

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	242348
Site Address:	Sulby Croft, Heathlands Road, Wokingham, RG40 3AR
Expiry Date:	16 December 2024
Site Visit Date:	8 November 2024
Proposal: Householder application for the proposed modification of the existing roof form and erection of a first-floor front extension, a two-storey front extension, a single-storey side and rear extension and a two-storey rear extension with balcony, plus changes to fenestration including the addition of 2no. Juliet balconies, and a two-storey, side residential annexe extension.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Water Utility Consultation Zones
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
Local Wildlife Site
Nuclear Consultation Zone
Tree Preservation Orders
Borough Wards
Landscape Character Assessment Area
SSSI Impact Risk Zones
Thames Basin Heaths SPA Mitigation Zones
Local Wildlife Sites Consultation Zone
Local Plan Update Submitted Sites
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 CP2 – Inclusive Communities CP3 – General Principles for Development CP4 – Infrastructure Requirements CP5 – Housing Mix, Density and Affordability CP6 – Managing Travel Demand CP7 – Biodiversity CP8 – Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals CP11 – Proposals Outside Development Limits

	CP12 – Green Belt CP13 – Town Centres and Shopping CP14 – Growth and Renaissance of Wokingham Town Centre CP15 – Employment Development CP17 – Housing Delivery
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 CC05 – Renewable Energy and Decentralised Energy Networks CC06 – Noise CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB21 – Landscape Character TB22 – Sites of Urban Landscape Value TB23 – Biodiversity and Development TB26 – Buildings of Traditional Local Character and Areas of Special Character
Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (JMWP)	DM1 - Sustainable Development DM2 - Climate Change – Mitigation and Adaptation DM3 - Protection of Habitats and Species DM4 - Protection of Designated Landscape DM5 - Protection of the Countryside DM6 - Green Belt DM7 - Conserving the Historic Environment 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

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
240831	Outline application for the proposed redevelopment of the site and erection of 49 dwellings with associated access, infrastructure, open space and landscaping (all matters reserved except for means of access)	Refused 05/08/2024
231528	Householder application for the proposed 2No storey side extension to form triple garage with accommodation above, single storey link extension. Single storey side extension to the rear. 3No Juliet Balconies and 1No balcony all to the rear. 2No storey front extension to form porch and changes to fenestration.	Application withdrawn 08/02/2024

001653	Proposed replacement entrance gates and brick piers facing highway.	Refused 29/11/2000
000104	Proposed single storey front extension to dwelling to form porch plus new windows in front and side elevations.	Approved 09/11/2000
971195	Proposed First Floor Rear Extension To Dwelling.	Approved 21/04/1997

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Drainage – Request further information (29/10/2024).
WBC Highways – No objection, subject to conditions (24/10/2024).
WBC Landscape and Trees – Objection/Request further information (05/11/2024).
WBC CIL – CIL liable (24/10/2024).
WBC Ecology – Conditions recommended following an objection and request for further information (09/12/2024 and 02/01/2025).

External

None consulted.

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	No objection (05/11/2024).
Ward Member(s)	No comments received.
Neighbours	No objection but concerns regarding the impacts of the development on the root protection areas of protected trees (28/11/2024).

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site consists of a two-storey detached property set within a large plot on Heathlands Road, Wokingham. The dwelling was constructed in the 1950s and has already benefitted from several alterations and extensions. The property is set back from the road behind a gravelled driveway and established trees and hedging along the front boundary which include several protected trees.

The northern end of Heathlands Road comprises commercial uses which include Garden Centres and fruit and vegetable farms. The application site is located towards the southern end of Heathlands Road which has sparse development with one other dwelling north of the site. The applicant owns a field that borders the southern and western boundaries. Further west is Gorrick Plantation, a large area of woodland that is a Local Wildlife Site. The application site also falls within the Forest and Rides Valued Landscape (see Valued Landscape Assessment 2024) and designated Countryside. Further south of the site is St Sebastian's Cemetery, Church and Primary School. Directly opposite the site, on the eastern side of Heathlands Road are the garages and parking areas of Heathlands Court estate.

Proposal:

This application seeks approval for the erection of extensions which include a two-storey side extension which would comprise a triple garage with a hallway and stairs to access the annexe above. The side extension would measure approximately 12.96m in width and 6.75m in depth and would have a pitched roof form with three front dormers and two rear dormers.

