

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	242195
Site Address:	8 South Drive, Wokingham, RG40 2DH
Expiry Date:	30 October 2024
Site Visit Date:	20 September 2024
Proposal: Householder application for a proposed single storey extension to facilitate leisure facilities and the erection of a detached garage.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Water Utility Consultation Zones
Conservation Area
Contaminated Land Consultation Zone
Local Authorities
Affordable Housing Thresholds
Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
Borough Parishes
Scale and Location of Development Proposals
Farnborough Aerodrome Consultation Zone
Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone
Nuclear Consultation Zone
Tree Preservation Orders
Borough Wards
Landscape Character Assessment Area
SSSI Impact Risk Zones
Thames Basin Heaths SPA Mitigation Zones
Listed Building Buffer Zone
Electricity Sub Station
JCEB Mineral Safeguarding Areas
Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone Minor

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 CP8 – Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area 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 CC06 – Noise CC07 – Parking

	CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB06 – Development of Private Residential Gardens TB07 – Internal Space Standards TB21 – Landscape Character TB22 – Sites of Urban Landscape Value TB23 – Biodiversity and Development TB24 – Designated Heritage Assets TB26 – Buildings of Traditional Local Character and Areas of Special Character
Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (JMWP)	DM1 - Sustainable Development DM3 - Protection of Habitats and Species DM4 - Protection of Designated Landscape DM7 - Conserving the Historic Environment DM10 - Flood Risk DM11 - Water Resources DM14 - Ancillary development DM15 - Site History
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document Wokingham Town Centre SPD

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
112145	Proposed erection of two storey side/rear extension, front porch extension, re-alignment of bay window area to rear, provision of new dormers to front and rear of loft space, and demolition of existing garage and outbuildings (Amendment to F/2008/2608 for proposed two storey side extension, new front porch and demolition of existing garage and out buildings).	Approved 17/10/2011
091911	Proposed erection of two storey side extension and new front porch.	Approved 28/05/2009
080538	Proposed erection of two storey side extension and new front porch. (Demolition of existing garage and outbuildings).	Refused 23/01/2009

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Highways – No objection 06/09/2024).
WBC Landscape and Trees – No objection, subject to conditions (24/09/2024).
WBC Built Heritage Officer – Requested design revisions (23/09/2024). Revised plans submitted – No objection, subject to conditions (18/10/2024).
WBC CIL – CIL liable (05/09/2024).

WBC Ecology Householder – No comments received.
WBC Ecology Newts – No comments received.

External

None consulted.

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	No comments received.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received.
Neighbours	One objection letter (03/10/2024). Concerns include: - Proposed garage beyond existing building line. - The garage would harm the visual quality of the area. - Potential for noise from the pool pump room.

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site consists of a large, two and a half storey, detached property set within a large plot on South Drive, Wokingham. South Drive is within the Murdoch Road Conservation Area. Adjoining the site to the north is Grade II Listed 7 South Drive, the application site falls within the Listed Building buffer zone of this property. The listed building was officially recognised by Historic England in January 2008 for its '*bold and striking design exhibiting Arts and Crafts influences, particularly in the form of its unusual porch. An Edwardian house which displays confident handling, unusual detailing, quality materials and which is finished to a high standard*'.

Three residential dwellings adjoin the southern boundary of the site and the rear (west) of the site backs onto the Langborough Recreation Ground playing field. A Greenway Route runs parallel to the site along the rear boundary.

South Drive is a private road and comprises of large, detached dwellings of various design styles and material palettes. Typical materials include light render, brick, timber detailing, clay and slate roof tiles.

Proposal:

This application seeks approval for the erection of a single-storey side extension to the main house with a pitched roof form to serve a swimming pool and a single-storey detached garage with a pitched roof form.

Proposed materials include facing brickwork, tiles and fenestration to match existing.

NOTE: Revised plans were received during the application process which superseded the plans originally submitted.

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:

South Drive features a variety of detached house types and designs, many of which have undergone substantial extensions and alterations, some of which are of a more contemporary design. 20th century architecture generally characterises the area.

The proposed detached garage would measure approximately 11m in width, 6.6m in depth and the pitched roof would have a maximum height of 5.9m. It would be sited in the front eastern corner of the plot. The brick detailing displayed on the main house would be replicated on all four walls of the garage.

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'.

Policy CC03 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy states that development proposals should protect and retain existing trees, hedges and other landscape features, which is also reiterated in Policy TB24: 'Proposals shall retain or enhance the condition, character and features that contribute to the landscape'.

One third party raised concern regarding the location of the proposed garage and the harmful impact it would generate. The WBC Borough Design Guide (BDG) states that... *'Garages should not be sited in front of gardens but should be to the side or the rear of a dwelling...'* and... *'Garages should not project forward of the building line of the property'* (R23). This is to prevent such buildings as appearing overly prominent, undermining the coherence of the street scene and have an undesirable impact on the established pattern of development and character of the area. The proposal does not accord with this guidance.

