

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	243140
Site Address:	37 Commons Road, Wokingham, RG41 1JJ
Expiry Date:	12 February 2025
Site Visit Date:	30/04/2024 – See 240766
Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of 1 no. detached dwelling following demolition of the existing dwelling and detached garage.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

- Water Utility Consultation Zones
- Local Authorities
- Affordable Housing Thresholds
- Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
- Borough Parishes
- Scale and Location of Development Proposals
- Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone
- Ground Water Zones
- Nuclear Consultation Zone
- Tree Preservation Orders
- Borough Wards
- Landscape Character Assessment Area
- SSSI Impact Risk Zones

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 CP6 – Managing Travel Demand CP7 – Biodiversity CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction CC06 – Noise CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB05 – Housing Mix TB06 – Development of Private Residential Gardens TB07 – Internal Space Standards TB23 – Biodiversity and Development

Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (JMWP)	DM1 - Sustainable Development DM2 - Climate Change – Mitigation and Adaptation
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
242171	Full application for the proposed erection of 1 No. detached dwelling following demolition of existing bungalow and detached garage.	Approved, 31/10/2024
240766	Pre-application advice for the proposed erection of 1 no. detached dwelling following demolition of the existing dwelling.	Replied, 10/05/2024
B/10/58	Residential Development	N/A
3/16/58	Dwelling House	Approved, 27/08/58
120857	Proposed erection of a replacement detached garage.	Approved, 05/12/2012

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Environmental Health – No comments received.
WBC Drainage – No objections, subject to a condition.
WBC Highways – Further information requested.
WBC Landscape and Trees – No objections, subject to conditions.
WBC CIL – The proposed development will be CIL liable.
WBC Cleaner and Greener – No comments received.
WBC Ecology – No comments received.

External

Thames Water Utilities Ltd – No comments received.
South East Water – No comments received.

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	No comments received
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	No comments received

APPRAISAL

Site Description and Proposed Development:

The application site relates to a detached bungalow property located in an established residential area. The surrounding area is characterised by detached and semi-detached properties that vary in style and architecture.

This application is a resubmission of a similar scheme approved in October 2024 under planning reference 242171. The key differences in this proposal include:

- An increase in the depth of the single-storey rear extension by approximately 1.2 metres.
- The addition of light-coloured render to the rear and north-west side elevations of the single-storey rear extension.
- Minor alterations to the fenestration.

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:

Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy requires developments to maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment.

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.

The application site is located in a spacious residential road which is characterised by a rhythm to the overall layout, with detached and link-detached houses set in discernible groupings which are distinguished by repeated house type. Well-maintained landscaping within front garden areas and a road median featuring mature trees and hedgerows contribute to the site's verdant appearance. The area is

also characterised by predominant gaps which provides glimpses of leafy green gardens to the rear, particularly along the south-western side of Commons Road. This marked feature creates a certain rhythm in the street which makes an important contribution to local distinctiveness.

The subject site forms one of eight bungalow properties located on the north-eastern side of Commons Road. It is however noted that a neighbouring property has had a dormer window extension that give it a chalet bungalow style appearance.

The proposed dwelling would have dimensions of 13.5 metres (width) x 18.9 metres (depth) with a maximum ridge height of 7.5 metres. The fact that the proposed building would be taller than their neighbours is not in itself harmful to the character and appearance of the area due to the individual circumstances of the application. The contextual Street Scenes analysis provided by the agent demonstrates that the new dwelling would not extend significantly above the adjacent neighbouring bungalows. While the introduction of a two-story dwelling would disrupt the row of bungalows along this section of the road, the street as a whole features a clear variation in building types, sizes, and designs. Several groups of semi-detached houses of similar size and scale exist nearby, ensuring that the proposal would not appear incongruous within the wider streetscape. Adequate separation from neighbouring boundaries would be maintained, and the proposed hipped roof design would help pull the roof mass away from adjacent properties, preserving visual separation at roof level between the proposed dwelling and its neighbours.

