

Application Number	Expiry Date	Parish	Ward
251346	20/08/2025	Earley CP	Maiden Erlegh & Whitegates;

Applicant	Mr Sajad Bashier
Site Address	20 Culver Lane, Earley, Wokingham
Proposal	Householder application for the Proposed erection of an outbuilding (part-retrospective).
Type	Householder Application
Officer	Tariq Bailey-Biggs
Reason for determination by committee	Listed by Councillor Stephen Newton

FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Planning Committee on Wednesday, 10 September 2025
REPORT PREPARED BY	Assistant Director – Place and Growth
RECOMMENDATION	APPROVAL subject to conditions and informatives

SUMMARY

The application was deferred at the 13 August Planning Committee solely to enable a Member site visit to facilitate assessment of the outbuilding's bulk, height, mass, and form within its setting, and to more fully consider its visual impact and relationship with the character of the surrounding area.

The Member site visit was undertaken on the 5 September.

No additional information has been received since deferral and no matters have arisen that would alter the original assessment as set out in the appended report. The consideration of the proposal's impact on the character of the area in relation to its bulk, height, mass, and form remains as set out within the 'Character of the Area' section of the original Committee report, which is provided below as Appendix 1, with the recommended conditions and informatives set out in Appendix 2.

The application is therefore recommended for approval subject to conditions and informatives.

APPENDIX 1 – Committee Report 13th August 2025

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SUMMARY

The application seeks to regularise modifications to previously approved outbuilding at a one-and-a-half-storey detached dwelling in Earley following enforcement action. Changes include a 1m ridge height increase, three rooflights, a veranda, and French doors.

These are modest amendments that maintain clear separation between structures and remain subordinate to the enlarged main dwelling, approved to become two storeys. The veranda's open design and rooflights' scale minimise visual impact, while landscaping will enhance screening.

Neighbouring privacy and light impacts are acceptable given the site layout and boundary treatments. Parking provision meets council standards with no highway objections.

Concerns about the outbuilding functioning as a separate dwelling, due to the inclusion of a bathtub, will be managed by a planning condition ensuring ancillary use only.

The proposal complies with local and national policies, balances regularisation with safeguarding the area's character and amenity, and is recommended for approval subject to conditions.

The application was deferred at the Planning Committee meeting of 13 August to facilitate a member site visit, providing an opportunity to view the outbuilding within its setting and to better assess its visual impact and relationship with the character of the surrounding area.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
251348	Householder application for the proposed erection of a detached outbuilding for use as a garage within the rear garden. (Part-Retrospective)	Awaiting decision.
243174	Householder application for proposed erection of an outbuilding.	Approved, 14/01/2025
243086	Application for non-material amendment to planning consent 232494 to change of the internal layout of the outbuilding including addition of a staircase to serve loft storage space, plus insertion of rooflights and changes to fenestration.	Approved 13/12/24
241035	Application for submission of details to comply with the following condition of planning consent 240123 dated 27/03/2024. Condition 5, Landscaping.	Approved 13/06/2024
240123	Householder application for proposed raised roof with part single part two storey front extension, single storey side/rear extension, front driveway and boundary alterations along with demolition of chimney.	Approved 27/03/2024
232494	Householder application for the proposed alterations to the front garden to create a driveway and new vehicular access, erection of single storey rear outbuilding following the demolition of the existing detached garage plus the erection of new boundary fencing and associated landscaping (part-retrospective).	Approved 08/12/2023

DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION	
CONSTRAINTS	Scale and Location of Development Proposals – Major Development Location (Earley) Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone Landscape Character Assessment Area

CONSULTATION RESPONSES	
WBC Highways	No objections, subject to a condition.
WBC Ecology	No objections.

REPRESENTATIONS

Town/Parish Council:

Earley Town Council (ETC) - Objected to the application and recommended that Wokingham Borough Council refuse it for the following reasons:

1. The proposal is visually dominant within the street scene and fails to maintain the environmental quality, contrary to Core Strategy Policy CP1.
2. Its scale, massing, and built form are considered inappropriate and intrusive, with poor integration into the street scene, resulting in harm to visual amenity - contrary to Policy CP3.

ETC further requested that, should the application be approved, a condition be imposed to restrict the use of the outbuilding to incidental accommodation only. This would prevent it from being used, sold, or sub-let as a separate dwelling. They noted that creating a separate unit of accommodation in this location may be unacceptable due to concerns over local amenity, character, and highway safety, referencing Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP3, CP4, and MDD Local Plan Policies CC01, CC07, and TB07.