However, whilst the garage would be sited in front of the existing building line, the structure is substantially screened by trees and landscaping features along the front and southeastern boundaries and is well contained. Separated from the road by mature hedging, trees and grass verge, the garage would be set back more than 13m from the frontage of South Drive and 8m from the main dwelling. In addition, houses along the southern side of South Road are sited closer to the road, on average by 10m. However, 8 South Drive is set further back from the road by more than 23m with the position of the garage largely in line with the prevailing building line of dwellings along the road.

Therefore, the proposed garage would not have an undesirable impact on the established pattern of development along South Drive.

The submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment confirms that the majority of trees will be retained on site, however, T18, a walnut, G19 apple trees and T20 a tamarisk would be removed. These have been classed as Category C and U trees. Furthermore, the host dwelling has a wide frontage onto South Drive of approximately 47m and all trees along the front boundary and shared southeastern boundary are to be retained. These are important features that contribute to the landscape character of the host site and street scene.

It is recognised that the garage would not be entirely screened from South Drive. However, the building would be sufficiently set back from the roadside on a substantial plot and would have a modest height in comparison to the main house. As such, the majority of the plot frontage onto South Drive would remain undeveloped, with views of the main house largely unobstructed. Therefore, the proposed garage would not undermine the coherence of the street scene and character of the host dwelling.

The single-storey side extension would be positioned on the eastern side of the main house and would measure approximately 13m in length, 7.28m in width and would have a maximum height of 6.8m. The pitched roof of the extension is sympathetic to the pitched roofs of the existing three gables on the front elevation by mirroring the same pitch which unifies the extension with the main house.

Revised plans were submitted which incorporate the Edwardian features of the main house in the design of the extension and include brick detailing to align with the brick detailing on the main house, exposed purlins below the eaves changes to fenestration including to the garage doors. The BDG states that 'The character of development proposals may be inspired by historical settlement patterns or architecture. Any proposal in a historical style must be carefully designed to use the correct proportions, and a quality of materials and refinement of detail that is similar to the original'. The revised plans address the Council's Built Heritage officer's concerns regarding the design of the original plans by incorporating key architectural features of the main house within the revised scheme adequately (See comments below).

The proposed side extension would be more than 42m from the rear boundary that adjoins the designated Greenway Route and the proposed garage more than 65m away. In addition, there is dense hedging and established trees along the rear boundary of the site, therefore, the proposed works would have a limited visible impact upon the landscape or setting of the Greenway Route.

The Built Heritage officer's comments regarding the original plans read: "*The proposed development consists of the erection of a single storey extension to the main house as to contain an indoor swimming pool, and the erection of a detached single storey triple garage. No. 8 South Drive is a fine example of an Edwardian Domestic Revival dwellinghouse, built c1908. Constructed as part of the Batty's Barn development by the People's Investment Company the building, and indeed South Drive, hold significance interest with respect to the development of the town. Whilst altered and extended it retains a significance amount of historic detail and character, and given its age, the architectural and historic interest as well as positive contribution to the character and*

appearance of the Murdoch Road Conservation Area, no. 8 South Drive is identified as a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA).

As noted, the property is located within the Murdoch Road Conservation Area, an area characterised by large sub-urban detached and semi-detached properties, generally set in their own gardens. Laid out in the 1900s, the area contains some fine examples of Arts & Crafts, Domestic Revival and inter-war design. One of the notable Arts & Crafts buildings, is the Grade II listed no. 7 South Drive, designed by Frank Morris in 1908. Morris' practice was responsible for much of the development and is a key figure in the town's history. As no. 7 South Drive is the direct neighbour, the application site lies within the setting of the listed building.

No. 8 is set in a substantial plot, towards to the bottom of South Drive. As with most of the properties in the vicinity, there is a strong verdant character, defined by mature trees, established hedging, lawns and shrubbery planting. As noted, whilst altered, the building contains a substantial amount of its Edwardian character, which is drawn in part from the materials used in construction and the details of design. As such strong significance remains, it is important for any alteration to the building, and thus Conservation Area, respect and embrace such elements.

With respect to the proposed swimming pool addition, the size, form and proportions of the element are considered acceptable in relation to the host, however revision is required as to include a greater detail which reflects the Edwardian language. A brick string course should be included as to run consistent with the main house, the oeil-de-boeuf (circular) windows (front and rear) are too small and out of proportion, they should be increased in size, and/or consideration given to greater detail (raised brick surround) and/or oval design – as per authentic Edwardian Domestic Revival architecture. Similarly, the triple light window is out of the proportion for the amount of blank walling. This should be either increased in size as to form a quad-light window, or separated into two evenly spaced windows.

With respect to the proposed garage, given the substantial plot and open nature of the setting that would remain, this proposal is considered acceptable from a setting perspective. Coach houses/garages are not an uncommon feature of the Conservation Area and early 20th century development as a whole, and given this and the separation from no. 7, it is considered not to harm the significance of either of these two designated heritage assets. However, as with the swimming pool element, revision to the design is required. At present, the building is presented as standard, plain triple garage, of limited architectural interest. It fails to adequately respond to the host in detail and thus not reflect an authentic historic coach house/garage. No objection is raised to the form, massing, position or orientation of the building. However, greater detail should be added – the garage doors should be of the typical early 20th century type, timber plank construction with part multi-panelled glazing (as per the extant garaging), side hung or concertina in opening. These doors should be evenly spaced as to create a better sense of proportion – at present the blank walling to the right-hand-side of the front appears odd and disjointed. Further consideration should be given to detailing such as a string course, stronger barge boards and soffits. There should be deeper eaves to the front and rear, perhaps introducing a sprocketed roof form. Inspiration should be drawn from authentic Edwardian coach houses, thus to better harmonise with the host, and wider character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

In conclusion, provided revisions are forthcoming and are of sufficient quality and reflect the above commentary, the application would be acceptable from a heritage perspective”.

After re-consultation, the Built Heritage officer raised no objection to the revised plans, subject to conditions relating to materials, finishes and fenestration details.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Overlooking, Loss of Light & Overbearing:

The proposed garage would be more than 5m from the shared boundary with no.9a South Drive and the side extension would be more than 10m from the shared boundary. Furthermore, the existing mature hedging and trees along this boundary would provide natural screening of the structures from the neighbouring property. The BDG 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’. Therefore, due to the significant separation distances between the proposed built form and the side boundary, there would be no detrimental overlooking, loss of light or overbearing impacts generated.

Noise:

A third party raised concern over the potential for noise to be generated by the swimming pool pump. As there are no external pumps proposed in the application, any noise generated would be contained within the building, and more than 14m to the closest adjoining neighbours. Therefore, limited harm would be generated regarding noise.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

The proposal includes the erection of a detached garage to the front of the main house and one additional habitable room. Policy CC07 and Appendix 2 of the MDD stipulates minimum off street parking standards. The Council’s Highway officer was consulted and raised no objection to the proposal and commented *“While the total numbers of habitable rooms cannot be identified from the application, the applicant proposes extension to include a swimming pool and provisions of a garage of internal dimensions 6.3m x 10.4m, resulting in an increase of 1 allocated parking space. Three driveway parking spaces are also indicated on the site plan.*

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

The site has ample spaces for more than the four proposed provisions, which is acceptable”.

Amenity Space:

The proposal includes the erection of built form within the existing garden space of the host dwelling. The property benefits from one of the largest plots on the road and a garden depth of more than 40m would be retained from the side extension to the rear

boundary and a garden width of more than 60m. This is considered more than sufficient to serve the residents of the dwelling.

Flooding and Drainage:

The application site is located on land within flood zone 1 which has a low probability of flooding from rivers and a low risk of surface water flooding. Therefore, WBC Drainage were not consulted on the application.

Landscape and Trees:

There are four protected trees within the site boundary, four to the front of the host dwelling and one to the rear. The Council's Trees and Landscape officer was consulted and raised no objection to the proposal subject to conditions. They commented "*The site is within the Murdoch Road Conservation Area (CA) and is subject to Tree Preservation Order (TPO) 1477/2014 on T1 a holm oak, T2 a black pine and T3 a Douglas fir, also TPO 1195/2007, T1 a holm oak (not registered as a veteran tree on the Ancient Tree Register) and T2 a Douglas fir.*

With a circa 6m ridge height, the garage seems unnecessarily tall for the CA location where conservation and enhancement of the setting and important character and garden, including views, are key. The garage is proposed for the front of the property. I am concerned about compliance with policy CP3 which aims to permit proposals of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height and character. Garages at the front of a dwelling are contrary to Design Guide 4.11. However, in this location an appropriately sized building would be screened by CA protected trees and set back from the boundary within the site and not forward of the boundary line for the street. Therefore, subject to the height, I find it acceptable.

The pool house is set back and will receive scant public views.

Trees have been protected, on the whole and I have suggested a condition. But T18, a walnut, G19 apple trees and T20 a tamarisk are to be removed. The loss of the green infrastructure in the CA can be mitigated with planting, for which there will be room on the plot. I have suggested a landscaping condition. In these ways the scheme can comply with policies such as CP1 which seeks to maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment, CC03 which requires incorporation of high quality, ideally, native planting and landscaping as an integral part of the scheme and TB24 which aims to conserve designated heritage assets, of which trees are part".

The recommended condition for the protection of trees will be applied, however, whilst the condition relating to a landscaping scheme is duly noted, due to the scale of the proposal and existing established vegetation on site to be retained, the condition is not considered necessary or reasonable to improve the development.

Ecology:

The application site falls within an area suitable for bat roosts and within an amber zone for Great Crested Newts. A preliminary and emergence survey were submitted with the application. The ecologist concluded "*The cumulative evidence leads me to conclude that bats are not roosting in the single storey side extension at 8 South Drive and the single storey side extension has a negligible potential to support roosting bats therefore an EPSL is not required*".

Great Crested Newts are a protected species, and the application site falls within a designated amber zone. A Newt Avoidance Statement was submitted with the application and this will be conditioned as part of any approval.

Conclusion:

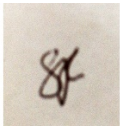
For the reasons set out above, subject to conditions, the proposal is acceptable as it accords with local plan policy and guidance.

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:	Yes
Recommendation:	Approve
Date:	21 October 2024
Earliest date for decision:	18 October 2024

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	29.10.24