

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	251596
Site Address:	6 Old Bath Road, Sonning, Wokingham, RG4 6TA
Expiry Date:	12 September 2025
Site Visit Date:	26 June 2025
Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of 1 no. detached dwelling following demolition of the existing dwelling and garage.	

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 CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction CC06 – Noise CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB06 – Development of Private Residential Gardens TB07 – Internal Space Standards TB21 – Landscape Character TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (JMWP)	DM1 - Sustainable Development DM2 - Climate Change – Mitigation and Adaptation DM3 - Protection of Habitats and Species DM4 - Protection of Designated Landscape DM9 - Protecting Health, Safety and Amenity DM10 - Flood Risk DM11 - Water Resources DM15 - Site History
Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU)	SS1 – Sustainable development principles SS2 – Spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy SS3 – Development within or adjacent to major and modest settlements SS4 – Development within or adjacent to minor settlements CE1 – Design principles for efficient buildings CE3 – Environmental standards for residential development CE4 – Supporting a circular economy CE5 – Embodies carbon C5 – Parking and electric vehicle charging

	H1 – Housing mix, density and standards H6 – Self-build and custom build FD1 – Development and flood risk (from all sources) FD2 – Sustainable drainage NE1 – Biodiversity and geodiversity NE2 – Biodiversity net gain NE4 – Trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows NE5 – Landscape and design NE7 – Sites of Urban Landscape Value DH1 – Place making and quality design HC5 – Environmental protection HC6 – Air pollution and air quality HC7 – Light pollution HC8 – Noise pollution HC10 – Odor, fumes and dust
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
14955	Conversion of garage into guest room and bathroom also addition of new porch, store and car port.	Approved 21/04/1981

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Environmental Health – No comments received
WBC Drainage – No objection subject to conditions
WBC Highways – Request further information prior to determination
WBC Landscape and Trees – No objection
WBC Ecology Newts – No objection
WBC Ecology – No objection subject to conditions
WBC Waste Services – No comments received

External

Thames Water Utilities Ltd – No comments received

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	Sonning Parish Council have the following comments to make: On the previous application (251237) the neighbour was not consulted by the applicant or agent, they did not receive notification from WBC, and no notice was displayed.
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	<i>Officer comments: There is no requirement for the agent and applicant to consult with neighbours, and additionally, there is no requirement to display a site notice. It is noted that the neighbour did not receive notification, however, the Council's system shows that the neighbour was consulted on this and the previous application.</i> • There will be a solid two-storey wall just over a metre from the boundary with the neighbour for a distance of 7 metres, the proposed dwelling also has an increased height that would be overbearing. This would also reduce light to habitable rooms of the neighbouring property. <i>Officer comments: Impacts on neighbouring amenities are assessed within the main report below.</i> • Parking arrangements are unclear. <i>Officer comments: The Council's Highways Officer has no objection to the proposed level of parking.</i> • There is a structure shown with a parking space in it on the submitted Tree Protection Plan, it is unclear as to whether this is a car port. <i>Officer comments: There is no car port that forms part of the proposal for this application.</i> • The recommended two emergence surveys should be carried out. <i>Officer comments: The emergence surveys were carried out and details can be found within the submitted Ecological Survey Report (Bats) dated 03/08/2025.</i> • A Great Crested Newt Survey would be welcomed. <i>Officer comments: The Council's Ecology Newts Officer has no objection to the proposal.</i> • The ownership of the property on the application form is completely different to what is shown on the CIL form. The CIL form states the site is owned by a charity. <i>Officer comments: This matter was raised with the agent and a revised CIL Form has been received clarifying that the site is not owned by a charity.</i> • Overall, Sonning Parish Council find that the proposal is out of scale with the plot, too large, and due to the scale, bulk and height, it is unneighbourly and visually intrusive. <i>Officer comments: Impacts on the character of the area are assessed within the main report below.</i>
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	Four neighbours have commented on this application and their comments are summarised below:

	• The proposed new dwelling would encroach the boundaries of the neighbouring properties, leading to a loss of light and loss of outlook of adjoining gardens and living spaces. No light impact assessment has been provided. The 45-degree rule is not met. <i>Officer comments: Impacts on neighbouring amenities will be assessed within the main report below.</i> • The two-storey high wall right adjoining the neighbour which would create an unacceptable sense of enclosure and an overbearing presence. <i>Officer comments: Impacts on neighbouring amenities will be assessed within the main report below.</i> • The size, height and bulk of the property would have an unacceptable impact upon the street scene and it would be out of keeping with other properties. <i>Officer comments: Impacts on the character of the area will be assessed within the main report below.</i> • It would be assumed that due to the nature of the plot backing onto the A4, that an opportunity would be taken to position the larger dwelling to the rear of the plot. <i>Officer comments: The front building line of the proposed new dwelling closely matches that of the existing dwelling. It is not within the remit of the LPA to consider potential alternatives that do not part of this application.</i> • Lack of off-street parking following the loss of the garage. <i>Officer comments: The Council's Highways Officer has no objection to the proposed level of parking.</i> • The front gardens for many of these properties are used as the main relaxing and BBQ area during warm weather, if the property is allowed it would cause a loss of sunlight to this amenity area for the neighbour. <i>Officer comments: The 'back-to-front' garden situation is noted, and impacts on neighbouring amenities are assessed within the main report below.</i> • In the community commitment note states the applicant has taken into consideration the views and concerns of the local community, but there was no dialogue between the applicant and neighbours. <i>Officer comments: This is noted.</i> • The recommended dusk emergence surveys have not been provided. <i>Officer comments: An Ecological Survey Report (Bats) with the findings of the dusk emergence surveys was provided on 03/08/2025.</i> • The site lies within an amber risk zone for Great Crested Newts.
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	<i>Officer comments: The WBC Ecology Newts Officer has no objection to the proposal.</i> • Several reports refer to the withdrawn application 251237 and there is confusion as to whether documents reflect the current proposal or the previous (demolition and rebuild vs. extension). <i>Officer comments: Application 251237 was submitted as the wrong application type, and this current application has rectified that error.</i>
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APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site is located on a quiet residential road in Sonning, where the surrounding plots are characterised by the large, detached properties. Here, the properties are set well back from the street frontage, with some properties having a back-to-front arrangement, where the main private amenity space is located to the front of the dwelling. Front boundaries along this section of the road are characterised by varied planting and green landscaping which contributes positively to the overall attractiveness of the area. Despite being situated within a relatively small settlement, many properties along this part of Old Bath Road have been altered, extended upon, or rebuilt entirely. They also host a rich variety of architectural styles and design features, with many adopting contemporary appearances.

Description of Development:

This application seeks permission for the proposed erection of a three-storey, 4-bedroom dwelling, following the demolition of the existing dwelling and garage.

Principle of Development:

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Act requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the Local Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case, the Development Plan consists of the Core Strategy 2010 and Managing Development Delivery (MDD) Local Plan 2014. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) must also be considered as it constitutes guidance which the Local Planning Authority must pay regard to, however it does not change the statutory status of the Development Plan as the starting point for decision making. However, the NPPF is a material consideration in any determination and must be read alongside the Development Plan.

The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the local Development Plan. The MDD 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. 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.

The spatial strategy for the borough is contained within the Core Strategy. Policy CP9 'Scale and location of development proposals' of the Core Strategy relates to the scale and location of development proposals and seeks to focus development proposals within those identified major, modest and limited development locations. Policy CC02 of the MDD Local Plan sets out the development limits for each settlement as defined on the policies map. The site is located within a limited development location and as such the principle of development should be acceptable subject to other material considerations.

Character of the Area:

Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy requires developments to maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale, mass, layout, built form, height and character of the area and must be of high quality design. R1 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires that development contribute positively towards and be compatible with the historic or underlying character and quality of the local area.

Paragraph 130 of the NPPF requires that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping, and are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting. Paragraph 134 states that development that is not well designed should be refused.

The proposed new dwelling would be sited 1.6 metres from the site's eastern boundary with no. 8, and 2.4 metres from the western boundary with no. 4. Such adequate separation distances ensure that there are no concerns relating to a potential terracing effect as a result of the proposed dwelling. The proposal will enlarge the footprint of the existing dwelling by approximately 75sqm at ground floor level. It is recognised that this is a significant increase, however, given the spacious plot size, it is not deemed that this would result in excessive built form on the site.

