

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	252584
Site Address:	544 Wokingham Road, Earley, Wokingham, RG6 7JB
Expiry Date:	18 December 2025
Site Visit Date:	12/11/2025
Proposal: Householder application for the proposed erection of a single-storey side and rear extension with a dual-pitched tiled roof and rendered external walls to match the existing dwelling, incorporating new fenestration to the side and rear elevations, following the demolition of the existing garage.	

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
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 – Development Limits CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC07 – Parking CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB05 – Housing Mix TB06 – Development of Private Residential Gardens
Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU)	SS1 – Sustainable development principles H12 – Residential development of existing private gardens NE4 – Trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
190917	Householder application for erection of a single storey side infill extension, erection of new front porch, changes to fenestration and internal alterations, following demolition of existing single storey side extension	Approved 24/05/2019

211484	Full application for the proposed subdivision of the site and erection of a detached 3 no. bedroom dwelling and car port following demolition of existing outbuildings, with associated access and parking.	Refused 21/06/2021
220193	Application to vary conditions 2 and remove condition 5 of planning consent 190917 for the erection of a single storey side infill extension, erection of new front porch, changes to fenestration and internal alterations, following demolition of existing single storey side extension. Condition 2 refers to approved details, and the variation is to include a roof light to the front elevation. Condition 5 refers to Visibility splay provision and the variation is to remove this requirement.	Approved 17/03/2022
221892	Full application for the proposed subdivision of the site and erection of a detached 2 no. bedroom dwelling and car port following demolition of existing outbuildings, with associated access, storage and parking.	Refused 22/07/2022

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Property Services- No comments received
WBC Drainage- No objection subject to conditions
WBC Landscape and Trees- No objection subject to conditions
WBC CIL-No comments received

External

No comments received

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	Earley Town Council- Raises objection for the following; - The application shows the dwelling being converted into two. - The applicant has failed to demonstrate that the second dwelling has adequate private amenity space. - The proposed garage does not meet the councils standard for garages contrary to Policy CC07, CP3, CP1, CC01, CC07 and TB07.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	2 letters received raising the following points: • Plans do not contain a scale bar (this has since been rectified and amended plans uploaded) • The plans seek to erect an extension treble the size of the existing property potentially obstructing light to the neighbouring property, particularly in the living room, kitchen and back garden.

	• Additional concern over the side facing window facing the neighbouring property, having a potential impact on privacy. • The development will make it two separate dwellings. • Increase in noise.
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APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site comprises of a single-storey semi-detached bungalow, situated on the main Wokingham Road. The bungalow itself is contained within a narrow plot, consisting of a deep front garden and a long rear garden surrounded by hard and soft landscaping.

Planning History:

The application site has had previous planning applications submitted. Application 190917 (submitted in April 2019) consisted of the proposed erection of a single storey side infill extension, erection of a new front porch, changes to fenestration and internal alterations, following demolition of existing single storey side extension. This was later approved in May 2019.

A second application 211484 (submitted in April 2021) consisted of a full application for the proposed subdivision of the site and erection of a detached 3 no. bedroom dwelling and car port following demolition of existing outbuildings, with associated access and parking. This was later refused in June 2021 due to issues with the character of the area, external amenity space and inadequate arboricultural details.

A third application, 220193 (submitted in January 2022) consisted of an application to vary conditions 2 and remove condition 5 of planning consent 190917 for the erection of a single storey side infill extension, erection of new front porch, changes to fenestration and internal alterations, following demolition of existing single storey side extension. Condition 2 refers to approved details, and the variation is to include a roof light to the front elevation. Condition 5 refers to Visibility splay provision, and the variation is to remove this requirement. This was approved in March 2022.

The last application 221892 (submitted in June 2022) consisted of a full application for the proposed subdivision of the site and erection of a detached 2 no. bedroom dwelling and car port following demolition of existing outbuildings, with associated access, storage and parking. This was later refused in July 2022 due to issues with the character of the area and external amenity space.

Proposal:

The proposal as described in the application form is for the erection of a single storey side and rear extension with a dual-pitched tiled roof and rendered external walls to match the existing dwelling, incorporating new fenestration to the side and rear elevations, following the demolition of the existing garage. The submitted plans and

elevations show the existing part of the building will be an “annex”. This consideration is set out further in the principle of development section.