Local Members:

Councillor Stephen Newton – Has formally objected to the application, expressing concern that it fails to acknowledge a second outbuilding constructed in the same garden. He noted that this adjacent structure has been submitted under a separate application (No. 251348), which he believes may be an attempt to obscure the cumulative impact of both buildings. Councillor Newton argued that the applications should be considered together, as separating them could mislead decision-makers - particularly in light of the previous refusal (application 250666).

He reaffirmed the original grounds for refusal, stating that the outbuildings, both individually and cumulatively, are excessive in scale, height, and massing, and are inappropriately located forward of the established building line along Eastcourt Avenue. He stressed that the development forms a visually intrusive and dominant presence that detracts from the character, pattern of development, and spatial quality of the area. His objection references conflict with Policies CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy, Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework, the National Design Guide, and the Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document.

Neighbours:

The ACER The Whitegates Residents Association - ACER objected to the application, stating that the outbuilding is out of character with the area and visually overbearing compared to the previous garage. They noted that only minor changes have been made since the previously refused application (250666), including a small height reduction and removal of a car port, which they believe do little to lessen its impact.

Concerns were also raised about the near-complete garage no longer shown on the site plans, the scale of the outbuilding (comparable to the main house and a commercial gym), and the inclusion of first-floor accommodation, which they consider inappropriate. They argued that a home office could be accommodated on the ground floor.

Additional objections included the veranda being unsuitable for a structure of this size, incomplete and unspecified landscaping details, and failure to fully implement previously approved green screening and grassed areas, which they see as important to maintaining the local character.

14 Culver Lane, RG6 1DS – Raised concerns that the current planning application appears to duplicate a previously refused and enforceable application (reference 250666), involving the same building, site, and applicant. They questioned how an identical proposal could be resubmitted and noted that construction is nearly complete despite the lack of approved planning permission. The consultee considered this situation unacceptable.

32 Easby Way, RG6 3XA – Objection to the relocated door and new windows being positioned only 750mm from the boundary fence along Eastcourt Avenue. They raised concerns that this layout could facilitate the creation of a separate, self-contained unit of accommodation. Additionally, they noted that access and daylight to the area appear to be obstructed.

PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework
National Design Guide
National Planning Practice Guidance

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
CC06 – Noise
CC07 – Parking
CC09 – Development and Flood Risk
CC10 – Sustainable Drainage
TB21 – Landscape Character
TB23 – Biodiversity and Development

Other

Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document
CIL Guidance + 123 List

PLANNING ISSUES

Site Description, Planning History and Proposed Development:

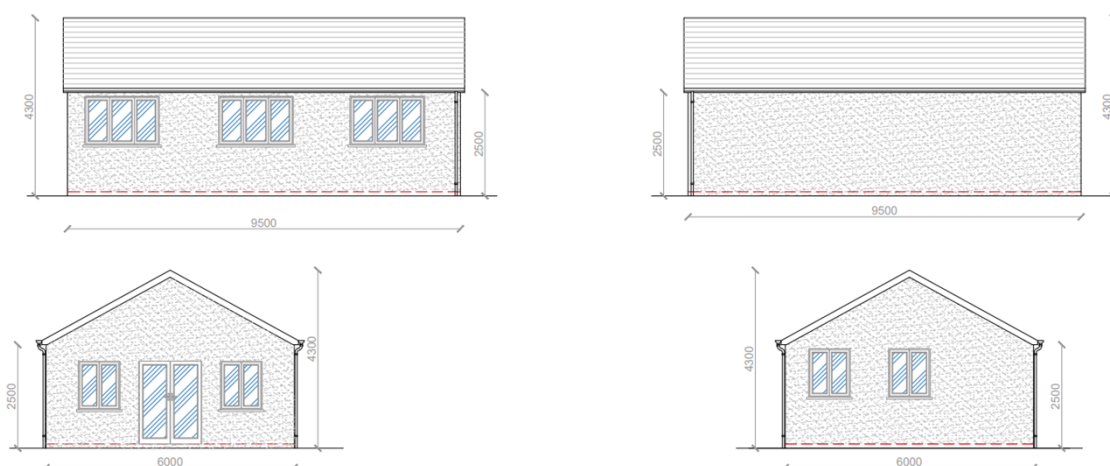
- 1) The application site falls within the Major Development Location of Earley and relates to a one-and-a-half-storey detached dwelling located at a corner plot at the junction of Culver Lane to the north and Eastcourt Avenue to the west.

