

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	242124
Site Address:	32 Wilmington Close, Woodley, Wokingham, RG5 4LR
Expiry Date:	24 October 2024
Site Visit Date:	30 August 2024
Proposal: Householder application for the proposed single storey rear and two storey side extension to create a garage and habitable accommodation, along with changes to fenestrations.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Local Authorities
Affordable Housing Thresholds
Borough Parishes
Scale and Location of Development Proposals
Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone
Ground Water Zones
Nuclear Consultation Zone
Borough Wards
Landscape Character Assessment Area
SSSI Impact Risk Zones

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 CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 – Development Limits CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction CC07 – Parking
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document Woodley Design Statement

PLANNING HISTORY- No relevant planning history

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Highways: No objection

External

None consulted

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	Woodley Town Council: The Planning & Community Committee have considered this application and, whilst they determined to submit no formal objections, they were concerned about the likely terracing effect that would occur from approving this application, although they noted this was a result of the approval of planning for the neighbouring property.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	No comments received

APPRAISAL

Site Description: Two storey semi-detached dwelling

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.

Policy & Guidance: Section R23 of the Borough Design Guide states alterations and extensions to buildings should:

- be well designed;
- respond positively to the original building;
- contribute positively to the local character; and
- relate well to neighbouring properties

Section 12 of the NPPF emphasises the requirement for good design to achieve sustainable development. Paragraph 126 states that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

Paragraph 130 states that decision should ensure developments, add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive and sympathetic to local character and the built environment.

The National Design Guide Part 2; Identity. The identity or character of a place comes

from the way that buildings, streets and spaces, landscape and infrastructure combine together and how people experience them. It is not just about the buildings or how a place looks, but how it engages with all of the senses. Local character makes places distinctive and memorable and helps people to find their way around. Well-designed, sustainable places with a strong identity give their users, occupiers and owners a sense of pride, helping to create and sustain communities and neighbourhoods.

Well-designed places, buildings and spaces:

- have a positive and coherent identity that everyone can identify with, including residents and local communities, so contributing towards health and well-being, inclusion and cohesion;
- have a character that suits the context, its history, how we live today and how we are likely to live in the future; and
- are visually attractive, to delight their occupants and other us

Character of the Area:

The proposed two storey side extension would abut the side of number 34 eroding existing separation between the houses and creating an ad-hoc terrace of the dwellings that would appear incongruous and contrived within the street scene. There is a clear and set style of semi-detached dwellings along Wilmington Close and the proposal would detrimentally erode the rhythm of the buildings and the gaps between them. The terracing impact is harmful and would negatively impact upon the character and street scene of Wilmington Close.

The proposal would be contrary to the Borough Design Guide SPD (BDG), which states that for side extensions, *'a gap should be retained between the building and the site boundary and this should be a minimum of 1m in width.'* The addition of a 2 storey side extension would fail to achieve this minimum requirement and result in cramped terracing effect. The failure to adhere to the BDG also conflicts with para 139 of the NPPF, which makes clear that, *'development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes.'*

The proposed extension would also result in an ad-hoc terrace with a haphazard staggered join in the middle that would not follow the simple form and design of the existing houses. Whilst there have been alterations to the properties in the area, the simple form and character of the original semi-detached houses has been predominantly retained. The proposed staggered join with different building lines, roof heights and variations to the eaves treatments, windows sizes /designs would result in a piecemeal terrace that does not respect the simple character of the existing semidetached houses in the locality.

Whilst some dwellings in the area have been extended to the sides at 2 storey level, they have all maintained separation at first floor level between the houses, retaining a cohesive spatial character and appearance to the area. As stated, the proposed development would not follow this positive characteristic and detrimentally impact the character and appearance of the area.

The neighbouring property (no. 34) has an existing 2 storey side extension, but this retains a gap between the 2 storey side elevations of the properties. In addition, this neighbouring extension was permitted in 2001, prior to the current policies and guidance in development plan (2010), Borough Design Guide SPD (2012), first version of the NPPF (2012) and the National Design Guide (2019). The proposal has been assessed and conflicts with the current policies and guidance.

