

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	261559
Site Address:	12 Chivers Drive, Finchampstead, Wokingham, RG40 4EW
Expiry Date:	27 August 2026
Site Visit Date:	30 July 2026
Proposal: Householder application for the proposed erection of single-storey rear extension with 4no. rooflights and porch infill extension.	

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 CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC07 – Parking TB21 – Landscape Character TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU) (N.B. the LPU is deemed to overall hold limited weight at this time).	SS1 – Sustainable development principles SS2 – Spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy SS3 – Development within or adjacent to major and modest settlements C4 – Green and blue infrastructure and public rights of way C5 – Parking and electric vehicle charging NE1 – Biodiversity and geodiversity NE4 – Trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows NE5 – Landscape and design DH1 – Place making and quality design DH2 – Safeguarding amenity
Other	Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
222716	APPLICATION FOR WORKS TO PROTECTED TREE(S) TPO 730/1995, T7 and T8 T1 , Silver Birch (T7 on TPO) - Formative trim maintaining symmetry and reducing length of right lower limb by approximately 2 Metres which overhangs roof	C/A – 27/10/2022

	of adjacent garage and house. T2, Oak (T8 on TPO)- carry out crown thinning (20-25%).	
171194	TREE WORKS APPLICATION: tpo number 730/1995 Application to T1 - Silver Birch - Thin and remove overhanging branches. T2 - Oak - Thin crown by 20-25%	C/A 31/05/2017 –
23536	Detached House & Garage	C/A 18/07/1985 –

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Highways: No objection
WBC Landscape and Trees: **Object** on the following grounds – impact of proposed rear extension on two TPO protected trees, no overriding justification for development within the RPA of important trees on site.
WBC CIL: No comments received

External

None consulted

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	Finchampstead Parish Council raised no objection.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	No comments received

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site is a detached two storey dwellinghouse located within a 1980s development in the settlement of Finchampstead North. The site fronts a shared access drive off the main street (Chivers Drive) which serves 3no. properties and amenity space. The site's rear (southern) boundary adjoins a footpath which connects with the wider estate and California Country Park.

An Oak tree and Silver Birch tree located within the rear garden space are protected under Tree Preservation Order No. 730/1995. The Oak tree is located centrally within the rear garden and is highly prominent from the immediate street scene, while the Silver Birch is located adjacent to the shared boundary with No.31 Carolina Place to the east. It does not appear that the main dwelling has been significantly altered since its construction.

Proposal:

This application proposes the erection of a single storey rear extension and a porch infill extension to the front. The proposed rear extension is fairly modest in terms of its size and scale, with a total depth of approximately 3m it would span the full width of

the main dwelling (circa. 8.2m). Its pitched roof form would sit at a total ridge height of approximately 3.7m and eaves height of 2.25m. The front extension would infill the existing porch canopy area and would not project beyond the existing principal (front) building line.

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.

Alterations and additions to an existing residential dwelling within settlement limits is acceptable in principle, subject to impact on other material considerations including the character of the area, neighbouring amenity and trees & landscape.

Design and Character of the Area:

Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale, mass, layout, built form, height and character of the area and must be of high quality design. R1 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires that development contribute positively towards and be compatible with the historic or underlying character and quality of the local area.

R23 of the Borough Design Guide SPD states that alterations or extensions should be clearly subservient to the form and scale of the original building in most situations, with a complementary design which either adopts the existing style or by a carefully considered contrast. The key considerations for all proposed additions to residential dwellings are they should be well designed, respond positively to the original dwelling, contribute positively to the local character and relate well to neighbouring properties.

Chivers Drive and the surrounding estate predominantly comprises detached two storey dwellings. While there is some variety in terms of external materials, architectural style and massing, common features including gable roof form and front gable windows contribute to a sense of cohesiveness. Mature trees and landscaping, including trees protected by single and area Tree Preservation Orders, contribute significantly to the visual amenity of the estate.