- 2) This part-retrospective planning application is a resubmission of a similar scheme that was refused in May 2025 under planning reference 250666. It forms part of a wider suite of applications submitted in response to an enforcement investigation (ref: RFS/2025/090145) concerning the construction of outbuildings on the site that were not carried out in accordance with previously approved permissions. These include a single-storey rear outbuilding approved under application ref: 232494 (December 2023) for use as a gym/playroom, study, and bathroom, and a separate storage outbuilding approved under ref: 243174 (December 2024). As these elements have not been built in accordance with the approved plans, they are presently unauthorised in planning terms.
- 3) The most recent application under ref: 250666 which sought planning permission for the proposed erection of 2 no detached outbuildings which was refused for the following reason:

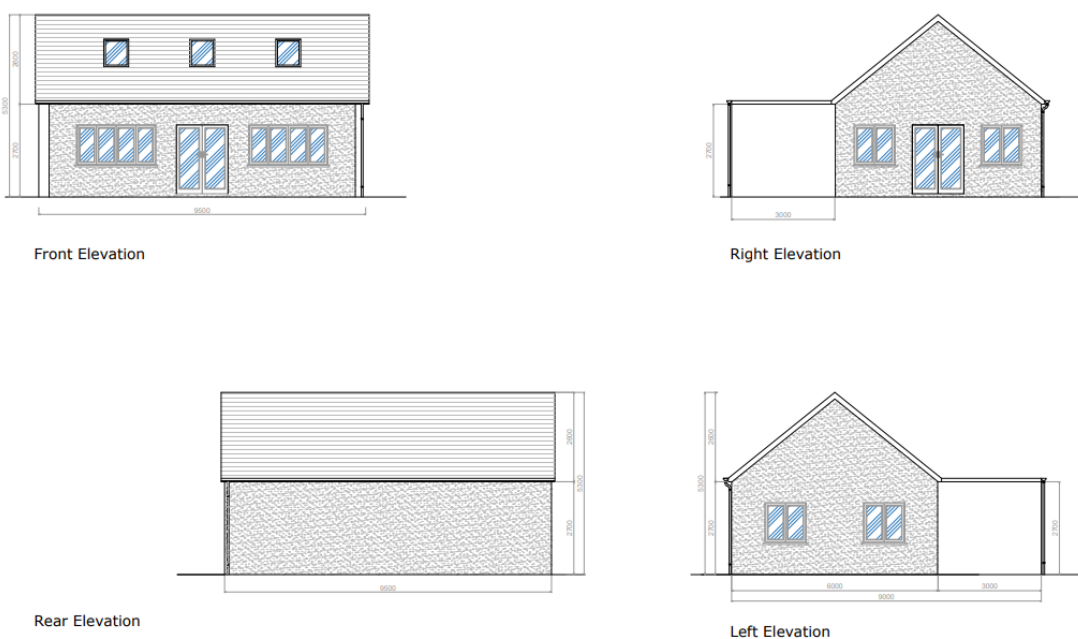
Individually and cumulatively, the proposed outbuildings would by reason of their excessive scale, height, massing and inappropriate siting forward of the established building line along Eastcourt Avenue, result in an overly dominant, incongruous and visually intrusive form of development. From many locations along Eastcourt Avenue, the proposed outbuildings would read as one continuous form of development forward of the established building line that would significantly detract from the visual amenity of the character and appearance, pattern of development and spatial qualities of the immediate vicinity, contrary to Policies CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy, Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework, the National Design Guide, and Section 4 of the Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document

- 4) Subsequently, several amendments have been made to the current proposals in an effort to overcome the above reason for refusal and ultimately regularise the unauthorised works on site, as identified during the enforcement investigation.
- 5) When compared to the approved scheme under planning reference 232494, the following changes are now proposed:
 - The ridge height has been increased by approximately 1 metre, with three rooflights added to the front elevation to facilitate the use of the roof space as a home office.
 - The introduction of a front veranda.
 - The insertion of French doors on the front elevation.
- 6) A comparison of the elevational drawings and site layout between the originally approved scheme and the current proposal is provided below:

Gym/Playroom Outbuilding as approved under 232494



Proposed Outbuilding



- 7) It should be noted that this application has been submitted alongside a concurrent, separate application for the part-retrospective erection of a detached rear outbuilding for use as a garage, under planning reference 251348. While each application is assessed on its own merits in terms of planning acceptability, it is relevant that the most recently refused application (ref: 250666) included both the main outbuilding and the garage within a single proposal. As such, this report will, where appropriate, consider the relationship between the two structures as part of the overall assessment of the current scheme.

