

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	251295
Site Address:	162a Nine Mile Ride, Finchampstead, Wokingham, RG40 4JA
Expiry Date:	27 July 2025
Site Visit Date:	14 January 2025
Proposal: Householder application for the proposed erection of a detached garage including new 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 CP6 – Managing Travel Demand 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
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
242980	Householder application for the proposed detached double garage.	Refused: January 2025
202494	Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey front/side extension to form a store, demolition of detached garage in rear garden and installation of cladding to the front elevation of the dwelling.	Approved: October 2020
142147	Application for a certificate of lawfulness for the proposed erection of a single storey rear extension to dwelling.	Approved: August 2014
970949	Proposed Single Storey Rear Extension To Dwelling To Form Conservatory And Rear Extension To Garage. front porch extension	Approved: May 1997

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal
WBC Highways – No objection WBC Landscape and Trees - Objection WBC CIL – No comments
External
None

REPRESENTATIONS	
Parish/Town Council	Object to this planning application on the grounds that the garage is in front of the building line contrary to Policy D3, 1b of the FNDP.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	No comments received

APPRAISAL
Context: The application site is situated within a residential setting of Finchampstead. This application seeks planning permission for the proposed erection of a detached double garage, to be sited adjacent to the front boundary of the plot. This application is a resubmission of application 242980, which was refused for the following reason: <i>'By virtue of its excessive scale and inappropriate siting forward of the principal building line, the proposal would have an intrusive visual impact on the street scene and Green Route, and harmful impact to the predominant character of the surrounding area, one which is of open views to the front elevations of detached dwellings. The proposal would introduce an overly dominant built form in the streetscene detracting from the character and appearance of the host dwelling. This is contrary to National Planning Policy Framework (2024), Core Strategy (2010) policies CP1 and CP3, Policies CC03 and TB21 of Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014), the advice and guidance contained in the Borough Design Guide (2012) and Policy D3 1b of the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan (2023).'</i> Following engagement with the LPA, amendments have been made from the previously refused scheme and additional contextual information has been provided. 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: Core Strategy Policy CP1 states planning permission will be granted for development proposals that *'maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment'*. CP3 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'* and *'contributes to a sense of place in the buildings and spaces themselves and in the way they integrate with their surroundings (especially existing dwellings) including the use of appropriate landscaping'*.

Nine Mile Ride is characterised by a strong linear development composed of a range of dwelling type, styles and sizes. The street has a very strong building line with generous front and rear gardens. The set back of properties from the road allows generous landscaping to exist in stretches, which in some instances, prevents clear views of houses from the road. Whilst it was highlighted through the previously refused application that there are a lack of forward sitting garages within the immediate vicinity, it is also true that the proposed garage would not be the only one of this nature. There are examples of garages existing forward of this defined building line (highlighted below).

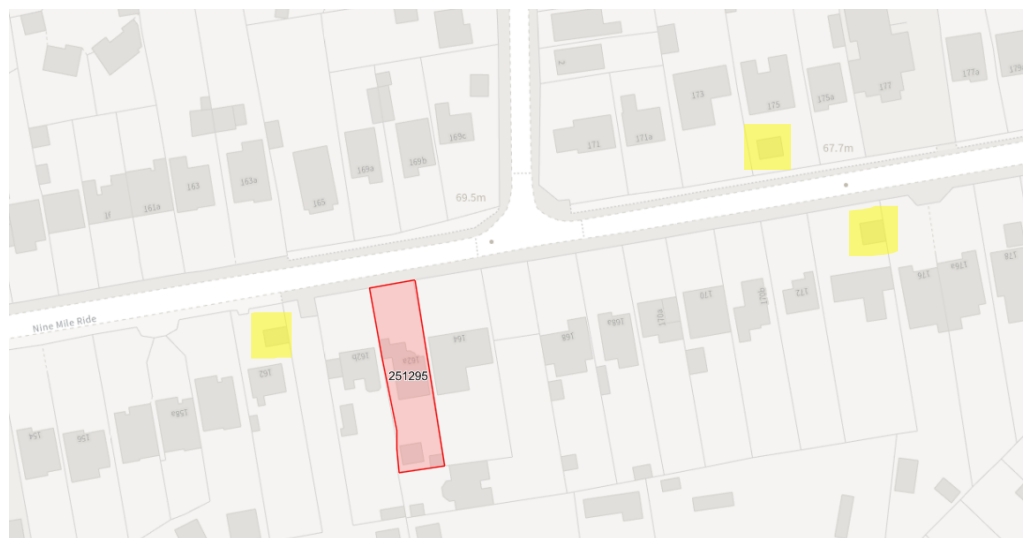


Figure 1 – Application site and garages forward of the building line highlighted along this part of Nine Mile Ride.

With regard to relevant guidance, the Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2012 (SPD) states that garages should not be sited in front gardens or project forward of the building line. Without identifying this stretch of Nine Mile Ride specifically, the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan FNDP (FNDP) identifies pressure caused by frontage development (such as garages in front of the established building line) in respect to tree losses, which itself could cause harm the character of the area and the Green Rides. Policy D3 1b of the FNDP also seeks to achieve layouts which integrate with existing building lines.

It is clear the intention of the BDG guidance and to a lesser extent the FNDP is to prevent such buildings becoming overly prominent visually, undermining the coherence

of the street scene and have an undesirable impact on the established pattern development and visual landscape characteristics of the area.

In relation to the current resubmission, it was deemed appropriate for a contextual analysis to be undertaken of the surrounding area. It is noted that there are not only similar examples along this stretch of road (See Figure 1), but also the degree in which this stretch of road is not wholly characterised by open frontages. A mixture of mature landscaping, and to a lesser extent garages, often prevent direct views of houses and add an existing degree of privacy and defensible space without any harmful sense of enclosure being caused.

Like many properties along Nine Mile Ride, the siting of many dwellings in relation to the plot boundaries prevents any proposed garage from reasonably complying with the BDG or FNDP guidance. In the case of this proposal, the garage is modest in scale in relation to its intended purpose and would be partially screened by landscaping. In any case, the main dwelling would remain visible when passing along Nine Mile Ride, which is largely due to the reduction in scale from the previously refused proposal.

Whilst the amended proposal has removed significant concern pertaining to the previous scheme, such as reducing dominance of the structure from the street scene and increasing permeability of the dwelling, it should be noted that the design of the garage is not one that is reflective of the emphasis on high quality development proposals in national and local policy. The flat roofed, utilitarian appearance of the garage would appear discordant to the architectural features in the surrounding area and even the style of the garages identified in Figure 1. That said, the consideration in this instance is whether the benefits to the character of the street of adopting a box style garage, thus reducing its mass, outweighs the negative aspects relating to its design quality.

The application site is adjacent to a Green Route (Nine Mile Ride is designated). The Trees and Landscape Officer has objected to the proposal, on the basis that the proposed development is similar to the previous application and does not address the previous reasons for refusal. However, notably more soft landscaping has been introduced along the front boundary, compared to that of the previously refused scheme, resulting in what would be a frontage more in keeping with the characteristics of Nine Mile Ride. Although such landscaping can never be relied upon as a permanent solution to screen a structure in perpetuity, any increase in the existing level of vegetation in the form of the front hedge and trees is supported and will undoubtedly aid the functioning of the Green Route and provide an attractive feature in the street scene. This can be secured via condition.

As stated previously, the matter at hand is whether the negative aspect of this resubmission, being the poor design quality, is outweighed by the benefits of a far more modest proposal. In light of all the above, this is considered to be the case, whereby the amended scheme is now considered to overcome the primary concerns identified under the previously refused application. The proposal would no longer appear as an overly dominant structure when viewing the site from the street scene and would not be harmful to the character and appearance of the immediate area, where it is reiterated that there are other examples of garages outside the established building line. As such, despite concerns raised on design grounds, overall, there would be no

adverse conflict with Policies CP1 & CP3 of the Core Strategy, Policy CC03 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework. Whilst it is fully recognised that the proposal would not fully comply with guidance contained within the BDG or FNDP, it would not undermine the overall intention of these documents given the site-specific circumstances.

Neighbouring Amenity: The proposal would not harm the amenities of neighbouring residents, owing to its modest size and position away from the front facing windows of the neighbouring properties. It would not unduly obscure light or outlook.

Highway Access and Parking Provision: WBC Highways have raised no objection to the development, however, it has been noted that the proposed garage does not fully meet the Council's requirement for car parking. Nonetheless, as there is already suitable parking for three cars within the existing driveway, this does not constitute a reason to withhold planning permission in this instance.

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:	Not required
Recommendation:	Approve
Date:	24 July 2025
Earliest date for decision:	25 June 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	<i>HMM</i>
Date:	24 July 2025

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Modest Development Location of Finchampstead

Green Route