

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	251670
Site Address:	25 Firmstone Close, Earley, Wokingham, RG6 4JS
Expiry Date:	9 September 2025
Site Visit Date:	24 July 2025
Proposal: Householder application for the proposed erection of part two-storey and part single-storey rear extension, single-storey front extension and conversion of existing garage to create habitable accommodation.	

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 CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction CC07 – Parking
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List

PLANNING HISTORY- No relevant planning history

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Highways: No objection

External

None consulted

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	Earley Town Council: No objection
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	24 Firmstone Close: Loss of sunlight and overshadowing. The front extension on the second storey above garage roof will add to loss of sunlight and overshadowing on property (24 especially one bedroom (second storey) and living hall (ground floor). Officer response: The proposal is for a single storey front

	extension and part two-storey and part single-storey rear extension, therefore no development of the front extension on the second storey above garage. In terms of loss of light to the front ground floor living hall window, the front extension is only single storey and would be approx. 1.05m from the boundary of no.24 and over 2m from the flank wall of no.24 and the limited front projection. Therefore, given the adequate separation distance as well as the front extension being single storey, there are no loss of light concerns to the no.24 front habitable windows. Such separation provides sufficient separation space between the neighbouring dwelling and would not be considered overbearing. In terms of loss of light to the first-floor rear bedroom window. The line of 45° degrees would not be breached and be compliant and therefore, there would be no harmful loss of light to the rear first floor bedroom window of no.24. Also, the rear extension would not project forward of no.24 rear building line.
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APPRAISAL

Site Description: Two storey 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.

Character of the Area: The garage conversion into a family room/gym would differ the current street scene and slightly alter the characteristics of the street as the garage door will be replaced within a window. However, the new window would be similar to the existing in size and proportions of current ground floor window along Firmstone Close, meaning that the proposal would not negatively harm the street scene. The proposal meets the recommendations of the Borough Design Guide and is line with policy CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy.

The Borough Design Guide states *“front extensions should generally be no more than 1 storey in height and should not project significantly forward of the building line”*.

The front extension would only be single storey, 1.50m in length and not project forward of the building line. Thus, complying with the BDG. The front extension roof form would match that of existing front element of the dwelling and is considered to be a modest addition which would not harm the street scene.

The BDG states *“rear extensions should not project more than 4m from the main rear wall where they are close to a side boundary”*. The total length of the part two-storey and part single-storey rear extension would be approx. 4.15m.

The first-floor pitched roof rear element would project 3m and would extend above the proposed ground floor projection. The eaves/ridge height would be set down from the main dwelling appearing as a subservient feature. Furthermore, the pitch of the roof of the rear extension would match that of the existing. Moreover, being located at the rear it wouldn't be visible from public locations. Hence, this aspect of the proposal would not have an adverse impact on the character of the host property or surrounding area.

The ground floor element would project a further 1.15m. The ground floor element is considered to be a minor addition. Also, with it being located at the rear it wouldn't be visible from public locations. Hence, the proposal would unlikely have an adverse impact on the character of the host property or surrounding area.

The proposed materials would match that of the existing dwelling, thus in keeping with the current characteristics of the dwelling and would not harm the character of the area.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Overlooking: The scheme would add an additional ground floor window at the front of the property due to the garage being converted into habitable accommodation. The window would overlook onto trees and the streetscene.

The proposal includes adding one first floor window on both side elevations, a bathroom and en-suite. Both windows will be obscured glazed given they are classed as non-habitable rooms

The ground floor bi-folding windows would overlook onto the rear garden and would be screened by the existing fencing, thus no overlooking. The ground floor rear extension includes adding a side window for the dinning room, but would be screened by the existing fencing, thus no overlooking concerns.

The first-floor rear elevation of the property already contains three windows at first floor level: bedroom, bathroom and en-suite. The proposed first floor includes two windows for bedrooms 1 & 3. Most rear gardens are overlooked at an oblique angle from the upper floor windows in the neighbouring property. This would be no different with the new window as part of the first-floor rear extension and its oblique angle/view of no.26 & no.24 rear garden. Thus, the proposed rear window would not cause any significant harm with regards to neighbouring amenities and the relationship with the neighbouring house would be orthodox for dwellings in a suburban area.

The Borough Design Guide states the minimum back-to-back separation distance is 22m. The separation distance between the rear of no.25 and the rear of 1 & 2 Ledran Close is approx. 21.40m, thus not marginally below that advocated within the BDG. However, in this instance, the slight shortfall is not considered to introduce any significant additional overlooking impacts to these neighbouring properties such that it would not warrant refusal of this application.