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 proposed extension would be of such a large scale in relation to the existing dwelling

that the submitted floor plans explicitly identify the existing section the building as an “annex”. This annex would be fully self-contained, incorporating its own external entrance, two bedrooms, a living room, kitchen and full bathroom facilities. It would be capable of independent day-to-day living without any need for occupants to enter the remainder of the building.

The remaining (extended) part of the building would also function independently, with its own separate external entrance, two bedrooms, living room, kitchen, bathroom, study and garage. Each part of the building would therefore be capable of functioning as a complete and independent residential unit.

Although an internal hallway door is shown between the two parts, the internal layouts of each section are fully enclosed and self-contained. There would be no functional necessity for occupiers to use this internal connection, and the door could be locked or removed without requiring further planning permission. The presence of this door does not therefore prevent the development from functioning as two separate units of accommodation.

Given the scale, layout and self-containment, officers sought clarification from the agent as to the intended use of the proposed annex. In an email dated 05/12/2025, the agent confirmed that *‘My client spends half his time in France so he rents his property out. The annex is for himself to stay while he’s in this Country.’*

The proposal would therefore result in two separate households occupying each self-contained part of the building: the applicant occupying the annex and, an unrelated tenant(s) occupying the main house. This represents occupation by two independent households and therefore the creation of two separate dwellings for planning purposes.

The fact that the applicant may be absent from the annex for part of the year does not alter this conclusion. The annex would remain a self-contained unit capable of independent occupation, furnished and retained for residential use at all times. Temporary absence does not suspend its status as a separate dwelling.

There would be no family or personal link between the owner living in the annex and those renting the remaining part of the house. There would be no physical link that would necessitate occupiers using each side of the house. The building is designed to

be occupied as two separate independent units and the explanation is that separate households would use each section. It is therefore two separate dwellings.

This position is supported by appeal decisions and case law, including the Inspector determining Planning Appeal Ref. APP/L3815/C/15/3141285 (Annexe, 47 Wellington Gardens, West Sussex, PO20 0RF, enforcement ref. SY/15/00074/CONHH) for erection of an outbuilding, who stated that: *“Irrespective of whether the term “annex” is used to describe the building, the fact remains that if the building were to provide all the normal facilities for self-contained day to day living, it would be a dwelling for the purposes of planning law.”*

Likewise, in *Gravesham Borough Council v Secretary of State for the Environment* (1982) P&CR 142, McCulloch J in the High Court was required to consider the definition of a dwellinghouse. He held that a distinctive characteristic of a dwellinghouse was its ability to afford, to those who used it, the facilities required for day-to-day private domestic existence. This is the case with the proposal applied for under the current application.

The application cannot be approved under a householder application, as it would result in the creation of an additional dwelling without the submission of the correct application form, fee or supporting information. Furthermore, there are material planning considerations, set out below, which would in any event weigh against the creation of a separate dwelling at this site.

Before considering those other material considerations, it is relevant to highlight that this application follows on from application 221892 for a new dwelling which was refused on the following grounds:

- 1- Character of the Area- By virtue of its backland location, the proposed dwelling is an incongruous form of development which will erode the character and appearance of the area, and which fails to respect the existing grain of development in the area contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework 2021, policies CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy, Management Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC01 and TB06 and Section 4.10 of the Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2012.
- 2- External Amenity Space- The proposal would result in a lack of available and usable external amenity space for the occupiers of the proposed dwelling contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework 2021, Policies CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy 2010 and R16 of the Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2012.

Character of the Area:

Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy Planning permission will be granted for development proposals that Maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment.

Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for development that is of an appropriate scale, mass, layout, built form and character for

its surroundings, and which achieves a high quality of design without causing harm to the amenities of adjoining land users or to the character of the area.

The proposed extension would represent a substantial addition to the dwelling, the scale and internal layout would result in the effective subdivision of the property into two separate units of accommodation. As such, the proposal would not be of an appropriate scale, size or layout when assessed against the host dwelling. Rather than remaining a subordinate addition, the extension would fundamentally alter the function and form of the building.

The property forms one half of a semi-detached pair and the proposed development would unbalance that relationship. The introduction of a large extension that facilitates two independent residential units within one half of the pair would disrupt the visual symmetry and cohesion of the semi-detached dwellings, resulting in harm to the character and appearance of the host property and the area.

