

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	250589
Site Address:	4 Rowan Drive, Crowthorne, Wokingham, RG45 6RZ
Expiry Date:	9 May 2025
Site Visit Date:	1 April 2025
Proposal: Householder application for the proposed loft conversion into habitable accommodation, including the addition of a front and rear dormer and raising of the roof. Plus, a single storey rear extension and changes to fenestration. Following the demolition of the existing conservatory and chimney.	

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
Nuclear Consultation Zone
Borough Wards
Landscape Character Assessment Area
SSSI Impact Risk Zones
Thames Basin Heaths SPA Mitigation Zones
Historic Flooding Points Consultation Zone

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 CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Crowthorne Village Design Statement

PLANNING HISTORY

240941: Pre application advice for the proposed raising of the roof to create habitable

accommodation to include 2No dormers. 2 storey rear extension along with Juliet balcony. Single storey rear extension and conversion of the garage to create habitable accommodation following demolition of the existing conservatory. Replied 14/05/24

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Drainage: No objection subject to conditions

WBC Highways: No objection

WBC Ecology: No objection

WBC CIL: CIL Lieable

External

None consulted

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	Wokingham Without Parish Council: No objection, ensuring that any over development does not impact the street scene. Officer response: Addressed in character section of report
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	5 in support of application, but comments in relation to concern of parking roadside given the narrow nature of the road and ensuring residents maximise parking on their drives and materials. Officer response: The applicant has altered the parking arrangement, with the existing short fence that lines the front boundary is to be removed, to allow 4 off-street parking spaces (2428-PL-SITE Rev A). Highways have no objection, however, the applicant will need to be aware that any future modification to the dropped crossing will be subject to separate consent from WBC Traffic Management team. The proposed materials include 'off white' render to the external walls and face of the dormer, a tiled roof, a brick plinth around the bottom of the exterior and grey upvc double glazed windows. Along the street scene there are examples of white finishes including no.7 and no.8 and white dormers including no. 6a. Therefore, no objections to the subsequent similar appearance of the dwelling. Whilst the grey upvc windows would be out of keeping with the street scene. However, given the varied street scene style and

	design of properties, the appearance would alter the street scene but ultimately would not harm the street scene.
--	---

APPRAISAL

Site Description: Detached bungalow.

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: R1 design principle within the Borough Design Guide states that *“residential development should be designed to contribute positively toward the historic or underlying character and quality of the local area. This may be achieved through blending in with a strongly positive existing character, responding where relevant to the positive elements of its historic context or, where the site is large enough to allow for a distinctive identity to be created, by establishing a new character that relates well to the existing”*.

The street scene in the surrounding area is varied in style and design of properties as well as variety of single storey and two storey dwellings. The proposal will result in an appreciable increase in height from the existing bungalow but it would be similar in scale to other dwellings in the street scene. Therefore, the proposal does not cause an unacceptable harmful impact to the character or quality of the local area. It is also relevant that this section of the street scene is pre-dominantly larger two storey dwellings and therefore the proposal would not be out of keeping with the houses that predominantly characterise the immediate area – the existing bungalows is the outliers in this section of the road.

R23 design principle within the Borough Design Guide states *“alterations or extensions should be clearly subservient to the form and scale of the original building in most situations, although there may be exceptions where it is more appropriate to design a seamless continuation”*. As the proposal is not overly excessive in size or built form and as the neighbouring properties in the surrounding area differ in size and appearance, there will be no unacceptable harmful impact on street scene and character. It is acknowledged there would be an increase in the visible scale of the dwelling, however this would not result in a development that is detrimentally out of character with the surrounding area, given both neighbouring dwellings no.2 and no.6 are two storey dwellings and the majority of dwellings along Rowan Drive are two storey.

Whilst the existing front fencing will be removed, there are example along Rowan Drive which do not have any front fencing and an open driveway such as no.1a, 1b, 3 and 3a. Therefore, the change is considered to be minor and not harm the varied street scene.

