

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Application Number:	251450
Site Address:	353 Nine Mile Ride, Finchampstead, Wokingham, RG40 3NH
Expiry Date:	15 September 2025
Site Visit Date:	8 April 2025
Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of 1 no. detached dwelling following demolition of the existing dwelling, with associated landscaping and swimming pool.	

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 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 HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
250646	Householder application for the proposed part double and single storey front, rear and side extension and loft conversion. Along with hardstanding landscaping works to the front and rear garden.	Withdrawn: June 2025

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Environmental Health – No comments
WBC Drainage – No objection subject to a condition
WBC Highways – No objection

WBC Landscape and Trees – No objection subject to conditions
WBC CIL – CIL liable development
WBC Ecology Newts – No objection
WBC Ecology – Request further information
WBC Waste Services – No comments

External

Thames Water Utilities Ltd – No comments
South East Water – No comments

REPRESENTATIONS

Finchampstead Parish Council	No objection
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	No comments received

APPRAISAL

Site Description: Nine Mile Ride is characterised by strong linear development, composing of a range of dwelling type, styles and sizes. The street has a very consistent building line with generous front and rear gardens. Despite the range of dwellings throughout, the stretch of road in which the host property is situated on is largely characterised by considerably sized detached properties.

Proposal: This application seeks planning permission for the erection of a new dwelling, replacing that of the existing 353 Nine Mile Ride. The replacement dwelling would be of a greater scale compared to the existing, with a footprint of approximately 209sqm, a ridge height of approximately 8 metres, a width of approximately 14.9 metres, and an overall depth of approximately 12 metres (excluding the single storey rear component).

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 within settlement limits, where a replacement dwelling is acceptable in principle subject to an assessment of the impact on the character and appearance of the area, amenity of neighbours, and all other material considerations.

Character of the Area: Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for development proposals that 'maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment'. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states planning permission will be granted if development is 'of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area, together with a high quality of design, without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life'.

R1 of the Borough Design Guide (BDG) requires that development contribute positively towards and be compatible with the historic or underlying character and quality of the local area.

R2 of the BDG requires development to respond to context, including incorporating existing features, taking advantage of landform and orientation, relating to neighbours and minimising amenity, iconological and drainage impacts. R3 and R4 require housing to relate to the existing network of streets and spaces.

R7 of the BDG requires a consistent building line relative to existing buildings.

R9 and NR5 of the BDG note that height, bulk and massing should respond to the local context and the prevailing heights in the area.

General

The most prominent and fundamental aspect of the scheme is the intention to alter the property type from a relatively modest dwelling to a notably larger, two storey building, with a considerably sized habitable loft space. As described previously, Nine Mile Ride demonstrates a wide range of building types, however, within this stretch of the road, modern, large, two storey properties dominate the street scene, with many of the dwellings having been recently erected or extended/refurbished. Consequently, the replacement dwelling would not appear out of place in this context.

Siting & Scale

The replacement dwelling would be located in a similar position to the existing property, thus complying with the guidance contained within the BDG, which states that replacement dwellings should be sited in the same location as the original building. This is especially important within the context of the application site, which as stated above, is characterised by its strong linear development. The new dwelling would have a larger footprint than the existing, however, the areas of additional built form would not significantly encroach outside the current coalesce of development. Accordingly, the dwelling would be appropriately placed within the existing building line.

In terms of height, the replacement dwelling would have a maximum ridge of approximately 8 metres. This is considered acceptable as it would be commensurate with prevailing building heights in this section of Nine Mile Ride, where, as stated, large two storey properties are a commonality. For specific context, the immediate neighbouring dwellings demonstrate heights of approximately 7.8 metres (No.351) & 8.05 metres (No.355). A street scene elevational plan has been provided, which further demonstrates the balanced relationship between proposed property and the immediate neighbouring dwellings.

In general, the replacement dwelling would clearly be of a notably greater scale compared to its existing counterpart and thus would result in a more confined form of development within the site. Notwithstanding, the size of the property would not significantly differ from the size of proximate dwellings that have been recently constructed and/or extended on the street and thus would not be out of character in this respect. Furthermore, the replacement dwelling would retain generous separation from the adjacent boundaries, with the property being set in by over 1 metre on both

sides, which would be in accordance with the BDG recommendations and subsequently retain an adequate spacious relationship with the neighbouring houses.

Design

With regard to the design, the existing property is not of any particular architectural merit and does not stand out as a building of exceptional design quality. As such, there is negligible concern associated with its demolition. Furthermore, whilst the modern design of the proposal marks a significant departure from the existing property, it is not considered that this would be harmful, but in fact would be a positive reflection of the changes in architectural attitudes within the context of Nine Mile Ride. Moreover, given the wide variety of architectural styles present along this residential setting, the design is not considered to detract from the street scene.

Notwithstanding the above, the small, flat roofed façade elements, situated on either side of the protruding gable, appear to be incongruous additions to the proposed property. However, when taking a balanced view, these are not considered to adversely detract from the overall and otherwise high-quality design, such that their inclusion is not considered to be justification to withhold planning permission in this instance.

Summary

In accordance with all the above, it is considered that the proposed replacement dwelling would have an acceptable visual impact and would accord with policy CP3 of the Core Strategy and the BDG recommendations.

Other Matters

The scheme involves the creation of a swimming pool in the rear garden, measuring approximately 8 metres in length and approximately 4 metres in width, with a depth of approximately 1 metre. It would be well contained within the curtilage of the site and is sufficiently screened from neighbouring grounds and the public realm. Despite covering a relatively large ground area, the size of the swimming pool is not particularly imposing in relation to the size of the rear garden and the subsequent impact on amenity space is therefore not a concern.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Overlooking: The internal layout of the property has been carefully designed to avoid the inappropriate placement of fenestration. The first-floor side facing windows would all serve non habitable rooms and therefore would not constitute any concerns on overlooking grounds. The rear facing fenestration at both first and second floor level would provide oblique views of adjacent sites, however, this would not result in direct overlooking.

Loss of Light & Overbearing: Despite the increase in scale compared to the existing property, no significant overshadowing or overbearing impact is considered likely as the proposed dwelling would be similar to that of the immediate neighbour in terms of height and footprint. The only components of the property that would encroach beyond the rear building line of the adjacent dwellings are single storey, thus mitigating the impact upon the neighbouring sites.

Highway Access and Parking Provision: The Highways Officer for this application has raised no significant objection to the development, however, requested clarification as to whether the driveway will be resurfaced. This is not considered relevant to the determination of the application. It is stated within the submitted Planning Statement that the existing driveway is to be retained, which is sufficient to meet the councils parking standards.

The Highways Officer also requests that the dwelling facilitates an EV Charging point, however, this is a matter covered through building regulations and is not required to form a condition of approval.

Landscape and Trees: To the rear of the site is a woodland protected by 555/1992. To the front of the site is a large garden with a group of Scots Pine and Silver Birch trees in the front half of the garden. They are protected by TPO 1320-2009. A Tree Report dated March 2025 is submitted from Advanced Tree Services and includes an Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Tree Constraints Plan, Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan to BS5837:2012.

The report states that 4 of the protected Scots Pine are in decline. It has been noted that the surface beneath the trees is exposed topsoil. It looks from the enclosed photos that the area beneath the trees is used for parking; this compacts the soil and will adversely impact the trees. Providing alternative parking arrangements as part of the proposals will be important in securing the wellbeing of the trees. Ameliorating the soil would help to build up soil nutrients as well as aiding access to moisture. The Arboricultural Consultant can advise on methods for decompaction of the soil.

Policy CC03-2/d of the Local Plan states that development proposals should demonstrate how they can protect and retain trees through development to ensure they continue to contribute to landscape character. The Trees & Landscape Officer suggests the information on protecting the trees and their growing environment going forward to be added to the AMS as part of a tree protection condition. Growing low groundcover will also help to protect the soil and growing environment.

It is noted that the Tree Protection Plan is included around the existing concrete hardstanding and at the rear of a gravel parking area. This plan appears to apply to both the demolition project to remove the existing house, and the construction project for the new dwelling. This is acceptable, although the LPA will need more information about contractor parking areas and storage of materials/material deliveries.

Overall, there is no objection to the proposed development from the Landscape & Trees Officer. Nonetheless, a Tree Protection Condition in the form of an Arboricultural Method Statement to BS5837:2012 and an updated Tree Protection Plan and mitigation as appropriate is required. The plan needs to include the canopies and RPAs as well as the approved layout. The AMS should also contain proposals for the area beneath the trees, including amelioration of the soil and a planting scheme to include non-competitive ground cover plants and woodland bulbs. This would help retain the character of Nine Mile Ride and aid some recovery of the trees.

Flooding and Drainage: The development is proposed in Flood Zone 1. The Drainage Officer recommends a condition that no development shall take place until details of

the drainage system for the site have been submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. However, this condition is too onerous when compared with the scale of the development, plus the fact the site would retain a more than sufficient amount of permeable land within the rear.

Ecology: An emergence survey bat report has been submitted with the application. This appropriately demonstrates that no bats were observed to have used features throughout the property for roosting or feeding and no further surveys or mitigation would be required. An informative has been included to advise the applicants on the appropriate steps to take if bats were to be encountered prior to or during the development.

Conclusion: For all the above, the proposal is acceptable, and the application is recommended for approval.

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:	Yes
Recommendation:	Approve
Date:	9 September 2025
Earliest date for decision:	11 August 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	10 September 2025

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Modest Development Location of Finchampstead

Bat Roost Habitat

Tree Preservation Orders (TPO-1320-2009) & (TPO-0555-1992)