The proposed rear extension is fairly modest in terms of its size and scale, with an appropriate ridge and eaves height it would not project significantly beyond the original rear elevation or add significant footprint to the host dwelling. The proposed pitched roof form would further mitigate the bulk of the extension.

The colour of the boarding proposed as cladding is not known at this stage. Subject to the boarding not significantly clashing with the existing brown brickwork the proposed cladding and dark grey coloured UPVC fenestration frames would unlikely detract from the appearance of the host dwelling. Moreover, the proposed roof tiles

would match the existing, and the proposal would be largely screened from public view by the existing boundary treatments, further mitigating its visual impact on the amenity of the street scene.

Due to the minor scale of the proposed front infill extension, and the proposed use of matching brickwork, this element of the proposal would have an acceptable impact on the character of the area. Overall, subject to the cladding of the rear extension being appropriate in colour the proposal would have an acceptable impact on the visual amenity of the street scene and local character in accordance with Core Strategy policy CP3.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Overlooking: Due to the single storey nature of the proposal, there are no concerns in relation to potential overlooking impact. The small window proposed on the elevation facing No.31 Carolina Place to the east would be screened by the existing boundary treatment.

Loss of Light and Overbearing: The proposed rear extension would retain a separation distance of approximately 1.9m from the shared boundary with No.31 Carolina Place adjacent. Due to this separation, its appropriate eaves height and pitched roof form the design of the proposal would sufficiently mitigate any potential impact on neighbour amenity in terms of loss of light or overbearing impact. Moreover, the majority of the neighbouring garden space would be unaffected by the proposal with sufficient separation from the site's boundaries adjoining the public realm.

Overall, it is considered that any potential harm on neighbouring amenities has been sufficiently mitigated, prohibiting any additional harm over and above the existing level of amenity. The proposal is therefore compliant with Core Strategy policy CP3 in this respect.

Landscape and Trees:

Policy N2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2026) states that to contribute positively to the natural environment, and support nature's recovery, development proposals should conserve and enhance existing natural features of visual, historic or nature conservation value (such as established trees and hedgerows) where possible.

Policy IRS6 of the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan states that development proposals should seek to retain mature or important trees, groups of trees or woodland on site. Core Strategy policy CP1 states that planning permission will be granted for proposals that maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment. Core Strategy policy CP3 states that development should maintain or enhance the ability of the site to support fauna and flora.

Policy CC03 of the MDD Local Plan aims to protect green infrastructure networks, promote linkages between public open space and the countryside, retain existing trees and establish appropriate landscaping. MDD Local Plan Policy TB21 requires

consideration of the Council's Landscape Character Assessment. Proposals must retain or enhance the condition, character and features that contribute to the landscape.

The rear garden contains an Oak and Silver Birch which are protected by Tree Preservation Order No. 730/1995 (specified as T7 & T8 respectively). The trees are of high amenity value and subsequently make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the site and its surroundings.

An Arboricultural Assessment & Method Statement (Oakhurst Arboriculture, 10th July 2025) has been submitted in support of the application. The assessment concludes that the Oak tree (T001) is of high quality and the Silver Birch (T002) is of moderate quality.

The submitted information confirms that the proposed rear extension would encroach within the Root Protection Areas (RPAs) of both protected trees, resulting in approximately 10% encroachment into the Oak RPA and 8% encroachment into the Silver Birch RPA. The report concludes that the development could be undertaken subject to the implementation of various mitigation measures including tree protection fencing, ground protection, manual excavation and low impact foundation solutions.

The Council's Tree & Landscape Officer has reviewed the submitted information and objects to the proposal. In accordance with the British Standard, it is important that the impacts on the tree are known at the decision making stage and the foundation design is key component of the potential impact, given the proximity of the trees to the proposed extension. Para 6.1.2 of BS 5837:2012 further sets out that an Arboricultural Method Statement should address '*specialist foundations – installation techniques and effect on finished floor levels and overall height*'.