Along Old Bath Road there are inconsistent spacing patterns between buildings where many rebuilt properties occupy almost the entire width of their site at ground floor level and in some cases at first floor level too. It is acknowledged that the site is located on a slightly narrower plot compared to some of the surrounding properties, however, the building is well contained and does not appear inappropriate in size, scale and it would not appear overly cramped from the frontage.

Buildings on the street scene host a variety of design styles and design features, both at single storey and first floor levels. There is no specific design type for properties or material palette in the character of the area, and this demonstrates that the proposals design and material choices would be appropriate given the existing varied character of the area.

Properties on the northern side of Old Bath Road are large properties on sizeable plots, however, they have a restricted rear garden size due to the Bath Road that runs adjacent to the rear of these properties, and this results in a back-to-front arrangement as referred to in the 'Site Description' section at the start of this report. The proposed front building line matches that of nos. 8 and 10, however, compared to no. 4 to the

east, the proposed new dwelling is set forward approximately 4.85 metres. Whilst this is a significant difference, the proposed new dwelling where it is close to the boundary with no. 4 does not project further forward than the existing dwelling (notably the existing garage), and additionally, where the existing garage is set very close the boundary, a gap of 2.4 metres to the boundary will be implemented for the new dwelling. Therefore, it is not considered that the stagger in building lines poses any significant harm to the character of the area.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that permission should be granted to proposals that are not detrimental to the amenities of adjoining land users including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life.

Overlooking:

In terms of overlooking, two windows are proposed at first-floor level on the western side elevation facing no. 8. These windows are identified on the submitted western elevation as being obscure glazed windows. A condition is recommended to ensure that the windows are obscure glazed and non-opening below a height of 1.7 metres above the finished floor level of the rooms. Two rooflights are also proposed on the western elevation, however, these will be aligned with the side of no. 8, and it is not deemed that they would raise any significant overlooking concerns.

Two rooflights are proposed on the eastern side elevation and these will serve a storage room. These rooflights raise significant overlooking concerns as they would be aligned with the main private amenity space of the neighbouring property no. 4 which is to the front of the dwelling. It is noted that the rooflights serve a storage room which is not considered to be a habitable room, however, to alleviate the significant overlooking concerns, a condition is recommended to ensure that these rooflights are obscure glazed and fixed shut.

A balcony is proposed at first floor level on the front elevation above the entrance lobby. Views from the balcony towards no. 8 would be over the front driveway and parking area for the neighbouring property and there would be no significant overlooking or privacy concerns given this space fronts a publicly open area. However, no. 4 use their front garden as their main private amenity space and the proposed front balcony would overlook this space. Therefore, a condition is recommended to ensure details of a privacy screen are provided to ensure that there is no significant overlooking towards the neighbouring property no. 4.

Loss of Light:

No. 8 Old Bath Road

The proposed new dwelling is sited approximately 1.6 metres from the boundary with no. 8 and the building lines, both front and rear, are very similar. Therefore, it is not considered that the proposed new dwelling would introduce any significant loss of light concerns to the neighbouring property no. 8.

No. 4 Old Bath Road

The proposed new dwelling is sited approximately 2.4 metres from the boundary with no. 4. No. 4 have sliding doors on the left-hand side of the front elevation serving a living room, and the centre of these doors is approximately 2.4 metres from the

boundary. The proposed new dwelling projects forward approximately 4.6 metres from the front building line of no. 4. The proposed new dwelling therefore complies with the 45-degree horizontal test as advocated within the Borough Design Guide (BDG) and the British Research Establishment (BRE) publication "Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A Guide to Good Practice". This therefore demonstrates that there would not be an unacceptable loss of light to the neighbouring lounge. However, due to the back-to-front garden arrangement of some sites along this section of Old Bath Road, the main private amenity space of no. 4 is to the front of the dwelling. It is recognised that there would be a loss of light to this area of garden space. However, given that this amenity area would still receive an adequate amount of light for most of the day, it is not considered that there would be a significant loss of light that would warrant the refusal of the application in this instance.

Overbearing:

No. 8 Old Bath Road

Whilst the proposed new dwelling does have significant bulk and an increased footprint, the dwelling is largely aligned with no. 8, and therefore it is not deemed that there would be any overbearing impact on no. 8.

No. 4 Old Bath Road

In terms of overbearing impacts on no. 4, it is recognised that the proposed new dwelling would be sited approximately 4.6 metres forward of the building line of no. 4, and that this would be aligned with the main private amenity space of no. 4. It is acknowledged that a two-storey wall extending 4.6 metres beyond the front of the neighbouring property would have a slight overbearing impact, however, given an adequate separation of 2.4 metres from the new dwelling to the boundary, it is not deemed that the new dwelling would have a significant enough overbearing impact on the neighbouring property that would warrant a reason for refusal of this application.

Housing Amenity:

Internal Amenity

Policy TB07 of the MDD and R17 of the Borough Design Guide SPD require adequate internal space to ensure that the layout and size achieve good internal amenity. Additionally, Nationally Described Space Standards provide minimum internal spaces required for various dwellings. A dwelling with more than one bedroom should have a main bedroom, which is to have a minimum area of 11.5 m². Secondary or single bedrooms should have a minimum area of 7.5m². There should also be provision for appropriate living areas and storage.

The development provides provision for 4 bedrooms, all of spacious and appropriate size along with large living area spaces.

R18 of the Borough Design Guide requires sufficient sunlight and daylight to new properties, with dwellings afforded a reasonable dual outlook and southern aspect. The new dwelling is located to the centre of the plot, exposing it to an appropriate level of sunlight to the front and rear elevations. No objections are therefore raised.

External Amenity

Section 4 of the Borough Design Guide provides guidance on the provision of amenity space and recommends that 11 metres is a generally accepted depth for private garden

space. The proposed garden depth is 6.3 metres at the shortest point, and 9.1 metres for the remainder of the garden space, and neither figure meets the recommended figure of 11 metres. However, as the plot is just over 18 metres wide, it is deemed that there is an appropriate amount of garden space to facilitate the development.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

As this proposal is for a replacement dwelling, it is not anticipated that there would be any additional traffic impact as a result of the development. Additionally, the existing access onto Old Bath Road is being retained, and this is acceptable. In terms of parking, the driveway will have sufficient space for at least three driveway parking spaces, and this is acceptable to serve a dwelling of this size. An electric vehicle charging point has been indicated on the submitted site plan, and the Council's Highways Officer has indicated that its position is acceptable for the planning application, but it may be subject to further authorisation via Building Control.

Cycle provision has been identified on the submitted block plan and this is likely in the form of Sheffield stands, which the Council's Highways Officer identifies as being not ideal for long-stay residential cycle parking with reference to LTN 1/20, MfS and WBC's Parking Standards Study. As a result, the Highways Officer has recommended a condition that would require details of secure and covered cycle storage to be submitted to the council prior to development commencing. Given that there is ample space within the rear garden for cycle storage or a shed, it is considered unnecessary and unreasonable to impose a condition requiring these details. Accordingly, the condition is not recommended.

Flooding and Drainage:

The application site is located within Flood Zone 1 and it is at a low risk of flooding from surface water according to EA mapping.

The submitted application form states that the surface water will be managed via soakaway, whilst foul water will be disposed of via the mains sewer.

The Council's Drainage Officer has no objection to the principle of development. But they have recommended a condition requiring full details of the drainage system for the site to be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to development commencing.

Landscape and Trees:

The Council's Landscape and Trees Officer was consulted on this application. They initially raised concern with the size of the rear patio, and potential incursion to the RPA of Lombardy poplar tree located to the rear of the site. Additionally, the first iteration of the landscaping plan included a number of trees along the sites rear boundary, but these were to be under 1 metre in height. It was deemed that this would have introduced views of the dwelling from Bath Road to the rear of the site, and impacted upon the verdant character of Bath Road which is identified as a Green Infrastructure Route.

A revised landscaping plan was submitted and this reduced the size of the rear patio and included taller trees along the sites rear boundary. The Council's Landscape and

Trees Officer was consulted on this revised information and they have stated they these changes are acceptable.

The submitted landscape plan indicates that the front wall and gates would have a height of 1.75 metres, with the brick pillars having a maximum height of 1.85 metres. The Council's Landscape and Trees Officer has no objection to the replacement of the boundary wall, but has stated that it should relate in height to other existing boundary walls along this road. The fence at the neighbouring property no. 4 has a height of 1.8 metres, and the brick piers measure to 2.05 metres. It is therefore deemed that the proposed boundary treatment is at an acceptable height for the area, and it would not negatively impact upon the character of the area in terms of any significant loss of trees or vegetation.

Ecology:

The Council's Ecology Officer was consulted on this application, and they have no objection to the proposal subject to conditions.

The Ecology Officer finds that the biodiversity enhancements recommended in the submitted Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Report are appropriate, and a condition is recommended to secure these enhancements.

The BNG Report proposed the removal of trees and the enhancement of a hedgerow with native planting, however, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, it is a criminal offence to remove, damage, or destroy the nest of any wild bird and their eggs. Therefore, to ensure that this protected species is not impacted by the removal of the trees and planting of a hedgerow a condition is recommended for the protection of breeding birds during construction.

Conclusion:

For the reasons stated above, the proposed new dwelling is acceptable subject to conditions and should be approved.

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.

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.

RECOMMENDATION	
Conditions agreed:	Yes
Recommendation:	Approve
Date:	11 November 2025
Earliest date for decision:	8 August 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	12/11/25

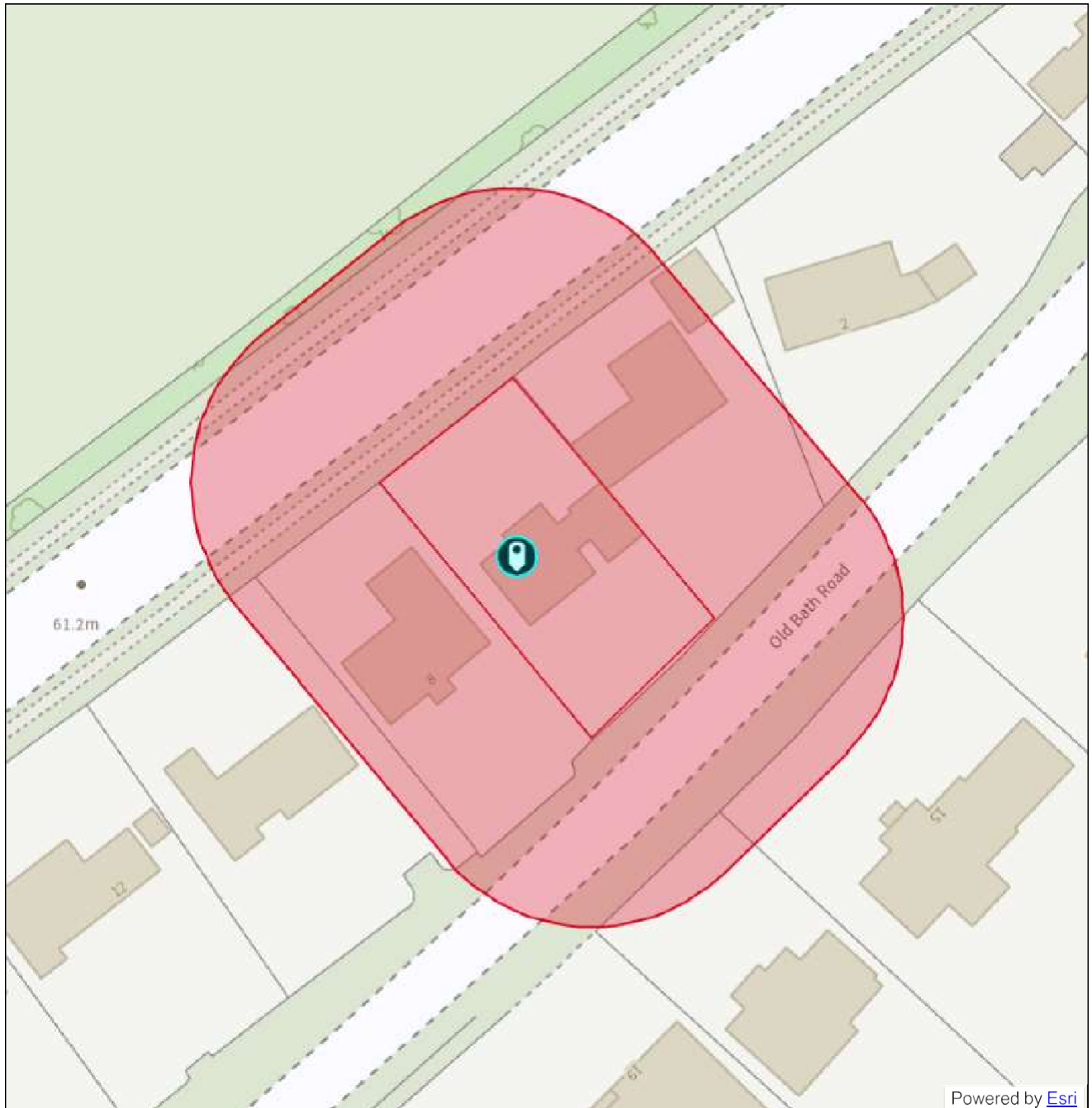
PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Near Me Report