The Character of Commons Road is distinctly varied. There are 'blocks' of properties with a similar character that are of the same period and constructed in the same architectural style and materials, but overall, the road provides a varied, mixed character with a range of property types and styles. The architectural features of the proposed dwelling, including a hipped roof, gable dormer windows, and a material palette comprising red brickwork, white rendering, and grey roof tiles, would align with the character of the surrounding area.

Considering all these points, it is concluded that the new dwelling would not detrimentally harm the character of the area in accordance with policies CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy and the guidance contained within section 4 of the Borough design Guide.

Housing Design:

Internal Amenity:

Policy TB07 of the MDD Local Plan and R17 of the Borough Design Guides require adequate internal space to ensure the layout and size of new dwellings achieves good internal amenity. The Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard sets out the minimum standard internal space requirements for new dwellings. A minimum standard of 97m² applies for a two storey, 4-bedroom dwelling. The proposal would accords with this requirement.

Double bedrooms should have a minimum area of 11.5sqm, single bedrooms should have an area of 7.5sqm, living spaces a minimum area of 27sqm and there should be provision for storage. The proposed bedrooms meet the required minimum and the

combined total of that in kitchen, living and dining room is satisfactory. Sufficient built would also be available and the minimum floor to ceiling height would measure 2.3 metres for at least 75% of the Gross Internal Area. As such, the proposal would accord with local and national space standards, therefore, is acceptable in this regard.

External Amenity:

Policy TB07 of the Managing Development Deliver Local Plan and Principle R17 of the Borough Design Guide require adequate internal space to ensure the layout and size achieves good internal amenity. Principle R16 of the Borough Design Guide requires that rear gardens are at least 11 metres deep and 1 metre set back from the boundary to allow access thereto.

The proposed rear amenity space would have a depth of approximately 30 metres and would therefore comfortably exceed the minimum 11 metre requirement. The dwelling would also be set away from both side boundaries by at least 1 metre to allow access. As such, no objections are raised in this aspect.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Overlooking:

R15 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires the retention of reasonable levels of visual privacy to habitable rooms, with separation of 22-30 metres to the rear and 10-15 metres to the street.

The new windows on the front and rear elevation would be situated at a sufficient distance from neighbouring properties as to mitigate against any harmful overlooking or loss of privacy to surrounding dwellings.

The proposal would introduce first-floor windows on both side elevations to serve non-habitable rooms. It is recommended that these windows are obscure glazed and non-opening below 1.7m in order to minimise overlooking into the rear garden and patio areas of the adjacent neighbouring properties. A suitable condition will be attached to any approval.

With regards to the new ground floor windows, the existing boundary fencing would be high enough to sufficiently mitigate any overlooking concerns.

Loss of Light:

R18 of the Borough Design Guide SPD aims to protect sunlight and daylight to existing properties, with no material impact on levels of daylight in the habitable rooms of adjoining properties.

In accordance with the BRE Sunlight/Daylight Guidance, it has been demonstrated by way of the 45-degree line of sight test from the nearest habitable room windows at no.35 and no.39 Commons Road that this line would not be infringed by the proposed replacement dwelling. The new dwelling would infringe upon the 25 degree test in relation to the flank lower ground window at no.35 Commons Road. However, it appears that this window functions as a secondary window to a bedroom and therefore would not raise any loss of light concerns.

Overbearing and Sense of Enclosure:

R16 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires separation distances of 1.0m to the side boundary and 11m to the rear boundary.

Accounting for the enlarged rear extension, the replacement dwelling would remain suitably located away from the adjacent neighbouring boundaries and would not extend significantly beyond the rear elevation of either adjacent neighbouring property not to pose any unreasonable of overshadowing or overbearing impacts.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

Car Parking:

The Council's Highways Officer has reviewed this application and considers that the three off-street parking spaces would be sufficient for a dwelling of this size, and in accordance with the council's Parking Standards. As such, there are no highways issues.