The two-storey front extension would infill space on the southeastern corner of the property. It would comprise a front gable and would measure approximately 4.59m in width and 2m (maximum) in depth.

The first-storey front extension would extend floor space above the existing porch and would measure approximately 3.39m in depth and 4.6m in width. It would comprise a pitched gable roof with a glazed front to serve the hall and landing.

The two-storey, rear extension would infill space between the existing kitchen and study. It would measure approximately 7.3m in depth and 9.1m in width with two pitched roof gables. Also proposed is a first-floor balcony which would span the width of the rear two-storey extension.

Also proposed is a single-storey side/rear extension. It would measure approximately 23.39m in length and 8.7m (maximum) in width and would have a pitched roof form at the front which would adjoin a flat roof which would adjoin a mono-pitch roof form. The extension would serve an office, gym, hot tub and changing facilities.

There are also changes proposed to the existing dwelling to include changes to external wall finishes and changes to fenestration, including the addition of two Juliet balconies in the rear elevation of the existing property.

One air source heat pump is also proposed as part of the development. It would be located to the rear of the garages approximately 1.5m from the side boundary.

NOTE:

The original submission included an indoor swimming pool located within the single-storey side/rear extension. After discussions with the owner regarding the impact of the swimming pool on the root protection area of a protected tree, the swimming pool element was removed from the proposal and revised plans were 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 outside the settlement boundary and in the countryside. Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy does not permit development outside of development limits, however exceptions to this include: 'Residential extensions or replacement dwellings

where it does not result in inappropriate increases in scale, form or footprint or would bring about environmental improvement’.

Character of the Area:

The application proposes a number of extensions and alterations that would result in a significant increase in footprint by more than 500m².

CP3 of the Core Strategy states that proposals should be of an appropriate scale of mass, built form and character. The Council’s Borough Design Guide (BDG) SPD gives advice on residential developments. The application site is located in designated countryside and for rural and settlement edge sites, RD2 of the BDG states that development must ‘respond to the unique character and setting of each site, taking into consideration a thorough understanding of the local pattern of settlement and its setting in the landscape’. CP11 states that proposals outside of development limits will not normally be permitted except where *“It does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings; and when it is contained within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion”*.

The application site is located on Heathlands Road which is long and characterised by its rural and open nature. There is no prevailing character to the properties along the road. Whilst there are a number of older properties that incorporate traditional design features such as decorative soffits and ridge tiles, there are also properties which were constructed more recently and boast a range of design styles. Many of the properties have also benefited from alterations and extensions in a variety of forms.

R23 of the BDG states that residential extensions and alterations should be designed to contribute positively towards the underlying character and quality of the local area. Whilst the proposed extensions would be significant in size, they have been positioned sympathetically within the plot. The proposed two-storey and first-floor extension to the front would be set back from the street frontage by more than 11m and the presence of mature landscaping features to the front of the plot provide some natural screening from the street scene.

Heathlands Road on page 124 of the Wokingham Valued Landscape Assessment 2024 is shown to be located within the ‘Forest and Rides Valued Landscape’ area. Paragraph 6.15 of the Wokingham Valued Landscape Assessment 2024 states ‘A number of roads and public rights of way, running through the Forest and Rides Valued Landscape are laid out over earlier historic straight rides designed to allow royalty to follow the stag hounds by carriage as they hunted in the Royal Forest of Windsor. Parts of this landscape are deeply rural but in other areas, low-density residential development lines the ‘straight rides’. Homes are mostly set back from the road, characterised by substantial front gardens, with attractive landscaping of mature trees, hedges and shrubs’. The proposed extensions to the front of the property would not extend forward of the existing principal building line. The existing large front driveway would be maintained and the established trees and hedging along the front boundary which would retain the verdant setting of the site within the street scene. Page 96 of the BDG also highlights the importance of soft vegetation in rural and settlement edge site, and particularly references the contribution that soft verges, hedgerows and trees make in the public realm and within plots.

