

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	261587
Site Address:	25 Loxwood, Earley, Wokingham, RG6 5QZ
Expiry Date:	16 September 2026
Site Visit Date:	24 March 2026
Proposal: Householder application for the proposed erection of a part single part two storey rear and side extension linking existing detached garage plus garage conversion to habitable accommodation along with associated changes to 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 CP7 – Biodiversity CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 – Development Limits TB05 – Housing Mix TB06 – Development of Private Residential Gardens
Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU)	SS1 – Sustainable development principles SS2 – Spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy SS4 – Development within or adjacent to minor settlements H12 – Residential development of existing private gardens
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
23649	Single storey front extension to provide enlarged lounge and hallway also cloakroom and porch.	Approved 2nd July 1985
252887	Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey rear extension to include insertion of 4 No. rooflights. Followed by conversion of existing garage to create a home gym.	Approved 13 th May 2026

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal
WBC Digital Solutions Scanning- No comments received WBC CIL- No comments received WBC Ecology- No comments received
External
None consulted

REPRESENTATIONS	
Parish/Town Council	Earley Town Council raises objection to this application and recommends that WBC refuses the application as the proposed first floor rear extension would impact the habitable rooms in the rear of 7 Loxwood behind, contrary to Section R15 in the Borough Design Guide, which requires reasonable levels of privacy between new and existing properties and figure 4.25, which indicates that 22m back to back separation is considered to achieve adequate privacy, whereas the proposal results in a window to window separation of only 16.5m, thereby impacting the privacy and amenity of the neighbouring property contrary to Policy CP3.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	2 representations as follows; - I am greatly concerned over the size of the proposed plans privacy issues being overlooked and the amount of natural light being blocked into my property and surrounding properties. This is a big extension which i have real concerns with. - I have no concerns with ground extension plan; however I want to ensure that planning authorities consider that second storey doesn't have any window/s towards our property to safeguard our privacy and not blocking sunlight. My comment is based on the understanding I have of the planning document provided. My neighbour Dr Satwinder Singh of number 18 Squirrels Way also share the same feedback.

APPRAISAL
Site Description: The application site relates to a two-storey semi-detached dwelling located within the residential area of Earley, Wokingham. The property benefits from a private rear garden comprising a patio and grass area. The garden is enclosed by a combination of fencing and vegetation, adjoining residential development. The surrounding properties are generally of a comparable scale, design and appearance. Planning History: Planning permission was granted under application 23649 on 2 July 1985 for a single-storey front extension comprising an enlarged lounge and hallway, together with the provision of a cloakroom and porch.

More recently, planning permission was granted under application 252887 on 13 May 2026 for the erection of a single-storey rear extension incorporating four rooflights and the conversion of the existing garage to a home gym. Whilst this permission is a material consideration, the current proposal must be assessed on its own merits against the development plan and other material planning considerations. The key difference between the approved scheme and the current application is the inclusion of a two-storey rear extension. It should also be noted that a rear dormer window proposed during the course of the previous application was removed following officer advice due to concerns regarding overlooking and loss of privacy.

Proposal: This application seeks permission for a proposed single-storey front infill extension, a part single-storey and part two-storey rear and side extension linking to the existing detached garage, the conversion of the garage to habitable accommodation, and associated changes to fenestration.

The proposed single-storey front extension would measure approximately 0.65 metres in depth, 3 metres in width and 3.5 metres in height. The proposed rear extension would measure approximately 3 metres in depth, 7 metres in width and 3 metres in height. The proposed first-floor en-suite element would measure approximately 3 metres in depth, 2 metres in width and 3 metres in height. The proposed bedroom element would measure approximately 3 metres in depth, 4 metres in width and 3 metres in height. The scheme also includes the provision of a home gym to the rear, occupying the footprint of the existing garage. To facilitate this, an infill side extension is proposed. Measured from the rear wall of the new extension, the home gym would extend approximately 7.6 metres in length and 3 metres in height.

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: Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy requires development to be appropriate in terms of scale, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character, and to achieve a high quality of design without detriment to adjoining land users. Policy CP1 states that development should maintain or enhance the quality of the environment. Policy R1 of the Borough Design Guide (BDG) SPD requires development to contribute positively to, and be compatible with, the historic or underlying character and quality of the local area.

The existing dwelling forms part of a suburban residential area characterised by detached houses with relatively simple built forms, clear visual separation between

neighbouring properties. Although planning permission exists for single-storey extensions on the application site, those additions would retain the detached appearance of the dwelling and preserve the visual gaps that make a positive contribution to the spacious character of the street scene.

The current proposal includes a two-storey side and rear extension. The two-storey side element would be positioned very close to the shared boundary and adjacent to the side elevation of the neighbouring dwelling to the south. A gap of only approximately 0.5 metres would be retained between the extension and the boundary. As a result, the extension would appear cramped and contrived. This impact would be compounded by the proposed single-storey side/rear extension, which would extend even closer to the boundary, creating significant built form along the side of the plot. Collectively, the development would erode the visual separation between properties and result in a cramped and incongruous form of development.

The Borough Design Guide SPD advises that "a gap should be retained between the building and the site boundary and this should be a minimum of 1 metre in width". The proposal would fail to comply with this guidance. In this case, adherence to the guideline is particularly important because the neighbouring dwelling's flank wall is positioned on the shared boundary and the proposal includes two-storey element. The reduced separation would therefore result in an especially cramped and contrived form of development.