The BDG *“front extensions should generally be no more than 1 storey in height and should not project significantly forward of the building”*. The front extension would be 2 storey in height and would not project forward of the existing building line, thus not fully compliant with the BDG. The projecting gable would be set back from the road by over 9m, is set down from the main dwellings ridge height and would appear a subservient feature to the main dwelling. As a result of the varied character along the street, such feature would not harm the street scene so is considered acceptable.

The BDG states that *“dormer windows should generally be positioned within the main roof, by being set back from both eaves line and the sides of the roof”* and *“dormers should relate to the design of the existing building in terms of roof form, materials, position and window proportions”*. The gable dormer in the front elevation does not project above the existing ridge line and the dormer is situated within the main roof whilst also being set back from both eaves line and the sides of the roof, therefore complying with the BDG. The gable dormer would be considered subservient addition and would not harm the street scene. Furthermore, along Rowan Drive there are many examples of different style dormers and such feature would not look out of place.

The flat dormer complies with the BDG and with it being located at the rear it wouldn't be visible from public locations. Hence, the proposal would not have an adverse impact on the character of the host property or surrounding area.

The single storey rear extension would project 5m in depth, which does not comply with the BDG. However, the host property has a very spacious garden and there are similar sized extensions in the surrounding area. Moreover, being located at the rear it wouldn't be visible from public locations. Hence, the proposal would not have an adverse impact on the character of the host property or surrounding area.

The proposal would differ to the current street scene and slightly alter the characteristics of the street. However, the new windows would be similar to the existing in size and proportions of current ground and first floor window along Rowan Drive, 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.

Overall, whilst the proposed dwelling is appreciably larger than the existing bungalow, the context of the street scene means that the scale and size of the proposal is compatible with the locality. The architectural vernacular of the proposal is of good quality and would relate well to the character and appearance of the area.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Overlooking: As a result of the front dormer and projecting gable element, this

introduces first floor windows to the property. The separation distance from the front of no.4 to the front of no.7 & no.9 is over 30m, thus complying with the BDG minimum front to front separation distance of 10m.

The ground floor openings would be screened by the existing fence boundaries, therefore no overlooking concerns. The ground floor side kitchen window facing no.2 would have a similar outlook as the current conservation. Furthermore, the widow would face the blank side wall of the garage.

The first-floor landing, bathroom window and en-suite window facing no.2 would be conditioned obscured glazed to prevent any overlooking.

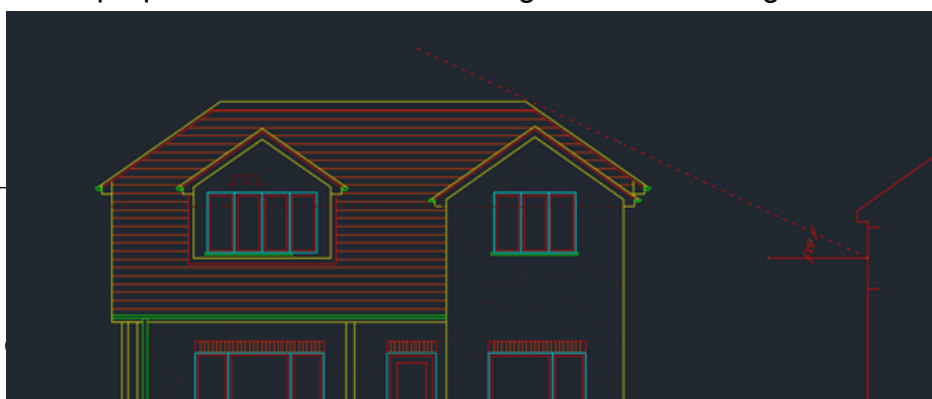
The rear element of the dwelling includes adding 2 bedroom windows. Most rear gardens are overlooked at an oblique angle from the upper floor windows in the neighbouring property. This is no different with the new window as part of the rear dormer and first- floor rear extension and its oblique angle/view of no.2 & no.6 rear garden. Thus, the rear windows 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 separation distance from the rear of no.4 to the rear of 3 & 5 Maple Drive is over 40m, which complies with the minimum back-to-back separation distance of 30m.

It is acknowledged that the rear extension significantly exceeds the recommendations for extension depth as outlined in the Borough Design Guide. However, 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. The separation distance between 4 Rowan Drive and 6 Rowan Drive is greater than 1m, therefore complying with the BDG.