Cycle Parking:

Policy CC07 and Appendix 2 of the MDD Local Plan stipulates minimum cycle parking standards and Policies P2 and P3 of the Borough Design Guide SPD ensure that it is conveniently located, secure and undercover and provided where it is compatible in the street scene. The Highways Officer considers that the proposed garage would be suitable for cycle storage.

EV Charging Points

Each new dwelling is expected to provide a minimum of one EV charging point. The Council's Highways Officer has requested a revised plan demonstrating at least one EV charging point. However, this requirement will be addressed separately under Building Regulations (Approved Document S) following the granting of planning permission. Given the ample space available within the front driveway to accommodate an EV charging point, providing this information at this stage is not essential.

Flooding and Drainage:

The proposed development is in Flood zone 1 according to the Environment Agency mapping with a low risk of surface water flooding. The Council's Drainage Officer has reviewed the application and has noted that the drainage details have not been provided and the existing drainage details has not been mentioned. The Drainage Officer has subsequently recommended a condition be implemented which secures details of the surface water drainage system of the site prior to the commencement of development.

However, the Local Planning Authority consider this condition too onerous when compared to the scale of new development; the new replacement dwelling is set to predominantly occupy the position and footprint of the existing bungalow, with the additional impermeable areas consisting of a single-storey front extension, a rear extension, and a patio area. The remaining permeable land surrounding the site, which includes a landscaped front garden and a substantial garden area, is deemed adequate to prevent any adverse impact on flood risk for both the site and the

neighbouring properties.

Landscape and Trees:

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 and Policy TB21 requires consideration of the landscape character.

The key character of the site and its surroundings are trees, especially Oak trees that characterise the front gardens, and the street character, which is consistent along the route. Unusually, Commons Road has a central reservation planted with native trees and shrubs some of which are identified as Veteran trees. The sylvan contributes to the high quality landscape setting of the site and provides additional value in terms of public amenity and residential value. It is important that the visual amenity and landscape character is retained and protected in accordance with Policy CC03, CP1, CP3.

The Council's Trees and Landscape Officer has reviewed the application and acknowledges the submission of mitigation measures for tree protection. Given the identical plot layout and tree locations, the Officer considers the tree reports submitted for application 242171 to remain relevant to the proposed scheme.

The submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) identifies the removal of two trees, T006 and T007, corresponding to T4 and T3 of the Tree Preservation Order (TPO). Both trees were assessed as having structural weaknesses that could affect their lifespan and public amenity. As mitigation, the proposal includes planting two large replacement trees near the front boundary. While this would initially reduce amenity value, it would provide long-term benefits.

An updated landscaping scheme was submitted by the agent on 03/03/2025, which the Trees and Landscape Officer has reviewed and deemed acceptable.

Accordingly, the Officer has raised no objections to the proposed development, subject to conditions ensuring tree protection during construction, retention of existing trees and shrubs as previously approved, and implementation of soft landscaping. Suitable conditions will be attached to any approval.

Ecology:

The site is located in habitat which matches where bat roosts have previously been found in the borough and is surrounded by a habitat suitable for use by foraging and commuting bats including large, connected trees that border Rotherfield Avenue and Reading Road.

The supporting Bat Scoping Survey (Crossman Associates, August 2024, ref: S1214.001 v.2) found no evidence of bats during the internal and external inspections of the property and concludes that the potential for roosting bats is deemed to be very low. As such, the proposals are unlikely to adversely affect roosting bats or other protected species.

Environmental Health:

As noted in the previous application, the Environmental Health Officer identified no public health risks, and the plans raised no environmental health concerns. Therefore, no objections are raised on these grounds.

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:	29 January 2025
Earliest date for decision:	11 January 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	<i>MC</i>
Date:	12.03.2025