Paragraph 4.11 of the Borough Design Guide states that alterations and extensions should be '*clearly subservient to the form and scale of the original building*'. Given its scale, layout and the resulting subdivision of the dwelling, the proposal would not be read as a subservient extension. Instead, it would appear as a dominant and transformative addition. While parts of the development would be located to the rear, the creation of two self-contained units within a single semi-detached bungalow would nonetheless have a harmful impact on the character of the building and the integrity of the semi-detached pair as a whole. It is well established that 'character' considerations are not reliant on visual impact.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy aims to protect neighbouring amenity.

Objections have been raised on grounds that the proposal impacts the amenity of the neighbour next door No 542 Wokingham Road.

Overlooking:

R15 of the Borough Design Guide states that buildings must be designed to provide reasonable levels of visual privacy to habitable rooms. The proposed rear extension includes new windows and doors to the rear. The windows to the rear, towards No 542 Wokingham Road include non-obscure glazed windows and open plan living and dining room spaces. As the development is single storey, the vantage point within the property would be similar to the existing garden.

The submitted plans indicate no detrimental impact on overlooking to the neighbouring amenity directly next door or to the rear.

Loss of Light:

R18 of the Borough Design Guide states that dwellings must be designed to provide appropriate levels of daylight and sunlight to new and existing properties. Due to the

proposal consisting of a single storey, there would be any detrimental loss of light to neighbouring amenity. It will also be set off the shared boundaries.

Noise:

Regardless of whether the proposal is an annex or separate dwelling, residential noise from the property is compatible with the existing residential area. There is no evidence that noise from the development would detrimentally impact the amenity of neighbouring residents.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

Sufficient parking on site is retained on site if the proposal is considered as a residential extension. However, if an application was submitted as two dwellings, then it would not have been demonstrated that sufficient parking is retained.

To avoid the requirement for unallocated parking, a 2 bedroom property would require 2 spaces in the council parking standards, as set out in the MDD Local Plan. Therefore 2no, 2 bedroom units would require 4 parking spaces. It has not been demonstrated that this level of parking could be accommodated on site whilst being able to manoeuvre safely and enter and leave the site in a forward gear.

Wokingham Road is a busy A Road and the current layout of one property on the site means there is space for vehicle to park and manoeuvre on site so that vehicle can enter and leave in a forward gear. On street parking would obstruct the cycle lanes and force cyclist to divert into the road.

Flooding and Drainage:

Section 10 of the NPPF, Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy and Policies CC09 and CC10 of the MDD require flooding protection, sustainable drainage methods and the minimisation of surface water flow, via the preparation of a Flood Risk Assessment or Surface Water Drainage Strategy.

The application site projects no concern regarding Flood Zones and is at low risk from surface flooding. No objections have been raised by the Council's Flooding and Drainage Officer as no existing or proposed drainage details have been provided, such details will need to be provided via condition in the event of an approval.

Landscape and Trees:

Policy CC03 of the MDD Local Plan aims to protect green infrastructure networks, retain existing trees and establish appropriate landscaping and Policy TB21 requires consideration of the landscape character.

The Council's Landscape and Tree Officer, poses no objection to the proposal. However, retention of key structural landscape features to the plot boundaries should be retained in accordance with the policy.

In order to comply with the policy, the Council's Landscape and Tree Officer requires a scheme of Landscaping which clearly shows existing vegetation to be retained/removed/proposed. The scheme should include existing and proposed boundary fencing such as the 1m high post and rail fence to the front of the site and the hedges/shrubbery to the rear or similar, which will comply with the policy. This information could have been secured by a recommended condition if acceptable in all other respects.

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 and recommended for refusal for the following reason:

The proposed development, by reason of its size, scale, layout and intended use, would not constitute a subordinate extension to the existing dwelling and instead would facilitate the effective subdivision of the property into two self-contained and independent dwellings. The resulting subdivision would unbalance the existing pair of semi-detached dwellings and would cause harm to the character and appearance of the host property, its adjoining semi-detached neighbour and the area. The creation of an additional dwelling cannot be approved under a householder application, as the proposal has not been submitted using the correct application type, is accompanied by an incorrect fee, and lacks the necessary supporting information required to assess a new residential unit. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy, Policy TB06 of the MDD Local Plan, Section 4 of the Borough Design Guide and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

RECOMMENDATION

Conditions agreed:	Not required
Recommendation:	Refuse
Date:	10 November 2025
Earliest date for decision:	18 November 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	<i>MC</i>
Date:	18.12.2025

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS