

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	252971
Site Address:	50 Heathermount Drive, Crowthorne, Wokingham, RG45 6HN
Expiry Date:	29 January 2026
Site Visit Date:	12 January 2026
Proposal: Full application for the change of use to a mixed residential and commercial use and the erection of a single storey side extension to create a home distillery plus changes to fenestration. (Retrospective)	

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 CC02 – Development Limits CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction CC06 – Noise CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk TB21 – Landscape Character TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (JMWP)	DM1 - Sustainable Development DM15 - Site History
Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU)	C5 – Parking and electric vehicle charging
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document

	Crowthorne Village Design Statement
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PLANNING HISTORY		
Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
162225	Householder application for the proposed single storey rear extension, first floor rear dormer extension plus single storey front garage extension to dwelling.	Approved 16/11/2016

CONSULTATION RESPONSES
Internal
WBC Environmental Health WBC Highways – Request further information. WBC CIL
External
None.

REPRESENTATIONS	
Parish/Town Council	<p>Objection. Concerns relate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How the development may impact the local residents in the future. - Recommend a personal consent if approved. - Recommend controlling hours of operation, deliveries and noise pollution if approved. <p>Officer comment: The Parish comments are noted. Conditions will be attached to any grant of approval to control the hours of operation and to condition what shall happen in the event the use ceases.</p>
Ward Member(s)	No comments received.
Neighbours	<p>Six letters of support. One letter of support subject to conditions attached relating to noise levels, no odour, no emissions, no public access, no change to the character of the property and no increase in deliveries/collections outside of 'normal household activity'.</p>

APPRAISAL
<p>Site Description: The application site consists of a two-storey link-detached property located on the southern side of Heathermount Drive, Wokingham. The property forms part of a 1960s housing development. Properties are not uniform in layout and design, although are unified through a repetition of architectural features such as steep roof pitches, flat roofed dormers and large glazing.</p>

The application dwelling is set back from the road behind a large front lawn and driveway providing on-site parking.

Proposal:

This application seeks retrospective approval for the erection of a single-storey side extension to serve an area for distillation production, packaging and storage, and the change of use of the residential dwellinghouse to a mixed use of residential and commercial home distillery.

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:

Heathermount Drive forms part of a 1960s residential housing development characterised by relatively large, detached and link-detached dwellings set within generous plots. The area has a verdant quality with mature trees, established shrubs and hedgerows contributing to the leafy suburban character. Properties are generally well spaced, allowing for a sense of openness and low-density development.

While dwellings are not uniform in appearance, there is a coherence to the street scene derived from shared architectural influences typical of the period. These include steep pitched roofs and flat roofed dormers. These features create a distinctive and consistent character reflective of mid-20th-century design.

The proposal includes the erection of a single-storey, flat roofed side extension to serve the proposed home distillery. CP3 of the Core Strategy states that proposals should be of an appropriate scale of mass, built form and character. The Council's Borough Design Guide (BDG) SPD gives advice on residential developments.

Page 56 of the BDG states that the primary considerations of side extensions are impact upon neighbourhood, upon street scene and local character and recommends 'A gap should be retained between the building and the site boundary and this should be a minimum of 1m in width'. While the side extension would not comply with this guidance, the extension would represent a subservient addition to the host dwelling as it is set back from the principal building line by approximately 1.2m and aligns with the existing eaves height. In addition, the side extension is set back more than 12m from the road and the mature shrubs and hedgerow in the front garden provide natural screening of the development from the public realm.

The distillation process would operate on a small scale (259 litre Kothe still) and would not include industrial distillation. It would be accommodated within the relatively modest side extension, which in terms of its design, scale and appearance would appear as a small residential extension. The extension measures approximately 3.56m in width and 5.33m in length with an internal floor space of approximately 16.6sqm.

Externally, the extension is consistent with the design and materials used on the host dwelling and does not appear commercial or industrial in character. There are no flues or external ventilation system, thereby preserving the residential appearance of the property and wider street scene.

The proposed use would have no employees other than the two Landowners who live on-site. Deliveries and collections would be minimal and can be accommodated within the existing access arrangements without detriment to highway safety. Outbound orders would be collected by regular household courier services, and the frequency and noise levels of associated vehicle movements would be comparable to typical domestic activity. All work associated with the distillation process would be conducted indoors, with no public access, visitors or on-site retail activity.

In summary, while the use of the extension for non-residential use is out of character with the established residential character, the small-scale nature of the use, and domestic appearance of the extension which is partially screened from the road, it is considered that the development would not result in any adverse harm to the character of the host dwelling or local area. As such, no objection is raised with regards to the impact on the character and appearance of the area in visual terms.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Overlooking, Loss of Light & Overbearing:

The side extension is located approximately 3.8m from the flank wall of no. 52 Heathermount Drive. By virtue of the separation distances from neighbouring properties and single-storey nature of the extension, there are no detrimental impacts of this nature that would arise from the proposal.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

The proposal does not propose any changes to the existing parking arrangements. The council's Highways officer was consulted and raised no objection, subject to further information. They commented:

"The existing dwelling consists of 8 habitable rooms. The proposal involves a side extension to create an additional attached unit of small-batch craft distillery of 18sqm..."

The submitted Planning Statement states that there is "no public access, visitors, or on-site retail activity. Sales are conducted exclusively online." and that commercial operation is carried out solely by the two directors. The applicant is required to confirm if both directors and any other potential employees are residents of 50 Heathermount Drive.

The development does not impact the existing parking arrangement. Subject to the confirmation of all users of the development are residents of the dwelling, there will have no additional parking demand.

It is unclear whether the development removes the side access to the rear garden. If no side access is retained and the garage will be used for both car and cycle parking, it will be necessary to accommodate cycle storage in a suitably sized garage (7.0m x 3.0m) or in a dedicated cycle store. WBC guidance requires three cycle parking spaces for a dwelling with nine habitable rooms.

Application ref.162225 (2016) shows four car parking spaces as one garage car parking space and three driveway parking spaces. This is in excess of the minimum parking requirements for the dwelling (three car parking spaces). As such, it would be acceptable to use the garage for cycle storage. If the applicant wishes to retain the garage for car parking, it will be necessary to provide a dedicated cycle store. Details of the cycle storage arrangement are to be secured in this proposal or by condition"

The officer can confirm that completed Planning Contravention Notices (for enforcement case RFS/2025/090756) were completed by the two Landowners which confirm that the two persons involved in the distillation operation are the Landowners, and occupants of the host dwelling.

The site visit carried out by the planning officer also confirmed that the existing garage along the western side of the site is used for cycle storage. As such, the existing three driveway parking spaces are acceptable to serve the proposed development.

Conclusion:

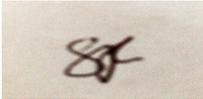
For the reasons set out above, and subject to conditions, the proposed change of use from residential to a mixed use of residential and distillery would not result in a detrimental impact upon the amenities of the neighbouring properties, local character or upon highway safety and is acceptable.

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:	Approve
Date:	21 January 2026
Earliest date for decision:	31 December 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	23.1.26

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

**Modest Development Location
Area Tree Preservation Order TPO-0787-1996
Wokingham Without Ward
Wokingham Without Parish**