

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	250321
Site Address:	42 Culver Lane, Earley, Wokingham, RG6 1DY
Expiry Date:	16 April 2025
Site Visit Date:	26 February 2025
Proposal: Householder application for the proposed formation of a front drive for car parking (retrospective).	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Water Utility Consultation Zones
Contaminated Land Consultation Zone
Local Authorities
Affordable Housing Thresholds
Borough Parishes
Scale and Location of Development Proposals
Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone
Nuclear Consultation Zone
Tree Preservation Orders
Borough Wards
Landscape Character Assessment Area
SSSI Impact Risk Zones
JCEB Mineral Safeguarding Areas

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 CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB21 – Landscape Character TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Joint Minerals and Waste	DM1 - Sustainable Development DM3 - Protection of Habitats and Species DM10 - Flood Risk DM15 - Site History

Plan (JMWP)	
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
971201	Proposed Two Storey Side Extension To Dwelling.	Refused 14/11/1997
991867	Proposed Two Storey Side Extension To Dwelling.	Approved 18/11/1999
050558	Proposed erection of 8 flats with associated parking and access. Demolition of existing 2 dwellings.	Refused 06/12/2005 appeal dismissed 05/06/2006
051451	Proposed erection of 8 flats. Demolition of 2 existing dwellings.	Refused 2005
091621	Proposed erection of 3 detached dwellings, including new access from Palmerston Road, plus demolition of existing dwelling, garages and stores.	Refused 15/12/2009
081818	Proposed erection of a pair of semi-detached and two detached dwellings and creation of new access. Demolition of 40 Culver Lane including garages and store.	Refused 14/11/2008

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Highways – No objection.
WBC Landscape and Trees – No objection, subject to condition.
WBC CIL – Not CIL liable.

External

None consulted.

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	Objection.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received.
Neighbours	One letter of concern relating to water run-off.
Whitegates Residents Association	Objection.

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site consists of a two-storey detached dwelling on the southern side of Culver Lane, Earley. The road consists of a range of property types including detached, semi-detached, bungalows and flats. Properties are of a similar age but vary in style and form with many having undergone alterations and extensions.

The host dwelling is set back from the road behind a driveway and paved gravelled area providing off-street parking. There is a variation in land levels across the site with the front of the site at a lower level than the rear.

Proposal:

This application seeks retrospective approval for the removal of the front garden and excavation of earth to reduce the height of the land to the front of the property and the erection of a retaining wall and steps. The changes facilitate the installation of a gravelled driveway to provide additional off-street parking.

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 principle of a residential extension in this location is acceptable in principle providing that it complies with the wider policy objectives contained within the Core Strategy and Managing Development Delivery (MDD).

Character of the Area:

Property frontages along Culver Lane vary in design and style. Many of the properties have already benefitted from replacing the original front gardens with hard surfaces to provide additional off-street parking.

CP3 of the Core Strategy states that proposals should be of an appropriate scale of mass, built form and character. The Council's Borough Design Guide (BDG) SPD gives advice on residential developments.

The changes to the front include lowering the level of the land to the front of the property and replacing the original front lawn with gravel to create a driveway. There is a strip of concrete, approximately 1.4m in depth that runs along the front of the drive, adjacent to the footpath. Installed within the concrete strip is a linear drain that runs adjacent to the front site boundary.

The ACER Whitegates Residents Association raised objection to the proposal regarding the removal of 'green vegetation' from the front garden. Whilst it is acknowledged the changes have removed the soft landscaping from the front of the property, the changes are not out-of-keeping with surrounding properties that have

already replaced front gardens with driveways. Examples include nos.31 and 33 opposite the application site, and nos.40 and 44 either side of the host dwelling. Therefore, it would be unreasonable to refuse the proposed changes when the precedent has already been set. Thus, the additional parking area would not cause any detrimental impact to character of the host dwelling or already established character of the street scene.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Overlooking, Loss of Light & Overbearing:

By virtue of the development not including any additional built form, the changes to the front of the property do not generate any loss of privacy, overshadowing or overbearing impact to neighbouring amenity.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

The proposal includes changes to the on-site parking provision. The Council's Highways officer was consulted and raised no objection to the proposal. They commented:

"Highways DC has no objection in principle to the parking area, which can accommodate at least one parking space, of dimensions 5.0m x 2.5m, clear of the highway."

Culver Lane is unclassified and the applicant will need to obtain separate consent for a dropped crossing to serve the driveway. The applicant shall be made aware that any planning permission does not authorise construction of an access.

The first c.2.0m of the parking area has been hard surfaced and this is considered acceptable in this instance to prevent loose material onto the public highway".

Flooding and Drainage:

The Local Parish and a third party have raised concern regarding the driveway drainage. According to the Environment Agency flood mapping system, the application site is within flood zone 1 which has a 'very low' risk from surface water flooding. An area of soft landscaping has been replaced with gravel and a concrete strip. Whilst it is acknowledged that this could have the potential to increase surface water run-off, a drainage channel has been installed along the front boundary. Therefore, third party concerns regarding drainage have been mitigated by the provision of the drain which directs run-off water away from the road.

Landscape and Trees:

The Council's Landscape and Trees officer was consulted and raised no objection to the proposal, subject to a landscaping condition. Whilst this is noted, by virtue of similar developments within proximity to the host dwelling, which include driveways with no presence of soft landscaping, it would be unreasonable to impose this condition to make the development acceptable. Accordingly, the condition will not be applied.

Conclusion:

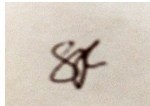
For the reasons set out above and subject to conditions, the proposal is acceptable as it accords with local plan policy and guidance.

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:	4 April 2025
Earliest date for decision:	13 March 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	16.4.25