The two-storey triple garage and annexe extension would be located to the southern side of the property. It is recognised that the extension would not be entirely screened from the street and would increase the overall built form visible from the road. However, the extension would be subordinate to the main dwelling by being set down from the main ridge line by approximately 0.85m and set back from the principal building line by approximately 0.34m. In addition, the extension is sensitively set in from the site boundary by approximately 1m and would be positioned behind the established hedging and protected mature trees to the south of the site which would obscure much of the extension when traversing along Heathlands Road. The three front facing dormers in the side extension would be subservient additions by being well set in from the sides, set back from the eaves and between 0.5m and 1.3m lower than the ridge line. The introduction of the dormers in the front elevation of the annexe (one projecting gable dormer and two flat roof dormers) are sufficiently in-keeping with other properties within the local area which also boast front facing dormer windows. Examples include projecting gable dormers at Bevere Lodge, The Walled Garden and Deaconfield House, Hatch Ride and Heathfield, Gorrick Woods Path.

The changes to the front of the dwelling would create a more modern architectural style to the property which would also include some traditional design features such as the stone window surrounds and more contemporary additions, such as the glazed hallway. Whilst relatively large in form, the new additions to the front of the property would seek to balance the host dwelling and introduce an improved form from the numerous unsympathetic changes of the past. It is considered that the proposed changes to the front would not be obtrusive or overly dominant within the street scene when viewed within the context of the large plot and are acceptable.

The proposed two-storey rear extension would effectively infill space between the existing kitchen and office and would only marginally protrude beyond the existing rear building line. The roof form would incorporate two gables to replicate a similar form to the two existing gables in the rear elevation of the existing dwelling. The gables would be subservient to the main house by being set down from the ridge line by approximately 0.3m. The proposed balcony to the rear would span the width of the rear extension and would protrude approximately 1.4m. There would be no views of the rear extension or balcony from the street scene as it would be screened by the host dwelling and garage extension. Therefore, this element of the scheme would have no detrimental impact to the character of the host dwelling or local countryside setting.

The proposed single-storey side/rear extension would have a large footprint and would extend the built form approximately 15.4m further to the rear than the existing rear building line. However, a portion of the extension would be located on the footprint of the existing detached garage that would be demolished to allow for the development. In addition, the only visible section of the side extension from the street scene would be the pitched roof element which would serve a study. The design of the front section of the extension has a more traditional character and is designed to blend with the main house by replicating the pitch roof form and maintaining the existing eaves height. The single-storey side extension would be set in from the side boundary, well set back from the principal building line by more than 5m and would be more than 19m from the front boundary. Therefore, this element of the scheme would not be overly dominant within the street scene and would not adversely impact the character of the local area or rural setting.

Whilst the single-storey rear/side extension would be large, it is positioned along the shared boundary with Heath Lodge. This positions the built form along the northern side of the site which backs onto other residential development and away from the southern side of the site which backs onto an open field, thus limiting encroachment into the countryside.

The BDG states that 'the materials selected for alterations, or an extension should match or improve upon the quality of those of the existing building'. The proposed materials include brick to match the existing, sections of render, stone detailing, dark fenestration and slate roof tiles. The proposal includes some changes to the materials on the external walls of the existing house and would ensure a sense of cohesion with the extensions, as well as with properties within the local area.

The proposal also includes removing the southern driveway entrance and replacing the existing hard standing at the front with permeable paving. These would be welcomed changes that would enhance the verdant established character along Heathlands Road.

The BDG states that in rural and settlement edge settings, 'Extensions may be permissible provided that the scale, form and footprint does not have an unacceptable impact upon the countryside'. Overall, the proposed extensions are large and would increase the footprint of the property by a significant amount. However, the extensions would be proportional to the size of the plot and would not be overly oppressive or dominant with the street scene. Whilst it is recognised that the extensions would encroach into the garden space and countryside, the development would be well contained within a spacious plot and would retain a garden depth of between 37m and 50m and a garden width in excess of 43m. In addition, many of the properties within the local area also boast large plots sizes and there is precedent in this area for extensions of a similar scale.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Overlooking:

The additional and altered fenestration in the front elevation would all be road facing with the garages and parking area serving the occupiers of Heathlands Court directly opposite. These would be more than 43m away and located behind the dense tree cover lining Heathlands Road. Therefore, these changes would not result in any detrimental overlooking impacts.