Loss of Light: The proposal would comply with the 45° degree lines to the first-floor rear bedroom window of no.24. Whilst the proposal would result in some overshadowing to the conservatory of this neighbour, it would still receive sufficient natural light. Therefore, it is not considered to be a reasonable reason to refuse the scheme given its compliance with local policy in other respects and given the neighbouring property would still have adequate access to natural light. Also, the rear extension would not project forward of no.24 rear building line.

Whilst the rear building line of no.25 would marginally project further than no.26, it would not breach the 45° degree line of the nearest habitable room and given the separation distance of approx. 2.30 from flank-to-flank wall, such separation would not result in harmful loss of light.

A neighbour has raised concerns regarding the front extension which is addressed in the neighbour comments section above, however no detrimental loss of light to the neighbours was identified.

Overbearing: The Borough Design Guide has a recommendation that a minimum 1 metre separation gap should be retained between the flank of a property and the site boundary, in order to limit a sense of enclosure. Whilst the proposal would be 0.90 metres from the neighbouring flank wall, the existing property is already 0.90m from the flank wall of no.24. As such, an extension in the same location would not result in harm despite not being marginally short of the 1.0m guidance in accordance with the Borough Design Guide.

The flank wall of the rear extension would be approx. 1.35m from the side boundary of no.26, which complies with the BDG and provides sufficient separation space between the neighbouring dwelling. Thus, it is not considered to be overbearing.

Given the size of the plot and the siting of the dwelling within it resulting in sufficient separation distances to neighbouring property it would not result in harmful overbearing concerns. It is considered sufficient visual separation between the houses. The rear extension would be set off from the boundary which provides sufficient partition space between the neighbouring dwellings and would not be considered overbearing.

The proposal would not appear physically overbearing or oppressive to neighbours with the height of the dwelling not increasing and as such that it would be significantly detrimental to their amenities.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

The proposal will result in an additional habitable room, however, this will not have a significant impact in respect of the councils parking standards.

The garage is to be converted, however, it not considered that this will represent a significant loss of parking as the garage does not meet the councils current standards for parking a car. The remaining level of driveway parking is therefore considered acceptable in this instance.

Should the applicant wish to pursue widening of the dropped crossing this will need to be undertaken outside of the planning process by contacting WBC Traffic Management team for approval.

Amenity Space:

The proposal reduces the amount of amenity space available to the property, but it would still be of adequate size, 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 occupiers.

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:	29 August 2025
Earliest date for decision:	6 August 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
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Date:	29/08/25
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PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Affordable Housing Thresholds | Total count: 3

#	NAME
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1	Within Major Development Locations
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2	Within Major Development Locations
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3	Within All Development Locations
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Scale and Location of Development Proposals | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	NAME
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1	Major Development Locations	Earley
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Thames Basin Heath SPA Mitigation Zones | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME
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1	Special Protection Area Linear Mitigation Zone	7km Linear Mitigation Zone
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Mineral Safeguarding Areas | Total count: 1

#	Type	SubType
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1	Sharp Sand and Gravel	River Terrace deposits
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Major Nuclear Sites Consultation Zone | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME	PLANNING_NOTE
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1 Consultation Zone - Major Nuclear Site AWE: 12km Zone This is the 12km Zone. A circular zone of 12km radius around all nuclear sites, for certain types of significant development due to the potential for such developments to pose an external hazard to sites.

Aerodrome Safeguarding: Heathrow Consultation Zone | Total count: 1

Height Band Wind TurbineAviation

1 All works exceeding 150 metres (492.1 feet) NO YES

Risk of Flooding from Surface Water | Total count: 5

FEATURE_TYPE FEATURE_NAME

1	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 30 year risk extent
2	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 100 year risk extent
3	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 100 year risk extent
4	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 100 year risk extent
5	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 1000 year risk extent

Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zones | Total count: 1

FEATURE_TYPE FEATURE_NAME CONSULT

1 Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zone Green Consult NatureSpace for Major developments only

SSSI Impact Risk Zones | Total count: 1

IRZURL

1 [https://irz.geodata.org.uk/IRZ/step2.html?irzcode=0300000530000&es=11404&location=475984,168857%20\(IRZ%20polygon%20centre\)](https://irz.geodata.org.uk/IRZ/step2.html?irzcode=0300000530000&es=11404&location=475984,168857%20(IRZ%20polygon%20centre))

Landscape Character Assessment 2019 | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	Name
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1	Landscape Character Assessment 2019 Woodley-Earley Settled and Farmed Clay
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Wards | Total count: 1

#	NAME	Closest	Approximate	Distance
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1	Hawkedon Ward		0	m
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Parishes | Total count: 1

#	NAME	Closest	Approximate	Distance
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1	Earley CP		0	m
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