It is acknowledged that there are limited examples of extensions constructed close to side boundaries within the wider area. However, these do not define the prevailing character of the area, are not positive features of the street scene, and were not approved under the current policies or guidance.

The design concerns are further exacerbated by the relationship of the proposed two-storey rear extension with neighbouring properties to the west. The extension would be positioned approximately 16 metres from the rear elevation of No. 7 Loxwood, falling around 6 metres short of the 22-metre separation distance recommended in the BDG. Whilst the implications for neighbouring amenity are considered separately elsewhere in this report, the reduced separation also reinforces the conclusion that the proposal represents an overdevelopment of a modest suburban plot. Comparatively, the overall development would appear cramped and contrived.

Whilst the side and rear extensions would not be highly prominent within the wider street scene, they would nevertheless be visible from neighbouring properties and the immediate surrounding area. The NPPF and development plan policies make clear that good design is an objective in its own right and require proposals to be assessed not only for their visual appearance but also for their effect on the character of the area.

The proposal would represent poor design and would conflict with the Borough Design Guide SPD. It would fail to respond positively to the context of the site and the character and appearance of the area. As such, the proposal would conflict with Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy and the design objectives of the NPPF, which make clear that development should be refused where it conflicts with locally specific design guidance without clear justification.

The proposal would therefore result in a cramped and incongruous form of development by reason of its size, scale, design and proximity to the boundary. It would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area and would be contrary to Policies CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy, the Borough Design Guide SPD and Section 14 of the NPPF.

Neighbouring Amenity: Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy requires development to be of an appropriate scale, mass, layout and height, and to achieve a high quality of design without detriment to the amenities or quality of life of adjoining occupiers. Policy CP1 states that proposals should maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment.

The proposed two-storey rear extension would be positioned approximately 16 metres from the rear elevation of No. 7 Loxwood. At first-floor level, the three-pane rear-facing window would provide direct views towards the neighbouring property's rear-facing windows and private rear garden from materially closer proximity than currently exists, resulting in an unacceptable loss of privacy and increased perception of overlooking. In addition, the closer proximity to the shared boundary would result in an unduly dominant and overbearing presence when viewed from the neighbouring dwelling and garden. The proposal would therefore create an unacceptable sense of enclosure and materially harm the living conditions of the occupants of No. 7 Loxwood.

While the existing dwelling is located closer to No. 7 Loxwood than would ordinarily be sought under current guidance, this does not justify further intensification of built development that would materially worsen the relationship between the properties. The proposal would create two storey built form and first floor windows materially closer than the existing house and would exacerbate existing constraints rather than maintain an acceptable standard of residential amenity.

As stated above, the Borough Design Guide (BDG) SPD recommends a minimum back-to-back separation distance of 22 metres between two-storey dwellings. The guidance states that this is to “maintain privacy and limit sense of enclosure”. In this case, the proposed extension would be positioned only approximately 16 metres from the neighbouring rear elevation, resulting in a substantial shortfall against the recommended minimum distance. The development is in a suburban location, and no exists for departing from the guidance.

The proposed development would therefore result in a clear and substantive conflict with the minimum separation guidance in the Borough Design Guide SPD. The NPPF makes clear that development should be refused where, without clear justification, it conflicts with relevant local design guidance or explicit design standards set out in the development plan, including locally specific guides, codes or masterplans.

The proposed development would have a detrimental impact on the amenity of the occupants of No. 7 Loxwood by reason of loss of privacy through overlooking, together with an over-dominant and overbearing impact. The proposal would be contrary to Policies CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy, the Borough Design Guide SPD and Section 14 of the NPPF.

It should be noted that the two-storey rear extension is not depicted on the proposed block plan. Notwithstanding this, officers have sufficient information to measure the separation distances and assess the application.

Highway Access and Parking Provision: There would be no change to the existing level of driveway parking and no additional off-street parking is proposed. The proposal would not materially affect parking or access arrangements and no comments have been received from the Council's Highways Officer.

Ecology: The ecological assessment carried out by GS Ecology on 12 January 2026 states that both the main house and garage have negligible potential to support a bat roost. No bats or signs of bats were found during the survey and neither building contains features suitable for use by roosting bats. It is therefore very unlikely that bats would be affected by the proposed works, no further surveys are required, and there are no bat-related constraints to the proposal. No comments have been received from the Council's Ecologist.

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.

Conclusion: The proposed development is unacceptable, would result in material harm and is contrary to national and development plan policies for the following reason:

1. The proposed development, by reason of its siting, scale, massing and proximity to the boundaries and neighbouring property, would result in an unacceptable loss of privacy through overlooking of rear-facing windows and private garden areas of No. 7 Loxwood. In addition, the scale and massing of the proposal would appear unduly dominant and overbearing when viewed from that property, causing material harm to the living conditions of its occupants. The proposal would therefore have a harmful impact on neighbouring amenity and would be contrary to Policies CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy, the Borough Design Guide SPD and Section 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
2. The proposed development, by reason of its siting, scale and massing would result in a cramped and contrived form of development that is poor design, harming the character and appearance of the area, contrary to Policies CP1 and

CP3 of the Core Strategy, the Borough Design Guide SPD and Section 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

RECOMMENDATION	
Conditions agreed:	Not required
Recommendation:	Refuse
Date:	12 September 2026
Earliest date for decision:	12 August 2026

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	<i>MC</i>
Date:	15.09.2026

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS
Insert where relevant