the established front boundary hedge, which contributes to the verdant character of Old Bath Road.

An Arboricultural Method Statement, Impact Statement and Tree Protection Plan were submitted (SouthOaks Arboricultural Consultancy). The Officer concluded that the footprint of the development would encroach into the Root Protection Area (RPA) of T1, off-site category C tree. This necessitates specialist construction techniques to prevent root damage. It is therefore necessary to condition the submitted Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan to safeguard the existing vegetation during construction.

In addition, the proposed extensions would not result in the loss of any existing trees, shrubs or other significant landscaping features within the site. The established landscape, including the front boundary hedge and surrounding vegetation, would be retained and protected throughout construction. Consequently, the proposal would preserve the verdant character of the site and surrounding area, and the extensions would integrate successfully with both the host dwelling and its wider landscape setting.

Ecology:

The application site is in an area suitable for bat roosts. A preliminary bat survey by Nature Bureau (Ref: Eco26-16, March 2026) was submitted which concluded that the application site offers high bat roosting potential and that three dusk emergence surveys are required.

Emergence survey (Arbtech, Bat Emergence and Re-entry Survey, 23 July 2026) was submitted. The ecologist concluded that no roosts were confirmed on site at the time of the surveys. However, the surveys still only provide data from a snapshot in time, and bats switch roosts regularly. Due to the high habitat value, and/or the high level of bat activity on site/around the building, roosting cannot be discounted entirely. As such there is still a risk to bats as a result of the proposed works, and therefore precautionary working measures are needed to reduce risk to an acceptable level.

As such, it will be necessary and reasonable to condition the measures set out in the report to ensure minimal risk to roosting bats.

Conclusion:

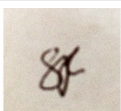
For the reasons set out above and subject to conditions, the proposed development is acceptable as it accords with local plan policy and guidance.

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:	Approve
Date:	23 July 2026
Earliest date for decision:	30 April 2026

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	2.9.26

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Limited Development Location

Green Route Enhancement Area

Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zone – Amber

Thames Ward

Sonning Parish