Principle of Development:

- 8) 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.

- 9) 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:

- 10) Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for proposals that maintain and enhance the high quality of the environment.
- 11) Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy emphasises 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.
- 12) Section 4 of the Borough Design Guide advises that alterations or extensions should be clearly subservient to the form and scale of the original building in most situations, although there may be exceptions where it is more appropriate to design a seamless continuation.
- 13) The application site comprises a one-and-a-half-storey detached dwelling located at a corner plot at the junction of Culver Lane to the north and Eastcourt Avenue to the west. The character of the surrounding area distinctly varied when viewed as a whole, primarily consisting of two storey dwellings set in discernible groupings which are distinguished by repeated house type.
- 14) The proposal includes several modifications to the previously approved scheme under planning application reference 232494. These changes comprise a 1-metre increase in ridge height, the installation of three rooflights to facilitate habitable accommodation within the roof space, the addition of a veranda, and the insertion of French doors on the front elevation.
- 15) Taken as a whole, the proposed modifications are considered modest in scale relative to the extant permission. Although the 1-metre increase in ridge height would result in a slightly more prominent roof form, the outbuilding would retain a generous separation distance of approximately 5.9 metres from the south-western boundary, helping to minimise its visual impact - particularly when viewed from the public realm along Eastcourt Avenue.
- 16) While the proposed outbuilding would remain subordinate to the existing dwelling, it is also relevant to note that planning permission has been granted in March 2024 under reference 240123 for the extension of the main dwelling from a single-storey bungalow to a two-storey house. This approved increase in the overall scale of the host building further reinforces the outbuilding's relative subservience. In this context,

the proposed height increase to the outbuilding is considered proportionate and would continue to appear clearly subordinate to the enlarged main dwelling.

- 17) The proposed veranda, due to its open and lightweight structure, would not introduce significant visual or physical bulk. Its presence would largely be screened by the adjacent garage and, as such, it reads as a minor, ancillary feature that would not detract from the outbuilding's appearance or harm neighbouring amenity or the street scene.
- 18) Similarly, the proposed 3 no rooflights on the front elevation are modest in scale and appropriately designed. They would integrate well within the roof form and would not appear as incongruous elements in this residential context, thereby preserving the character and appearance of the area.
- 19) When considering both the proposed outbuilding and the garage under application 251348, it is acknowledged that their ground-level proximity would be relatively close. However, a substantial gap would be maintained at roof level, ensuring a clear visual break between the two structures. This separation helps to prevent the appearance of a single, continuous built form and allows each building to remain legible as a distinct, ancillary element within the site. As such, the combined impact on openness, massing, and visual character is considered acceptable.
- 20) It is acknowledged that the applicant benefits from extant planning permissions for both outbuildings under 243174 and 232494 which provide a credible fallback position. In comparison, the proposed amendments are modest and would not result in any materially greater impact on character of the area. The design remains sympathetic, the outbuildings retain clear separation, and both structures continue to read as subordinate to the main dwelling, which is itself increasing in scale. Overall, the proposal is considered acceptable within its context and would accord with policies CP3 and CP9 of the Core Strategy and the guidance contained within section 4 of the Borough design Guide.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Overlooking:

- 21) Figure 4.25 of the Borough Design Guide sets out the Council's minimum privacy and amenity distance standards to safeguard privacy and limit any perceived sense of enclosure. For developments of between one and two storeys, a minimum back-to-back separation distance of 22 metres is advised between opposing elevations of neighbouring dwellings.
- 22) Due to its orientation, the main outbuilding effectively shares a back-to-back relationship with the neighbouring property at No. 22 Culver Lane. In this context, the 22-metre separation guideline is considered appropriate. The nearest of the proposed front-facing rooflights would be sited approximately 19.3 metres from the main rear elevation of No. 22, which falls slightly short of the recommended distance. However, this shortfall is not considered significant enough to result in an unacceptable level of overlooking or a harmful sense of enclosure, particularly given the scale and position of the rooflights. No overlooking or loss of privacy objections are therefore raised. With regards to the new ground floor windows, the existing

boundary fencing would be high enough to sufficiently mitigate any overlooking concerns.

Loss of Light and Overbearing:

- 23) The proposed main building is situated toward the rear of the garden, adjacent to the boundary with No. 1 Eastcourt Avenue, which contains several side-facing windows. While a slight reduction in sunlight to these windows may occur as a result of the proposed height increase, the impact is considered negligible. This is due to the single-storey nature of the outbuilding and the fact that the affected windows either serve non habitable rooms or act as secondary openings to habitable spaces. As such, any loss of daylight/sunlight to these rooms would not substantiate a reason to refuse this application under such grounds.
- 24) The proposed outbuilding would be suitably located away from surrounding neighbouring properties, therefore would not result in any unreasonable overbearing or loss of light impacts.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

- 25) The Council's Highways Officer has reviewed this application and considers that the four off-street parking spaces on the front driveway would be sufficient for a dwelling of this size, and in accordance with the council's Parking Standards.
- 26) As such, the Highways Officer has raised no objections to the proposed development, subject to a condition attached to any approval requiring the proposed outbuilding to remain ancillary to main dwelling, in the interest of highway safety; to ensure acceptable access and parking. A suitable condition will be attached in the event of any approval.

Amenity Space:

- 27) The remaining rear amenity space would meet the minimum depth requirement of 11 metres.

Other matters:

- 28) It is noted that the proposed outbuilding is described in the submitted plans as serving partly as a gym/playroom and home office. However, the inclusion of a bathtub, when considered alongside the overall footprint of the building has raised concerns from several objectors about its potential use as a self-contained residential unit, independent of the main dwelling.
- 29) The creation or use of a self-contained unit of accommodation within the rear garden of the application site would not be acceptable in planning terms. Such use would constitute a material change of use requiring separate planning permission.
- 30) Accordingly, should the application be recommended for approval, a planning condition would be imposed to ensure the outbuilding remains ancillary to the main dwellinghouse. This condition would explicitly restrict the building from being used, sold, or sub-let as a separate unit of accommodation. The Council reserves the right

to take appropriate enforcement action should the outbuilding be used in breach of this condition, including in circumstances where it functions independently of the main dwelling.

- 31) This approach ensures that the development remains consistent with the intended ancillary use, avoids the establishment of an unauthorised dwelling, and safeguards the planning integrity of the site and surrounding area.

Conclusion:

- 32) The proposal addresses the previous refusal by reducing scale and massing, maintaining separation between outbuildings, and respecting the established building line. The modest amendments preserve the character and visual amenity of the area, ensuring the development remains subordinate to the main dwelling and avoids dominance or visual intrusion.

- 33) There are also no anticipated adverse impacts on highway safety or neighbouring amenities.

- 34) Subject to the conditions and informatives within Appendix 1 below, this application is recommended for approval.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010)
<i>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 the protected groups 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 upon protected groups as a result of the development.</i>

APPENDIX 2 - Conditions / informatives

APPROVAL subject to the following conditions and informatives:

1. Timescale

The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: In pursuance of s.91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by s.51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2. Approved details

This permission is in respect of the submitted application plans and drawings titled and numbered Location Plan, 16 REVB, 22 REVB and 21 REVB received by the local planning authority on 06/06/2025. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details unless other minor variations are agreed in writing after the date of this permission and before implementation with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the application form and associated details hereby approved.

3. External materials

Except where stated otherwise on the approved drawings or application form, the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the outbuilding hereby permitted shall be of similar appearance to those used in the existing building, unless other minor variations are agreed in writing after the date of this permission and before implementation with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the external appearance of the building is satisfactory. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3

4. Non-let/No sale

The outbuilding hereby approved shall be used as ancillary accommodation to the main dwellinghouse, the main dwelling shall remain in use as a single dwellinghouse and the outbuilding shall not be used, sold or sub-let as separate dwellings.

Reason: A separate unit of accommodation of this nature may not be acceptable in this location in the interests of the amenities, character of the area and highway safety in accordance with Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP3, CP4, and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policies CC01, CC07, TB07, TB08.

Informatives:

1. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF.

2. Whilst it would appear from the application that the proposed development is to be entirely within the curtilage of the application site, the granting of planning permission does not authorise you to gain access or carry out any works on, over or under your neighbour's land or property without first obtaining their consent, and does not obviate the need for compliance with the requirements of the Party Wall etc. Act 1996.
3. The applicant is reminded that should there be any change from the approved drawings during the build of the development this may require a fresh planning application if the changes differ materially from the approved details. Non-material changes may be formalised by way of an application under s.96A Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