The additional and modified fenestration in the rear elevation would include no.2 Juliet balconies and a first-floor balcony. There are no neighbours to the rear or south of the site. The closest neighbour to the north would be more than 22m from the site boundary. Views from the proposed rear fenestration would be similar to that of the existing views from the rear fenestration. Views into the neighbouring Heath Lodge would not be possible due to the significant separation distance and extensive tree lined shared boundary containing 14 protected trees. Therefore, there would be limited opportunity for any detrimental loss of privacy impacts to be generated by the changes proposed to the fenestration at the rear.

The proposed first-floor side facing window in the southern elevation of the two-storey rear extension would serve a bedroom. It would be more than 13m from the southern site boundary with no neighbours beyond. Therefore, there would be no overlooking impacts generated.

Loss of Light and Overbearing:

There would be limited detrimental overbearing or overshadowing impacts generated by the scheme due to the significant separation distance and thick vegetative screening that would prevent impact from occurring.

Air Source Heat Pump:

A third party raised concern regarding the installation of the proposed air source heat pump (ASHP). The primary concern with the installation of an ASHP in a residential setting is noise. Therefore, details of the unit will be secured via condition, as well as either an approved Microgeneration Certified Scheme assessment or a noise impact assessment, in order to assess any impact.

Removal of permitted development rights:

By reason of the scale of the proposed development and existing tennis courts, it is necessary to condition the removal of permitted development rights for Schedule 2, Part 1, Class E (buildings etc incidental to the enjoyment of a dwellinghouse) of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015. In this instance, it is necessary and reasonable due to the significant scale of the proposed development in order to prevent further expansion into the Countryside as well as to maintain a sufficient level of amenity space following the extensions.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

The development would increase the number of habitable rooms and the Council's Highways officer was consulted. They raised no objection to the proposal and concluded that the proposed triple garage and driveway parking would meet the WBC parking standards. They raised no objection to closing the southern access and commented *"It is recommended that the highway verge is reinstated to grass. The applicant is advised to contact the councils Highway Assets team to agree the works within the public highway"*.

The Highways officer recommended conditions relating to providing the parking and turning space and the annexe remaining ancillary to the main house.

Flooding and Drainage:

The proposal would increase the footprint of the property by a significant amount. WBC Drainage were consulted and requested a surface water drainage strategy which was submitted. Subsequent to further consultation, the Drainage officer advised that further infiltration tests in accordance with BRE 365 standards were required to determine the appropriate infiltration technique. This will be conditioned with any grant of approval.

Landscape and Trees:

The application site is located within designated countryside and the Council's Trees and Landscape officer was consulted. They noted that the site boasts notable mature trees of high local amenity value. In the officer's first comments, they remarked upon a major tree issue regarding the pool complex. Subsequently, discussions took place

with the owner of the property and the pool element was removed from the scheme. Following a re-consultation with the Trees and Landscape officer, they maintained their concern with the amount of incursion into the root protection area (RPA) of TPO northern boundary trees. Therefore, the requirement for conditions relating to an Arboricultural Method Statement would be necessary in order to safeguard the protected trees.

Ecology:

The application site is located in an area suitable for bat roosts. Bat surveys were submitted, and the Council's Ecology officer was consulted. The officer raised objection to the assessment and mitigation provided not being adequate to demonstrate the development will have no detrimental impact upon important ecological features and maintain the ability of the site to protect species. They recommended conditions.

The imposition of a European Protection Species licence was recommended. Whilst this is duly noted, the licence is awarded by Natural England who also ensure compliance. Therefore, it would not be necessary to impose this condition as it is covered by other legislation.

A condition to remove permitted development rights for Schedule 2, Part 1, Class A and E of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, was also advised. Please see section 'Removal of permitted development rights'.

However, the need to remove permitted development rights for Class A is not necessary as the dwelling will already have 'used up' development rights within this Class. The applicant should note that reference within The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 to "original" means:
(b) in relation to a building, other than a building which is on Crown land, built on or after 1st July 1948, as so built.

Conditions relating to landscaping, retention and protection of trees will be imposed with any grant of approval.

Conclusion:

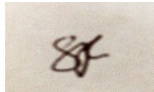
For the reasons set out above, and subject to conditions, the proposal is acceptable as it accords with local plan policy and guidance.

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:	Approval
Date:	6 December 2024
Earliest date for decision:	12 November 2024

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	24.1.25