Area of Interest (AOI) Information

Area: 3,951.54 m²

Date: Tue Jul 08 2025 10:55:46 GMT+0100 (British Summer Time)



No legend

Affordable Housing Thresholds | Total count: 4

#	NAME
1	Outside Development Locations
2	Within Modest or Limited Development Locations
3	Within Modest or Limited Development Locations
4	Within All Development Locations

Scale and Location of Development Proposals | Total count: 2

#	FEATURE_TYPE	NAME
1	Countryside	Countryside
2	Limited Development Locations	Sonning

Green Infrastructure Routes Consultation Zone | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE
1	Green Route Enhancement Areas

Mineral Safeguarding Areas | Total count: 3

#	Type	SubType
1	Soft Sand	Construction sand: Palaeogene: Thanet Sand Formation, Lambeth Group, Harwich Formation, London Clay Formation
2	Sharp Sand and Gravel	River Terrace deposits
3	Soft Sand	Construction sand: Palaeogene: Thanet Sand Formation, Lambeth Group, Harwich Formation, London Clay Formation

Major Nuclear Sites Consultation Zone | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME	PLANNING_NOTE
1	Consultation Zone - Major Nuclear Site	AWE: 12km Zone	This is the 12km Zone. A circular zone of 12km radius around all nuclear sites, for certain types of significant development due to the potential for such developments to pose an external hazard to sites.

Aerodrome Safeguarding: Heathrow Consultation Zone | Total count: 1

#	Height Band	Wind Turbine	Aviation
1	All works exceeding 150 metres (492.1 feet)	NO	YES

Wokingham Borough Council Owned Land | Total count: 1

#	Address	Tenure	Title_no
1	Land on the north side of Holmemoor Drive, Sonning, Reading	Absolute Freehold Estate in Land	BK412521

Risk of Flooding from Surface Water | Total count: 3

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME
1	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 30 year risk extent
2	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 100 year risk extent
3	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 1000 year risk extent

Bat Roost Habitat Suitability | Total count: 3

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME	CONSULT
1	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	NX574	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team
2	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	NX575	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team
3	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	NY574	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team

Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zones | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME	CONSULT
1	Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zone	Amber	For Householder applications check HH Layer. Consult NatureSpace for all other types of development

SSSI Impact Risk Zones | Total count: 1

#	IRZURL
1	https://irz.geodata.org.uk/IRZ/step2.html?irzcode=0301000500050-es=&location=476719,175387%20(IRZ%20polygon%20centre)

Landscape Character Assessment 2019 | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	Name
1	Landscape Character Assessment 2019	Woodley-Earley Settled and Farmed Clay

Wards | Total count: 1

#	NAME	Closest Approximate Distance
1	Thames Ward	0 m

Parishes | Total count: 1

#	NAME	Closest Approximate Distance
1	Sonning CP	0 m