The overall the development would be out of keeping with rhythm of development in the locality and the importance of maintaining such characteristics, including gaps between buildings, is set out in the BDG: *'for properties in formal suburbia, whether detached, semi-detached or short terraces, the rhythm of the buildings and the gaps between them along the street frontage is often important to the character of the area. Side extensions should be set back from the building line by at least 1m, preferably with a lower roof line and should be set at least 1m from the plot boundary'*.

The proposal would also fail to meet the guidance in the BDG where it refers to respecting the balance of the rhythm of frontages and consistent gaps between houses: *'where there is a regular pattern to the built form, with a repeated building type on a consistent building line and with consistent gaps, then any alterations or extension that is visible from the street should not unbalance the rhythm of the frontage'*. The proposal does not respect the regular first floor separation between existing houses would unbalance the rhythm of existing frontages.

For the reasons set out, the proposed development cannot be considered to meet development plan policies CP1 and CP3 that have the requirement to *'maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment'*, and be *'of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area together with a high quality of design'*.

The proposal cannot be considered to meet the design requirements set out in the NPPF, which states at the start of Section 12 *'the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve'*. The proposal is not considered to be high quality and result in a materially harmful impact for the reasons set out.

The proposed development, by reason of its design, form, scale and proximity to the site boundary/neighbouring side elevation, would result in an incongruous, cramped and contrived form of development within Wilmington Close, causing a terracing effect and significant harm to the visual amenity of the existing semi-detached houses and the wider character of the area. The proposal is contrary Core Strategy Policy CP1, CP3, MDD Local Plan Policy CC01, The Borough Design Guide SPD and section 12 of the NPPF.

No objection is raised regarding the single storey rear extension as it is located to the rear of the property, low in height and broadly aligns with the rear elevation of the neighbouring houses.

Neighbouring Amenity: The proposed two storey extension would project beyond the front elevation of number 34 but there are no ground floor window at this section

of the neighbouring house and any loss of light would impact a garage door.

The scheme would add additional windows at the front and the rear of the property due to the side extension. Whilst the proposed window would face another property, it is noted that Wilmington Close, a public road, is located adjacent to the site. As such, the proposal would not result in a greater overlooking impact into residential properties than is currently present as the window at the front of the extension would overlook the street scene and therefore no harmful impact would occur.

The en-suite and shower room window in the rear elevation would be obscured glazed.

As the rear extension is single storey and modest in height and projection, there is no concern on overbearing or loss of light.

Highway Access and Parking Provision: The proposal will increase the numbers of habitable rooms from 5 to 7. Two driveway parking spaces of dimensions 4.8m x 2.4m are proposed within the red line.

According to the WBC Car Parking Standards, the development of such scale in Urban location will require two parking within the red line boundary. Each parking space shall have minimum dimensions of 5.0m x 2.5m.

The proposed parking spaces will be provided by utilising the existing dropped crossing and are unlikely to encroach with the public highways and footways, which is considered acceptable for this instance.

The proposed storage with direct access is of suitable dimensions for cycle storage, which is acceptable.

Amenity Space: The proposal reduces the amount of amenity space available to the property but it would still be roughly rectangular in shape, receive sunlight for part of the day and be able to accommodate typical garden activities as set out in the Borough Design Guide. Therefore, the reduction in amenity space is not considered to have a harmful impact on the amenity of the occupier.

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.

Conclusion: The proposal is contrary to local and national policy and guidance and would result in material harm for the following reasons:

1. The proposed development, by reason of its design, form, scale and proximity to the site boundary/neighbouring side elevation, would result in an incongruous, cramped and contrived form of development within Wilmington Close, causing a terracing effect and significant harm to the visual amenity of the existing semi-detached houses and the wider character of the area. The proposal is contrary Core Strategy Policy CP1, CP3, MDD Local Plan Policy CC01, The Borough Design Guide SPD and section 12 of the NPPF.

RECOMMENDATION	
Conditions agreed:	Not required
Recommendation:	Refused
Date:	21 October 2024
Earliest date for decision:	19 September 2024

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	<i>MC</i>
Date:	23.10.2024