On the other hand, the proposal would be approx. 0.65m from the side boundary of 2 Rowan Drive. However, it's noted the existing conservatory would be approx. 0.65 from the side boundary of no.2. As such, an extension that does the same would not result in harm to the character of the area despite not being completely in accordance with the Borough Design Guide.

Loss of Light: 2 Rowan Drive has 2 first floor windows, with one being a bedroom and a dressing room. Therefore, potential concern to loss of light to a habitable room.

For the initial consideration of windows opposite a proposed new extension, the British Research Establishment (BRE) Daylight and Sunlight Analysis guide advocates a 25-degree angle rule of thumb test. The angle is less than 25 degrees which is unlikely to substantially affect the diffuse daylight enjoyed by the existing building (see figure below). Furthermore, given the separation distance from flank to flank is over 4m and given the roof slopes away from the adjacent boundary, it's considered the proposal would not result in significant loss of light to the bedroom.



Given the adequate separation distance from no.6 of over 2m, it considered the proposal would not result in harmful loss of light.

Overbearing: The proposal would be of similar height to the other two storey dwellings in the surrounding area, the proposal would not appear physically overbearing or oppressive to neighbours such that it would be significantly detrimental to their amenities. The proposal would not extend beyond the established rear boundary line.

Amenity Space: The proposal reduces the amount of amenity space available to the property but it would still be roughly rectangular in shape, 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 occupier.

Highway Access and Parking Provision: The proposal will result in additional habitable rooms. There existing driveway parking for at least three vehicles and this meets WBC parking standards. The applicant has altered the parking arrangement, with the existing short fence that lines the front boundary is to be removed, to allow 4 off-street parking spaces (2428-PL-SITE Rev A)

Highways have no objection, however, the applicant will need to be aware that any future modification to the dropped crossing will be subject to separate consent from WBC Traffic Management team.

Flooding and Drainage: The comments from drainage have been taken into consideration, however due to the scale of the scheme the provision of drainage system is not required.

Ecology: In England all species of bats are European protected species. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) make it illegal to:

- intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture (or take) an EPS,
- deliberately disturb an EPS,
- recklessly disturb an EPS or obstruct access to breeding site or place of shelter and
- damage or destroy 'any structure or place which any EPS uses for shelter or protection.

A bat roost is interpreted as "any structure or place used for shelter or protection" whether or not bats are present at the time.

If a bat roost will be affected by the works, a licence for development works affecting bats (i.e. for derogation from the provisions of the Habitat Regulations) will need to be obtained before works which could impact upon the roost can commence.

The desk study undertaken by the Ecologist fails to include a search of the Council's constraint mapping and has only relied on aerial photos to determine if there are important landscape features around the application site. The consultant has not undertaken a local planning history search or bat group or TVERC records. The Ecologist therefore not taken account of or made the Owner and Agent aware of the bat roost recorded in the neighbouring property and the European Protected Species derogation licence.

The Ecologist concluded there was no internal evidence of bats was identified both internally or externally. However, as both records for bats and suitable habitats commonly used by bats for both feeding and commuting were observed locally a level of protection must be implemented to prevent disturbance.

Provided that potential roosting features for crevice dwelling bats in soffits and roof coverings and the loft void are retained I agree with the PRA that the works proposed will not impact features which are likely to bats. There are no ecological objections provided the application is implemented in full accordance with PBRA Appendix 4 which should be issued to the contractor and WBC informative I17 is included in the decision notice.

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.

This application will be liable for CIL based on measurements taken from the following floorplans –

2428-PL-101
2428-PL-102

CIL is calculated and measured based on the approved floorplans listed within the decision notice.

CIL form 2 - Assumption of liability will be required prior to the development commencing and will be required before any exemption can be approved.

All CIL forms can now be completed and submitted through the following link:
<https://pfi.exacom.co.uk/wokingham/cilforms.php>

For any further queries regarding CIL, please contact
developer.contributions@wokingham.gov.uk

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:	8 May 2025
Earliest date for decision:	4 April 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	8 May 2025