Whilst the submission acknowledges the constraints posed by the protected trees and proposes mitigation measures, the LPA is not satisfied that sufficient information has been provided to robustly demonstrate that the development can be implemented without unacceptable harm to the protected trees. In particular, the proposed foundation solution remains indicative in nature, with detailed foundation specifications not provided at this stage. Particularly given the encroachment of the proposed development into the RPAs of the trees, this information needs to be provided upfront and therefore an acceptable impact on the trees has not been demonstrated. Given that the foundation design is fundamental to establishing whether the development is acceptable in principle within the identified Root Protection Areas, this is not a matter that can reasonably be deferred to a planning condition.

Para 5.3.1 of BS 5837:2012 states that the default position should be that structures are located **outside** the RPAs of trees to be retained. However, '*where there is an overriding justification for construction within the RPA, technical solutions might be available that prevent damage to the trees*'. Whilst BS 5837 recognises that technical solutions may permit development within an RPA where there is overriding justification, the application has not demonstrated why the siting of the extension within the RPAs is necessary, nor whether alternative designs or layouts could reasonably reduce the extent of encroachment. In the absence of such information, the Local Planning Authority cannot be satisfied that the identified impact represents

the least harmful feasible design solution.

Additionally, the submitted information demonstrates that a substantial proportion of the extension would be located beneath the canopies of the protected trees. This further highlights the importance of ensuring that the trees can be retained in the long term and that the development can be implemented without adverse effects on their health or vitality.

Whilst the submitted Arboricultural Assessment acknowledges the constraints posed by the protected trees and proposes mitigation measures, the Local Planning Authority is not satisfied that sufficient information has been provided to demonstrate that the proposed development can be implemented without unacceptable harm to the long-term health, stability and retention of the protected Oak and Silver Birch trees. In particular, detailed foundation specifications have not been provided despite the acknowledged encroachment into the Root Protection Areas of both trees. Furthermore, insufficient justification has been submitted to demonstrate why the development must be located within the Root Protection Areas or whether less harmful alternatives have been fully explored.

The proposal is therefore contrary to policy N2 of the NPPF (2026), Core Strategy policy CP3, policies CC03 & TB21 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan and policy IRS6 of the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan, which seek to protect trees of amenity value and ensure that development does not result in unacceptable harm to landscape features that contribute positively to character of the area and the wider landscape.

The above concerns warrant a reason for refusal.

Other:

The Council's Highways Officer has reviewed the proposal and raised no objection, noting that the proposed development would not impact on the site's existing parking provision. The proposal would also not impact on the main roof or any other potential bat roost features and therefore a bat survey is not required for the assessment of this application.

Conclusion:

Whilst the proposal is considered acceptable in relation to design, character, neighbour amenity and highways matters, these benefits attract limited weight as they relate to a modest householder extension. However, significant weight is afforded to the protection of the TPO protected Oak and Silver Birch trees given their identified amenity value and contribution to the character of the area. In the absence of sufficient evidence to demonstrate that unacceptable harm would be avoided, the conflict with development plan and neighbourhood plan tree protection policies outweighs the limited benefits of the proposal.

As indicated above, insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate that the proposed rear extension would not cause harm to the long-term health and vitality of the TPO protected Oak and Silver Birch trees which are of significant amenity

value and contribute positively to the character of the area and the wider landscape. The proposal is therefore contrary to policy N2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2026), policy CP3 of the Core Strategy (2010), policies CC03 and TB21 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014) and policy IRS6 of the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan (2023).

This application is therefore recommended for **refusal**.

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.

RECOMMENDATION

Conditions agreed:	N/A
Recommendation:	Refuse
Date:	19 August 2026
Earliest date for decision:	24 July 2026

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	19/08/26

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

- *Modest Development Location (Finchampstead North)*
- *Tree Preservation Order No. 730/1995*
- *Bat Roost Habitat Suitability Area*
- *Landscape Character Assessment Area – Finchampstead Forested and Settled Sands*